

Journal of Global Business and Management Review
e-ISSN: 2685-3426
https://journal.uib.ac.id/index.php/jgbmr/

THE INFLUENCE OF VOTER BEHAVIOR ON THE GENERAL ELECTION OF REGIONAL HEADS IN THE RIAU ISLANDS PROVINCE

Bonita Melina[1], Hepy Hefri Ariyanto[2*], Ferdinand Nainggolan[3]
[1,2,3] Master of Management, Universitas Internasional Batam, Indonesia

Article's Information

DOI:
10.37253/jgbmr.v7i2.10554

e-ISSN:
2685-3426

EDITORIAL HISTORY:
SUBMISSION: 2025-12-09
ACCEPTED: 2025-01-20

CORRESPONDENCE*:
hepy@uib.ac.id

AUTHOR'S ADDRESS:
Baloi-Sei Ladi, Jl. Gajah Mada, Tiban Indah, Kec. Sekupang, Kota Batam, Kepulauan Riau 29426

ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the factors influencing voter decision-making among first-time voters in the 2024 regional head elections in the Riau Islands Province. Employing a quantitative research design, the study utilizes survey methods through questionnaires distributed to 100 respondents selected using purposive sampling. The research investigates five key variables: Attitude Toward the Behavior, Subjective Norms, Perceived Behavioral Control, Social Media Political Marketing Activity, and Negative Political Advertising. Data collection was conducted using a Likert-scale questionnaire, and the data were analyzed using SPSS version 25. Hypothesis testing was carried out through both partial and simultaneous regression analyses. The results indicate that all five independent variables significantly affect the voting decisions of first-time voters, suggesting that individual beliefs, social expectations, perceived ease of performing the behavior, online political engagement, and exposure to negative campaigning all play substantial roles in shaping voter behavior. These findings underscore the importance of strategic communication and ethical political engagement tailored to the youth demographic. For policymakers and campaign teams, understanding these determinants can support more inclusive and effective approaches to encourage political participation among young voters in regional elections, particularly in geographically dispersed areas like the Riau Islands.

Keywords: *first-time voters, political marketing, regional elections, subjective norms, voter behavior*

INTRODUCTION

The General Election or "Pemilu" is an event held to elect individuals to fill specific political positions within Indonesian government institutions, ranging from President/Vice President (executive), representatives in the House of Representatives (DPR) and the Regional Representative Council (DPD), to local legislative bodies at provincial and regency/city levels (Prasetio et al., 2020). A fair and honest election is a fundamental pillar of democratic governance. In Indonesia, the 2019 General Election marked the first time legislative and presidential elections were organized simultaneously on a single day, following a 2013 Constitutional Court ruling a reform intended to reduce costs, improve efficiency, and enhance voter turnout (Maemunah, 2020; Syafei & Darajati, 2020). During this election on 17 April 2019, citizens cast ballots not only for President and Vice President but also for DPR, DPD, provincial councils (DPRD Provinsi), and regency/city councils (DPRD Kabupaten/Kota).

General Elections in Indonesia are conducted according to six democratic principles, Direct (*langsung*), General (*umum*), Free (*bebas*), Confidential/Secret (*rahasia*), Honest (*jujur*), and Fair (*adil*), collectively known as Luber-Jurdil. These principles are mandated by Law No. 7 of 2017 on General Elections, which explicitly requires Indonesia's elections to uphold these standards to ensure legitimacy and inclusivity (Widiastuti, 2024). The democratic system is designed to serve the people's aspirations, embodying governance by the people, for the people, and of the people enabling citizens to hold leaders accountable through free choice and civic participation.

The 2024 General Election is projected to bring significant demographic shifts, particularly due to the rise in young voters. In 2019, a considerable portion of youth abstained from voting, citing low trust in the electoral process and skepticism about whether elections could bring meaningful change (Zamzam, 2024). Under Law No. 10 of 2008, "first-time voters" are defined as those aged 17 years or older on election day or individuals who are married and have not previously exercised their voting rights. Although their lack of experience may suggest lower political literacy, these novice voters still exert influence at polling stations and are considered crucial to the substantive quality of democracy. As impressionable and politically evolving individuals, their electoral behavior can reflect broader democratic engagement and trends.

According to data from the General Elections Commission (KPU RI), the Final National Voters List (Daftar Pemilih Tetap/DPT) for the 2024 General Election comprises 204,807,222 registered voters, of which approximately 52% are considered young voters aged 17–40 years (Nugroho et al., 2024). This sizeable youth electorate is therefore viewed as a critical indicator of the election's democratic health. This demographic influence, showing the impact of young voters in electoral outcomes and stressing the need to understand their preferences across geographic regions (Prihartini & Hajarisman, 2024).

Despite numeric dominance, young voters face challenges: apathy, a lack of firm political principles, and low institutional trust factors that can drive abstention (*golput*). Although precise journal based metrics on trust levels are limited, studies like (Kusumadinata & Suryatna, 2024) highlight widespread skepticism among youth towards political institutions, which correlates with higher abstention risk. Political disengagement in this age group poses consequences such as increased susceptibility to manipulation, weakened democratic legitimacy, and

reduced citizen support for development initiatives.

Although young voters dominate the Final Voters List in the 2024 General Election, their political participation still faces various significant challenges. The younger generation often displays apathy, indifference, and a low level of trust in political institutions. This is supported by a 2021 survey conducted by Indikator Politik Indonesia, which revealed that only 32.67% of young people trust political parties. The lack of in-depth information about candidates, combined with the dominance of superficial content on social media, has resulted in young voters being insufficiently informed about their prospective leaders in a substantive way.

Moreover, the phenomenon of rational abstention has also been observed among urban university students, who perceive the democratic system as overly complex and irrelevant to their immediate welfare. A phenomenological study by (Siregar, 2024) further revealed that disillusionment with the political system, socioeconomic pressures, and weak civic education are key barriers preventing the younger generation from exercising their voting rights. In this context, young people face a critical challenge in forming a mature and participatory political attitude when choosing credible regional leaders.

The Riau Islands Province (Provinsi Kepulauan Riau), with its capital in Tanjungpinang, comprises 2 cities and 5 regencies, and is classified as one of Indonesia's archipelagic provinces. Ahead of the 2024 General Election, the province's Final Voter List (Daftar Pemilih Tetap, DPT) includes 1,500,974 registered voters, with 753,535 males and 747,439 females (Alkaff, 2024). The General Elections Commission (KPU RI) officially confirmed 204,807,222 voters nationwide by mid-2023. In this context, the youth electorate in Riau Islands constituting a substantial demographic portion makes it essential to conduct targeted research assessing the influence of voting behavior among young voters in this region. Existing research on electoral participation in the Riau Islands remains limited. A report by RSIS highlights that the youth/millennial cohort (born 1981–1996) makes up 38% of local voters. Given the potential for high rates of voter abstention (*golput*) and low institutional trust among younger voters, as highlighted in national youth surveys, more localized studies are critical. While national surveys indicate only 32.67% of youth trust political parties, regional analyses in provinces like Riau Islands remain sparse (Alkaff, 2024).

Furthermore, multiple studies underscore the essential role of social media in shaping political behavior, especially among first-time and young voters who rely heavily on digital platforms for information prior to elections. For example, (Angela & Nisaa, 2025) show that 80% of Gen Z first-time voters rely on social media such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter for political information. Other research also emphasizes social media as a critical domain for political education and engagement among young voters nationwide (M et al., 2023). This study thus aims to examine voter behavior in the 2024 regional election specifically in the Riau Islands Province, focusing on youth electoral engagement, motivations behind participation or abstention, and the mediating role of social media campaigns. Previous literature such as the (Candraningrum et al., 2025) study largely considers national trends across age groups acknowledging that younger voters often trend progressive and politically engaged but lacks a localized archipelagic context. In contrast, this study centers on young first-time voters in Riau Islands, integrating both empirical survey data and

media analysis to better understand regional electoral dynamics.

This study differs from previous research in several key aspects. While many earlier studies have explored voter behavior in general or focused on national political trends, this study places a specific emphasis on first time young voters within the local context of the Riau Islands Province an area with unique demographic and geographic characteristics. Furthermore, this research integrates an analysis of the influence of social media, a platform that has become central to youth political engagement, yet remains underexplored in local electoral studies. Unlike the work of (Siregar, 2024), which primarily examine national patterns of political apathy and motivation, this study contributes localized insights into the challenges, preferences, and engagement patterns of young voters at the regional level. As such, it offers a novel contribution to the literature on youth political participation in Indonesia and informs future electoral strategies targeting this critical demographic.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political behavior encompasses not only individuals' internal responses such as thoughts, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs but also their visible actions, including voting, protesting, advocating, caucusing, and campaigning (Mustofa et al., 2024), that emphasize a sociological approach in which political participation can spread socially, likened to an infectious process: individual political expressions influence their peers through social contact, eventually leading to collective political behavior.

Behavior can be understood as human thoughts or actions related to the process of governance. In this context, political behavior includes both internal responses (such as thoughts, perceptions, attitudes, and beliefs) and visible actions (such as voting, protesting, lobbying, caucusing, and campaigning). Therefore, behavior is not only defined as abstract thoughts or responses but also as the actions carried out by certain political actors. In other words, an individual's political behavior is influenced by what is collectively discussed, eventually leading to shared choices.

First-time voters in Indonesia are divided into three categories. The first category is rational voters, who choose a party based on careful evaluation and thorough analysis. The second category is critical emotional voters, who are idealistic and uncompromising. The third category is first-time voters, who are voting for the first time because they have just reached voting age. According to Article 1, Paragraph (22) of Law No. 10 of 2008, voters are Indonesian citizens who have reached the age of 17 years or older, whether married or unmarried. Furthermore, Article 19, Paragraphs (1 and 2) of Law No. 10 of 2008 explains that those eligible to vote are Indonesian citizens registered by election organizers in the voter list and who have reached the age of 17 on the day of voting. Therefore, it can be concluded that first-time voters are citizens registered by election organizers in the voter list who are participating in an election (casting their vote) for the first time since elections have been held in Indonesia, typically aged between 17 and 21 years. This group of first-time voters usually consists of university students and young workers.

First-time voters in a democracy (regional elections) have generally been seen as objects within political activities, meaning they still require guidance and development to grow their potential and abilities to a more optimal level so that they can actively participate in politics. This group of first-time voters usually consists of university students and young workers. Therefore, it can be concluded

that the characteristics of first-time voters are: Indonesian citizens who, on the day of voting, are 17 years old or older; are participating in regional elections (casting their vote) for the first time since elections have been held in Indonesia; fall within the age range of 17 to 21 years; and have the right to vote in the 2015 regional elections.

Voter behavior refers to a person's actions in choosing the option they feel is most preferred or suitable. There are certain areas or regions that consist of community groups formed based on kinship systems and social bonds (*paguyuban*) rooted in lineage, where community leaders often come from families or relatives descended from individuals regarded as prominent either economically or socially, or respected because of their leadership. As a result, community members often rely on and align their attitudes with these leaders.

This attitude reflects the dominance of these leaders in shaping the attitudes, behaviors, and orientations of the people who depend on them. The tendency for changes in attitudes and behaviors within social, economic, political, or cultural life is limited by the ideas or guidance provided by these community leaders, who help modify established social and cultural systems in line with the conditions and dynamics of the community.

This factor poses a challenge for candidates or legislative hopefuls trying to penetrate these communities for the purpose of socialization or simply to build relationships. Even if a candidate succeeds in entering the community, their acceptance usually extends only to social etiquette such as being welcomed as a guest without the community necessarily supporting or following the candidate's wishes.

Heterogeneous communities tend to be more rational, pragmatic, and less easily influenced. They sometimes exhibit ambivalent attitudes and are more material-oriented. In such communities, the decision to vote or abstain in the political process largely depends on the individual's own attitudes and views, making their political awareness and participation determined by personal convictions rather than influence from leaders or primordial ties

Studies of first-time voters in Indonesia categorize them into three groups based on their voting motivations: (1) rational voters, who choose parties based on analytical evaluation; (2) critical emotional voters, who are idealistic and uncompromising; and (3) novice voters, typically aged 17–21, voting for the first time after reaching voting age (Hakim & Hakim, 2024). In Indonesia, Law No. 10 of 2008 defines voters as Indonesian citizens aged 17 or older married or unmarried who are registered on election day. These first time voters often university students or young professionals cast their vote for the first time in regional elections.

(Mustofa et al., 2024) argue that these first-time voters often function as objects rather than actors in the political process: they require guidance to develop awareness and capacity before becoming fully active participants in politics. Voter behavior in regions with strong kinship bonds such as communities tends to follow community leaders who influence decision making (Satriadi et al., 2020). Consequently, candidate penetration into such communities often results in superficial social acceptance such as courteous receptions without guaranteed electoral support. In contrast, heterogeneous communities are more rational and pragmatic; their voting behavior depends more on personal conviction than social influence or primodial loyalties.

1. The Influence of Attitudes on Voter Decisions

   Attitude represents a psychological disposition shaped by

experience, which influences responses toward objects or actions either directly or indirectly. According to (Notoatmodjo, 2019), attitude is a prepared mental state organized through experience that predisposes individuals to respond in a consistent way. Attitude as an expression of one's feelings reflecting liking or disliking toward an attitude object. Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H_1: Voter attitude has a significant relationship with voter decision in the Regional Head Election in the Riau Islands Province.

2. The Influence of Subjective Norms on Voter Decisions

Subjective norms refer to individuals' perceptions of social pressure or expectations from important others, which influence their behavioral intentions (Ajzen, 1991). (Becker, 2022) analyzed mechanisms driving electoral participation using Weber's typology goal rational, habitual, and normative action and found that normative motivations significantly influence whether individuals vote.

H_2: Subjective norms have a significant relationship with voter decisions in the Regional Head Elections in the Riau Islands Province.

3. The Influence of Perceived Behavioral Control on Voter Decisions

(Ajzen, 1991) introduced the concept of perceived behavioral control (PBC) as part of the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), positing that PBC influences both behavioral intention and actual behavior. Some research reported that first time voters who trusted the political system felt more capable of voting resulting in stronger voting intentions (Izzati et al., 2024).

H_3: Perceived behavioral control has a significant relationship with voter decisions in the Regional Head Election in the Riau Islands Province.

4. The Influence of Social Media Political Marketing Activity on Voter Decisions

Social media platforms support two-way interaction, enabling both identity building and marketing. Political marketing applies strategic marketing principles to shape candidate image and public opinion. (Tanusondjaja et al., 2023), examining political ads on Snapchat during the U.S. 2020 presidential election, found that broader-targeting campaigns with longer ad schedules produced more impressions and better cost efficiency than microtargeted messaging. In Indonesia, (Ramli et al., 2021) surveyed voters in West Java and found that effective social media marketing significantly enhanced political engagement and voting intention emphasizing consistent candidate positioning via social platforms.

H_4: Social media political marketing activity has a significant relationship with voter decision in the regional head elections in the Riau Islands Province.

5. The Influence of Negative Marketing on Voter Decisions

Negative political advertising may not reliably suppress voter turnout; its effects depend heavily on the credibility of the source and the level of viewer engagement (Yoon et al., 2007). A meta-analysis by (Lau et al., 2014) concluded that negative ads are no more effective than positive ones and often do not damage democratic processes as commonly believed. However, in European contexts, (Walter & Eijk, 2019) found potential backlash effects in multi-

party systems, sometimes boosting second choice preferences after negative campaigning.

H_5: Negative advertising has a significant relationship with voter decision in the Regional Head Election in the Riau Islands Province.

METHODS

This research is quantitative and was conducted in the Riau Islands Province. The population of this study includes all eligible voters participating in the regional general elections in the Riau Islands Province. Previous studies have revealed that older individuals tend to have higher voter participation rates compared to younger voters (Kulachai et al., 2025). Therefore, this study focuses specifically on first-time voters in the 2024 regional general elections in the Riau Islands Province. This focus is based on the fact that the percentage of first time voters in Indonesia is larger than that of older voters.

The population of this study comprises all residents in the Riau Islands Province, totaling 2,178,810 people. The sampling technique used in this study applies the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10%. The sampling method is purposive sampling, targeting first-time voters, with a total of 100 respondents. The research was conducted in 2025. The instrument used for data collection was a questionnaire. The distributed questionnaire consists of survey questions that can only be answered using weighted scores on a Likert scale.

The variables used in this study consist of five independent variables and one dependent variable which are presented in the following table:

Table 1. Research Variables

Variable	Symbols
Attitude Toward the Behavior	X_1
Subjective Norm	X_2
Perceived Behavioral Control	X_3
Social Media Political Marketing Activity	X_4
Negative Marketing	X_5
Voter Decision	Y

Furthermore, the research instrument was tested for validity and reliability. The validity test was conducted using the product-moment correlation, while the reliability test employed the Cronbach's Alpha value. An instrument is considered reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha value is ≥ 0.7. Based on the results of the instrument testing, the instrument was found to be valid and reliable, and therefore suitable for use as a data collection tool.

Before hypothesis testing is carried out, the data will first be analyzed using classical assumption tests to ensure the feasibility of the regression model used. The classical assumption tests include the normality test to determine whether the data are normally distributed, the multicollinearity test to identify any high correlation between independent variables, and the heteroscedasticity test to examine whether there is any inconsistency in the residual variance.

The results of normality testing with Kolmogorov Smirnov in this study are presented in the following table:

Table 2. Normality Test Results
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

	Unstandardized Residual
N	100
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.200[c,d]

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the value of Sig. 0.200 > 0.05. This means that the research data is distributed normally. Then the results of the multicollinearity test are as follows:

Table 3. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
X_1	0,981	1,019

X_2	0,976	1,024
X_3	0,983	1,017
X_4	0,984	1,016
X_5	0,985	1,015

The results of the multicollinearity test showed that all independent variables had a tolerance value of > 0.10 and a VIF of < 10.00 so that it can be concluded that multicollinearity did not occur between variables.

Furthermore, the results of the heteroscedasticity test are presented in the following figure:

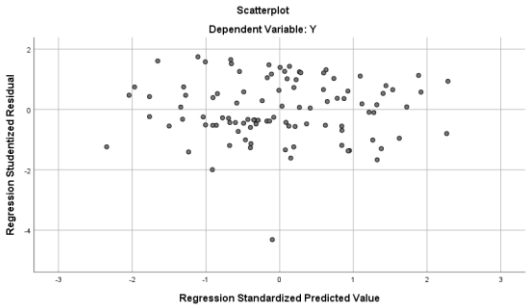

Figure 1. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

It can be observed in Figure 1 that the data is distributed in all directions, meaning that it does not show a specific pattern or trend. Therefore, it can be concluded that the regression model does not show symptoms of heteroscedasticity. Based on the test results, it is said that it meets the requirements of classical assumptions so that regression testing can be continued.

To measure the strength of the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is used. The R^2 value indicates how much of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. These tests use a significance level of 0.05 or 5%, which is the standard in social research. The higher the R^2 value, the greater the contribution of the independent variables to the model. In addition, the F-test is used to determine whether the regression model as a whole is statistically significant. The model is considered significant if the significance value (Sig.) in the F-test is less than 0.05.

RESULTS

Based on the data analysis results of the conducted research, it is known that the tests performed in this study include partial and simultaneous testing, as well as the coefficient of determination, which illustrates the percentage of influence on voter decisions in the regional elections of the Riau Islands Province.

1. Partial Hypothesis Testing

Table 4. Partial Hypothesis Testing

Model	t	Sig.
X_1	5,860	0,000
X_2	2,222	0,029
X_3	2,685	0,009
X_4	3,219	0,002
X_5	5,709	0,000

Based on the research data mentioned above, the partial influence (t-test) in this study can be explained as follows:

a. Attitude Toward the Behavior has a t-count value of 5.860, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.983, so t-count > t-table, and the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that Attitude Toward the Behavior has a significant effect on Voter Decision in the Regional Election of the Riau Islands Province.
b. Subjective Norm has a t-count value of 2.222, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.983, so t-count > t-table, and the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that Subjective Norm has a significant effect on Voter Decision in the Regional Election of the Riau Islands Province.

c. Perceived Behavioral Control has a t-count value of 2.685, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.983, so t-count > t-table (not smaller), and the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05 (not greater). Therefore, it can be concluded that Perceived Behavioral Control has a significant effect on Voter Decision in the Regional Election of the Riau Islands Province.
d. Social Media Political Marketing Activity has a t-count value of 3.219, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.983, so t-count > t-table, and the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that Social Media Political Marketing Activity has a significant effect on Voter Decision in the Regional Election of the Riau Islands Province.
e. Negative Marketing has a t-count value of 5.709, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.983, so t-count > t-table, and the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that Negative Marketing has a significant effect on Voter Decision in the Regional Election of the Riau Islands Province.

2. Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing

Table 5. Simultaneous Hypothesis Testing

Model	F	Sig.
Regression	175.993	0,000[b]
Residual		

Based on the research data presented above, the partial influence (t-test) in this study can be explained as follows: the calculated F-value is 175.993, which is greater than the F-table value of 2.10, and the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables Political Negative Advertising, Perceived Behavioral Control, Social Media Political Marketing Activity, Subjective Norm, and Attitude Toward the Behavior have a significant effect on Voter Decision in the Regional Election of the Riau Islands Province.

3. Coefficient of Determination Test

Table 6. Coefficient of Determination Test

Model	R	R^2	Adj. R^2	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,951	0,903	0,898	178,375

Based on the research results, the R square value indicates the percentage of the overall influence of the independent variables (X) on the dependent variable (Y). The adjusted R square value is 0.898, which means that Political Negative Advertising, Perceived Behavioral Control, Social Media Political Marketing Activity, Subjective Norm, and Attitude Toward the Behavior collectively influence Voter Decision in the Regional Election of the Riau Islands Province by 89.8%.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research conducted on the influence of Attitude Toward the Behavior, Subjective Norm, Perceived Behavioral Control, Social Media Political Marketing Activity, and Negative Political Advertising on Voter Decision in the Regional Head Election in the Riau Islands Province, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Attitude Toward the Behavior

The analysis revealed that attitude toward voting had a highly significant effect on voter decisions (t=5.860, p<0.001). In practice,

young voters in Riau Islands tend to report that they participate when they perceive voting as meaningful for their future and the region's progress. They see civic engagement as a form of political responsibility and empowerment. This aligns with TPB theory and is consistent with previous findings that positive political attitudes drive participation (Zahra et al., 2022).

2. Subjective Norm

With a t-value of 2.222 ($p< 0.001$), the effect of subjective norms remains significant. In the field, many respondents indicated that family members, peers, and community or religious leaders encourage them to vote, making social expectations a powerful predictor. This is especially notable in Riau Island's communal culture, where social alignment and group norms strongly shape behavior. Similar patterns were observed among university-age youth in North Sulawesi, who considered peer and social identity crucial in their candidate choice (Pradipta & Suprapti, 2013).

3. Perceived Behavioral Control

Perceived behavioral control also showed significant influence ($t=2.685$; $p<0.001$). Actual conditions revealed that while some young respondents felt intimidated by procedural ambiguity, many others felt confident thanks to increased voter education and social media outreach. This suggests a transitional dynamic where information campaigns (e.g. KPU simulations and online guides) reinforce political self-efficacy, a pattern supported by (Zahra et al., 2022).

4. Social Media Political Marketing Activity

Political messaging via social media significantly influenced voting decisions ($t=3.219$; $p<0.001$). In actual survey responses, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube were frequently cited particularly when young influencers or short-format content clarified candidate positions or emphasized local issues. This aligns with broader findings that Gen Z in Indonesia overwhelmingly relies on digital platforms for political cues. Further, studies by (Ramli et al., 2021) highlight how social media activity shapes offline political involvement, especially among youth.

5. Negative Political Advertising

Negative political marketing had one of the strongest effects ($t=5.709$; $p<0.001$). In context, many respondents admitted that exposure to negative content such as scandal coverage or criticisms of candidates often changed their candidate preferences, especially if they had not formed a clear opinion beforehand. This reflects literature showing that targeted negative political messages can be persistently influential among undecided or low information voters (Kim & McKinnon, 2022).

The overall model was strongly significant ($F = 175.993$; $p < 0.001$), and the adjusted $R^2=0.898$ indicates that 89.8% of the variance in voter decisions can be explained by these five factors. This exemplary model fit demonstrates that psychological attitudes, social influences, perceived political efficacy, digital exposure, and campaign tone collectively shape electoral decisions toward young voters in Riau Islands.

In the context of the Riau Islands Province, first-time voters exhibit a generally positive tendency toward political participation, which is shaped by several key factors. Their attitude toward voting behavior is relatively optimistic, as most young voters believe that their vote matters for the future of the region,

especially since they are more drawn to tangible issues such as education, internet access, and employment opportunities.

In terms of subjective norms, voting decisions are significantly influenced by parents, school communities, religious leaders, and peer groups, indicating that social values within their surroundings remain influential in shaping the political choices of the younger generation. However, geographic barriers such as the province's island-based structure, limited transportation access, and uneven distribution of polling stations reduce young voters' perceived behavioral control, particularly for those living in remote or outer islands.

On the other hand, political campaign activities through social media have a significant impact, as young voters are highly active on platforms like TikTok and Instagram; engaging, visual, and interactive content is far more effective than traditional campaigns. Nevertheless, the rise of negative political marketing is also a concern; although it can shape perceptions of political rivals, such strategies often foster skepticism or even apathy among young voters, especially when perceived as unethical or lacking factual basis. Therefore, political campaigns and civic education efforts that consider local values, geographic accessibility, and ethical communication are crucial to improving the quality of youth political participation in this archipelagic region.

This study concludes that attitude toward the behavior, subjective norms, perceived behavioral control, political marketing activities through social media, and negative political marketing all have a significant influence on voter decisions among first-time voters in the Riau Islands Province. The most dominant factor is attitude toward the behavior, indicating that a favorable personal evaluation of voting behavior is key in motivating participation. The findings underscore the importance of holistic and ethical political education and campaign strategies that align with youth values, social environments, and digital engagement patterns. Policymakers, election organizers, and candidates must ensure inclusive access, credible information dissemination, and constructive political discourse to maximize youth participation and enhance the democratic process in the region.

LIMITATIONS

This study has several limitations that need to be acknowledged. First, the focus of the study is limited to first-time voters in the Riau Islands Province, so the findings cannot be generalized to other regions or demographic groups in Indonesia. Second, the data collection method, which uses a Likert scale questionnaire, may introduce perceptual bias among respondents, particularly regarding the sensitivity of political issues and electoral preferences. Third, the use of a quantitative approach without incorporating qualitative data limits a deeper understanding of the motivations behind voting behavior and the social dynamics influencing voter decisions. Additionally, this study did not control for other intervening variables such as political literacy, family influence, and previous levels of political participation, which are likely to also influence voting decisions. These limitations serve as a basis for improvements in future research to achieve more comprehensive and accurate results.

REFERENCE

Ajzen, I. (1991). The Theory of Planned Behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Humann Decision Processes*, *50*(2), 179–211. https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-

5978(91)90020-T

Alkaff, S. H. B. O. (2024). *Political Dynamics and Economic Prospects in the 2024 Riau Islands Election* (093/2024). https://rsis.edu.sg/rsis-publication/idss/ip24093-political-dynamics-and-economic-prospects-in-the-2024-riau-islands-election/?utm_source

Angela, S., & Nisaa, F. (2025). First-Time Voters and Social Media: Exploring the Factors Shaping Political Preferences. *Nakhoda: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan*, *24*(1). https://nakhoda.ejournal.unri.ac.id/index.php/njip/article/view/791

Becker, R. (2022). Voting Behavior as Social Action: Habits, Norms, Values, and Rationality in Electoral Participation. *Rationality and Society*, *35*(1), 81–109. https://doi.org/10.1177/10434631221142733

Candraningrum, D. A., Yoedtadi, M. G., Djunaidi, A., Setyanto, Y., Utami, L. S. S., Hapsari, Z. R., & Utami, B. (2025). Youth Political and Social Media Engagement for 2024 Indonesian General Elections. *Calathu: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, *7*(1), 36–44. https://doi.org/10.37715/calathu.v7i1.5316

Hakim, L., & Hakim, I. (2024). Preferences and Behaviour of Gen Z Voters in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. *Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora)*, *12*(3), 796–807. https://doi.org/10.24269/ars.v12i3.11274

Izzati, R. Al, Dartanto, T., Suryadarma, D., & Suryahadi, A. (2024). Direct Elections and Trust in State and Political Institutions: Evidence from Indonesia's Election Reform. *European Journal of Political Economy*, *85*, 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2024.102572

Kim, K. E., & McKinnon, L. M. (2022). An Experimental Study of the Effectiveness of Negative Campaign Messaging: Will Outcome Framing Work for Partisans in Polarised Politics? *Journal of Creative Comunications*, *18*(1), 26–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/09732586221128747

Kulachai, W., Lerdtomornsakul, U., & Homyamyen, P. (2025). Factors Influencing Voting Decision: A Comprehensive Literature Review. *Social Sciences*, *14*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.3390/socsci12090469

Kusumadinata, A. A., & Suryatna, U. (2024). Prefalensi Pemilih Muda dalam Partisipasi Politik di Tahun 2024. *Karimah Tauhid*, *3*(2), 1456–1465. https://doi.org/10.30997/karimahtauhid.v3i2.11772

Lau, R. R., Sigelman, L., Heldman, C., & Babbitt, P. (2014). The Effects of Negative Political Advertisements: A Meta-Analytic Assessment. *American Political Science Review*, *93*(4), 851–875. https://doi.org/10.2307/2586117

M, D. S., Zulfadli, & Al-Zuhri. (2023). The Role of Social Media in Increasing Political Literacy of Beginning Voters. *Malikussaleh Social and Political Reviews*, *4*(2), 77–81. https://doi.org/10.29103/mspr.v4i2.11948

Maemunah. (2020). Voting Results Concurrent Election in Indonesia in 2019. *CIVICUS: Pendidikan-Penelitian-Pengabdian Pendidikan Pancasila &*

Kewarganegaraan, *8*(2), 46–50. https://doi.org/10.31764/civicus.v8i2.2860

Mustofa, M. U., Utama, R. S., & Andalus, M. K. (2024). E-Democracy in Indonesia: Use of Socia Media and Challenges in Encouraging Youth Political Participation. *Jurnal Wacana Politik*, *9*(1), 102–111. https://doi.org/10.24198/jwp.v9i1.52775

Notoatmodjo, S. (2019). *Health Promotion and Behavioral Science*. Rineka Cipta.

Nugroho, A. S., Ramadhan, K. M. P., & Pasaribu, D. (2024). Pengaruh Faktor Geografis dalam Preferensi Pemilih Muda pada Pemilihan Presiden 2024. *Jurnal Spatial Wahana Komunikasi Dan Informasi Geografi*, *24*(1), 5–65. https://doi.org/10.21009/spatial.241.006

Pradipta, I. B. G. S., & Suprapti, N. W. S. (2013). Pengaruh Sikap dan Norma Subyektif terhadap Niat Calon Pemilih di Kota Denpasar untuk Memilih Partai Demokrat dalam Pemilu Legislatif tahun 2024. *Matrik: Jurnal Manajemen, Strategi Bisnis, Dan Kewirausahaan*, *7*(1). https://ojs.unud.ac.id/index.php/jmbk/article/view/6068

Prasetio, Karjoko, L., Wardhani, L. T. A. L., Marwiyah, S., Handayani, I. G. A. K. R., Jaelani, A. K., Tahir, A., & Al-Fatih, S. (2020). Problems of Democratic and Dignified Election in Indonesian Simultaneously Electoral Era. *International Journal of Criminology and Sociology*, *9*, 1701–1708. https://doi.org/10.6000/1929-4409.2020.09.193

Prihartini, W. P., & Hajarisman, N. (2024). Pengelompokan Kabupaten/Kota Berdasarkan Generasi Umur pada Daftar Pemilih Tetap (DPT) Pemilihan Umum Tahun 2024 Provinsi Jawa Barat Menggunakan Analisis Korespondensi. *Bandung Conference Series: Statistics*, *4*(2), 716–724. https://doi.org/10.29313/bcss.v4i2.15046

Ramli, Y., Shiratina, A., Imaningsih, E. S., & Soelton, M. (2021). The Implication of Digital Marketing that Influence the Political Decision to Vote. *Ilomata International Journal of Management*, *2*(4), 282–292. https://doi.org/10.52728/ijjm.v2i4.275

Satriadi, Y., Yusuf, S., & Ali, R. (2020). Understanding the Voter's Behavior as an Effort to Increase Publics' Political Participation in Indonesia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, *11*(2), 960–972. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v11-i2/9192

Siregar, I. (2024). Phenomenological Review of the Issue of Political Apathy of Indonesia's Young Generation. *Phenomenological Review of the Issue of Political Apathy of Indonesia's Young Generation*, *4*(2), 135–147. https://doi.org/10.33258/polit.v4i2.1159

Syafei, M., & Darajati, M. R. (2020). Design of General Election in Indonesia. *Law Reform*, *16*(1), 97–111. https://doi.org/10.14710/lr.v16i1.30308

Tanusondjaja, A., Michelon, A., Hartnett, N., & Stocchi, L. (2023). Reaching Voters on Social Media: Planning Political Advertising on Snapchat. *International Journal of Market*

Research, *65*(5), 566–580. https://doi.org/10.1177/14707853231175085

Walter, A. S., & Eijk, C. van der. (2019). Unintended Consequences of Negative Campaigning: Backlash and Second-Preference Boost Effects in A Multi-Party Context. *The British Journal of Poliics and International Relations*, *21*(3), 612–629. https://doi.org/10.1177/1369148119842038

Widiastuti, W. (2024). Uninformed Choice: Exploring Knowledge Gaps Among First-Time Voters in The 2024 Legislative Elections. *ICOMMEDIG: International Conference on Communication and Media Digital*, *1*(1), 217–223. https://journal.uir.ac.id/index.php/icommedig/article/view/19355

Yoon, K., Pinkleton, B. E., & Ko, W. (2007). Effects of Negative Political Advertising on Voting Intention: An Exploration of the Roles of Involvement and Source Credibility in the Development of Voter Cynicism. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, *11*(2), 95–112. https://doi.org/10.1080/13527260420000315423

Zahra, A., Munandar, J. M., & Sarma, M. (2022). Factors Affecting the Decision Using Theory of Planned Behavior (Case Study: Election of the 2019 President). *Jurnal Indonesia Sosial Sains*, *3*(8), 1136–1148. https://doi.org/10.36418/jiss.v3i8.659

Zamzam, E. M. (2024). Analysis of Voting Behavior in the Young Generation in the 2024 General Election. *International Journal of Research Publication and Reviews*, *5*(6), 85–89. https://ijrpr.com/uploads/V5ISSUE6/IJRPR29611.pdf