

**FACTOR INFLUENCING FIRST TIME VOTERS PARTICIPATION IN 2024
PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION: A STUDY IN SEMARANG CITY**

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 Presidential Election which will be faced in the near future is a big topic of conversation among the general public. Not to mention, the General Election Commission predicts that there will be a surge in first time voters. First time voters are citizens who are registered as voters with the election organizers and are voting for the first time in an election in Indonesia between the ages of 17 and 21 years. The group that has just used its right to vote is known as first time voters in the political category. The political orientation of first time voters is always changing and will change according to the situation and variables that influence it. In Semarang itself, there are 26.031 first time voters who have been registered as permanent voters for the 2024 Presidential Election. This research aims to determine the enthusiasm of first time voters in Semarang City in the 2024 Presidential Election and what factors can influence them. This research was conducted using quantitative methods with descriptive and inferential approaches. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to various districts in Semarang City. The sample size for this research was 205 respondents. The research results show that the enthusiasm of first time voters in Semarang City in the 2024 Presidential Election is in very good level. This is proven by their interest in participating in the campaign, using their right to vote, and their criticality in assessing the candidates. This is certainly a breath of fresh air because based on several previous studies, first time voters in several regions in Indonesia are not very interested in participating in the 2024 Presidential Election and previous periods.

Keywords: First Time Voters, Presidential Election, Political Interest

BACKGROUND

Elections are one of the crucial steps in achieving people's sovereignty, and it may be argued that no democracy offers the option of holding elections in a scheduled and regular manner. Elections are therefore among the most crucial components of a democratic society. Given that the Election Supervisory Board itself has predicted that there will be an increase in first time voter's participation. First time voters may make up 60% of the electorate in the next 2024 elections, according to the Election Supervisory Body. The Semarang General Election Commissions already calculated that 26.031 Semarang City's first time voters will use their right to vote in the 2024 Presidential Elections. It is intended that the 2024 Presidential Election would demonstrate how political engagement of first time voters utilizes their right to vote to win the presidential election in the city of Semarang.

First time voters in the political sphere refer to individuals or groups who are using their voting rights for the first time. First time voter's political preferences are constantly fluid and subject to change depending on the environment and other influences. Beyond that, however, the participation of first time voters in general election campaigns is unquestionably encouraging as a way to gain the strategic advantage that any politician seeking office seeks to attain. High school students, college students, or voters between the ages of 17 and 21 who are first time voters are a genuinely distinctive demographic that frequently surprises and is undoubtedly promising in terms of numbers. It is unique because enthusiastic first time voters behave relatively more rationally, are more eager for change, and are less tainted by pragmatism.

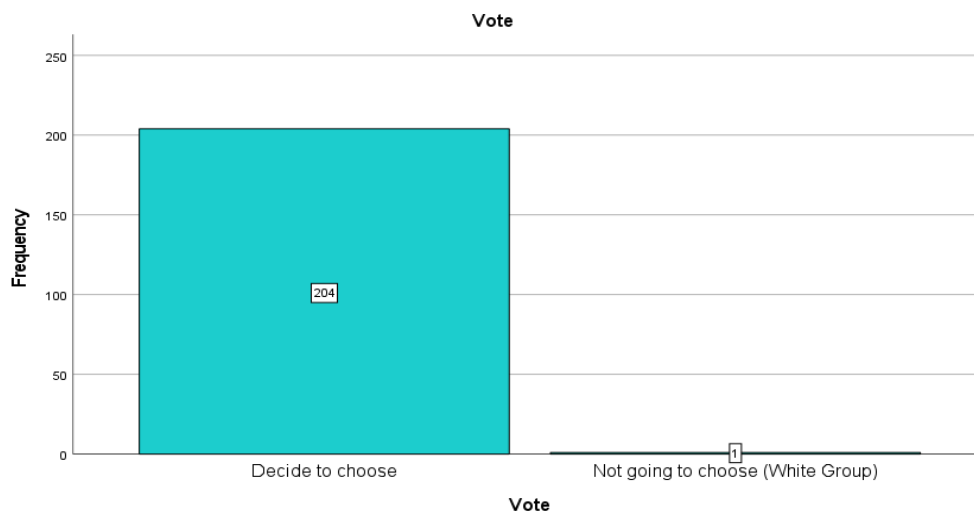
These first time voters typically lack political education and are ignorant. Political parties first sought to sway citizen's political choices in a variety of ways based on these presumptions. In reality, political parties encourage more young people to vote by running monetary policy-related campaigns. Not only are first time voters more susceptible to political party manipulation, but they are also more likely to abstain from voting. The first time voter group is a more scrutinizing group than the other categories, which gives first time voters several opportunities to abstain due to uncertainty when using their right to vote during elections. To ensure that the candidates who were chosen for the election were more well-liked in the neighborhood and that no more "crazy" candidates appeared, this procedure should have been carried out far in advance of the election. Because of that, the goal of this research is to examine the enthusiasm and the factors that can

influences first time voters in Semarang City in participating in the upcoming 2024 Presidential Election.

RESEARCH METHODS

The method used in this research is descriptive quantitative research method, by distributing questionnaires to 205 respondents. Azwar (2001:7) explains that descriptive research is research that aims to systematically and accurately describe facts and characteristics about a particular population or field. This research attempts to describe a situation or event. The data collected is solely descriptive so it is not intended to seek explanations, nor test hypotheses. In order to offer clarity and comprehension of the state of the data supplied, frequency tables and graphs are used to display the results of the descriptive research analysis in this study as frequencies and percentages. The technique for taking respondents uses Quota Sampling Technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



The research results show that 204 out of 205 respondents will use their right to vote in the 2024 presidential election, this is a very positive result because first time voters are already aware of the importance of using their right to vote in the 2024 presidential election, although there is 1 respondent who will not use his right to vote because he feels the candidate is not suitable, in the sense that he is happy with the candidate leader but not happy with his deputy.

Based on the results of research conducted by researchers, there are several factors that can influence the decisions of first time voters, including:

a. Candidate image

Statement Indicators	Respondent	Percent
Firm and authoritative candidate	143	23,9%
Distinguished candidate	146	24,91%
Honest and trustworthy candidate	176	29,8%
The candidate has a cool education background	27	4,8%
Candidate with experience in leadership	92	15,6%
Others	7	1%
Total	591	100%

Undoubtedly, image cannot be separated from an individual or an organization. If someone has a bad image, they are usually difficult for others to trust. Therefore, the image must be built and maintained. We know that a good reputation increases a candidate's popularity and electability, and vice versa. Based on the research results, more than half of the respondents, who are first time voters, tend to choose candidates who are honest and trustworthy. The case percentage reached 29.8%. This is an important factor that can influence the decision of first time voters to use their right to vote because they admit that they are tired of seeing council members or politicians who are supposed to defend and protect the interests of the people, instead harming and forgetting the people, as is proven by many cases where council members or politicians engage in corruption to benefit themselves.

b. Programs Offered by Candidates

Statement Indicators	Respondent	Percent
Regional development program	146	34,9%
Socio-economic program	160	38,2%
International cooperation program	91	21,8%
The programs offered are not attractive	13	3,1%
Others	8	4%
Total	418	100%

In elections, campaigns are an important part of introducing candidates to the public. In this campaign, the issue of work programs will be the candidates' main concern because it touches the lives of many people. Candidates will always read the circumstances and conditions of the voting public so that their programs can be

accepted by the public. The voting public believes that it is important to recognize and understand the work program plans offered by the candidates. Therefore, candidates are very careful and thorough in designing their programs. However, the public does not know whether the work program offered by the candidate can answer the problems that exist in society or not. Candidates have a reputation and credibility which is a guarantee for the public to know about the work programs offered. Based on research that has been conducted, candidates who offer socio-economic programs are the main choice for first time voters. This is because in accordance with the government's plan for a Golden Indonesia 2045, where the government targets Indonesia to become a developed country and equivalent to a superpower, first time voters expect candidates who offer socio-economic programs to be able to realize what is being campaigned for and help previous government programs in achieving a Golden Indonesia in 2045.

c. Environment Influences

Statement Indicators	Respondent	Percent
Friends invite to participate	35	13,7%
Family opinions or discussions	66	25,8%
Self encouragement	150	58,8%
Others	4	1,7%
Total	255	100%

The self-awareness of first time voters in Semarang City also gives them good hopes in the 2024 Presidential Election in Semarang City compared to the previous Presidential Election. This shows that the political awareness of first time voters in Semarang City is very good (58,8%).

d. Candidate Political Parties

Statement Indicators	Respondent	Percent
Not affected by political parties	159	73,3%
Voting based on the wellknown/strongest political parties	43	19,8%
Get help from the candidate's political party	15	6,9%
Total	217	100%

Based on research results, currently the presence of political parties as well-known places to promote candidates is not strong enough to influence the decisions of first time voters. Many first time voters are also skeptical of political parties because in

practice they are often used as political tools of a group of ruling elites or to satisfy their own "lust" for power. Political parties are only tools of a lucky few who succeed in deceiving the public to get their votes and force the implementation of certain public policies.

e. Influence of Social Media

Statement Indicators	Respondent	Percent
Often read negative news about elections on various social media	45	14,7%
Using social media as a means of election information	136	44,4%
Not affected by the election news circulating	56	18,3%
Affected by the election news circulating	25	8,2%
Political advertising on social media is quite effective	43	14,1%
Others	1	0,3%
Total	306	100%

Ahead of the 2024 Presidential General Election, political parties and candidates are trying to connect with the public. They do this through media announcements and face-to-face meetings with various activities, conveying a lot of information, and inviting people to vote for them. Creative campaigns using social media are currently in demand among the public. 44,4% First time voters use social media to easily get more information about candidate profiles, election news, etc. Through various creative content uploaded on social media, the political information conveyed will be more interesting, easy to understand, and relevant to people's daily lives, especially first time voters.

f. Trust in Government

Statement Indicators	Respondent	Percent
Already lost believe and disappointed with the performance of the government	15	7,3%
Still believe in government but hesitant to use right to vote	83	40,5%
Trust the government and interested to use right to vote	104	50,7%
Others	3	1,5%
Total	205	100%

The existence of a sense of trust in society plays an important role, because this trust is the essence that supports and maintains the legitimacy of the political system built by the government. The younger generation is completely passive in political activities, skeptical of various political institutions and authorities, and not interested in getting involved in the political process and political trust issues. Based on this research, 50.7% of respondents still trust the government and will use their right to vote.

CONCLUSION

Ahead of the 2024 presidential election, first time voters are an important part of the election process because they are still in the early stages of democratic practice, especially electoral democracy. Based on the results of research and analysis carried out on first time voters in Semarang City for the 2024 Presidential Election, researchers can draw the conclusion that first time voters in Semarang City are very enthusiast in using their right to vote and participate in the 2024 Presidential Election. This is also caused by several things such as the image of candidate, the programs that the candidate offer, social media, and their trust in government.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The Semarang City Government and the election organizers or KPU are expected to maintain the level of interest of first time voters as much as possible so that the choice of abstaining from voting in the minds of first time voters will not occur by conducting approaches and outreach at Senior High Schools (SHS) in Semarang City as often as possible and evenly distributed.
2. First time voters should be more interested in exploring information about the candidates and news about the election itself, for example by using social media as best as possible and being more active in participating in socialization held by the KPU.
3. First time voters maintain their criticality and selectivity in choosing good candidates, so that later they can provide leaders who can be trusted, not because there are factors given or rewarded. This attitude is very necessary so that the 2024 Presidential Election and the following period can and will continue to produce quality and capable leaders.

4. Support from family and the surrounding environment can increase the interest of first time voters in participating in the 2024 Presidential Election through small discussions about politics or providing political education from an early age.
5. Political parties should promote more positive political issues, so that they can attract the attention of first time voters in voting by showing evidence of real work results obtained from work that has been done previously, rather than attacking each other.

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