



Digital Media Utilization in Enhancing Political Participation Among Young Voters in the General Election

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ABSTRACT

Elections are a crucial moment in any democracy, yet first-time voter turnout tends to be low. This study explores the role of the digital platform Bijakmemilih.id in increasing the participation of first-time voters in the 2024 Indonesian elections. It focuses on analyzing the platform's contribution to encouraging political engagement among this voter group. The objectives of this study are to identify the platform's impact on first-time voter engagement, examine the factors influencing increased participation, and evaluate the extent to which the platform can be effectively adopted by first-time voters. This research employs surveys and literature review to identify the research problem and applies a mixed-methods approach to answer the research questions. The findings indicate that Bijakmemilih.id plays a significant role in enhancing the participation of first-time voters in the 2024 elections. The platform effectively promotes both electoral participation and broader political involvement, such as engagement in social movements. Key factors supporting its effectiveness include contextual information delivery, voter-centered orientation, continuous information flow, content segmentation tailored to young voters, and opportunities for active participation. Although the platform shows a high adoption rate, further improvement in political literacy and the development of a volunteer spirit are needed to ensure its sustainable use in the future.

Keyword: Bijakmemilih.id, Digital Democracy, First-Time Voters, Voter Participation, 2024 Election.

ABSTRAK

Pemilu adalah momen krusial dalam setiap demokrasi, namun partisipasi pemilih pemula cenderung rendah. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi peran platform digital Bijakmemilih.id dalam meningkatkan partisipasi pemilih pemula pada Pemilu 2024. Penelitian ini berfokus pada analisis kontribusi Bijakmemilih.id dalam mendorong partisipasi kelompok pemilih ini. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengidentifikasi kontribusi platform dalam mendorong keterlibatan pemilih pemula, menel faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi peningkatan partisipasi, dan mengevaluasi sejauh mana platform ini dapat diadopsi secara efektif oleh pemilih pemula. Penelitian ini menggunakan survei dan tinjauan pustaka sebagai dasar untuk mengidentifikasi masalah penelitian dan menerapkan *mix method* untuk menjawab pertanyaan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Bijakmemilih.id memiliki peran signifikan dalam meningkatkan partisipasi pemilih pemula pada Pemilu 2024. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa platform bijakmemilih.id berperan signifikan dalam meningkatkan partisipasi pemilih pemula pada Pemilu 2024. Platform ini efektif mendorong keterlibatan dalam pemilihan serta aktivitas politik lainnya seperti gerakan sosial. Faktor-faktor utama yang mendukung efektivitasnya meliputi penyajian informasi yang kontekstual, orientasi pada kebutuhan pemilih, alur informasi yang berkelanjutan, segmentasi konten sesuai karakteristik pemilih muda, serta peluang untuk berpartisipasi aktif. Meskipun tingkat adopsi platform cukup tinggi, masih diperlukan peningkatan literasi politik dan pengembangan semangat kerelawan untuk menjamin keberlanjutan penggunaan di masa depan.

Kata Kunci: Bijakmemilih.id, Demokrasi Digital, Partisipasi Pemilih, Pemilih Pemula, Pemilu 2024.



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1. Introduction

General Elections (Pemilu) are often defined as a celebration of democracy and serve as a fundamental pillar for any nation that upholds democratic principles. In Indonesia, Pemilu represents the tangible manifestation of democracy, providing a mechanism through which the people express their sovereignty over the state and government, grounded in the principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. Elections in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) are conducted based on the principles of direct, general, free, confidential, honest, and fair voting.

Political participation in a democratic nation is an indicator of the legitimate exercise of the highest power by the people (popular sovereignty), which is reflected in their involvement in elections. It demonstrates their understanding and engagement in state affairs. A high level of political participation signifies the public's awareness and involvement in governance, while low participation often indicates a lack of interest or appreciation, as reflected in the phenomenon of abstention (golput) (Nur Wardhani, 2018). Hence, the level of political participation in elections is considered highly important as it can serve as a critical indicator of the health of democracy and the realization of popular sovereignty.

In the political year of 2024, some segments of society have shown proactive awareness in ensuring that the election process is transparent and marked by integrity. This active participation is particularly targeted at first-time voters, including university students, who are expected to have a dominant influence on the voting outcome in the 2024 elections. According to the Permanent Voter List provided by the General Election Commission (KPU) in July 2023, more than 52% of the expected voters for the 2024 elections fall under the youth voter category. Voters aged 17-30 make up around 31.23%, equivalent to 63.9 million individuals, while those aged 31-40 comprise about 20.7%, or approximately 42.4 million people (Manik et al., 2015). In fact, the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) stated that Indonesia's voter demographics leading up to the 2024 elections show a youth voter proportion (aged 17-39) nearing 60% (Fernandes et al., 2022). This data highlights the crucial role of first-time voters in shaping the direction of democracy, necessitating active awareness and involvement to ensure integrity in the electoral process.

Despite their familiarity with the digital world, first-time voters' knowledge of elections and the track records of presidential and legislative candidates remains limited. This is despite the availability of election-related information across various digital platforms, one of which is *Bijakmemilih.id*. This platform provides relevant information on political issues, political parties, and presidential candidates to aid in making informed political decisions for the 2024 elections. It also campaigns to help first-time voters avoid hoaxes and misinformation that could undermine the integrity of the elections, all conveyed in a youth-friendly style. Moreover, the platform claims to be an independent movement with no affiliations to any particular candidates or political parties. The existence of this digital platform is assumed to play a significant role in increasing first-time voter participation in the 2024 elections, due to its comprehensive, unbiased, factual, and engaging content.

Thus far, existing studies have provided insights into first-time voter participation in elections. Current studies concluded that the involvement of all societal segments, including first-time voters, is crucial for the smooth conduct of elections, especially in efforts to promote participation through digital spaces (Musticho et al., 2023). However, this study has not thoroughly explored the specific role of digital platforms in increasing first-time voter participation. Another study identified several barriers to first-time voter participation in elections, including daily activities, feelings of inadequacy, and family restrictions (Nur Wardhani, 2018). Nevertheless, this research has yet to address the factors contributing to the increase in first-time voter participation in the 2024 elections, nor has it evaluated how a digital platform can be adopted by first-time voters to enhance their participation in future elections.

Therefore, this research aims to fill this knowledge gap and provide a deeper understanding of how digital platforms can enhance first-time voter participation in elections, thus strengthening the implementation of a more integrity-driven democracy in Indonesia. In line with this, the author has chosen the title "Increasing First-Time Voter Participation in the 2024 Elections Through the *Bijakmemilih.id* Platform." It is hoped that this study will provide recommendations on solutions to boost first-time voter participation in the electoral contest. Based on the background outlined above, the research questions are identified as follows: How does the *Bijakmemilih.id* platform contribute to increasing first-time voter participation in the 2024 elections?; What factors influence the increase in first-time voter participation in the 2024 electoral process through the *Bijakmemilih.id* platform?; To what extent can the *Bijakmemilih.id* platform be adopted by first-time voters to enhance their participation in future elections? To address these research questions, this study sets out the following objectives: to identify the platform's impact on first-time voter engagement, examine the factors influencing increased participation, and evaluate the extent to which the platform can be effectively adopted by first-time voters.

2. Method

This study employs a mixed methods approach, combining quantitative survey analysis with qualitative literature review to comprehensively examine the role of the Bijakmemilih.id platform in increasing first-time voter participation in the 2024 elections. According to Creswell, mixed methods research integrates both quantitative and qualitative data to provide a more complete understanding of a research problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The quantitative component involves a survey conducted among more than 200 first-time voters aged 17 and above, specifically university students. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on the study's objectives. The qualitative component consists of a literature review, which provides theoretical and contextual foundations to support the interpretation of the survey results and enrich the overall analysis.

3. Result and Discussion

Respondent Demographics

Table 1 shows that 98.7% of the participants are over 17 years old. Regarding platform exposure, the majority (73.6%) have been exposed to the Bijakmemilih.id platform. Additionally, 40.1% of participants received information about the platform through social media, while 38.8% learned about it from friends. Most participants agreed that the platform helped them in making decisions during the election (93.4%).

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Variable	Level	N	Distribution (%)
Age	Under 17	3	1.3
	More than 17	224	98.7
Platform	Yes	167	73.6
Exposure	No	60	26.4
Information	Family	17	7.5
Source of the platform	Friends	88	38.8
	Social Media	91	40.1
Helping to vote	Internet	31	13.7
Helping to vote	Yes	212	93.4
	No	15	5.6

Source: Processed data results

The study presents interesting findings related to the respondent demographics and the platform's effectiveness in increasing first-time voter participation. A large majority of respondents (98.7%) were over 17 years old, indicating that the study successfully reached its target demographic—first-time voters who have recently become eligible to participate in elections. The platform's exposure rate of 73.6% demonstrates that Bijakmemilih.id has effectively reached most of its target audience. This success is further supported by the significant role of social media (40.1%) and peer networks (38.8%) in spreading information about the platform, highlighting the importance of digital marketing strategies and word-of-mouth in engaging young voters.

Contribution of Bijakmemilih.id to Increasing First-Time Voter Participation

Political participation is the heart of elections and democracy. Without participation, elections and democracy lose their meaning. Participation ensures the realization of popular sovereignty, whereby government is for, by, and of the people. Forms of political participation in a political system have varying degrees, reflecting the different ways citizens engage in the democratic process. These include:

a. Voting

Voting refers to casting ballots in an election, influencing government policies. Political participation through voting is considered moderate in intensity.

b. Informal Groups and Social Movements

This form of participation involves specific groups that aim to channel aspirations to influence government policies. It represents a higher degree of political participation, as only a few are willing to be involved.

c. Direct Contact

This form is more personal and usually serves individual interests, categorizing it as low-intensity political participation.

d. Protest Activities

Protests represent dissatisfaction with government policies, such as demonstrations, and are considered a high degree of political participation (Sahid, 2011).

The questionnaire results revealed that most respondents exhibited moderate levels of political participation.

Table 2. Platform Contributions in Increasing Participation

No	Level	Implication	Presentages
1	Voting	First-time voters are motivated to participate in elections by casting their votes.	90,7%
2	Social Movement	First-time voters are encouraged to engage in social movements aimed at expressing political aspirations.	65,6%
3	Direct Contact	Participating in politics and social movements driven by the desire for recognition from others.	59,5%
4	Protest Activity	Engaging in demonstrations to voice their aspirations.	74%

Source: Processed data results

The platform's effectiveness in assisting the electoral process proved to be high, with 93.4% of respondents stating that the platform helped them in making electoral decisions. This indicates that the content and features provided by Bijakmemilih.id are relevant and beneficial for first-time voters. In terms of increasing participation, the platform was highly effective in motivating voters to participate in elections (90.7%) and relatively successful in encouraging engagement in social movements (65.6%) and protest activities (74%). However, the platform was less effective in promoting direct contact for personal interests (59.5%), possibly reflecting its focus on broader issues rather than individual concerns.

The study found that 90.7% of respondents were motivated to vote after engaging with the Bijakmemilih.id platform. This aligns with the study of meta-analysis, which demonstrates that digital media use—particularly social media—has a significantly positive effect on active political participation among young citizens (Boulianne, 2020). For first-time voters, interactive platforms like Bijakmemilih.id not only provide accessible information but also enhance political efficacy.

A study in the Indonesian context reinforces this, showing a strong correlation between digital media use and increased civic engagement among Generation Z (Tarsidi et al., 2023). The present study contributes to this discussion by highlighting that Bijakmemilih.id has been effective not only in encouraging voting but also in promoting broader political activities, such as participation in social movements (65.6%) and protests (74%). The platform's success lies in its user-friendly, non-partisan content delivery through visual media and interactive features such as quizzes and infographics. These approaches help foster trust and build political interest among young and first-time voters.

Factors Affecting Increased First-Time Voter Participation

The foundational principles of voter education include:

a. Segmented

Voter education should consider societal segmentation. Society is divided into homogeneous voting groups, each with different needs, characteristics, and behaviours. Therefore, the voter education approach for each group must be tailored accordingly.

b. Voter-Oriented

Voter education should be voter-oriented, placing the citizens' interests at the forefront and empowering them

in relation to the government and other non-democratic elements. Voter education guides the development of critical and reflective awareness.

c. Contextual

Voter education must be contextual, aligning with current situations and local conditions, as well as using relevant materials and methods. This ensures that voter education is up to date with the latest developments and is delivered through appropriate means.

d. Participative

Voter education must be participative, involving all stakeholders in planning, implementation, and evaluation. In a democracy, voter education is a shared responsibility.

e. Sustainable

Voter education must be ongoing, extending beyond election periods and continuing throughout the governance cycle (Manik et al., 2015).

Table 3. Factors Influencing the Increase in Participation

No	Level	Implications	Percentages
1	Segmented	Voters education customized to the young voters' characteristics and needs	88,5%
2	Voters' Oriented	Voters' oriented education	92,5%
3	Contextual	Contextual for young voters	93,4%
4	Participative	Facilitating voters to interact with candidates. Giving complete information from campaign period to the selection of the elected candidate	76,7%
5	Sustainable		90,7%

Source: Processed data results

The factors influencing the increase in voter participation show that contextual (93.4%), voter-oriented (92.5%), and sustainable (90.7%) approaches were highly effective. They were identified as key factors contributing to their increased participation. These findings are in line with Segmented Communication Theory, which emphasizes that messages are most effective when tailored to the specific characteristics and needs of their target audience (Kotler & Armstrong, 2024). This underscores the importance of providing information relevant to first-time voters' realities, focusing on their needs, and offering consistent support from the campaign period through to the election results. Segmented (88.5%) and participative (76.7%) approaches were also quite effective, emphasizing the need to tailor content to specific voter characteristics and offer opportunities for direct interaction with candidates.

A recent study finds that interactive websites and online communities—featuring threaded discussions, Q&A forums, and peer-to-peer interaction—significantly boost youth involvement in civic discourse and translate into offline activism (Seelig & Deng, 2022). Furthermore, emphasize that digital campaigns can enhance political efficacy and volunteerism, particularly when they involve peer-based outreach and emotional appeals (Boulianne & Theocharis, 2020). The effectiveness of Bijakmemilih.id stems not only from the relevance of its content but also from its format—contemporary, participatory, and personalized—which successfully fosters emotional connections and stimulates action among young voters.

The Impact of Education on Bijakmemilih.id Platform and Increased Voter Participation

Voter education aims to instil values related to elections and democracy in citizens eligible to vote or who may become potential voters in the future. The objectives of voter education include:

a. Increasing Participation

Voter education aims to boost voter participation throughout the governance cycle, encouraging involvement in every election stage. Established democracies see voter participation rates around 70%, which is vital to the legitimacy and effectiveness of elected officials and the democratic system.

b. Enhancing Political Literacy

Voter education seeks to improve voters' political literacy, equipping them with the skills needed for informed participation. Political literacy includes understanding, skills, and behaviours that strengthen democratic

processes. Without this, the political process can be dominated by a few, marginalizing the voters' interests.

c. Promoting Voluntarism

Voter education also aims to promote voluntarism in the political process, encouraging participation driven by idealism without material rewards. The opposite of voluntarism is voter pragmatism, where participation is based on material incentives (Manik et al., 2015).

Table 4. The Impact of Education on Increasing Voter Participation

No	Level	Implications	Percentages
1	Increasing Participation	Voter education is intended to enhance voter participation.	90,7%
2	Increasing Political Literacy	Voter education aims to improve the political literacy of voters.	65,6%
3	Increasing Voluntariness	Voter education also seeks to foster a sense of volunteerism among voters.	59,5%

In terms of education's impact on increasing voter participation, the platform was highly effective in boosting overall participation (90.7%). However, its effectiveness in enhancing political literacy (65.6%) and voluntarism (59.5%) still needs improvement. This indicates that while the platform successfully encouraged voter turnout, there is room for growth in fostering a deeper understanding of the political process and promoting voluntary political engagement. This gap reflects findings from empirical studies who noted that digital political engagement often leads to surface-level awareness rather than deeper civic understanding or long-term activism (Boulian, 2020). A 2022 study titled Standby Ties that Mobilize reported that while social media increases the likelihood of volunteering, explicit organizational pathways are necessary to convert interest into sustained engagement (Boulian, 2023). Similarly, while youth engage with digital platforms, they require targeted interventions to build critical literacy and political skills (Tarsidi et al., 2023).

A recent empirical study highlights that informal and peer-based social media interactions—encompassing online discussions and casual exchanges—increase young adults' engagement in civic topics online, and also, to a smaller extent, their offline activism, supporting the idea that interactive digital environments can catalyse political mobilization (Barati, 2023). To address these gaps, the author recommends that *bijakmemilih.id* expand its features to include more discussion forums, virtual debates, volunteer training modules, and certification programs—thus transforming the platform from an information provider to a long-term incubator for civic engagement.

4. Conclusion

1. The platform *bijakmemilih.id* makes a significant contribution to increasing the participation of first-time voters in the 2024 elections. The majority of respondents demonstrate a high motivation to participate in the voting process. This platform is also effective in encouraging first-time voters' engagement in various forms of political participation, such as social movements and protest activities. Overall, the platform plays a crucial role in helping first-time voters make more informed decisions during the election process.
2. Several key factors influencing the increased participation of first-time voters through the platform *bijakmemilih.id* have been identified. These factors include a contextual approach to information presentation, a strong orientation towards voter needs, the provision of continuous information throughout the election process, content segmentation that aligns with the characteristics of first-time voters, and opportunities for active participation. The combination of these factors significantly contributes to the platform's effectiveness in enhancing first-time voter participation.
3. The platform *bijakmemilih.id* shows a promising adoption rate among first-time voters. The majority of respondents have been exposed to this platform, indicating a broad reach. The platform's effectiveness in enhancing participation and political literacy suggests that first-time voters are likely to adopt and utilize this platform in the electoral process. Nevertheless, there is still room for improvement, particularly in the areas of political literacy and the development of a sense of volunteerism, which could impact the long-term adoption rates of the platform in the future.

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