# The Relationship between Political Image and Voting Behavior in First-time Voters: Demographics of Generation Z Voters in the 2024 Election in Indonesia

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| ABSTRACT | Published Online: June 01 2024 |
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**Purpose:** This research aims to determine the relationship between voting behavior and political image as well as the demographic characteristics of the voting behavior tendencies of Generation Z in the 2024 Election in Indonesia.

**Methods:** Data collection uses a questionnaire that has good validity and reliability, the questionnaire contains a measurement scale for voting behavior and political image. The measurement of voting behavior variables uses a scale that includes aspects of knowledge, attitudes and actions. Meanwhile, the measurement of the political image variable uses a scale that includes aspects of competence, benevolence, integrity, fairness and reliability. Respondents are given alternative answers to choose one of the four answers provided starting from the options Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Scoring for each answer choice for each variable is 1-4. Apart from that, the questionnaire also contains descriptive questions regarding respondents' voting tendencies. The number of samples that met the criteria for first-time voter respondents was 453 respondents taken using a purposive sampling technique. The data analysis technique uses the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test (r) which aims to determine the level of closeness of the relationship between variables which is expressed by the correlation coefficient (r).

**Results:** The research results show a significant positive correlation between political image and voting behavior. The findings also show that the categorization of respondents' political image is medium and the categorization of voting behavior is in the high category. The majority of respondents chose candidates based on their track record, ethnicity and religion, having a nationalist and religious image, and looking cool and trendy.

**Conclusion:** The political image and voting behavior of Generation Z can be concluded to be correlated with each other. This research also shows how the candidate's political image is desired by first-time voters.

**KEYWORDS:** Political Image, Voting Behavior, First-time Voters, Generation Z, Election

## I. INTRODUCTION

Political behavior is a form of behavior in general, because besides political behavior there are also other

behaviors. According to Surbakti (2010) political behavior can be formulated as activities related to the process of making and implementing political decisions, so it can be said that political behavior is behavior that concerns political issues (Surbakti, 2010). Political behavior carried out by individuals as voters during elections can be said to be voting behavior. Voting behavior according to Surbakti (2010) is the activity of voting by individuals which is closely related to decision making to vote or not to vote (to vote or not over) in elections, so voters will choose or support certain candidates, so in other words people's voting behavior manifested in the

form of political participation to vote for candidates during elections.

Based on data from the General Election Commission of Indonesia (KPU), the number of voters in the 2024 elections in Indonesia is dominated by the younger generation, namely the millennial generation and generation Z, namely a total of almost 113 million voters out of more than 204 million voters, where the number of generation Z has almost reached 60 million people. (Muhamad, 2023), with that number, Generation Z is the largest group of voters who will dominate the 2024 elections in Indonesia and most of them are first-time voters.

Generation Z is a generation of digital natives, where this generation is so attached to the use of technology such as computers and the internet, it seems like this has been flowing within them since birth (Prensky, 2001). This generation has the characteristic of wanting to be connected to the internet at all times. This generation uses technology more in their life activities, Generation Z can even be said to live in a digital world and become a true digital society. Based on the 2020 BPS population survey, the current number of Generation Z has reached 74.93 million people, followed by millennials at 69.38 million people (Media Indonesia, 2021).

First-time voters in this study are generally Generation Z with an age range of 17-21 years, where this age is included in the youth category (Santrock, 2007). Adolescence is a vulnerable period for individuals experiencing psychological dynamics and emotional fluctuations (Santrock, 2007). Santrock (2007) explains that adolescence is the age at which individuals integrate into adult society. Children no longer feel below the level of older people but are at the same level, at least in matters of rights, including political rights. Fensterheim and Baer (2005) say that adolescence is a phase of searching for self-identity and has the desire to know many kinds of things and wants to have the freedom to decide what to do, including political matters.

Based on the numbers, Generation Z currently reaches 74.93 million people (Media Indonesia, 2021), this research considers that first-time voters are important in determining the results of the 2024 elections. On the other hand, first-time voters who fall into the teenage category tend to have psychological dynamics. who are not yet as stable as adults, apart from that, novice voters tend not to be very aware of the role and power they have in determining the direction of the nation and state represented by their votes (Carlos, 2004), so that many politicians and those who take advantage of this group, the unstable character of teenagers emotionally and can be easily influenced, therefore it is not uncommon for political candidates to take advantage of this opportunity to mobilize first-time voters.

In an effort to build people's interest in voting, political candidates are required to reflect the best quality of work, so that this can shape perspectives in people's minds and create a good political image among voters. If candidates

continue to develop and display a positive side, they will form a good political image in the eyes of voters, so that voters' sympathy and votes will be easier to achieve. On the other hand, if the candidate looks bad, the political image in the eyes of voters will also become negative, making it more difficult to get voters' votes.

Based on Newman and Sheeth's (1985) approach, the image of a political candidate in the eyes of voters is very important. This factor is commonly referred to as political image. Political image is an assessment of a candidate's character based on the candidate's personal traits that are considered important which are formed from the results of voter perceptions (Nursal, 2004).

Based on a national survey conducted by the Poltracking Indonesia survey institute in December 2018, it was found that party image was at the top of the factors that caused political parties to be successful in elections. Party image obtained the highest percentage as a factor that influences the success of political parties, followed by the performance of political parties and political figures in second and third place (Poltracking Indonesia, 2013), in other words it can be said that the image of candidates and parties is the main factor for selection which is the result of voter perception. Therefore, constructing a positive image among first-time voters towards political candidates is one way that can be used to build a good political image, this is often also known as imaging.

The level of popularity and political image possessed by candidates is influenced by many factors, including their respective track records, reports in mass media and social media, as well as opinions developing in society. According to the Charta Politika survey, the level of public recognition of Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto is very high, reaching 94 percent and above (Ristianto & Gatra, 2019). Based on these data, the political image of presidential and vice-presidential candidates has an influence on people's voting behavior in determining which candidate to choose.

This phenomenon was seen in the 2014 Election and 2019 Election in Indonesia where there was a shift in votes from the government party to the opposition party which shows how much political image can influence voting behavior, this makes the performance of political parties along with the issue of political figures important (Klimek, Diakonova, Eguíluz, Miguel, & Thurner, 2016). In the 2014 elections, people's political choices shifted to opposition parties in the previous government era which were considered to provide new hope which made Joko Widodo and PDI-P as the proponents to win the 2014-2019 elections.

The voting behavior of first-time voters is considered to be important because of the role of first-time voters as the next generation in the democratic process in the future. Apart from that, new voters also have the potential to increase the level of election legitimacy. Therefore, it is interesting to examine further the voting behavior tendencies of first-time

voters, who in fact are Generation Z in the 2024 elections in Indonesia, where this generation is very attached to the use of technology to obtain information, including political information.

Based on the description that has been presented, this research aims to determine the relationship between voting behavior and political image as well as the demographic characteristics of the tendency for voting behavior for first-time in Generation Z.

## II. METHOD

This research uses a questionnaire that has good validity and reliability. The questionnaire contains a measurement scale for voting behavior and political image. The measurement of voting behavior variables uses a scale developed by researchers based on aspects of voting behavior, namely knowledge, attitudes and actions as proposed by Bloom (1908) (in Notoatmodjo, 2007). The measurement of the political image variable uses a scale developed by researchers based on aspects of competence, virtue, integrity, justice, reliability from Mayer and Davis (1999) which was then used as a basis for researchers to construct a measuring instrument for the political image variable. The measurement scale for all indicators in each Likert Scale variable (scale 1 to 4). Respondents are given alternative answers to choose one of the four answers provided starting from the options Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree. Apart from that, the questionnaire also contains descriptive questions regarding respondents' voting tendencies.

The total number of respondents who filled out the questionnaire was 649 respondents taken using purposive sampling technique. The researcher then filtered the respondents so that the data to be processed was in accordance with the respondent criteria that had been determined by the researcher. The number of samples that meet the criteria for first-time voter respondents is 453 respondents.

Reliability testing in this research uses an internal consistency approach using Cronbach's alpha variance analysis with a minimum correlation value of 0.7. The reliability coefficient for the voting behavior scale is 0.766, and the political image scale is 0.835. Data analysis techniques obtained from respondents were analyzed quantitatively using a correlation test to determine the relationship between voting behavior variables and political image using SPSS ver.24. The correlation coefficient is used to determine the degree of relationship between variables. This research uses the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test (r) which aims to determine the level of closeness of the relationship between variables which is expressed by the correlation coefficient (r).

## III. RESULTS

### A. Respondent Descriptive Data

This research uses a questionnaire containing a scale to measure voting behavior variables and political image. Apart from that, the questionnaire also contains descriptive questions related to respondents' voting tendencies. The number of samples that meet the criteria for first-time voter respondents is 453 respondents. Based on the results of the data processing, the researcher will graphically display some of the respondent description data.

**Table 1. Gender**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Man | 199 | 44% |
| 2 | Woman | 254 | 56% |
| **Total** | | **453** | **100%** |

Based on the results of descriptive data processing in Table 1, it can be seen that 44% of the respondents were male and 56% of the respondents were female.

**Table 2. Interested in Politics**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Interested | 250 | 55% |
| 2 | Not interested | 203 | 45% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 2, it shows how interested respondents are in the world of politics. As many as 55% of respondents said they were interested in the world of politics, while the remaining 45% said they were not interested in the world of politics.

**Table 3. Member of a Political Party**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Once | 14 | 3% |
| 2 | Never | 439 | 97% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 3, it shows whether the respondent has ever joined or been a member of a political party or not. As many as 97% of respondents said they had never joined a political party, while the remaining 3% said they had never joined a political party.

**Table 4. Participating in Political Campaign Activities**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Once | 50 | 11% |
| 2 | Never | 403 | 89% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 4, it shows whether or not the respondent has participated in the campaign activities of a political figure or political party. As many as 89% of respondents said they had never participated in the campaign activities of a political figure or political party, while the remaining 11% said they had never participated in the campaign activities of a political figure or political party.

**Table 5. Choose Candidates with the Same Ethnicity or Religion**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Once | 122 | 27% |
| 2 | Never | 331 | 73% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 5, it shows whether respondents chose candidates based on the same ethnicity or religion or not. The research results showed that 73% of respondents said they would not always vote for candidates with the same ethnicity or religion, while the remaining 27% said they would vote for political candidates with the same ethnicity and religion.

**Table 6. Believes the Candidate's Campaign Is the True Attitude**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Once | 50 | 11% |
| 2 | Never | 403 | 89% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 6, it shows whether respondents believe that what the candidate displays during the campaign is the candidate's true attitude. The results showed that 79% of respondents felt unsure that what the candidate displayed during the campaign was his true attitude, while on the other hand 21% felt confident that what he displayed during the campaign was his true attitude.

**Table 7. Voting for Nationalist Candidates or Political Parties**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Once | 54 | 12% |
| 2 | Never | 399 | 88% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 7, it shows whether respondents will always choose a candidate or political party with a nationalist background or not. The research results showed that 88% of respondents admitted that they would vote for a candidate or political party with a nationalist background, while 12% admitted that they would not vote for a candidate or political party with a nationalist background.

**Table 8. Voting for Religious Candidates or Political Parties**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Once | 272 | 60% |
| 2 | Never | 181 | 40% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 8, it shows whether respondents will always choose a candidate or political party with a religious background or not. The research results showed that 60% of respondents admitted that they would vote for a candidate or political party with a religious background, while 40% admitted that they would not vote for a candidate or political party with a religious background.

**Table 9. Fanatical in Supporting Candidates or Political Parties**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Once | 41 | 9% |
| 2 | Never | 412 | 91% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 9, it shows whether respondents will be fanatical when supporting a candidate or political party. The research results showed that 91% admitted that they would not act fanatically when supporting a candidate or political party, while the remaining 9% would act fanatically when supporting a candidate or political party.

**Table 10. Choose Candidates Who Look Cool and Trendy**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Once | 281 | 62% |
| 2 | Never | 172 | 38% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 10, it shows whether respondents will choose a candidate who looks cool and up-to-date. The research results showed that 62% said they would vote for a candidate who looked cool and trendy, while the remaining 38% said they would not vote for a candidate who looked cool and trendy.

**Table 11. Selecting Candidates Based on Track Record**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|----------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Once | 426 | 94% |
| 2 | Never | 27 | 6% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 11, it shows whether respondents will choose candidates based on track records or not. The research results showed that 94% said they would choose candidates based on track records, while the remaining 6% said they would not choose candidates based on track records.

**Table 12. Voting for Candidates Because They Distribute Money or Basic Food**

| No. | Category | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Once | 321 | 71% |
| 2 | Never | 131 | 29% |
| **Total** | | **453** | 453 |

Referring to the results of descriptive data processing in Table 12, it shows whether respondents will choose a candidate who distributes money or basic necessities. The research results showed that 71% said they would not vote for a candidate who distributed money or basic necessities, while the remaining 29% said they would vote for a candidate who distributed money or basic necessities.

### B. Descriptive Analysis of Measurement Results

Descriptive analysis of measurements was carried out to determine the empirical mean and standard deviation of political image variables and voting behavior as well as to categorize respondents for each variable.

**Table 13. Descriptive Analysis of Variable Measurement Results**

| Variable | Hypothetical Value | | Empirical Value | | Category |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Mean | SD | Mean | SD | |
| Political Image | 27.5 | 5.5 | 28.8 | 5.06 | Moderate |
| Voting Behavior | 20 | 4 | 27.9 | 3.17 | High |

N = 453

Based on the descriptive analysis of measurements which can be seen in Table 13, it can be seen that the categorization of participants in the political image variable is in the medium category with an empirical average value of 28.8 (SD=5.06). Meanwhile, the voting behavior variable is in the high category with an empirical average value of 27.9 (SD=3.17).

### C. Correlation Test Results

Researchers conducted a correlation test between voting behavior variables and political image using SPSS ver.24. Correlation between variables is considered significant if the p value <0.05 (Azwar, 2012).

**Table 14. Variable Correlation Test Results**

| No. | Variable | Political Image | Voting Behavior |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Political Image | 1 | |
| 2 | Voting Behavior | 0.163** | 1 |

Note ** = $p < 0.01$

Based on the results of the correlation test which can be seen in Table 14, it is known that the voting behavior variable has a positive correlation with the political image variable with a correlation value of 0.163 and significance ($p<0.01$).

## IV. DISCUSSION

The results of the correlation test show that there is a significant relationship between the political image variable and the voting behavior of first-time voters. These findings show that political image can determine the behavior of first-time voters. As stated by Newman and Sheeth (1985), the image of a political candidate in the eyes of voters is very important. Political image is an assessment of a candidate's character based on the candidate's personal traits that are considered important which are formed from the results of voter perceptions (Nursal, 2004).

According to Yusran and Sapar (2022), open media is supported by increasingly advanced advances in information technology, and the packaging of message content makes it easier for political actors to differentiate themselves from existing political competition, coupled with unlimited political information capabilities, the formation of a political image is increasingly easier to do, including among them is political candidate branding. In line with this, the results of descriptive data processing in Table 10 show that 62% of respondents said they would choose a candidate who looked cool and trendy.

If candidates continue to develop and display a positive side, they will form a good political image in the eyes of voters, so that voters' sympathy and votes will be easier to achieve, and vice versa. These results are in line with the research findings of Limilia and Ariadne (2018) which show that negative images of candidates and political parties in the form of self-centeredness, corruption, and just doing an image have an impact on the voting behavior of first-time voters.

Political candidates are required to provide a reflection of the best quality of work in building the interest of new voters, so that this can form a good political image among new voters. This is supported by the findings of descriptive data analysis in Table 11, where 94% of respondents said they chose candidates based on the candidate's track record. The holding of elections also supports the creation of political conditions full of open and transparent competition, thereby requiring contestants to apply certain methods in order to convey political initiatives, political ideas, political issues,

ideologies, characteristics of leaders and work programs to the public (Firmanzah, 2007). This is done as socialization with the aim of forming a political image and getting the votes of first-time voters.

Image is the process of understanding or giving meaning to information regarding stimuli from objects, events or relationships and each person has a different picture of the reality around them (Sumanto, 2014). Therefore, each candidate will take steps to form a positive image in the eyes of voters. The approach of using digital media technology has now become a way for political contestants to socialize, especially for first-time voters. Socialization through digital media technology will form an image where the information received will be digested to be used as material for consideration in general elections. On the other hand, this will make it easier for novice voters to find information about political candidates so that their insight and knowledge will also increase, thereby forming a political image.

The votes of individual first-time voters are part of a collective decision in determining election results. Political candidates who can influence the political image of first-time voters have a great opportunity to attract the votes of first-time voters, so it is not surprising that political parties are fighting over well-known and popular people to become cadres or nominate them in elections. Therefore, the performance of political parties together with the issue of political figures is important (Klimek, Diakonova, Eguíluz, Miguel, & Thurner, 2016). Likewise, in the current 2024 Election, many political parties are proposing or nominating political figures who are popular and have good enough electability to join, for example the Nasdem Party which is nominating Anis Baswedan as a presidential candidate and PPP which is proposing Sandiaga Uno to become its cadre, the aim is of course to increase the party's votes in the 2024 Legislative Election.

The importance of the level of popularity and electability of this figure is also confirmed by the results of previous research conducted by Wisdawan (2010) regarding party image and money politics on Marmo Hendi's victory in the 2010 regional elections in Semarang City, saying that there is a significant influence between popularity on political behavior, apart from that the findings show that there is a significant influence between party image on political behavior. Meanwhile, research conducted by Wicaksono (2009) on the 2008 Central Java Governor/Deputy Governor Election in Semarang City found that, partially or jointly, the variables of candidate image, party image and campaign effectiveness did not have a significant influence on voter behavior.

The younger generation is generally considered to be still unfamiliar with the world of politics and some young people who have entered the category of first-time voters tend to be less interested in politics, are passive, and tend to care more about economic matters (Oyedemi & Mahlatji, 2016),

but in On the other hand, quite a few of the younger generation are politically literate, where these groups actually tend to observe political dynamics more through media networks to become the basis for taking a stance (Sheerin, 2007; Southwell & Pirch, 2003).

Social media certainly plays a role as a forum for the democratic exchange of ideas, ideas, choices and support, replacing the era of rhetoric, the era of conventional media, which has so far controlled the flow of information received by society (Heryanto, 2019). In relation to new voters who are Generation Z, their closeness to the internet has become a particular strength for this age group to build a virtual space that is more democratic and should be taken into account on the Indonesian political map in the 2024 Election. The advantages of social media as a form of internet-based communication application offers the convenience of unlimited dialogue which can be maximized by political candidates as political communicators.

According to Nimmo (2009), political communicators have an important role in creating political activity. How a person or group who is a political communicator views the position of a media or communication channel in achieving the goals of the political message they want to achieve will greatly influence the form and packaging of the political message they will convey through that media. Nowadays, social media is considered to be a powerful weapon to attract young voters. It is not surprising that a number of figures and politicians are quite active in using social media as a communication platform with the public, especially new voters.

## V. CONCLUSION

This research concludes that there is a significant relationship between political image variables and voting behavior among first-time voters who are Generation Z in the 2024 Election in Indonesia. The results of descriptive data processing also show the tendencies of the political image desired by first-time voters. The voting behavior of first-time voters is considered to be important because of the role of first-time voters as the next generation in the democratic process in the future. Apart from that, new voters also have the potential to increase the level of election legitimacy. Therefore, the voting behavior of novice voters in this study who are Generation Z in the 2024 Election in Indonesia is quite important, where this generation is very attached to the use of internet technology to obtain political information. This research can also be a recommendation for political candidates to build the image desired by first-time voters through the medium of information and communication technology.

## VI. DISCLOSURE

We confirm that we have no financial or other interest in this work in which we are involved, which may be

considered as constituting a real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest.

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