

PARTICIPATION OF BEGINNER VOTER IN THE 2024 ELECTION IN KUNINGAN DISTRICT

Ade Maulana Sobirin^{1*}, Resna Fauziah², Iskandar Zulkarnaen³, R. Mahendra Haryo Bharoto⁴

Universitas Swadaya Gunung Jati, Cirebon, Indonesia

*Correspondence: ademaulanasantobirin@gmail.com

Abstract

The participation of novice voters in the 2024 elections in Kuningan Regency is already underway but is considered still not optimal due to a lack of basic understanding regarding the importance of participation in elections, apathy towards the political system and their low trust in the government. This research aims to find out how novice voters participate in the 2024 elections in Kuningan Regency. The research method used was descriptive qualitative with data collection techniques in the form of observation, interviews, and documentation. Using the theory of the influence of community participation according to Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo as a theoretical framework. The results of this research indicate that voter participation in the 2024 elections in Kuningan Regency is considered not yet optimal if viewed from the results of the vote acquisition during the election because the number of invalid votes is still quite large. These results cannot be separated from the participation of first-time voters in it. Things that influence the participation of first-time voters are the lack of voter trust in the government and political institutions, the delivery of election-related information to first-time voters is still not conveyed thoroughly, and the political knowledge and understanding of new voters is still minimal. So even though the election was welcomed enthusiastically by first-time voters, there were still many invalid votes which was an indicator that in their participation they had not been able to use their voting rights properly.

Keywords: Participation, First-time Voters, 2024 Election.

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is a country that implements a democratic political system, where government comes from the people, by the people, and for the people. In a democracy, supreme power is held by the people. Every citizen has the right to elect their representatives in government. One implementation of this democratic system is through the implementation of General Elections (Pemilu). Elections are a method used to ensure democratization in countries including Indonesia, which have diverse societies. (Lestari, 2018).

General elections in Indonesia follow the "Luber" principle (Direct, General, Free, Secret) which has existed since the New Order era. This guarantees that every citizen has the right to vote directly, without interference, and without discrimination based on various factors such as ethnicity, religion and gender. Elections must also be free from pressure and conducted with security to ensure that each voter's vote remains confidential. During the reform era, the principle of "Jurdil" (Honest and Fair) increasingly developed, emphasizing the need to hold elections honestly in accordance with the law and fairly for all participants and voters, without fraud or discrimination.

In carrying out elections, the public should be involved in the entire process to participate. The definition of participation according to Aprillia Theresia (2015: 196) is as follows: "Participation is the participation of a person or group of community members in an activity."

Community participation is the right and obligation of citizens to contribute to the goals of their group. This allows them to get involved in development by giving their initiative and creativity. This participation includes the mental and emotional involvement of individuals in a group context, which encourages them to contribute and share responsibility collectively. (Iskandar, 2017).

Participation is very important and is even one of the goals of an activity itself, namely involving and mobilizing the entire community in the process of implementing activities in accordance with previously established directions and regulations. (Haryo et al, 2020).

The role of first-time voters in the general election process is very important in ensuring the sustainability of democracy in a country. New voters consist of the younger generation who have great potential in increasing political participation and overseeing the general election process. These new voters have different characteristics, backgrounds, experiences and challenges from previous generations. They are a group that is exercising their right to vote for the first time and has a political orientation that is dynamic and can change depending on existing conditions and the factors that influence it. (Dalinama et al, 2022).

In this context, it is important to further increase political awareness and education for first-time voters so that they can understand the importance of participating in the general election process. Apart from that, other efforts need to be made such as disseminating knowledge and studying the political participation of first-time voters in the community as well as developing programs that can increase the political knowledge of first-time voters. Thus, the participation of first-time voters can be a more significant factor in improving the quality of democracy in Indonesia.

Based on data obtained during pre-research regarding the participation of beginner voters in Kuningan Regency, a problem was found that regarding the level of awareness of participation, beginner voters, based on the level of attendance at the polling place, were quite enthusiastic, but because they did not have sufficient knowledge of election information, beginner voters who do not understand the importance of voting rights can affect the quality of democracy. The low quality of democracy is caused by voters' lack of political awareness in exercising their voting rights. Therefore, the low knowledge of novice voters generally indicates that they have little appreciation or interest in state issues or activities, such as in the implementation of elections.

Previous research conducted by Benamin, Mursin, Ikbar, and Chairan Zibar L Parisu entitled "Beginner Voters in the 2024 Election" research used qualitative methods with a descriptive approach. This research states that in several developed countries increasing the political participation of first-time voters is a major concern. New voters tend to have low levels of participation, so efforts need to be made to overcome this problem, including through the involvement of young people. The incompatibility between government policy and the will of the people is a major trigger for the loss of people's trust in no longer exercising their right to vote. If a country has a low level of public political participation, then this could be an indication that the implementation of democracy is giving a bad sign. This means that it can be said that the public is still lacking or even completely uninterested

in elections and other constitutional issues. Apart from this problem, there are also people who do not want to cast their vote because they did not receive a summons or think that the election is not that important even though this fact is very wrong. (Benamin et al, 2022).

This research aims to determine the extent of participation of the people of Kuningan Regency who are classified as beginner voters in their participation in the 2024 elections in Kuningan Regency, to find out the factors that influence this and it is hoped that it can provide benefits by providing scientific information for the development of science and success in democratic political development process through the election implementation process in Kuningan Regency in relation to community participation.

Based on this explanation, the author is interested in carrying out research with the title "Participation of Beginner Voters in the 2024 Election in Kuningan Regency".

LITERATURE REVIEW

Community participation is the right and obligation of citizens to contribute to the goals of their group. This allows them to get involved in development by giving their initiative and creativity. This participation includes the mental and emotional involvement of individuals in a group context, which encourages them to contribute and share responsibility collectively. (Iskandar, 2017).

According to Moch. Nurhasim (2014) states that General Elections are the basis of one of the instruments of democracy. Through elections, popular sovereignty can be transformed into political power in parliament and the executive. General Elections, hereinafter abbreviated to Elections according to Law Number 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections, are a means of implementing people's sovereignty which are held directly, publicly, freely, confidentially, honestly, and fairly in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Indonesia in 1945. Elections are the main institution of democratic representative government, because in a democratic country, government authority is only obtained with the consent of those who are governed. The main mechanism for implementing this agreement as the government's authority is through holding free, honest, and fair elections, especially for electing the President/Regional Head.

METHOD

This type of research will explain how voters who are classified as beginner voters will participate in the 2024 general election in Kuningan Regency. Based on the characteristics of the problem, the research method that will be used is a descriptive qualitative approach. With a qualitative approach, the author will examine the overall context, interactions with participants and collect data directly from participants and rely on descriptive data obtained by conducting interviews with participants. This is in line with what was stated by Moleong (2005:4), a descriptive qualitative approach, namely a research approach where the data collected is in the form of words, pictures and not numbers. This data can be obtained from interviews, field notes, photos, videos, personal documentation, notes, or memos and other documentation.

The informants in this research are in accordance with the main problem and focus of the research, so those who will be the subjects in this research are people who are related to the implementation of the election, including members of the KPU, students aged 17 years or more, university students and members of the public who have the right to vote between the ages of 17 and 22 years. They were determined deliberately to select informants who were truly relevant and competent with the research problem, so that the data obtained could be used to build theory. The theory used in this research uses the theory of influence of participation according to Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo (1995:226) that the factors that influence the level of a person's political participation are issues of leadership, communication and education.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to Gaffar in Efrizal (2012) general elections (elections) play an important role in realizing democracy in a country. The substance of elections is as a means of conveying the people's voice in forming representative institutions and government as state administrators. Suffrage is a form of popular vote, where the people have the right to choose representatives from various existing candidates. Efriza (2012) emphasized that elections are the strongest way for people to participate in a modern representative democratic system. Thus, participation in elections is not just a technical process of voting, but is also the main foundation in the system of state power which originates from the people and is based on the will of the people. So the participation of all people who have the right to vote in general elections is not just a right, but also an important responsibility in ensuring that government takes place in accordance with the wishes and interests of the people as a whole.

Participation is a crucial element in democracy. This is based on the belief that the individual who best understands his needs and interests is himself. New voters, who are exercising their right to vote for the first time, are a group whose orientation always changes in line with the conditions and factors that influence them. Therefore, efforts are needed to educate the entire community, especially youth, about politics and democracy. This aims to reduce as little as possible the level of voter non-partisanship in the general election process. (Pardede, 2014).

Based on data obtained from the KPU, it is known that the total number of voters in Kuningan Regency is 895,041. The first-time voters in the diagram are between the ages of 17-20 years totaling 67,982 and 21-25 years totaling 98,452, meaning around 18.6% of the total number of voters. With the DPT number of first-time voters being quite large, their participation will influence the continuity of the election results. So the participation of first-time voters in Kuningan district is very much needed in the implementation of elections.

Table 1. Voting results for the 2024 Kuningan Regency election

Candidate	Number of Votes	Number of Valid Votes	Number of Invalid Votes	Percentage of Invalid Votes
President & Vice President	686.802	666.140	20.662	3.1%
DPR RI	684.628	612.670	71.958	11.7%
DPD	387.229	295.850	91.379	30%
Provincial DPRD	685.558	521.120	164.438	31.5%
District DPRD	781.367	638.717	142.650	22.3%

Source: Kuningan Regency KPU

Based on this data, it shows that the level of voter participation in the 2024 elections in Kuningan Regency is still relatively not optimal in terms of utilizing their voting rights. This is indicated by the large number of invalid votes in the voting results. According to General Election Commission Regulation (PKPU) No.3/2019 Article 54, a valid ballot is one that contains a voting mark on the serial number, a photo, the name of one of the candidate pairs, a picture of the political party, and/or a combination of the political parties carrying the pair. candidate. Thus, if there is no voting mark on the ballot paper, or there is a vote in more than one column of the candidate pair, or the vote is found in another part of the ballot paper (other than in the column of one of the candidate pairs), then the ballot paper will be invalid.

Invalid ballots are the result of people choosing to belong to the white group (abstention). According to Arbi Sanit, the white group is different from other voter groups. Voters generally comply with applicable regulations or do not exercise their right to vote due to insurmountable obstacles. While abstaining, they exercise their right to vote in three different ways. First, they can vote for more than one party picture. Second, they can vote on the white part of the voting card. Third, they can choose not to go to the ballot box because they are aware of not exercising their right to vote. For them, voting in elections is a right they fully possess. (Arbi Sanit, 1992).

In Indonesia there are two types of abstention groups. First, the general abstention group are those who do not exercise their right to vote not for political reasons, but because of economic constraints, busyness, and so on. This group tends to have a political understanding that is limited to descriptions, without reaching a deep level of analysis. Second, the selected group of abstainers are those who deliberately do not exercise their right to vote in elections for political reasons. For example, they may be dissatisfied with the quality of existing political parties. This group has political analysis capabilities that are not only at the description level, but also at the analysis level and even up to the evaluation level. (Novel Ali, 1999).

Previous research was conducted by Tauchid Dwijayanto regarding the Abstention Phenomenon in the 2008-2013 Central Java gubernatorial election in Semarang City which highlighted three main factors that caused the high rate of abstentions.

First, he found that socialization regarding the Central Java gubernatorial election was still inadequate. The Central Java Provincial Government, Semarang City Government and the General Election Commission (KPU) are deemed to have not effectively disseminated information regarding the Governor Election process to the public. Second, the majority of people tend to prioritize their economic needs. They are concerned that attendance at the TPS could disrupt their income. Third, there is apathy from the majority of respondents towards the gubernatorial election process. Around 67% of respondents thought that the gubernatorial election would not bring significant changes to either the province or their personal lives. They see the gubernatorial election as a political routine with no promise of real change.

Thus, this research highlights that factors such as a lack of effective socialization, society still prioritizing personal interests, and apathy towards the election process were the main causes of the high rate of abstention in the Central Java gubernatorial election during that period in Semarang City. This problem is similar to the problems experienced by first-time voters in Kuningan Regency

Voting results are an indicator of the level of public participation in elections. This abstention group is part of the results of community participation. Based on this explanation, the factor that influences election results is the participation of the community itself.

Based on Table 1, it shows two things regarding the 2024 general election in Kuningan Regency, that the participation of the Kuningan community in the general election is still not optimal in the use of their voting rights and there is a very significant difference between the voting results of presidential and vice presidential candidates and the voting results of legislative candidates in election of DPD, DPR RI, Provincial DPRD and Regency DPRD. The number of abstentions in legislative elections is relatively high. These results cannot be separated from the participation of first-time voters in it. The problems that arise are identified using Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo's (1995:226) participation influence theory which states that there are three things that influence participation, namely leadership, communication and education.

Leadership

Leadership issues are the main thing in the business control process through decision making in achieving organizational goals. This is determined largely by the existence and quality of leadership. Leadership really determines or is the main determinant of whether or not the development process can be implemented through a policy taken. (Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo, 1995). So in this case study the leadership problem is related to the performance of leaders who served in government and people's representatives who served as members of the legislature in the previous period. Namely regarding the ability to formulate public policies, accountability and responsiveness to public aspirations.

The results of interviews with sources stated that one of the reasons why novice voters did not vote in the 2024 election was due to distrust of candidates, especially legislative candidates, because they did not really know who the potential candidates were and what party was supporting them. Apart from this, they also believe that whoever is elected will be

the same and will not bring significant changes. They feel apathetic or don't care about politics, some of them even feel that their voices will not bring about change. This stigma was formed because of the behavior of some politicians who fall into the category of instant politics. Politics only approaches society when there is a political agenda such as elections and also money politics, where politicians use money to get people's votes. So conditions like this undermine the trust of young voters in politicians.

Communication

Communication is one factor that is quite influential in community participation. Ideas, policies and plans will only gain support if they are known and then understood. Effective communication is important to ensure that all members of the organization understand the organization's goals and strategies. (Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo, 1995). Good communication makes members feel valued and motivated to participate more actively in achieving organizational goals. (Peter Drucker, 1992).

Regarding this communication dimension, the Kuningan Regency KPU has communicated with novice voters who are high school and equivalent students through outreach activities by visiting schools. This outreach activity was carried out in five electoral districts in Kuningan Regency. The KPU of Kuningan Regency visited schools and campuses to deliver material regarding electoral information. However, it is not possible for the Kuningan Regency KPU to visit all existing schools and visit every resident who is classified as a beginner voter so that due to the limited scope of the socialization area, the information regarding the election provided by the Kuningan Regency KPU to beginner voters has not been spread effectively and equally. New voters who are workers and students whose schools have not been visited and new voters who are in remote villages do not receive direct socialization by the Kuningan Regency KPU. where in reality they are the ones who need this information more because with all its limitations, the understanding of these novice voters regarding elections is still considered not optimal.

The socialization carried out by the Kuningan Regency KPU has not been effective and comprehensive, there are many beginner voters who are lay people about elections who must be given an understanding, such as high school students who are in areas far from the city and also beginner voters who are already working. Because almost all of them still don't understand elections well. There are still many first-time voters who do not know about election procedures, candidates, party platforms and their rights as voters. The average number of lay voters is students. Meanwhile, students who are classified as beginner voters already know information related to the election, even though they got this information themselves from social media.

Education

An adequate level of education increases civic awareness and facilitates the development of identification with national development goals. In fact, education provides the basis for the ability to improve one's quality of life and develop the values and attitudes needed to improve the quality of life in the nation. (Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo, 1995).

In the educational dimension, education is very much needed to influence community participation in political participation, in this case elections. Education not only increases political knowledge and awareness, but also equips individuals with the skills and sense of responsibility necessary to actively engage in the democratic process. Higher levels of education are associated with increased quality of participation in various social and political activities, including elections. Education helps expand individuals' social networks and increases their involvement in the community, which will facilitate political participation (Robert D. Putnam, 2000).

Education plays an important role in encouraging optimal public participation in elections. However, the political education of novice voters in Kuningan Regency is considered not yet optimal. One direct indicator of suboptimal political education is the behavior of the novice voters themselves. distrust of the political system, lack of understanding of the importance of voting rights, or skepticism towards available candidates and political parties. The role of adequate state and political education in schools and in the social environment in this case is very influential in providing motivation to be involved in the political process in an effective way, knowledge of the importance of participating in elections and how to participate correctly. This has an impact on their knowledge of their rights and obligations as citizens, as well as their ability to assess and select candidates based on the policies and programs offered. The importance of the level of education in politics is reflected in the behavioral patterns of novice voters in Kuningan Regency, those with a high level of education such as students tend to be more careful in exercising their right to vote, on average they already understand information about the candidates taking part in the election contestation and other information related to the election. Meanwhile, those with a low level of education tend to just follow along and are easily influenced by the information circulating. They are only interested in choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates. So it is not uncommon for them to prefer abstaining (not using their right to vote) in the election of legislative candidates.

New voters tend to have an unstable nature that is strongly influenced by their social environment. This unstable nature will affect their consistency in making political choices, especially when facing the massive spread of information and influence from the surrounding environment, such as family, friends and issues on social media. Likewise, novice voters in Kuningan Regency tend to just follow along and are very influenced by the surrounding environment, they do not have strong and critical reasons for their political views in the election.

The results of problem identification carried out using Bintoro Tjokroamidjojo's participation influence theory and the results of interviews with first-time voters directly, show that the participation of first-time voters in Kuningan Regency is influenced by their trust in politicians and leaders who serve in government, information about the election that has not yet been obtained, and other factors. beginner voter education. Based on these problems, the following are several efforts that can be made to increase the participation of first-time voters.

The government's approach to gaining the trust of first-time voters

One of the factors causing high levels of political participation is political awareness and trust in the government or political system. Political trust is people's assessment of a political system or certain elements within it, based on normative expectations. According to Hetherington (1998), political trust reflects an evaluation of whether the political authorities and institutions involved meet the normative expectations of the public. This is the essence of democratic theory, according to Miller and Listhaug (1990), where society evaluates the extent to which the political system is running in accordance with the moral expectations and values they adhere to.

The average source of information obtained by novice voters comes from social media, there is a lot of information circulating on social media, regardless of whether the information is factual or contains hoaxes. New voters still have unstable attitudes and minimal knowledge, so they will be easily influenced by the information circulating. So, to gain the trust of new voters, the government can take steps to collaborate between sectors. Good cooperation between governments, the government with schools, campuses and also the KPU as the organizer. Efforts that can be made in this case include holding discussion forums on campuses and local communities where first-time voters can have open dialogue between government officials and first-time voters to listen to aspirations, answer questions, and provide direct explanations about government policies and programs, so that it will building the level of confidence of first-time voters. For the school environment, the KPU can hold election simulation activities to provide practical experience of the election process, from registration to voting, which of course is accompanied by providing a basic understanding of the government system, the rights and obligations of citizens, and the importance of participation in elections. so that it will motivate students to study it more deeply.

Delivery of information regarding elections is delivered effectively and comprehensively

In KPU regulation Number 5 of 2015, general election socialization is defined as the process of conveying information regarding the stages and program of holding elections. Thus, election outreach is an effort to convey information about the stages and election programs carried out by institutions stipulated by law, aimed at increasing public awareness of the importance of elections. According to Djuyadi (2014: 2017), election outreach aims to provide a clear understanding to the public regarding the importance of elections, so that people can be proactive in using their voting rights properly, correctly and responsibly during elections. So that when election outreach has been carried out well, effectively and on target, it will increase voter participation in the election.

Intense socialization has several important characteristics, such as being carried out with high frequency, namely frequently and repeatedly over a certain period, especially before elections. This outreach must also be comprehensive and widespread, reaching various segments of society in various locations, including remote areas and groups that are difficult to reach. Apart from that, the methods used must be varied, not only using face-to-

face media, the high interest in social media among teenagers can be utilized by the KPU to carry out socialization such as through Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, YouTube and other social media platforms. Which of course must be creative and interesting by using approaches such as short videos, animations, infographics and relevant content to attract the interest of first-time voters. However, the material presented must still provide complete and detailed information regarding all important aspects of the election process, voters' rights, how to vote, and the importance of participation in elections.

Providing effective political and civic education to novice voters to provide knowledge in facing the elections

New voter education is an effort to convey information to new voters to increase their knowledge, understanding and awareness of the election process. With a systematic and comprehensive approach, the aim is to empower them not only in understanding the technicalities of voting and using their voting rights correctly, but also in planning in a structured manner by selecting relevant material for the short and medium term. Increasing political knowledge, whether through formal, informal or non-formal channels, will ultimately encourage community participation. This participation reflects political modernization, where citizens are actively involved in the decision-making process with the aim of influencing government policy. (Arwiyah, 2012). Voter education aims to increase knowledge and understanding of the program, stages, schedule, general election process and the meaning and importance of general elections in the democratic country of Indonesia. Apart from that, it is also to increase voter awareness and participation in exercising their voting rights. Voter education for students who are still in school is an effort to prepare them to become intelligent voters from an early age (Hariyanti & Sari, 2021).

Not only in the school environment by providing formal material, but the social environment is the main basis for understanding the politics of novice voters. One of the reasons for the lack of knowledge and insight in politics is the absence of political education provided in the family environment or in the environment where they live. In the family environment, early political education must be carried out by introducing basic political concepts and the importance of participation in elections from an early age. Parents and other family members can invite first-time voters to discuss political issues, the election process, and the importance of voting. Providing motivation from peers can also be done by sharing information and holding discussions about political views. Community organizations can also hold education and training programs for first-time voters about their rights and the importance of participation in elections by involving community leaders or influencers to make it more attractive. interest of first-time voters.

CLOSING

Conclusion

The relatively low participation of first-time voters in Kuningan Regency is influenced by several crucial factors. First, the low level of voter trust in the government and political institutions. This low trust often arises from controversial issues or negative perceptions of

government performance that do not meet public expectations. Second, the lack of effectiveness in conveying information about the election to first-time voters. Information that is not conveyed properly and comprehensively regarding the election process, prospective candidates, and the importance of voting rights can reduce their motivation and understanding to be actively involved in general elections. Finally, inadequate political education for first-time voters is another important factor. Lack of or inadequate political education not only reduces their knowledge of the political process and the importance of participation, but also does not equip them with the skills and attitudes necessary to make informed and rational decisions in elections. Therefore, to increase the participation of first-time voters, systematic efforts are needed to build trust in the government, increase the effectiveness of conveying election information, and strengthen political education that is more inclusive and comprehensive. Only in this way can first-time voters feel more involved and confident in taking part in the democratic process, ensuring better representation and higher participation in future elections.

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