

**Strengthening Political Education for First-Time Voters Ahead of the 2024 Kudus Regional Election Through Entertainment Stages at IAIN Kudus**



**Penguatan Pendidikan Politik Bagi Pemilih Pemula Menjelang Pilkada Kudus 2024 Melalui Panggung Hiburan di IAIN Kudus**

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	
<p><b>Keywords</b>                      Regional Elections;                      Novice Voters;                      Entertainment Stage;</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b>                      Regional head elections or Pilkada are electoral processes at the local level organized by the KPU in the region with the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest, and fair elections. One of the central roles performed by the KPU is conducting political education. This is also what the KPU of Kudus Regency has done. One of the target points in the KPU's socialization program is first-time voters. First-time voters in the Kudus Pilkada are a central focus due to their fantastic number, according to the KPU Kudus's voter list totaling 145,140 first-time voters. This research aims to examine the steps taken by the KPU of Kudus Regency to increase voter participation. This research aims to understand the steps taken by the KPU (General Elections Commission) of Kudus Regency in increasing voter participation. The research method we used is descriptive qualitative research and data collection through observation and in-depth interviews. The findings include the role of the KPU of Kudus Regency in enhancing the political participation of first-time voters through several means, including 'KPU Kudus Goes To Campus'. Conclusion: The role performed by the KPU of Kudus Regency in increasing political participation among first-time voters is already optimal, although the delivery of material is less comprehensive. Meanwhile, the factors influencing the increase in voter participation are political party factors, political socialization with volunteers, and political awareness factors.</p>
<p><b>Kata Kunci</b>                      Pilkada;                      Pemilih Pemula;                      Panggung Hiburan</p>	<p><b>ABSTRAK</b>                      Pemilihan kepala daerah atau Pilkada merupakan proses elektoral di tingkat lokal yang diselenggarakan KPU di daerah dengan asas langsung, umum, bebas, rahasia, jujur dan adil. Salah satu peran sentral yang dilakukan KPU adalah melakukan pendidikan politik. Demikian halnya yang dilakukan oleh KPU Kabupaten Kudus. Salah satu titik sasaran dalam program sosialisasi oleh KPU adalah pemilih pemula. Pemilih pemula pada Pilkada Kudus menjadi titik sentral karena jumlahnya yang fantastis, berdasarkan DPT KPU Kudus yaitu berjumlah 145.140 pemilih pemula. Riset ini memiliki tujuan yaitu bagaimana langkah-langkah yang dilakukan KPU Kabupaten Kudus dalam meningkatkan partisipasi pemilih. Metode riset yang kami gunakan yaitu adalah metode penelitian kualitatif diskriptif serta pengumpulan data melalui observasi, wawancara mendalam. Temuan yang diperoleh antara lain peran KPU Kabupaten Kudus dalam meningkatkan partisipasi politik pemilih pemula melalui beberapa cara antara lain, KPU Kudus Goes To Kampus. Kesimpulan dalam penelitian yaitu Peran yang dilakukan KPU Kabupaten Kudus dalam meningkatkan partisipasi politik pada pemilih pemula sudah optimal, hanya saja dalam bentuk penyampaian materi kurang komprehensif. Sedangkan faktor yang mempengaruhi meningkatnya partisipasi pemilih yaitu faktor partai politik, sosialisasi politik dengan relawan, dan faktor kesadaran politik.</p>
<p><b>Article History</b>                      Send 20<sup>th</sup> May 2025                      Review 14<sup>th</sup> June 2025                      Accepted 10<sup>th</sup> July 2025</p>	<p>Copyright ©2026 <a href="#">Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora)</a>                      This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> license.                      Akses artikel terbuka dengan model <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> sebagai lisensinya</p>



## **Introduction**

The Regional Head Election or Pilkada is a direct election process by the Indonesian people to determine their preferences for candidate nominees. In the Regional Head Election, there are three scopes, namely the election of Governor and Vice Governor for Provinces, the election of Regent and Vice Regent for Districts, and the election of Mayor for Cities. Ideally, the regional head election holds the same value as general elections, which is based on the principles of democracy while upholding the values of elections with the principles of Direct, General, Free, Secret (Luber) and Honest, Just (Jurdil) (Tiansah, 2023). A country that has the quality of democracy will certainly consider all structural and orderly aspects to embrace a state that has quality in the procedural democracy within a region, Indonesia post-reform has a system transition from centralization to decentralization (Musqith, Munadhil Abdul; Tayibnapis, 2022). A system that emphasizes authority and responsibility is not concentrated solely at the center, but shifts authority, responsibility, and resources to local governments, as an effort for flexibility and accountability in a democratic state (Satriyo Pringgo Sejati & Ahmad Burhan Hakim, 2023).

Another term in the general election, especially in the regional head elections of the country, is also the need for an evaluation of the sustainability of the elections. In Indonesia, there is currently a continuous procedural evaluation (Hidayat et al., 2023), In the regional head election, evidenced by the amendment of Law Number 8 of 2015 to Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning regional head elections, considering various important aspects in maintaining and enhancing democracy in the country (Kelibay et al., 2022). The process of selecting candidate candidates certainly influences the sustainability in a region, therefore, it is necessary for the government to evaluate policies in all aspects outlined in the law and continue to apply the basic principles of the 1945 Constitution as its guideline (Muzakkir et al., 2021). In the current digitalization era, government institutions, particularly the Election Commission, have essential duties and functions that greatly influence the dynamics of regional head elections. This is because the digitalization era has a significant impact on both the productive and non-productive age groups, one of which is misinformation; they tend to be contaminated by information that lacks clear sources and accurate data on the ground. Media has become a spearhead tool for candidates in gaining votes and influencing the perspectives of the general public rationally, such as mass media and social media, which notably, people from various backgrounds and segments now have access to communication tools like mobile phones (Noorikhsan et al., 2023), thus becoming an opportunity for candidates to influence voters (Wahuningratna et al., 2024).

According to research (Rozaq et al., 2024),c The KPU Kudus is enhancing participation among first-time voters using a socialization method, targeting high school students. The socialization is carried out through the Project Strengthening the Pancasila Student Profile (P5) program, conducted by competent resource persons in their fields or presented by the chairman of the Kudus General Election Commission or commissioners, with the material presented using a projector. The face-to-face socialization makes it an important point in the relay of active participation by delivering information actively and interactively, making the socialization easily accepted by participants. The socialization conducted through school activities at SMAN 2 Bae serves as preparation for the training of student council president selection and procedural training to become informed first-time voters. The implementation of socialization has generated relevance and interest among students in directly seeking information from sources. Essentially, the dissemination of information about general elections and regional head elections serves as insight for first-time voters to be unaffected easily and to become informed first-time voters in choosing their preferred leaders or candidates.

So far, voter education for the first-time voter segment tends to be conducted only shortly before local elections (not continuous), and it is not managed specifically for first-time voters. There is a need for evaluation in socialization management because in the realm of socialization, individuals can absorb information more thoroughly if they continuously receive the information conveyed or develop an awareness of elections among first-time voters, ultimately increasing active participation among first-time voters regarding knowledge about elections, vigilance as first-time voters, and being informed first-time voters. However, the role of the General Election Commission in fostering political literacy for first-time voters is not optimal. The current problem is that knowledge about politics, democracy, and elections is still limited to procedural knowledge of citizens' rights and obligations, let alone technical skills and articulation in political behavior.

Political socialization serves as a method of political education to realize their interests through the material presented, to foster literacy and solutions for the general public, especially for first-time voters, to choose candidates according to their conscience, without pressure from anywhere. (Suripto et al., 2023). Regional head elections, often abbreviated as pilkada, are a core requirement and a benchmark of democracy. The results of regional head elections held in an atmosphere of openness with freedom of expression and freedom of association reflect the participation and aspirations of the community. It can be said that regional head elections are a political practice of governance that is generally

conducted in almost all countries in the world in the election of leaders/state organizers. (Kurniawansyah & Alqadri, 2021). However, in reality, there are regional head elections with low political participation rates. In other words, a relatively large number of citizens do not exercise their right to vote, known as the 'white group' (golput), or they use their voting rights merely to fulfill that right without truly understanding the importance of regional head elections, as seen in first-time voters. One way to address this issue is through voter education. (Masyarakat et al., 2022). Voter education contains understanding the election procedures for citizens who have the right to vote. From this education, it is hoped that first-time voters will participate by going to the polling place (TPS) to vote. Not only that, they are also expected to help supervise the regional elections, at least ensuring that the implementation is in accordance with the correct procedures.

Voter education aims to enhance knowledge and understanding of the programs, stages, schedules, election process for local leaders, and the meaning and importance of local elections in the democratic state of Indonesia. Additionally, it also aims to increase awareness and participation of voters in exercising their voting rights. Voter education for students who are still in college is an effort to prepare them to become informed voters from an early age. (Hariyanti & Sari, 2021). According to research (Kamuli et al., 2023), First-time voters hold significant meaning, as they are the target of votes in elections. Therefore, it can be said that first-time voters are often merely used as objects to gather votes in the lead-up to elections. Voter education is urgently needed for first-time voters because they are portrayed as unstable voters who make their choices based on external appearances or popularity. (Al Hamid & Hamim, 2023), having relatively low political knowledge and tends to be dominated by peer groups, so they come to the polling station just to fulfill their voting rights. First-time voters are generally still students, so the special performance stage by Alma Esbeye serves as a medium for voter education at IAIN Kudus campus.

First-time voters face very tough challenges, starting from political changes and internal problems without a clear direction, to the pressures of globalization, free trade, terrorism, and international interventions. The differences in nature and character, backgrounds, experiences, and challenges faced by young voters in elections must be well understood, especially in preparing smart, critical, and progressive young voters. Along with the fact that these first-time voters will be the next leaders at the 100th anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia in 2045. The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia will continue to exist today and will be greatly determined in the elections of first-time voters (Fathurokhman, 2022). First-time voters, consisting of students or voters aged 17-21,

represent a unique segment that often produces surprises and certainly promises in terms of quantity. It's called unique because the behavior of first-time voters is characterized by high enthusiasm, relatively more rationality, a thirst for change, and a low level of pragmatic pollution. First-time voters have high enthusiasm, while their undecided choices actually position them as swing voters in the truest sense. (Reza Yuna Dwi Rahmawati & Sultoni Fikri, 2022). Their political choices have not been influenced by specific ideological motivations and are more driven by the dynamics of the local political environment. First-time voters are easily influenced by certain interests, especially by those close to them such as family members, from parents to relatives and friends. Additionally, mass media also plays a role in influencing first-time voters' choices. This can take the form of news on television, banners, brochures, posters, and so on. First-time voters, especially teenagers (aged 17), have a cultural value that is relaxed, free, and tend to gravitate towards informal matters and seeking pleasure; therefore, anything unpleasant will be avoided. Besides seeking pleasure, peer groups are the most important aspect of a teenager's life, which is why it is important for a teenager to have their own group of friends in social interactions. (Haris Zulkarnain & Saufi, 2021).

According (Qoyyimah, n.d.) Socialization comes from the word social, where individuals are trained to be more sensitive to social matters. In a more comprehensive sense, socialization is defined as one of the procedures or mechanisms for providing an understanding of the social order, offering knowledge about social norms, and manifesting what actions should be taken and what should not be done. Socialization is an interactive procedural process in the social life of society, facilitated by a facilitator who presents material on various social aspects. Socialization is a key element in various forms of agendas with large management, as it is necessary to convey exclusive information as a resource for them to successfully execute common goals. Socialization also requires a persuasive strategy so that interactive communication can have an impact on the psyche and cognition. In socialization, it is necessary to accommodate an organization to consider the effects that will later be felt by participants, much like the concept of management which involves considering short-term, medium-term, and long-term impacts. (Sari & Farid, 2021).

According (Tesalonika et al., 2021) In general, socialization implementation is divided into two parts: first, it is carried out offline, and second, socialization is conducted online. When the implementation is done offline, it provides a complex understanding because, in offline socialization, the facilitator presents the material directly while face-to-face with the participants. Offline socialization is usually conducted intensively by bringing

in resource persons who are experts in their field to convey the material to be delivered, and this is done in a specific place that ensures the ease of conveying the material and minimizes technical obstacles. The second method is online socialization, which means it is conducted not in person or using online media for delivering the material. Socialization is carried out using online media : Like Zoom and other media. Online communication has positive and negative impacts, one positive impact is that it can provide information without having to meet in person, while the negative impact is the technical difficulties of using poor signal and the inability to control participants directly, which can hinder the communication process.

According (Jayanti et al., 2023) The socialization of the regional head elections by the General Election Commission is regulated in the Regulation of the General Election Commission (PKPU) Number 10 of 2018 Article 1 Clause 24, where the socialization of elections is the mechanism for delivering information about the procedural and programmatic organization of elections intensively. Article 5 clearly states that the target of socialization includes first-time voters, family-based voters, young voters, voters with disabilities, voters with special needs, female voters, marginalized communities, religious groups, Internet citizens, political parties, the general public, mass media, indigenous communities, community organizations, and so on. This is aimed at fulfilling the duties, main tasks, and functions of the General Election Commission as a form of increasing voter literacy, as well as a means to foster a participatory character in exercising their voting rights. (Riau & Sorong, 2023).

The General Election Commission (KPU) as the body to coordinate the procedures in carrying out regional head elections, the Regional General Election Commission (KPUD) has urgency in the formation of procedural structures, one of which is the establishment of Adhoc Bodies. (Syafarani, 2024). The purpose of writing this research journal generally focuses on the General Election Commission in carrying out its duties for political education ahead of the regional head elections in November 2024, and specifically as a study to understand the extent of the implications of socialization on students at the Kudus State Islamic Institute, as well as a perspective in contextualizing research for voter literacy knowledge for first-time voters broadly into electoral material.

First-time voters tend to have unstable psychological intensity in determining their preferences, one of the reasons being several points: firstly, conflicts within coalition parties, secondly, conflicts between candidates, thirdly, the rationalization of first-time voters who tend to be stagnant and pessimistic in casting their votes. (Kamuli et al., 2023). These factors

lead to the occurrence of the white group (Golput)(Putra & Fauzi, 2020), However, in casting their votes, it is urgent for every citizen to participate, as "One Man One Vote" emphasizes the importance of exercising the right to vote in elections. This has a significant impact on the accumulation of valid votes and exercising the right to choose, even though, in reality, there is no legal basis to impose sanctions on voters who abstain. The researcher suspects that the Kudus Election Commission, in providing outreach to first-time voters, particularly students of the State Islamic Institute of Kudus, has a significant impact. First, first-time voters become aware of the main duties and functions of the Kudus Election Commission. Second, students gain a better understanding of how to differentiate between general elections and local elections. Third, the material presented during the outreach will provide a clear understanding of the importance of informed voting by being aware of the candidates' backgrounds, better understanding the strategies of prospective candidates in influencing mass media, social media, and better understanding the preferences of candidates; fourth, socialization through the entertainment stage will provide a significant impact in delivering material to students of the Kudus State Islamic Institute to increase local election participation; fifth, in improving voter participation, the General Election Commission has an adaptive strategy to enhance participation through various programs and the use of infallible social media.

The existence of first-time voters is an urgency that needs to be considered, as historically, first-time voters tend to be easily influenced by their surrounding environment and often become the main target during elections. The researcher attempts to reconstruct the problem formulation into aspects of instruments in indicators: first, how is the form of socialization delivered by the KPU Kudus through entertainment stages to first-time voters or students of IAIN Kudus; second, how effective is the KPU Kudus's socialization in enhancing participation among first-time voters, especially new students of IAIN Kudus; third, how responsive are first-time voters to the socialization conducted by KPU Kudus at entertainment stages in IAIN Kudus.

## **Method**

The researcher conducts a study focusing specifically on the General Election Commission institution, as it is a vital institution with an important role and function in regional elections. The researcher seeks to conduct the study by examining several important aspects, one of which is the role of the General Election Commission in increasing

participation among students, and secondly, the strategies used by the institution to enhance political education literacy for first-time voters.

This research is a qualitative study with descriptive methods, interviews, documentation, observation, and an inductive approach. (Safrudin et al., 2023). The researcher conducted the selection of informants by choosing and qualifying them into several aspects. First, the delivery of information was carried out by the Head of the General Election Commission of Kudus Regency. Second, to novice voters who are predominantly from study programs that are linear with the field of study in politics, in order to see firsthand how the socialization delivered by the General Election Commission of Kudus Regency (KPU) was received. The researcher implemented interview methods with political students who are also novice voters as a way to observe how much the psychological and cognitive impacts provided by KPU affect the active participation of novice voters. The researcher conducted interviews with one student who is predominantly involved in the field of politics to obtain results that could serve as general knowledge.

Research focusing on qualitative methods also needs to pay attention to several data acquisitions in the study, researchers collect data by directly observing several aspects, among them, researchers collect data using observation methods, which means data is collected by directly watching the socialization carried out by the KPU Kudus in the entertainment stage in the IAIN Kudus environment. The qualification of data and data collection is also carried out with direct information at the KPU Kudus office, by looking at the KPU Kudus Instagram social media, and the Legal Documentation and Information Network of KPU Kudus (JDIH). Analysis is an advanced stage in research to comprehensively discuss the results, in order to reach conclusions that can be drawn by the researcher. The analysis conducted by the researcher involves presenting data and reducing data in the research, to be systematically explained so that conclusions can later be drawn from the research.

## Result and Discussion

### Socialization of the Kudus General Election Commission 2024 Through Entertainment Stage



**Image. 1 Documentation of the Socialization of the General Election Commission of Kudus Regency Through Entertainment Stage at the State Islamic Institute of Kudus 2024**

**Source: KPU Kudus 2024**

The KPU of Kudus Regency has the duty as the regulatory, managerial, and implementing body for elections in the Kudus Regency area through this office, the management of elections in this region is processed. The functions and duties of this KPU include designing the election budget, managing voter data, establishing cooperation with other agencies related to polling locations, preparing election necessities such as chairs and tents, collecting election results, processing the voting results, receiving complaints related to elections, conducting socialization of elections, and accepting registrations of candidates for regional leaders including legislative candidates (caleg), regents and deputy regents, mayors and their deputies, governors and their deputies, and other political positions. (IDalamat, 2024).

The socialization carried out by the Kudus General Election Commission is not merely a formal event, but also aims to build a relay of information, where in the socialization about the important role of first-time voters in exercising their voting rights, it is hoped to increase participation. The information received directly by students through the Kudus Regency General Election Commission can be conveyed further to relatives, siblings, and local residents. This was directly communicated through an interview conducted by IJTI media with the Chairman of the Kudus Regency General Election Commission via the Youtube platform.

*"First, it's indeed about socialization, secondly, we expect active participation including from fellow students, later outside after returning from campus they can spread and socialize the stages of the local election and on November 27 they can go in droves to the polling stations," said the Chairman of the General Election Commission of Kudus Regency, 8/20/2024.*

The socialization held at the Kudus State Islamic Institute by the Kudus General Election Commission will certainly have a significant impact in increasing voter participation. First-time voters are the main target in order to achieve maximum votes in regional elections. First-time voters tend to fall into the unstable age category, where their emotional and rational decisions can be influenced by their environment, party conflicts, and instability in determining their candidate preferences, which creates crucial problems in casting their votes. The socialization held through an entertainment stage will certainly generate interest among participants. The socialization presented by the Kudus Regency General Elections Commission will evoke cognitive responses to enhance participation among students. The material presented includes, first, becoming an informed voter, second, the scheme for casting votes at polling stations, third, distinguishing between general elections and regional head elections, fourth, the main duties and functions of the Kudus General Elections Commission and Adhoc bodies, and fifth, explaining issues related to rejecting money politics.

Participation is a concept whereby an individual is able to carry out their actions and morals when executing an order based on emotions in making choices. In an effort to increase voter participation, an institution certainly needs to distribute or think of effective strategies to attract participation. (Wibowo et al., 2020). Increasing participants' involvement in activities requires packaging an event by considering the background of the participants and the environment, so that delivering information, particularly on the concept of socialization, can proceed smoothly and create a significant image for the participants. (Usman & Putri, 2022). The Kudus Regency General Election Commission provides solutions related to socialization packaged through entertainment stages, based on the aspect of student preferences in an activity or observing the social environmental conditions by considering what is popular in a certain social structure in a specific place, which will ensure that the activities run smoothly.

*"Listening to and observing the information presented by the KPU Kudus during the socialization earlier opened my mind to actively participate in exercising my voting rights. Initially, before I learned about the information concerning first-time voters, I was an idealistic student because I felt that as the election day approached, the candidates and political parties relied too much on image-building concepts, and there was conflict among the candidates. I initially wanted to abstain from voting, but my perspective changed and I decided to vote because this is indeed part of the political dynamics, and I can determine which candidates I believe have the characteristics of good leaders for the progress of Kudus," said Firman Firdaus, a first-time voter and a Political Science student of 2024, 17/8/2024.*

Effective and maximal socialization is socialization that can influence participants psychologically and cognitively. In the socialization conducted by the chairman of KPU Kudus, knowledge was provided maximally to first-time voters. During the interviews conducted by the researchers, positive responses were obtained that can serve as research results. The presentation of interview results serves as a benchmark for the effectiveness of the socialization. The findings from the interviews reveal the extent to which the material presented was understood, as the participants of the socialization become a benchmark for the socialization delivered. The material presented indirectly yields results in the socialization that can enhance the participation of first-time voters. On the other hand, the material presented also provides knowledge and direct experience from the KPU to the participants, so that participants can understand the political dynamics and the existence of first-time voters in the simultaneous regional head elections of 2024.

Goes To Campus is one of the programs of the General Election Commission of Kudus aimed at increasing participation among first-time voters. The socialization is carried out through an event called Academic Culture Introduction (PBAK), where participants are typically aged 17 to 21 years. The event runs according to the guidelines and expectations set by the KPU Kudus institution. The implementation of the regional head elections to be held on November 27, 2024, requires the election implementation agency to work optimally. During the Goes to Campus event at the State Islamic Institute of Kudus, it was attended directly by the chairman of the Election Commission of Kudus Regency, Ahmad Amir Faisol, along with the commissioner's staff, and assisted by the Adhoc body in carrying out the socialization. The socialization event, held on August 17, 2024, coinciding with Independence Day, made the occasion even more festive, and the enthusiasm of young participants was quite conducive until the end, with around 2,500 new students in attendance.

There are two main contributions in terms of socialization in our lives. First, socialization provides society with a platform to engage effectively within the community.

Second, it creates a sustainable society, because without socialization, there would only be one generation, which greatly disrupts the community's ability to sustain itself. (Muzahid Akbar Hayat et al., 2021). For example, if a generation does not instill the values of Sundanese, Javanese, and Batak cultures in the next generation, those cultures will slowly fade away with the passage of time. The process of socialization needs to occur in several different contexts before these two things can happen. There are two types of heritage, namely social heritage and biological heritage. Socialization involves the acquisition of customs practiced by the society. Every newcomer to a society must learn the customs that already exist in that environment, including those related to economics, kinship, education, religion, politics, and others, through a process called socialization. The analysis of the social context, cultural context, social interactions, and social behaviors of the relevant community are interconnected. This indicates that among other social systems, socialization is the most significant form of unity because it involves the participation of both individual members, society, and groups within one system. (S & Rafni, 2024).



**Image. 2 Documentation of the Socialization of the Election Commission of Kudus Regency Through Entertainment Stage at the Islamic State Institute of Kudus 2024**  
**Source: Personal and KPU Kudus 2024**

The researcher conducted field observations by attending the socialization event, and on the other hand, the researcher also undertook an independent campus learning internship at the Election Commission of Kudus Regency. The researcher was directly involved by attentively listening to what was conveyed by the chairman of the Election Commission of Kudus. The socialization was attended by all commissioner ranks and Adhoc bodies to succeed in the socialization, with the material being delivered on August 17, 2024. Most of the students present at the event were first-time voters, who are primarily new students susceptible to influence from their surrounding environment, The socialization process runs interactively by involving questions posed by the resource persons intensively. Using the approach of socialization through entertainment stages is certainly one of the preferred

activities among students, while on the other hand, the entertainment stage serves as a concept for self-relaxation, which can be considered a harmonious event.

The information conveyed by the chairman of the General Election Commission includes becoming a smart first-time voter and information about regional head elections. One urgent piece of information about smart voters is: first, first-time voters can use gadgets to view the candidate's history; second, do not be easily provoked or influenced by the surrounding environment; third, first-time voters at the student level can directly access the KPU regulations and the percentage of general election participants in February by introducing JDIH and explaining the duties, main functions, and roles of the General Election Commission of Kudus. Fourth, conveying procedural in granting voting rights which will later become field experience and conducting a democratic student election. The ongoing general election creates a sufficient intensity to improve active participation in the ongoing regional head elections.

The delivery of information about local elections by the Kudus election commission uses two-way communication socialization, in which the information agency not only conveys information but also seeks information through cognitive and affirmative responses from students. The chairperson of the Kudus election commission has asked students questions several times, not without reason, as the questions posed are intended to explore the knowledge of first-time voters, in the concept of socialization, this becomes the key to success or is easily accepted by participants because it uses two-way communication. The Election Commission of Kudus also provides a small reward to first-time voters, as part of a socialization strategy to generate interest among participants, so that by offering prizes, they become active participants in the conducted socialization.

The Election Commission of Kudus Regency also conveys various information about its duties in regional head elections or general elections, the institution responsible for organizing elections consists of the National Election Commission (KPU), Provincial Election Commission (KPU), and Regency or City Election Commission (KPU). KPU, as a central, provincial, and regency or city institution, respectively, plays an important role in organizing elections, especially after regional head elections are included in the framework of regional head general elections. The functions and roles of the KPUD (Regional Election Commission) of the District/City remain in line with the KPU (General Election Commission) of the District. This aims to clarify the differences between the Provincial KPU and the District/City KPU, even though both substantially have the same roles in organizing elections. In this case, referring to the KPU of Kudus District, the following tasks are carried

out: a) explaining the programs and executing the approved budget allocations. The implementation of all processes in the district/city administration must comply with applicable regulations. b) Coordination and supervision of the administrative steps taken by the PPK (District Election Committee), PPS (Polling Station Committee), and KPPS (Polling Station Election Committee) in their respective areas. c) Submitting the voter list to the provincial KPU. d) Updating the voter data using the latest data from previous elections, considering the population information provided by the Government, and establishing it as the official voter list. In addition, conducting and announcing the results of the vote counting for the elections of members of the DPR, DPD, President and Vice President, as well as members of the provincial and district/city DPRD according to the report of the vote counting results at the PPK level. e) Creating a minutes of vote counting and its certificate, which must be submitted to the witnesses from the election participants, Bawaslu of the district/city, and the provincial KPU. f) Announcing the elected candidates for the district/city DPRD according to the number of seats allocated for each electoral district in the relevant district/city, as well as creating a minutes related to this matter. g) Respond promptly to findings and reports received from the district/city election supervisory board. h) Disseminate information regarding election implementation and the duties and authorities of the district/city KPU to the public, i) Conduct evaluations and prepare reports for each stage of the election implementation process, (Rahman et al., 2024).

The process of socialization will continue throughout a person's life. Experts discuss socialization strategies in this context, including socialization after entering childhood. According to the above opinion, socialization encompasses all community activities that take place in everyday life. Examples of such activities include education, which begins with basic training or education and then continues to the stage of application or real use before being sustained for future generations. The definition of socialization according to Wright is "The process by which individuals acquire the culture of their group and internalize its norms to a certain extent." Its social aspect, thus guiding the person to consider the expectations of others. Socialization is a human trait that essentially states that they will never be satisfied learning something they do not yet know, such as the social norms they need to learn in order to adjust to their environment. Based on the above definition, it can be concluded that socialization is a broad term that can be understood as a process through which we acquire important life skills through interaction with others. These skills include thinking, feeling, and acting, in generating successful social engagement. (Oktama Andriyendi & Fitria Dewi, 2023).

#### a. Planning for socialization

Socialization requires a planning process to succeed in achieving goals; effective socialization planning is necessary. Here are some socialization planning considerations: 1) In the process of formulating and establishing long-term goals, clarity in planning is essential. This is reflected in the determination of objectives, targets, as well as the identification of threats, opportunities, strengths, and weaknesses of the organization in implementing socialization. 2) When selecting actions, this step involves determining the socialization methods that align with the various available options : a) Outreach regarding the role of the General Elections Commission to first-time voters, as well as the importance of the 14 roles of youth in democracy, and the key role of youth in the advancement of a region is conveyed to students. They have limited experience and understanding of the general election process because they have not participated before. Therefore, this socialization is very important to increase their participation in the elections, considering the significant number of first-time voters (Dewi et al., 2022).

The socialization conducted by the General Election Commission to students is part of their efforts to provide understanding to potential voters among the student body. Students are considered agents of change who can impart knowledge to the community about the importance of participating wisely in elections. Through this socialization, it is hoped that students can spread awareness to the public so that they voluntarily vote wisely and understand the concept of an informed voter. c. In the allocation of these resources, the focus is more on providing technical guidance to election officers and ad hoc committees. This is done through the organization of activities aimed at enhancing their understanding of the materials related to their duties and responsibilities in conducting elections. This also includes communication regarding the active obligations of election organizers in socializing and implementing the scheduled stages according to the regulations of the General Election Commission that must be adhered to and executed (Huckle & Silva, 2020).

#### A. Understanding of Public Relations

Public relations is a part of management that is responsible for evaluating public perceptions, organizational procedures, and policies, as well as developing programs to gain support and recognition from the public (Khopipah et al., 2023), It states that Public Relations (PR) is a strategic approach that utilizes various communication concepts, with the expectation that its development will be very rapid in the future. Abdurrahman provides two definitions of PR: as a communication technique and as a communication method. From the

descriptions of these experts, it can be concluded that PR is part of the management function responsible for building and maintaining good relationships between the organization and its public, which ultimately has a significant impact on the success of that organization or institution. PR within an organization also has the responsibility to ensure effective communication with the public, whether internal or external (Bariroh, 2021). As an integral part of an entity, Public Relations plays an important role that affects the activities of the organization or institution. Besides being a communication link, the main task of Public Relations is to shape a positive image for the organization or institution. The primary role of the Public Relations division is to create, strengthen, and protect the organization's reputation in the eyes of the public. Thus, Public Relations is responsible for maintaining good and harmonious relationships with the public as an effort to uphold a good image.

#### B. The Role of Public Relations

In the context of organizations, especially within the scope of government, the public relations function holds a very strategic position. Public relations is not only responsible for building good relationships between the organization and various related parties, both internal and external, but also plays an important role in strengthening the image of government institutions (Putri et al., 2024). In this framework, the most ideal public relations approach is one that is symmetrical and oriented towards two-way communication. The role of government public relations includes providing clarification on incorrect or damaging information about the government, as well as conveying policies and current information to the public. This is done with the aim of strengthening the government's positive image in the eyes of the public. The presence of public relations in government agencies and institutions is very important in the context of modern society, where they are responsible for managing communication and organizational operations across various fields and locations. Nevertheless, the techniques used in government public relations practice are not much different from those used in public relations in other sectors, namely focusing on delivering information and effective communication.

## Discussion

### Analysis of First-Time Voters and Factors Influencing Voter Participation Beginner



Image. 3 Results of the Permanent Voter List by Age

Source: Instagram KPU Kudus

Insight Flayer The Permanent Voter List (DPT) is a concrete result from the Instagram source of KPU Kudus, in presenting the results of Gen Z which includes a significant number of voters at 145,140 or about 22.6% after the Millennial generation and Generation X. First-time voters fall into the Gen Z category, characterized by their unstable age and lack of voting experience, or young generation. Based on accurate data, there is a need for the KPU Kudus to enhance their outreach efforts, as the considerable number of voters requires accountability and efficient performance to facilitate outreach efforts, addressing the effectiveness of outreach in the era of digitalization, which means that the KPU also needs to reconstruct and manage outreach to convey information as maximally and inherently as possible, ensuring that the delivery of materials is distributed evenly and effectively.

Based on the concept of first-time voters in elections, they are a new group with characteristics and experiences different from previous generations. The majority of them are students, have a good economic status, and live in urban areas. They are very accustomed to technology, using various devices such as mobile phones, laptops, and other gadgets fluently. They are active on social media platforms like Twitter (Morales et al., 2024), on Facebook and LinkedIn, they tend to be open to new learning, critical, and independent. The challenges faced by young voters are very complex, ranging from political changes to global issues such as free trade and terrorism. A good understanding of their character differences and challenges is crucial to prepare smart and future-oriented young voters, especially since they will be the leaders of tomorrow. First-time voters in politics, who are using their voting

rights for the first time, have a dynamic political orientation and can be influenced by certain conditions and factors. Their presence is promising in elections as it can impact the strategic positions of candidate nominees. (Andriani, 2021).

Political parties and their candidates have begun to recognize the importance of the role of young voters in elections. Over the past two years, they have actively pursued the votes of young voters with various campaign strategies. This shows an awareness of the significance of the youth vote and efforts to improve their participation. However, special attention is still needed to enhance political understanding among young voters, who often remain undereducated in political matters. The vital role that the youth have in the context of the future of democracy is very important. They have a great responsibility to take an active part in the progress of the Indonesian nation, both as a whole and at the regional level. This involves their engagement in the political choices made directly by the Indonesian people. First-time voters must be pioneers in advocating for a healthy, fair, safe, honest, and prosperous democracy for the advancement of the Indonesian nation. The young generation must play a leading role in providing quality political education to the broader community and reject the practice of money politics that has become a habit among current legislative candidates (Eckstein et al., 2024).

Insufficient political education makes this group vulnerable to being exploited by certain interests. For example, young voters are often influenced to support one candidate pair without a deep understanding of the reasons behind their choice. This can happen through various means, including advertising wars and social media influence. (Khajehsarvi & Tangestaninejhad, 2022). There are several indications in the writing, such as a lack of understanding regarding the election process which results in first-time voters not exercising their voting rights, the vulnerability of first-time voters to be influenced by certain interests, especially from close environments like family, and a lack of interest among first-time voters to attend the explanations provided by the General Election Commission to encourage their participation. (Almuntasor et al., 2022).

Participation is an important concept, taken from the English word "participation", which refers to the active involvement of citizens in various activities. In the context of political dictionaries, participation is defined as active involvement or support for a particular activity or major plan. Political participation includes all forms of actions taken by individuals, groups, or organizations to engage in political life. Examples include participation in general elections, influencing decision-making processes, and involvement in political party activities. According to Davis, political participation encompasses mental

and emotional aspects that encourage individuals to contribute or be responsible for the goals or visions of the group they support (Setiawan & Djafar, 2023).

According to Milbrath as quoted in Sastroatmodjo, there are four factors that can influence a person's political participation, including first-time voters. First, a person's openness and sensitivity to political stimuli, whether through personal contact, involvement in organizations, or through mass media, can affect their political activity. Through active exposure to political developments via mass media, a person can have adequate information to respond to and participate in political activities. However, it is important to remember that the response to these political stimuli is also influenced by factors such as knowledge, attitudes, values, experiences, and individual personality (Antono, Budi; Solihah, 2021). Therefore, first-time voters tend to be motivated to participate in elections due to the encouragement or stimulus from mass or electronic media. According to Milbrath, the second reason related to individual social characteristics is that factors such as economic status, ethnic background, age, gender, and religious beliefs have an impact on a person's political involvement. New voters have a variety of personal social characteristics, but despite these differences, many of them recognize the importance of their political rights as citizens. They are willing to participate in the electoral process by visiting polling places in their residential areas as per the invitations they receive. (Alfatah, 2025).

When someone is in the political environment and party system of a democratic country, they tend to be actively involved because political parties strive to gain broad support and represent the interests of the people. First-time voters have a variety of social characteristics (Averus & Alfina, 2020), but most of them show awareness and concern for their political rights and their role in society. Currently, the factors influencing first-time voters are very diverse. Many legislative candidates only make promises without real action, leading to distrust among first-time voters towards the candidate leaders and representatives. In addition, the practice of political money also becomes a significant issue among first-time voters, causing the younger generation to become apathetic towards the Indonesian government system. This is due to the lack of positive role models from current leaders, who do not set a good example for the younger generation.

## **Conclusion**

From the results, the conclusion can be drawn as follows: The role of the KPU (General Elections Commission) of Kudus Regency in enhancing the political participation of first-time voters has been optimal, but in the implementation of socialization on social

media, it is not optimal because the form of socialization conducted seems traditional in delivering information. The KPU of Kudus needs to provide socialization by adapting to every age aspect, for example, delivering information to Generation Z through social media should not only be done through field socialization, but also by using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to increase participant interest in socialization. Meanwhile, the factors that influence the increase in voter participation include political party factors, political socialization with volunteers, and political awareness factors.

Next about the factors that can influence an individual's political participation, including first-time voters. Firstly, a person's openness and sensitivity to political stimuli, whether through personal contact, involvement in organizations, or through mass media, can affect their political activity. The KPU Kudus also needs to pay attention to how economic status, ethnic background, age, gender, and religious beliefs impact an individual's political engagement. In addition, many candidates for governor and regent only make promises without concrete actions, leading to a lack of trust among first-time voters towards the prospective leaders.

To advance informed voter education, it is essential to carry out regular and continuous communication activities, not just during general or local elections. This should be ingrained in the community's routine, especially among first-time voters, to actively participate in every election process. The General Election Commission should empower young people to establish communities and initiatives focused on democracy, which will help in disseminating the activities of the Commission.

This research aims to serve as a horizon for a wide segment of society, particularly for first-time voters, and can also be used as a reference for relevant authorities involved in the upcoming electoral process. The novelty of this research is about the importance of considering the adaptability of various segments among first-time voters, the need to enhance the adaptability of institutions in providing socialization to first-time voters. The researcher has presented data that is still considered insufficient, so it is hoped that this can be continued by future researchers as an active contribution to increasing active participation among first-time voters.

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