# Digital Literacy Landscape of Novice Voters in the 2024 Election in Indonesia

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#### Abstract

Elections are one of the times when Indonesian democracy runs because the people themselves will choose a pair of president and vice president candidates along with the existing legislature. Voters need to have enough information about the candidates to choose the best among them, especially novice voters. Novice voters need to have good digital literacy in facing the upcoming 2024 elections. The 2024 election itself is mostly from young people who are novice voters. The purpose of this study is to determine the digital literacy readiness of novice voters in 2024 elections. In addition, it will also be known what factors influence this readiness and the impact of the readiness of novice voters on their participation in the election later. This study uses a quantitative approach with descriptive methods. Data collection was carried out using questionnaires as primary data and literature studies as secondary data. The results and conclusions obtained in this study are that most novice voters use social media as an information platform about the 2024 elections with varying levels of trust in the information. Most of the respondents chose not to share the information obtained related to the verification of uncertain news.

Keywords: Digital literacy, Novice voters, Election.

# **INTRODUCTION**

Indonesia adheres to a democratic political system. As advocates of a democratic constitutional system, Elections are an absolute condition that must be met. To realize direct, general, free and secret, honest and fair elections, active participation from the community is required. All parties must carry out their roles consistently. It is not only the Legislative Candidates and Presidential Candidates who maintain the credibility of their campaigns, but the public is also expected to be ready and more critical in sorting out information related to the election campaign.

One of the community groups involved in active participation in elections is novice voters. Novice voters are individuals who are participating in the democratic process for the first time or have limited experience in elections and politics. As explained by Wardhani (2018), novice voters are citizens who are exercising their right to vote for the first time in Election activities. They can come from Indonesian citizens (WNI) who are 17

years old or not yet 17 years old but have already been married. Currently there are 428,799 novice voters, where they are defined as voters who will be 17 years old on February 14, 2024 (Dirgantara, 2022).

Novice voters are a group that is vulnerable to the flow of misinformation and hoaxes which may occur due to a lack of experience and knowledge regarding elections. Digital platforms allow novice voters to access a wealth of information about political candidates, parties and various political issues. Digital platforms also often become the main arena for political discussions, debates and campaigns. However, on the other hand, competitive campaigns are often filled with misinformation and disinformation, which can mislead and manipulate novice voters.

The information spread in the campaign competition is now made easier by the presence of digital technology. Digital technology now offers a variety of media for entertainment, education, and also dissemination of information. The ease of information dissemination through digital technology is now used as a place to disseminate information about elections. The information disseminated cannot be controlled by the recipients, the form can be in the form of positive and informative information such as information containing facts, or negative information containing false information.

This requires novice voters to have adequate digital literacy, especially in the digital era that continues to develop like now. Digital literacy allows novice voters to critically evaluate sources, check the veracity of information, and make decisions based on credible data so that novice voters can recognize false or misleading information, understand its motivations, and avoid falling victim to manipulation. It doesn't stop there, by having good digital literacy novice voters can be actively involved in these discussions, voice their opinions, and participate in online political movements and initiatives.

Digital literacy is a person's ability to use, understand and interact with digital technology effectively. Paul Gilster in Ginting, et al (2021) defines digital literacy as the ability to understand and use information in various formats from various sources when presented through digital technology devices. This means that digital literacy is not only about operating digital technology devices, but also about how a person can utilize the information found through these devices.

Digital literacy is becoming increasingly important because modern society is increasingly dependent on digital technology in various aspects of life, including participation in democratic processes. Individuals' ability to become literate in the digital world will enable them to take maximum advantage of technology and live digital lives intelligently and responsibly, especially during the upcoming 2024 elections.

However, in general the digital literacy of Indonesian society is still relatively low. Where the digital literacy level in Indonesia is only 62%. This number is the lowest compared to other ASEAN countries, which average 70% (Anam, 2023). Therefore, it is important to see how digital literacy new voters are in welcoming the 2024 election.

This research will describe how digital literacy readiness of novice voters is in facing the 2024 elections. Furthermore, this research will look at what further influences this readiness, and how this readiness will impact their participation in the 2024 elections. The benefits of this research are as a benchmark to see the digital literacy skills of first-time voters in the 2024 election and can be used as a reference for digital literacy training related to the 2024 election, especially for first-time voters.

# LITERATURE REVIEW

# 2024 Election (Pemilu) and the Role of Novice Voters

2024 is a year that is considered a democratic party for Indonesia. The 2024 elections consist of the 2024 Legislative Election (Pileg) to elect members of the DPR, DPD, Provincial DPRD and Regency/City DPRD. Simultaneously the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election (Pilpres) and Vice-Presidential Elections, and the 2024 Regional Head Election (Pilkada) were held (Wibawana, 2023a).

Elections are the main pillar in a democratic system, where elections give citizens the right to choose their leaders and determine the direction of the country. On the other hand, elections are also interpreted as a democratic process in which citizens have the freedom to express their political aspirations and elect their representatives (Panjaitan, et al., 2022; Muhtadin, 2023). According to Poddar, et al. (2018) Elections are a formal decision-making process in which the population elects individuals to hold public office.

Voters can express their political preferences through the voting process, while political parties and candidates compete for their support through sometimes fierce campaigns. Elections are a basic right of citizens in a democratic country like Indonesia. The democratic values referred to are freedom to choose and be elected. The election results then influence the direction of policy and government composition over the next few years. Apart from that, elections also support rotation of power and transparency in government.

Through active participation in the electoral process, citizens have a key role in determining the future of their country and ensuring appropriate representation in government. Therefore, elections are a means of upholding justice for the people and building political ethics in a country (Makarim & Fahmi. 2022). Overall, elections are an important process for citizens to exercise their political rights, elect their representatives, and contribute to the formation of the country's leadership and administration.

The role of the public in elections is very important in maintaining the democratic process. At the most basic level, they are voters who have a responsibility to cast their votes in elections, choosing the candidate or political party they believe will represent their interests. In other words, active voter participation is the key to ensuring that elections run well and reflect the will of the people.

Based on Article 1 PKPU No. 7 of 2022, voters in the elections are Indonesian citizens (WNI) who are 17 years of age or older, are married, or have previously been married. Voters in this election have the right to vote during the Election (Pemilu) (Wibawana, 2023b). According to Rachmat & Esther (2016) there are three categories of voters in Indonesia. First, rational voters, namely voters who really choose a party based on indepth assessment and analysis. Second, emotionally critical voters, namely voters who are still idealistic and uncompromising. Third, novice voters, namely voters who are voting for the first time because they have just entered voting age.

Law no. 10 of 2008 Chapter IV article 19 paragraphs 1 and 2 and article 20 states that novice voters are Indonesian citizens who on the day of the election or voting are Indonesian citizens who are 17 years of age or older or are or have been married and have the right to vote., and previously did not include voters due to the provisions of the Election Law (Azzuhri, et al., 2022).

According to Abdullah (2018), novice voters are individuals who are new to the voting process and potentially have less experience or knowledge in making decisions during the election. Novice voters are also often part of the millennial generation and are considered influential in elections. The political orientation of novice voters is always dynamic and will change according to existing conditions and the factors that influence them. However, apart from all that, the existence of novice voters is certainly promising in every election, as a way to secure the strategic position that every candidate who runs in the election wants to achieve (Wardhani, 2018).

Based on research conducted by Andriyendi, et al. (2023) novice voters tend to choose or look for candidate information via social media or other online media. Meanwhile, the circulation of information on social media is a challenge for novice voters to determine the direction of their choice. This is also in line with what was stated by Febriani, et al. (2022) that novice voters are vulnerable to being influenced by various issues, making political socialization important in shaping their political choices.

Therefore, considering the important role of novice voters in elections and their vulnerability to widespread information disruption on social media, it is very important to consider the readiness of them in facing the 2024 elections. In this context, it is necessary to explore how novice voters can be provided with adequate education to understand political issues, filter the information received, and effectively participate in the electoral process with a solid understanding of the consequences of their choices. This will help ensure that novice voters are able to make decisions based on truly informed knowledge and understanding in this everevolving information age.

#### Misinformation and Digital Literacy in the Election

In the digital era, misinformation and disinformation can spread very quickly and widely through social media and other online platforms. Therefore, misinformation is one of the biggest challenges for novice voters, because they usually have less experience in participating in elections and less knowledge about politics. This makes them more vulnerable to being exposed to misinformation. According to Wardle & Derakhshan (2017) novice voters usually lack an understanding of how social media algorithms work and how misinformation spreads in digital spaces, making it more difficult for them to identify and evaluate digital information. Social media platforms often use algorithms to display content that matches users' interests.

Novice voters also usually have closer relationships with friends and family than with politicians and the mass media. This makes them tend to trust the information they receive from friends and family, even if the information is inaccurate (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). This can make Novice voters more susceptible to misinformation tailored to their interests so that they more easily believe that the misinformation is true.

Digital literacy is an important thing for novice voters to have. Digital literacy can help novice voters understand how social media algorithms work and how misinformation spreads in the digital space. With this

understanding, novice voters will be more aware of the risks of exposure to misinformation and can take steps to protect themselves.

Digital literacy in the narrow sense, namely being able to optimally operate digital technology. This discussion can be read in research regarding the relationship between digital literacy and student self-directed learning (Akbar & Anggraeni, 2017). Digital literacy is a form of ability to obtain, understand and use information originating from various sources in digital form (Naufal, 2021).

Belshaw in Tazijan, Aboo Bakar, & Mohd Ramli (2022) formulated eight essential elements of digital literacy. The first is cultural, this element relates to how a person understands the context of the information or things received. Cognitive is the second element which means that a person can expand his thinking in assessing the literacy he gets. Next is constructive which is defined as the ability to build positive things through digital literacy. The fourth is communicative where a person can communicate and how networking works in the digital world. Self-confidence is the fifth element that comes from a person but is also followed by a sense of responsibility. The sixth element is creativity where a person can create new things even in a new way. Next is a critical attitude which means critical thinking is needed in responding to content in digital literacy. The last is a social attitude also known as civic where there needs to be a sense of responsibility towards the social environment for the realization of civil society.

Digital literacy is very important for novice voters because it allows them to access, assess and understand political information, as well as participate actively in the election process and political life. Through digital literacy, novice voters can understand complex political issues, recognize false information, and contribute to political discussions online. It also supports participation in online voting, which is increasingly common, as well as allowing novice voters to participate in policy and monitor elected officials. Digital literacy forms the basis for intelligent, informed and active participation in the democratic process.

## **METHOD**

This study applies a quantitative approach with descriptive methods. Quantitative research methods, which are based on the philosophy of positivism, are used to investigate specific populations or samples. Sampling is generally carried out randomly, data is collected through research tools, and data analysis is quantitative or statistical in nature to test the hypothesis that has been formulated (Sugiyono, 2015).

The population of this study was 428,799 novice voters or voter's aged 17-20 years. Then, determining the sample uses the Slovin Formula as a statistical method used to determine a representative sample size from a larger population that does not have a normal distribution. The degree of error used in this research was 5% so that the sample of novice voters used was 384 people.

The data collection technique in this research was obtained through distributing questionnaires as primary data and literature studies as secondary data. Primary data is a questionnaire that uses Google Form or an information collection tool via the internet by submitting a number of questions to be answered in writing by the respondent. Meanwhile, secondary data is in the form of data obtained from written sources related to the problem being researched.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Digital literacy is ultimately needed by everyone to understand the condition of Indonesian politics, especially during the election period. The need for digital literacy regarding elections is influenced by several factors, starting from the media accessed by the public to people's behavior or habits in using the media to search for various information. The following is a table of the results of data analysis that was carried out on respondents regarding various factors in digital literacy and their digital literacy level

Table 1. Type of media consumed (N=384)

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Answer	Percentage	
Television	0.6%	
Radio	0%	
Newspaper	0%	
Social Media	97.4%	

Online news website 1.9%

The data above illustrates that social media dominates as the source of information most frequently consumed by respondents, reaching 97.4%. Although mobile phones have facilitated access to various sources of information via the internet, especially through social media platforms, consumption of traditional media such as television (0.6%), radio (0%), and print newspapers/magazines (0%) appears to be a very popular choice. minority. Only 1.9% of respondents said they used online news sites as their main source of information. Analysis of this data shows a significant shift in information consumption behavior, with social media becoming the main channel for getting news and information.

Table 2. The frequency of Using social media (N=384)

Answer	Percentage
Very rarely	0%
Rarely	1.3%
Sometimes	3.8%
Often	43.6%
Very often	51.3%

Based on the data above, more than half of respondents (51.3%) use social media very often, while 43.6% admitted to using social media often. In contrast, only a small proportion (3.8%) use it sometimes, and 1.3% say their use of social media is rare. Then, there were no respondents who stated that they used social media very rarely. This data can provide an understanding of the level of user engagement within a social media platform. High dependence on social media may have implications for digital literacy, especially in terms of understanding political information and its impact on election participation.

Table 3. Type of social media used (N=384)

Answer	Percentage
Instagram	38.5%
X/Twitter	20.5%
YouTube	3.8%
TikTok	35.9%
Not using any social media	0%
Facebook	1.3%

The data above reflects the respondents' social media usage patterns, with Instagram being the platform most frequently used by 38.5% of respondents. TikTok also has a significant share with 35.9%, while X/Twitter reaches 20.5%. YouTube and Facebook have lower contributions, respectively, with 3.8% and 1.3%. Interestingly, no respondents stated that they did not use social media at all. This data shows that social media platforms that are more visual and focus on short content, such as Instagram and TikTok, have strong appeal among respondents. This implication can be considered in the context of digital literacy, because the use of different platforms requires different skills and expertise in managing information.

Table 4. Frequency of exposure to information about the 2024 Election (N=384)

Answer	Percentage
Very rarely	2.6%
Rarely	8.3%

Sometimes	43.6%
Often	40.4%
Very often	5.1%

Data shows that most respondents, as many as 43.6%, are exposed to information about the 2024 Election with occasional frequency, while 40.4% said they are exposed to it frequently. A small portion of respondents, namely 8.3%, experienced exposure to information rarely, while 5.1% stated that they were exposed to it frequently. Only a small portion stated that exposure was very rare, namely 2.6%. Analysis of this data shows that most respondents have a fairly good level of exposure to information about the 2024 Election, both frequently and occasionally. However, it is important to pay attention to and understand factors that may influence these levels of exposure, such as the sources of information used and the intensity of political campaigns.

Table 5. Media to get information about the 2024 Election (N=384)

Answer	Percentage
Television	6.4%
Radio	0%
Newspaper	1.9%
Social media	84.6%
Online news website	6.4%
All option	0.6%

Data shows that social media (84.6%) dominates as the main source of information about the 2024 Election, followed by television (6.4%) and online news sites (6.4%). Print newspapers/magazines have a lower share, reaching 1.9%, while radio does not have a significant contribution (0%). Although only a small portion of respondents chose "All of the above" (0.6%), this data highlights a key trend that people are likely to rely on social media for election information. It is important to note that the dominance of social media as a source of information can influence the way information is presented and received. This can create challenges regarding digital literacy, as information on social media can vary in credibility and balance. Therefore, efforts to increase digital literacy among first-time voters must include skills in assessing the accuracy and balance of information found on social media platforms.

Table 6. The most trusted media in accessing information on the 2024 Election (N=384)

Answer	Percentage
Television	21.2%
Radio	0%
Newspaper	2.6%
Social media	45.5%
Online news website	21.8%
Nothing	9%

Meanwhile, the most trusted media for accessing information on the 2024 Election is social media (45.5%). Then followed by television (21.2%) and online news sites (21.8%). The high level of trust in social media highlights the importance of digital literacy, which involves the skills to critically assess and understand information in complex online environments.

Meanwhile, several respondents, reaching 9%, stated that they did not have a reliable source of

information. Print newspapers/magazines have a lower share in the level of trust (2.6%), while radio does not have a significant contribution (0%). In addition, the fact that several respondents did not have a trusted source of information (9%) indicates the potential for uncertainty or concern regarding the credibility of election information sources. This shows the need for efforts to increase the credibility and transparency of information provided by various media

Table 7. Trusted social media for finding information on the 2024 Election (N=384)

Answer	Percentage
Instagram	26.9%
X/Twitter	34.6%
YouTube	10.9%
TikTok	7.7%
Nothing	17.9%
Others	2%

This data provides an overview of the level of trust in various social media platforms in searching for information on the 2024 Election. X/Twitter dominates as the most trusted platform with 34.6%, followed by Instagram (26.9%). YouTube has a significant contribution with 10.9%, while TikTok has a trust level of 7.7%. A few respondents, reaching 17.9%, stated that they did not trust social media as a source of election information. The presence of the "Other" category at 2% shows the diversity of social media platforms that may be used by a small number of respondents. The high level of trust in X/Twitter and Instagram may reflect a positive view of the openness and direct interaction offered by these platforms. On the other hand, that 17.9% of respondents do not trust social media indicates concerns regarding the balance, validity or privacy of information found on these platforms.

Table 8. Assessment of the accuracy of information on social media (N=384)

Answer	Percentage
Sangat Meragukan	3.8%
Meragukan	62.2%
Percaya	33.3%
Sangat percaya	0.6%

However, when asked to assess the accuracy of information on social media, most respondents had a level of doubt about the accuracy of the information on social media. As many as 62.2% of respondents doubted the accuracy of the information, while 3.8% said they were very doubtful. Although many respondents doubted the information on social media, there were also 33.3% who said they trusted the information, and only 0.6% who said they really believed it.

This high level of doubt reflects the challenges in ensuring the accuracy and balance of information in the social media environment. This perception can be influenced by the spread of fake news or information that is not carefully verified on the platform. Factors such as unequal access to information and algorithms that filter content may also play a role in shaping these views.

Table 9. What respondents do when they find questionable election-related information on social media (N=384)

Answer	Percentage	
Saya membagikannya tanpa memeriksa lebih lanjut	0.6%	
Saya mencari informasi lebih lanjut sebelum	46.8%	

membagikannya	
Saya tidak membagikannya dan mengabaikannya	48.1%
Saya melaporkan informasi palsu tersebut	3.2%
Saya tidak tahu apa yang harus saya lakukan	1.3%

In line with respondents' hesitation in viewing questionable election-related information on social media, most respondents, namely 48.1%, stated that they did not share it and ignored it. As many as 46.8% of respondents sought further information before sharing it, indicating a more cautious attitude in spreading questionable information. Only a small number of respondents chose to share it without checking further (0.6%), while 3.2% chose to report the false information. As many as 1.3% of respondents stated that they did not know what to do.

The most common responses, namely not sharing it and ignoring it, reflect a level of wariness and criticism of potentially questionable information on social media. This attitude is positive in the context of digital literacy because it shows awareness of the importance of verifying information before disseminating it.

The high proportion of respondents who sought further information before sharing it indicates a desire to ensure accuracy before sharing information with others. This reflects good digital literacy skills, where an understanding of the importance of sourcing and verification of information is applied.

These results also highlight the importance of further digital literacy education, especially to overcome the uncertainty felt by a few respondents who stated they did not know what to do. Promoting wiser behavior in managing information on social media and increasing knowledge about actions to take when encountering questionable information can help reduce the risk of spreading false or inaccurate information.

Novice voters are voters who will only take part in election activities this year. They are a generation that is very close to technology and digitalization in various aspects of life, one of which is accessing political information. Their closeness to technology certainly provides benefits in terms of ease in accessing political information. However, apart from that, they will also be more vulnerable to being exposed to misinformation regarding the election.

The potential of being exposed to political disinformation prior to election activities necessitates sensitivity and critical thinking abilities in processing the information that is circulated, particularly among beginner voters. Novice voters must be able to think critically and be cautious of the diverse information available. Novice voters who can think critically and are skeptical will be less likely to accept what they see on social media, and they will also be aware of what measures to take when confronted with disinformation.

Through data obtained from respondent data processing, novice voters have digital habits that are in line with those found in previous research. Novice voters use social media more in their lives, and this is proven in this research, where 43.6% of respondents said they often use social media and 51.3% use social media very often, which is dominated by Instagram, TikTok and X/Twitter. Next, the habit of searching for political information by novice voters in this study also shows that novice voters use social media more often to access political information, which is marked by a percentage of 84.6%.

Novice voters also have critical minds and are personally skeptical of various information circulating on social media. Novice voters say they are often exposed to information about elections and politics through social media, so they have trusted social media. The three main social media that novice voters trust are X/Twitter (34.6%), Instagram (26.9%), and YouTube (10.9%). Even though novice voters have social media as a mainstay in accessing information about politics and elections, they still do not fully trust the various information presented on social media. As many as 3.8% of novice voters said they very much doubted the existing information, then 62.8% doubted the existing information, 33.3% said they believed the existing information, and 0.6% of novice voters said they very much believed the existing information. Through this percentage, novice voters have high doubts about various existing information, which indicates that they think critically and are skeptical in digesting various exposures to information.

This way of thinking is needed in accessing all information on social media, especially political information ahead of the election. Novice voters are required to be more open and not easily believe in the information being disseminated, with this doubt will make them not easily swallow information raw and will lead them to take more critical actions than just doubt and distrust.

The high level of understanding and knowledge of digital literacy does not just stop at how they think

about existing information, novice voters also have critical actions in disseminating information. Through the results obtained, as many as 46.8% of novice voters said that they sought further information regarding information they were unsure about before they disseminated the information, they will not take the information circulating for granted but also double-check it before sharing or consuming it themselves. On the other hand, 48.1% of novice voters chose not to share it again. Preventing the spread of false information is also a sign that social media users, especially novice voters, have high digital literacy. By choosing not to share information that is not yet known to be true, novice voters have carried out one of the important elements created by Belshaw, namely civil, where novice voters have a responsibility to social life for what they share on social media. Through this data, novice voters know well what they should do with information that is not certain whether the truth is by looking for more information or not sharing it at all.

Through the various data presented, novice voters in the 2024 elections have a good level of digital literacy. They can think critically about various information that exists and is widely circulated, and know what they should do if they find information whose truth is still in doubt

#### **CONCLUSION**

Analysis of various data shows interesting trends regarding the behavior of novice voters in accessing, trusting and responding to information related to the 2024 Election on social media. Most respondents rely on social media as their main source of election information, with platforms such as X/Twitter and Instagram dominating. However, there is a significant level of doubt about the accuracy of information on social media, and a few respondents seek further information before sharing it. The most common response was not to share it and to ignore it, indicating awareness of the importance of verifying information.

- 1. Digital literacy education: The development of broader and deeper digital literacy programs needs to be considered, with a focus on information evaluation skills, understanding the risks of false information, and actions that can be taken when encountering questionable information on social media.
- 2. Public awareness campaign: Launch of a public awareness campaign emphasizing the importance of verifying information before sharing it on social media. This may involve collaboration with educational institutions, media, and social platforms to convey this message effectively.
- 3. Collaboration with social media platforms: Collaboration with social media platforms to increase transparency, identify and address false information, and provide users with more tools and resources to verify information.
- 4. Educational campaigns using social media: Utilizing social media platforms as a tool for digital literacy education campaigns. Create easy-to-understand, engaging, and shareable content to improve understanding and digital literacy skills.

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