



Political Education for New Voters Insight into Democracy as an Intelligent Citizen

Kalfin^{1*}, Astrid Sulistya A²

¹*Indonesian Operations Research Association, Bandung, Indonesia*

²*Research Collaboration Community, Bandung, Indonesia*

*Corresponding author email: kalfin@gmail.com

Abstract

New voters consisting of students, college students or voters with an age range of 17 to 21 years are a unique segment, often giving rise to surprises and certainly promising in terms of quantity. This study aims to describe the importance of political education for new voters in general elections in order to become smart voters and understand the political dynamics that occur. The study method used is a library research approach. Data and information collection techniques are carried out by utilizing documents in the form of articles, manuscripts, books, and other relevant documents for analysis. Data and information analysis is carried out using a descriptive analysis method. The results of the study show that it is important for new voters to be given education so that they have the right political literacy. Education for new voters as a source of learning for civic education to increase the political participation of new voters participating in education. Active participation of new voters as citizens in political activities is part of the measure of the effectiveness of the democratization process. The contribution of the results of this study is expected so that every citizen, especially new voters, is able to play a role as an intelligent, democratic, and characterful and civilized citizen.

Keywords: First-Time Voters, Political Education, General Elections, Democracy, The Role of Intelligent Citizens.

1. Introduction

Community participation in politics is the activity of a person or group of people to actively participate in political life, by electing the country's leaders, and directly or indirectly influencing government policies, public policy. Conventionally, this activity includes actions such as voting in general elections, attending rallies, becoming a member of a party or interest group, approaching or establishing relationships with government officials or members of parliament and so on (Kriesi, 2013). The increasing involvement of the community in the implementation of the General Election, shows the increasingly strong democratic order in a country. In a democracy, the involvement of the people in every implementation carried out by the state is a necessity (a necessity that cannot be avoided). The people are a very important factor in a democratic order, because democracy is based on the logic of equality and the idea that the government requires the approval of the governed. For this reason, the implementation of elections as a means of implementing democracy, of course, cannot be separated from community involvement (Elklit & Svensson, 1997).

General Election is a democratic process to elect people's representatives or government officials directly by citizens of a country. General Election is an important mechanism in a modern democratic system that allows people to participate in determining leaders and state policies. In relation to this, citizens need to be encouraged and even provided with provisions so that they have political literacy. One effective way is through voter education. Using the right to vote in a general election is the right of every citizen that must be used intelligently in order to produce a quality general election and the right leader. Political participation of the community is a form of manifestation of a democratic state, where the community is directly involved in the election.

Several studies and research on new voters and political participation have been conducted, including by Towner (2013) who stated that active participation of citizens in political activities is one measure of the effectiveness of the democratization process. Pamungkas (2023) said that education for new voters, especially for young citizens, namely students and new students. These new voters are often described as 1) Voters who are still unstable and tend to be apathetic; 2) Voters who have relatively low political knowledge; 3) Voters who tend to be dominated by groups (peer groups); 4) Voters who make choices because of the popularity of political parties or candidates proposed by political parties; 5) Voters who come to the Polling Station (TPS) only to cancel or revoke their rights.

In anticipation of novice voters not having knowledge and understanding about general elections, they will become objects whose votes are only desired by general election participants. Therefore, novice voters are an important thing that needs attention from election organizers and election participants. Therefore, this paper intends to conduct a study on political education for novice voters about the insight of intelligent citizen democracy, the aim is to describe the steps of democratic transformation in Indonesian society, which requires a correct and meaningful conception, and is supported by appropriate educational facilities.

2. Methods

This study was conducted using a literature study method, namely the author conducted a search for various written sources in the form of books, archives, magazines, articles, and journals that are relevant to political education for new voters. The data analysis process used a descriptive analysis method. Through this study, it is hoped that the information obtained from this literature study can be used as a reference to strengthen existing arguments and can be a reference for solving existing problems, especially regarding political literacy for new voters.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Tolerance and Democracy Education as Strengthening Political Literacy for The Younger Generation

Elections in Indonesia are one way to realize people's sovereignty. This is emphasized in Law Number 8 of 2012, Article 1 Paragraph (1), which states that elections are a means of implementing people's sovereignty in the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. Elections in Indonesia refer to the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair (Sugiharto & Riyanti, 2020). A country's democracy is often judged from the implementation of elections, where if elections are democratic, then the democratization process is considered to be running well. Political participation is an indicator of the success of this process.

Dalton & McAllister (2015) highlight that swing voters, especially new voters, have a significant position in the eyes of election participants or political parties. New voters are often the target of attention, but they tend to be apathetic even though they are rational. Political apathy among new voters, known as the white group, has the potential to disrupt the democratization process in Indonesia. To anticipate this, political parties and the General Election Commission have prepared an education program for first-time voters, with the aim of reducing the number of abstainers. Communication, socialization, and political education programs are organized by the General Election Commission and political parties in various regions.

First-time voters, such as high school students and college students, are involved in activities to increase their understanding of their rights and obligations as citizens in elections. This program, prepared by the General Election Commission and political parties, is a strategic step to increase political participation. Communication and socialization are important elements in political education that prioritize cognitive and behavioral aspects. In this context, the intensity of communication plays an important role in every political education program. Political education today is increasingly important because the younger generation has different views from the previous generation. The diversity of the Indonesian nation, if viewed as a positive potential, can be a strength in building a strong democracy (Kriesi, 2013).

In the implementation of elections, this diversity is always associated with the principles of democracy. The diversity and pluralism of the Indonesian nation require an attitude of mutual respect and tolerance for differences in choice. Tolerance is a form of accommodation in social interaction, where humans as social beings must be able to dialogue with various parties, not only with their own group. Tolerance requires a broad horizon of knowledge, freedom of thought, and the ability to dialogue (Kriesi, 2013). Tolerance means respecting different views and recognizing that other people's opinions are also valuable.

Tolerance supports a culture of democracy. Education for first-time voters must emphasize tolerance, namely respecting the rights of every individual to express their opinions, establish relationships, and communicate. This tolerance is an indicator of the success of a nation's democracy. In Indonesia, tolerance is an important part of education that must be developed, especially in democratic education. Democratic education and tolerance are very important for Indonesia's future.

Indonesia faces three main challenges in realizing democracy. First, having people's representatives who truly represent the interests of the community in decision-making related to political, economic, social, cultural, and defense policies. Second, the state must commit to achieving state goals, especially welfare and social justice. Third, the state must increase people's participation and make them subjects of democracy. According to Pamungkas (2023), democratic values include freedom of opinion, association, participation, cooperation, equality, people's sovereignty, trust, and gender equality.

From a national perspective, political education is very important for Indonesian democracy. First-time voters need to gain political knowledge so that they are aware of their rights and obligations as citizens. This knowledge will foster political awareness which is important for exercising their rights. Diamond (1994) explained that democracy requires political will from the state, society, and a strong and independent civil society.

Democracy and tolerance education in post-reform Indonesia aims to form young citizens who are critical and democratic, and able to live harmoniously in society. Democracy education includes two main things: democracy as a concept and democracy as a practice. Democracy as a concept means teaching democratic behavior, while democracy as a practice means that democracy has become an implemented system (Pamungkas, 2023).

Democracy and tolerance education can be developed through Civic Education. Civic Education plays an important role in encouraging the Indonesian people to understand their rights, obligations, and responsibilities as citizens. Civic Education learning is a way for the Indonesian people to have an attitude that supports Indonesian identity and character, in accordance with the national goals stated in the 1945 Constitution (Iriany & Paciana, 2019).

3.2. Democratization in National and State Life from the Perspective of Global Citizenship Education

Elections are a process in which citizens are involved in elections and governance, by actively choosing and determining leaders who will hold positions in the executive and legislative branches for a certain period. This election is a real manifestation of the implementation of people's sovereignty, where people have the right and obligation to choose, be chosen, and determine who holds power and regulates the lives of citizens (Pahlevi & Amrullobbi, 2020). Since 2004, Indonesia has implemented direct elections well. The diversity of society and citizens has created harmony, harmony, and good integration because it is managed wisely (Sugiharto & Riyanti, 2020). Therefore, it is important to continue to develop democratic life in Indonesia based on the values of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, Bhineka Tunggal Ika, and the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, and supported by the values of political culture and democracy (Pamungkas, 2023).

According to Mahpudiz et al. (2021), there are several strategic steps in managing Indonesian politics in the future. First, reorganizing the election and regional election system. Second, reorganizing the representative system. Third, improving decentralization and regional autonomy. Fourth, political party reform. Fifth, increasing positive examples from political elites, bureaucracy, and community leaders. Democratic transformation in Indonesia requires a correct, meaningful concept supported by proper education so that every individual as a citizen is able to play a role as an intelligent, democratic, and civilized citizen (Nurdin, 2015). The participation and political awareness of young citizens, especially new voters, are very important in the democratization of the nation.

Young voters, who are usually new voters in elections, have a comparative advantage. They have different characteristics from adult voters, such as being independent, critical, anti-status quo, and wanting change. These characteristics are in accordance with intelligent voters who consider candidates based on their track records and work programs offered. They tend to reject money politics and fake news (hoaxes). However, this group also has the potential to abstain, especially if they do not have sufficient information about the candidates or political parties (Feddersen & Pesendorfer, 1999).

The role of social media in increasing the participation and political awareness of young voters is very important. Fitriyah et al.'s (2021) research shows that 64% of respondents will follow discussions about elections on social media, although 95% of respondents still rely on print and electronic mass media to follow political discussions.

According to Kriesi (2013), voters in Indonesia are divided into three categories: rational voters, who vote based on in-depth analysis; emotional critical voters, who are idealistic and uncompromising; and novice voters, who are participating in elections for the first time, aged 17-21 years. Improving the quality of democracy in Indonesia requires good conditioning, where politically intelligent citizens not only understand the election mechanism, but also the freedom to vote without political pressure (Pamungkas, 2023). The participation of novice voters in Indonesian democracy plays a very important role in the future of the nation's democracy (Iriany & Paciana, 2019).

Civics Education is expected to form intelligent and integrity novice voters. One way is to form global citizens who care about the condition of society and are willing to make better changes. This caring attitude includes the ability to care about the immediate environment and the global community (Pamungkas, 2023). The development of democratization in the era of globalization is a challenge for civic education in Indonesia, especially in fostering democracy and tolerance (Nurdin, 2015). The democratization process requires citizens who are able to participate intelligently and responsibly.

Civic Education plays an important role in shaping intelligent political participation through political education for new voters (Kriesi, 2013). This political education aims to provide knowledge about election mechanisms, so that new voters can better understand political information (Dalton & McAllister, 2015). The ultimate goal of political education is to form a society that not only understands politics, but is also able to apply political behavior in everyday life.

4. Conclusion

From the results of this study, it can be concluded that personal data protection in Indonesia has progressed with the PDP Law, but there are still significant challenges in its implementation. Police actions in accessing individual mobile phones must be carried out in accordance with clear procedures to avoid violating privacy rights. Although there is leniency in emergency situations, it is important for law enforcement officers to act proportionally and in accordance with applicable legal provisions. Therefore, further efforts are needed to increase public awareness of their rights related

to personal data protection, as well as strengthen existing regulations to be in line with technological developments and community needs.

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