

Political Communication and Political Money of Election Participants on Voters's Political Participant in the 2024 General Election in Binjay City- Indonesia

Agus Purwanto^a   | Suwardi Lubis M.S^b  | Lusiana Andriani Lubis^c  | Nurbani^d  |
¹aguspur.knpibinjai@gmail.com, ²suwardi@usu.ac.id, ³lusiana@usu.ac.id, ⁴nurbani@usu.ac.id

^{a,b,c,d}Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

Received: 14 Dec 2024

Revised: 16 Feb 2025

Accepted: 24 Feb 2025

ABSTRACT

General Elections are a means to realize people's sovereignty. The success of elections can be measured through the political participation of the community. The purpose of this research is to analyze the political communication and political money of election participants so that it affects the political participation of voters in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City, besides finding a model of political communication of election participants in increasing voter political participation in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City. This research uses a mixed method approach with a Sequential Explanatory Design and a pragmatic paradigm to measure statistical effects and understand the meaning of political phenomena. The results of this study found that the political communication model of election participants in increasing voter political participation in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City, this study found the CASTLE model (Candidate, Strategy, Team, Logistics, Execution) as a political communication framework that affects voter involvement. Candidate: candidates must have good credibility. Strategy: the need for a clear and effective communication strategy in delivering election information to voters. Team: The campaign team serves as a liaison between candidates and voters. Logistics: equitable distribution of campaign logistics ensures voters get fair access to information. Execution: execution is more about the implementation of the candidate's overall activities during the campaign process until voting day. Statistical data shows that political communication of election participants affects voter political participation in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City by 60%. Political money of election participants affects voter political participation in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City by 50%. Political communication and political money of election participants affect the political participation of voters in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City by 70,2%.

Keywords: Political Communication, Political Money, Political Participation, General Election 2024

1. INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a form of government system of a country as an effort to realize people's sovereignty (citizen power) over the state to be run by the government of the country (Berlian & Dewi, 2021; Rosana, 2016). Democracy is the right of the people to choose the leaders that the people themselves want, as stated in the Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia Article 1 paragraph 2 which reads "Sovereignty is in the hands of the people, and is exercised entirely by the People's Consultative Assembly". Judging from article 1 paragraph 2, it can be concluded that democracy is the freedom for the Indonesian people to choose and determine the leader they want without any coercion from any party (Muhtadi, 2019). In conducting elections to determine a leader is not easy, therefore in Indonesia it has regulated how to choose a leader, namely by means of general elections or commonly abbreviated as elections (Efriza & Rozi, 2010).

Electoral success can be measured through various factors, and the assessment of success may vary depending on the perspective and desired goal. One of these factors of electoral success is public political participation (Darna, 2019; Fauzi, 2018). Public political participation is important to maintain the health of democracy and ensure that policies reflect the interests and aspirations of citizens (Ulfyyati dkk., 2023). According to data from the KPU of Sumatera Utara Province, the electoral districts in Sumatera Utara are divided into 3 electoral districts, elected region of Sumatera Utara Province III which includes Langkat, Karo, Simalungun, Asahan, Dairi, Pakpak Barat, Batu Bara, Pematang Siantar, Tanjung Balai, Binjai (Amanda, 2024; Prasetyo, 2021).

In the election of Members of the House of Representatives in 2019 and 2024, the level of political participation of the people in elected region of Sumatera Utara Province III, especially in three cities namely Binjai City, Pematang Siantar City and Tanjung Balai City can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Data on Permanent Voters and Voting Rights Users in the City of Madya Elected Region of Sumatera Utara Province III in 2019 and 2024

No.	City	2019			2024		
		DPT	PHP	%	DPT	PHP	%
1	Binjai	203.005	157.171	77,4	215.861	164.993	77,7
2	Pematang Siantar	187.067	144.981	77,5	202.206	151.445	74,8
3	Tanjung Balai	117.768	92.446	78,49	127.103	96.283	75,7

Source: KPU Sumatera Utara.

The political participation of the people of Sumatera Utara Province, especially in the three cities in Elected Region of Sumatera Utara Province III, is still below 79%. This is certainly not in accordance with the target set by the Central KPU that all provincial areas in Indonesia have at least reached above 81% for the level of political participation. By comparing the 2019 and 2024 data on election results, it can be seen that the participation rate of Binjai City has increased compared to Pematang Siantar City and Tanjung Balai City so that researchers are interested in examining the political participation of people in Binjai City.

In the 2019 election for DPR members, the level of political participation of the people of Binjai City was 77.4%. This can be seen in the picture below:

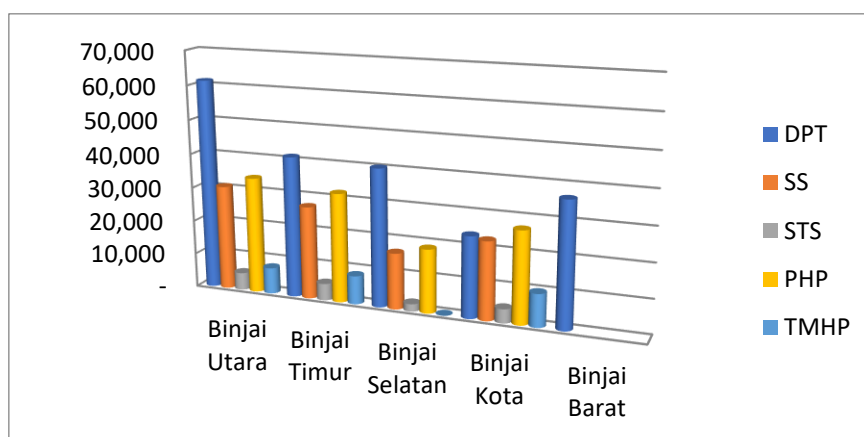


Figure 1. Political Participation of the Binjai City Community in the 2019 Election. Source: KPU Binjai City, 2019.

Based on the figure above, it is known that in 2019 the level of political participation of the people of Binjai City with DPT (Permanent Voter Data) 203,005 and PHP (Voting Rights Users) 157,171 was still at 77.4%. This is certainly not in accordance with the target set by the Central KPU that all provincial areas in Indonesia have at least reached above 81% for the level of political participation.

In the 2024 elections, the city of Binjai saw an increase in community political participation with permanent voter data (DPT) 215,861, valid votes (SS) 164,993, invalid votes (STS) 2,841 and users of voting rights (PHP) 167,834 at 77.7%, which means that there was an increase in community political participation by 0.3% from 2019. Can be seen in the picture below:

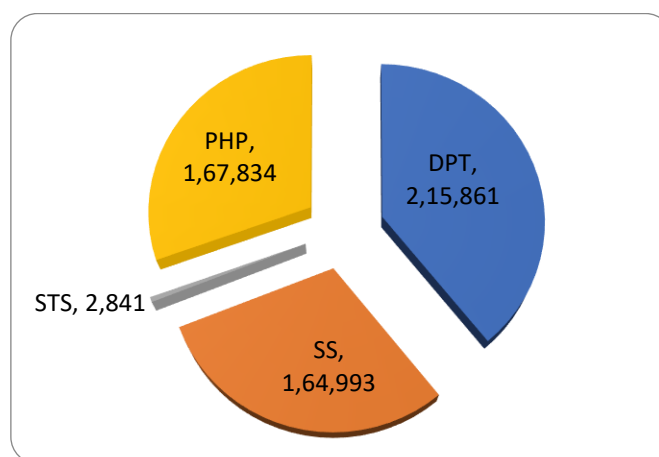


Figure 2. Political Participation of the Binjai City Community in 2024. Source: KPU Binjai City, 2024.

According to the data above, it can be seen that the 2019 election was 77.4% and in 2024 it was 77.7%, an increase of 0.3% in community political participation in Binjai City. Although there was an increase, it still could not penetrate the national standard instructed by the Indonesian KPU that each district or city must reach the target of 81% of community political participation.

The above problems prove that political participation in Sumatera Utara Province, especially the city of Binjai, is still low. One of the factors that influence voter political participation in elections is by building political communication. Political communication is a process, procedure and activity that can shape political attitudes and behavior integrated in a political system. Election organizers

KPU/Bawaslu, political parties, and election participants can build political communication with the public directly or through the media available at this time to convey positive framing related to politics, and educate the public about the dangers of black campaigns (Ramadhani dkk., 2022).

According to the findings, black campaigns still occurred in the 2019 elections. Unscrupulous supporters of the two camps of candidate pairs in the 2019 presidential election conducted a black campaign against their political opponents, giving rise to the phenomenon of cebong and kampret until now. Black campaigns that occur in Indonesia not only have an impact on election results, but also have an impact on the psychology of the Indonesian people. Information of unclear value has an impact on distrust of the current government, such as incitement, defamation, fights between election participants, political parties, individuals and/or certain social groups including black campaigns (Nur dkk., 2022). Therefore, utilizing the use of social media in the current digital era because of its practical and economical use for all social media users to build political communication in increasing voter political participation.

Political communication in Sumatera Utara is rich and complex, influenced by the social, cultural and historical dynamics that shape the province. Sumatera Utara is known as an area with very high ethnic diversity, where Batak, Malay, Javanese, Chinese and many other groups coexist. This diversity not only characterizes the society, but also affects how political communication takes place. Politicians in Sumatera Utara must always be aware and sensitive to these ethnic and cultural differences when they deliver their political messages. Given the sensitivities that may emerge in a different cultural context, they must modify their message to be universally acceptable (Hamdani, 2020). Religion, in addition to ethnic diversity, is a significant factor in regional political communication. Religions such as Islam, Christianity, and Catholicism have sizable populations, and each group has strong beliefs that serve as the foundation for interactions and communication (Munif dkk., 2023). In Sumatera Utara, politicians frequently incorporate religious symbols into their campaigns to win over supporters and show that they share their beliefs (Marpuah, 2019).

In Sumatera Utara, the mass media also plays a significant role in the spread of political messages. Politicians mostly communicate their opinions and policies through local print and electronic media. However, social media and community radio are two examples of traditional media that are becoming more and more significant in political communication. Politicians now have more ways to connect with younger and larger audiences than they could with traditional media, thanks in large part to social media (Heryanto, 2018). Political communication in Sumatera Utara is also influenced by local politics and history (Ibnu Sholeh dkk., 2023). Ethnic and political disputes have long plagued the province, and people's memories of these incidents are still quite clear. Politicians must therefore exercise caution when tailoring their speech to avoid offending delicate subjects pertaining to the past (Rozi dkk., 2021).

In Sumatera Utara, where political support is frequently determined by familial and related ties, the patronage system is still quite prevalent. In this setting, political communication frequently occurs through unofficial networks where family or tribal allegiance is valued above more general concerns. In order to preserve their position of authority, politicians must be clever in establishing and preserving connections with influential members of society (Klinken & Hidayat, 2007). As one of Sumatera Utara's major cities, Binjai City's political communication reflects the characteristics of a city with a rich history and a diverse population. The social and cultural background of Binjai, which is close to Medan, affects how political communication occurs there.

Despite having a tiny population and geographical area, Binjai City is strategically important in Sumatera Utara politics because of its close-knit community and strong sense of place. Political communication in Binjai is frequently defined by direct and personal contact, in contrast to the more dispersed and impersonal political relations found in bigger urban centers. Through in-person meetings, neighborhood activities, religious gatherings, and other social events, politicians frequently engage with the populace (Syafi'i dkk., 2024). Building close, trusting connections with constituents is made possible by these encounters, which promote a political culture built on familiarity and

interpersonal trust (Abror dkk., 2024). When handled wisely, this special dynamic can result in increased voter participation and the possibility of successful grassroots political mobilization.

Political communication in Binjai is also greatly influenced by ethnic and cultural diversity. Malay, Javanese, and Batak ethnic groups make up the majority of the population; each has its own traditions, customs, and social mores. Politicians must therefore modify their communication tactics to take into account the aspirations and cultural sensitivities of various communities. In order to guarantee tolerance and acceptance, campaign message frequently makes use of regional languages, culturally relevant symbols, and gestures. While culturally sensitive communication can increase political legitimacy and promote a more inclusive democratic process, failing to recognize these differences may result in the alienation of specific voter groups. Therefore, one of the main concerns of Binjai election participants is the necessity of complex, cross-cultural political message.

The distribution of political information in Binjai is still greatly aided by local media in addition to more conventional interpersonal forms of communication. The city benefits from active local newspapers, radio stations, and television networks that help shape public opinion, even if it lacks the media infrastructure of larger regional centers like Medan. Candidates can respond to public concerns, explain their policy suggestions, and build their public image using these traditional media channels. However, the emphasis of political communication has shifted toward online platforms due to the digital transformation brought about by greater internet usage. Politicians increasingly frequently use social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, to interact with people, particularly younger voters who are more engaged online. Real-time communication, increased interactivity, and the capacity to distribute tailored material to a larger audience are all made possible by these platforms.

The topics that are most commonly brought up in Binjai politics speak to the city's continuing growth and social problems. The political agenda is dominated by issues like sustainable resource management, employment creation, drug misuse prevention, public infrastructure, and access to high-quality public services. Politicians usually take advantage of Binjai's ongoing urbanization and economic transformation to win over the public by putting forward concrete answers (Syafi'i & El-Yunusi, 2024). In order to appeal to both pragmatic and sentimental voter concerns, political actors frequently match their campaign narratives with community objectives, highlighting development plans and public welfare projects (Habibulloh dkk., 2024). But in many instances, conventional power structures such as family ties and patronage systems continue to have a big impact on political communication, and local elites and community leaders have a big say in how voters vote.

The pervasiveness of money politics in Binjai's political environment is one of the most enduring and worrisome issues. Practices like the so-called "dawn attack," which involves distributing cash, products, or services to influence voters' choices on election eve, are well documented and are yet challenging to stop. These behaviors are frequently caused by a lack of political education among some groups of people and are made worse by the General Election Commission's (KPU) and political parties' ineffective political education campaigns. Money politics' transactional character erodes democratic principles and encourages voters to make snap decisions, often putting short-term financial benefit ahead of long-term policy considerations or ideological consistency. Voter apathy and "Golput," or non-voting conduct, are thus exacerbated by this phenomena.

In Indonesia's democratic age, empirical research has shown that vote-buying is becoming more widespread. The percentage of respondents targeted for vote-buying increased sharply from 11.2% in the 2009 parliamentary elections to 29% in 2014 and then to 40% in 2019, according to Burhanuddin Muhtadi's findings in *Money Politics in Post-New Order Elections*. According to a 2019 LIPI study, 37% of participants acknowledged getting payment in return for their vote (Bahri, 2024). Money politics, which frequently involves local brokers or significant community members serving as middlemen, has also become a commonplace aspect of the electoral process in Binjai. Local media reports suggest that vote-buying has occurred, with cash payments ranging from Rp120,000 to Rp200,000 for each vote. In addition to endangering the legitimacy of the election, these acts also foster clientelistic connections,

in which a candidate's devotion is motivated more by tangible rewards than by their credentials or programmatic offerings (Tanjung, 2015).

Nonetheless, initiatives to counteract money politics and promote better-informed, values-based voting are becoming more widespread. The KPU, youth movements, and civil society organizations have launched campaigns to promote clean elections and increase public awareness of the risks associated with vote-buying. The KPU of Binjai, for instance, has put in place a thorough communication strategy that includes phases for planning, carrying out, and assessing. As documented by Ariska and Pohan (2024), the KPU has employed various communication tools, including the short film *Kejarlah Janji*, as well as digital content on Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube, to engage novice voters and raise electoral literacy. These initiatives represent a shift toward more modern, multimedia-based political education that resonates with younger demographics. Despite these efforts, a long-term cultural and institutional change is required to fully eliminate the influence of money politics (Ariska & Pohan, 2024).

Given the interconnected dynamics of cultural identity, media influence, personal communication, and financial incentives, it is imperative to investigate the ways in which money politics and political communication impact Binjai voter turnout. The general election of 2024 offers a crucial chance to evaluate if current tactics used by political parties and election organizers can successfully raise political consciousness and turnout. In order to better understand how political communication, money politics, and voter participation are related, this study will focus on how local culture, digital media engagement, and institutional activities influence democratic behavior in Binjai City.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employs a combination of techniques, including an Explanatory Sequential Design methodology. This method involves gathering and analyzing quantitative data initially, followed by qualitative data collection and analysis to further elucidate and clarify the quantitative findings (Creswell, 2019). By using this approach, researchers may better understand how money politics and political communication affect voter political engagement in Binjai City's general election in 2024.

All 215,861 residents of Binjai City who are listed on the 2024 General Election Permanent Voter List (DPT) make up the study's population. To ensure that every person had an equal chance, the sample was chosen using the random sampling technique. With a 5% margin of error, the number of samples was determined using the Slovin formula, resulting in 399 respondents. To provide equal regional representation, the respondents were chosen proportionately from five sub-districts in Binjai City, each of which represented 79–80 individuals (Sugiyono & Lestari, 2021).

Both quantitative and qualitative data were used as data sources in this investigation. Structured questionnaires were sent in order to gather quantitative data. In the meantime, direct campaign activity observation, Forum Group Discussions (FGDs), and documentation from a variety of sources, including KPU reports and relevant scientific literature, were used to gather qualitative data (Bisjoe & Rizal, 2018).

There were four primary methods used in the data collection process. First, the research variables were quantitatively measured using questionnaires. Second, field observations were conducted to track campaign dynamics and community involvement at voting places (TPS). Third, focus group discussions (FGDs) were used to learn more about the opinions of voters, particularly those who were suspected of having been the recipients of money politics. Ten participants from different sub-districts participated in this FGD (Siregar & Safitri, 2019). Fourth, official papers and scholarly literature were analyzed in order to support primary data using documentation methodologies (Humaizi dkk., 2024).

Quantitative data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with the help of SPSS software. To test the validity of the instrument, validity test through Pearson correlation and reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha were used, with a value of > 0.6 as the limit of reliability. Classical assumption tests such as normality and homogeneity were conducted to ensure the feasibility of the regression model. Hypothesis testing is carried out through the T test (partial) and F test (simultaneous) to determine the individual and collective influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable. In addition,

the Adjusted R^2 value is used to measure the accuracy of the model in explaining variations in political participation.

Qualitative data from FGDs were analyzed thematically using an interpretative approach. This analysis aims to confirm and explain the quantitative findings, and to relate the findings to theories of political communication, patronage culture and the dynamics of local democracy. With this approach, a fuller understanding of the factors influencing people's political participation in Binjai City is expected.

3. RESULTS

Data analysis carried out for research data processing is to use regression analysis to determine how much the predictive ability of the two independent variables (political communication and political money) on the dependent variable (Political Participation). Before data analysis is carried out, assumption tests are first carried out which include normality of distribution and linearity analysis of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The entire data analysis technique uses SPSS software.

Normality Test

Normality test to see the deviation of the frequency of observations studied from the theoretical frequency. The normality assumption test uses the one sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov non-parametric statistical technique. The rule used is if $p > 0.05$ then the distribution is normal, otherwise if $p < 0.05$ then the distribution is not normal.

Table 2. Normality Test Results

Variable	P
Political Participation	0, 685
Political Communication	0, 281
Money politics	0, 262

Based on the table above, it can be interpreted that based on the rules, it shows that the distribution of political participation research data ($p > 0.05$) is normal, political communication is normal ($p > 0.05$) and political money is normal ($p > 0.05$).

Linearity Test

The linearity assumption test is carried out to determine the linearity of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The linearity test can also be used to determine the degree of deviation from the linearity of the relationship. The rules used in the relationship linearity test are if the linearity value $p < 0.05$ then the relationship is declared linear or if the deviant value for linearity $p > 0.05$ then the relationship is declared non-linear.

Table 3. Linearity Test Results

Variable	F	P	Description
Political communication with Political Participation	6.306	0, 014	Linear
Money politics with Political Participation	5.112	0, 027	Linear

In the table above, the results show that: The results of the linearity test on the political communication variable with political participation obtained a linearity value of $F = 6.306$ and $p = 0,014 < 0.05$. This shows that the relationship between the two variables is linear. The results of the linearity assumption test between the political money variable and political participation have a linearity value of $F = 5.112$ and $p = 0,027 < 0.05$, which means that the relationship is declared linear.

Multiple Regression Test of Research Data

Presented the results of testing research data using SPSS on the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-adjustment with delinquent behavior in the following table:

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Variable	R	R Squared	F	P	Description
X ₁ – Y	0,250	0,63	6.001	0,016	Significant
X ₂ – Y	0,223	0,50	4.690	0,033	Significant
X ₁₂ – Y	0,320	0,702	5.063	0,008	Significant

Notes:

X₁₂ = Predictor: Political communication, Money politics.

X₁ = Political communication

X₂ = Political money

Y = Political Participation

R = Correlation coefficient

R Squared = Coefficient of determination of predictor on Y

p = Chance of error occurrence

Based on the results of testing the research data obtained from the table above between political communication with Political Participation (X₁ - Y) obtained probability $p = 0,016$ and $p < 0.05$ which means that there is a significant relationship between political communication with Political Participation. Furthermore, between political money and Political Participation (X₂ - Y), the probability $p = 0,033$ and $p < 0.05$ is obtained, which means that there is a significant relationship between political money and Political Participation. Furthermore, between political communication and political money with Political Participation (X₁₂ - Y), the probability $p = 0,008$ and $p < 0.05$ is obtained, which means that there is a significant relationship between political communication and political money together with Political Participation.

First Hypothesis

The results of the first hypothesis regression test are as follows:

Table 5. First Hypothesis Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Sig. F Change
1	0,250	0,63	0,000

The first hypothesis in this study is that there is a positive relationship between political communication and political participation in the 2024 general election. Then the R value is 0.250 and the significance of $p = 0.000$. Thus it can be concluded that the first hypothesis is accepted, namely that

there is a relationship between political communication and political participation in the 2024 general election. The results of data analysis in this study show that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the relationship between political communication and political participation is 0.63, which means that 63.0% of the political participation variable can be explained by the political communication variable. Analysis of the relationship given by political communication (X_1) with Political Participation (Y) can be seen in the table above.

Second Hypothesis

The results of the second hypothesis regression test are as follows:

Table 6. Second Hypothesis Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Sig. F Change
1	0,223	0,50	0,000

The second hypothesis in this study is that there is a relationship between money politics and political participation in the 2024 general election. Then the R value is 0.223 and the significance of $p = 0.000$. Thus it can be concluded that the second hypothesis is accepted, namely that there is a positive relationship between money politics and political participation in the 2024 general election. The results of data analysis in this study show the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the relationship between political money and political participation of 0.50, which means that 50.0% of the political participation variable can be explained by the political money variable. Analysis of the relationship given by political money (X_2) with Political Participation (Y) can be seen in the table above.

Third Hypothesis

The results of the third hypothesis regression test are as follows:

Table 7. Third Hypothesis Test Results

Model	R	R Square	Sig. F Change
1	0,320	0,702	0,008

The third hypothesis in this study is that there is a relationship between political communication and political money with Political Participation in the 2024 general election. Then the R value is 0.320 and the significance of $p = 0.008$. Thus it can be concluded that the second hypothesis is accepted, namely that there is a relationship between political communication and political money with Political Participation in the 2024 general election.

The results of data analysis in this study show that the coefficient of determination (R^2) of the relationship between political communication and political money with Political Participation is 0.702, which means that 70.2% of the Political Participation variable can be explained by the variables of political communication and political money. Analysis of the relationship given by political communication and political money (X_{12}) with Political Participation (Y) can be seen in the table above. To determine the relationship and significance of the relationship, a partial analysis is carried out in regression analysis. Farsial t analysis refers to the following table:

Table 8. Results of Farsial t Test in Regression Analysis

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta	B	Std. Error
1	(Constant)	73.814	9.613		7.678	.000
	X1	.303	.133	.230	2.284	.025
	X2	.210	.106	.200	1.982	.041

Based on the table above, the linear regression line equation is obtained as follows:

$$Y = 73.814 + 0,303 X1 + 0,210 X2$$

Based on Table 4.12 above, it appears that the regression coefficient value of the political communication variable (X_1) is - 0.640, which is positive. So it can be said that political communication (X_1) affects Political Participation (Y). A positive influence means that the more political communication (X_1) increases, the more political participation (Y) will increase. To find out whether the effect is significant or not, the regression coefficient value is tested for significance with the farsial test. Based on the regression analysis, the significance value (sig.) is $0.025 < 0.05$. So it can be concluded that political communication has a significant effect on political participation.

Furthermore, it appears that the regression coefficient value of the political money variable (X_2) is 0.210, which is positive. So it can be said that political money (X_2) has a positive effect on Political Participation (Y). A positive influence means that the more political money (X_2) increases, the more Political Participation (Y) will increase. To find out whether the effect is significant or not, the regression coefficient value is tested for significance with the farsial test. Based on the regression analysis, the significance value (sig.) is $0.041 < 0.05$. So it can be concluded that political money has a significant effect on Political Participation.

Voters' Forum Group Discussion (FGD)

Ten participants of varying ages from different sub-districts in Binjai City participated in the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) for this study. Understanding how political communication and money politics tactics impact voter turnout in the 2024 elections was the goal of the conversation. Participants shared their opinions, experiences, and expectations regarding the political communication process that took place during the election during the discussion process. According to the findings of this focus group discussion, political communication during the Binjai City general election of 2024 produced the CASTLE model (Candidate, Strategy, Team, Logistics, Execution), which outlines the essential components of voter engagement. This model provides a more comprehensive knowledge of how election participants interact with voters and how specific elements can boost or inhibit people's political participation.

All things considered, the findings of this focus group discussion demonstrate that political communication in the Binjai City general election of 2024 results in the CASTLE model as a method that can explain how election participants try to boost public political engagement. Voters are more likely to pay attention to and support candidates with a clear communication plan, a strong team, sufficient logistics, and consistent execution. The success of political communication in this election is also significantly impacted by two-way communication elements, candidates' active participation in community events, and the use of technology to enhance political communication tactics.

Drawing from the outcomes of this conversation, it can be said that the way politicians and their campaigns communicate politically has a big impact on election turnout. Candidates that have community ties, have open and inclusive communication methods, and can run campaigns successfully and consistently are generally more likable and trusted by voters. Therefore, this study recommends

that future election participants pay more attention to the factors in the CASTLE model to improve the effectiveness of their political communication. In addition, it is important for election organizers to ensure that election information is equally accessible to all levels of society, so that every voter has an equal opportunity to participate consciously and rationally in the democratic process.

The following is a chart of the CASTLE model as the findings of this research:

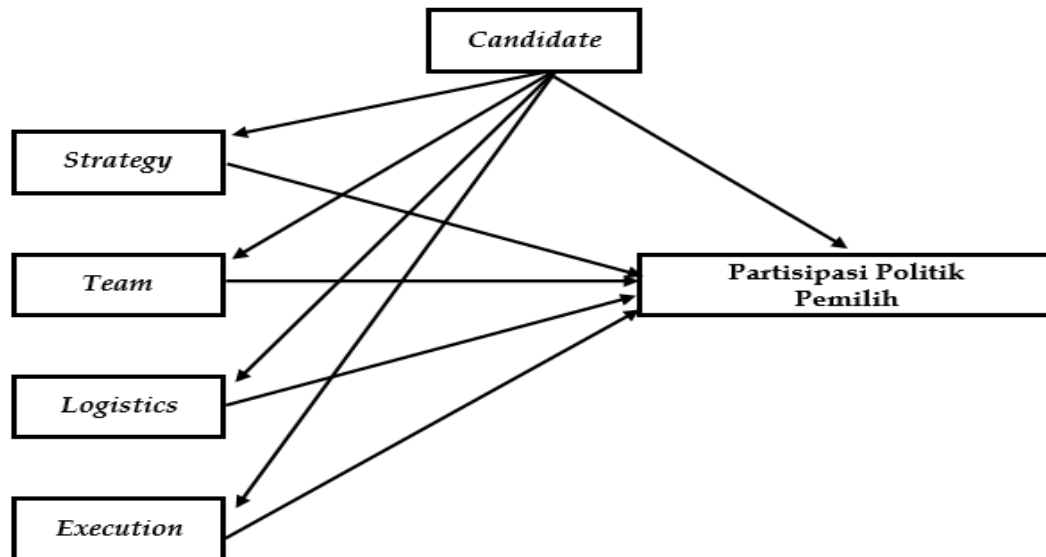


Figure 3. CASTLE Political Communication Model Chart.

The chart illustrates the CASTLE political communication model, which consists of five main elements, namely Candidate, Strategy, Team, Logistics, and Execution, which are interconnected and affect voter political participation. The CASTLE model illustrates that the effectiveness of political communication in elections consists of five main elements that are interrelated. Each element in this model has a strategic role in ensuring that political messages are clearly conveyed, structured, and able to build optimal voter engagement.

4. DISCUSSION

The Relationship between Political Communication of Election Participants and Political Participation of Voters in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City

This study examines the relationship between political communication and political participation in the 2024 General Election, with the first hypothesis stating that there is a positive relationship between the two variables. Based on the results of the analysis, the R value is 0.250 and the significance of $p = 0.000$. The very small p value indicates that the relationship between political communication and political participation in the 2024 General Election is significant.

Based on the significance value, the first hypothesis, which states that there is a positive relationship between political communication and political participation, is accepted. Furthermore, the analysis also shows a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.63, which means that 63% of the variability in political participation can be explained by the political communication variable. Meanwhile, the remaining 37% is the variability that is not explained in this study.

The relationship between political communication and political participation can be explained through various relevant communication theories. One of the theories underlying this finding is political communication theory. According to this theory, effective political communication can increase political awareness and encourage voters to participate in elections. Information on candidates, political parties, and significant issues in the election process are all communicated through political

communication. In political communication theory suggests that political communication can educate the public by providing information, socialization about the ways of elections and the use of their rights as voters. In the context of this research, well-run political communication is proven to have a positive impact on voter participation, as they feel more informed and more connected to the issues discussed (Cangara, 2009; McNair, 2003).

Furthermore, this study's findings are consistent with Halender's theory of political involvement, which was presented by Hasan et al. (2019) and demonstrates that political participation is the primary requirement in a democracy. Any involvement in the political process, whether through elections, protests, or other political actions, is considered political participation. Since effective communication enables voters to gather pertinent information about candidates, parties, and issues of interest, this theory views political communication as a factor that significantly affects the degree of voter engagement (Hasan dkk., 2019). The study's coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.63 indicates that political communication accounts for 63% of the variation in political engagement. Meanwhile, the remaining 37% is variability that is not explained in this study. Nonetheless, it can be said that effective political communication plays a significant role in increasing political participation.

Thus, it can be concluded that political communication plays a very important role in increasing political participation in the 2024 General Election. The results of this study confirm that effective political communication can encourage voters to be more actively involved in elections. Most of the variability in political participation can be explained by political communication factors, which shows the importance of appropriate communication strategies for political parties and candidates in attracting voters' interest and encouraging them to participate.

The Effect of Political Money of Election Participants on Voters' Political Participation in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City

This study examines the relationship between money politics and political participation in the 2024 General Election. The second hypothesis proposed states that there is a relationship between money politics and political participation, with the assumption that the greater the influence of money politics, the higher the political participation. Based on the results of the analysis, an R value of 0.223 was obtained with a significance of $p = 0.000$. The very small p value indicates that the relationship between money politics and political participation is very significant. Thus, the second hypothesis which states that there is a positive relationship between money politics and political participation is accepted. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.50 indicates that 50% of the variation in political participation can be explained by money politics, while the remaining 50% is variability not examined in this study.

This relationship can be further analyzed using some relevant communication theories as well as referring to the results of previous studies. Money politics, which is often considered a form of political manipulation through the provision of money or other materials to voters, can influence voters' attitudes and actions in elections. Although many consider money politics to be an unethical form of political practice, this study shows that the existence of money politics has a positive relationship with the level of political participation, which can be explained through several political communication theories.

One of the relevant theories to explain these findings is Political Communication Theory. According to this theory, political communication is a dynamic element that determines political socialization and political participation. In this case, political communication determines the behavioral patterns of political people (Maran, 2001). The pattern includes the application of money politics. In the context of this research, money in the form of political money can be seen as a means used to mobilize voters and increase their level of participation in elections. While not ideal, it can strengthen voter engagement in a direct and practical way, such as providing incentives to vote or participate in political activities. Even though money politics is frequently denounced as an immoral practice, it can be a useful instrument for voter mobilization, particularly in places where political participation is low.

In this instance, money politics serves as a motivator to promote involvement, even though it might not result in significant shifts in long-term political beliefs.

According to the study's coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.50, money politics accounts for 50% of the variation in political engagement. The remaining 50%, however, is variability that this study does not look at. This indicates that, while other factors obviously play a part, money politics has a major impact on the degree of political participation. This is consistent with the findings of Rokhmah's research, which evaluates the ethical and social implications of both activities and demonstrates how the use of money politics might alter voter political involvement (Rokhmah, 2021).

Overall, despite the fact that money politics is frequently perceived negatively, this study demonstrates that it has a positive relationship with political participation, particularly when other factors like the degree of political knowledge, the availability of resources, and educational attainment are significant determinants of voter participation. Even though there are still other factors that affect political engagement in the 2024 General Election, the R^2 coefficient of 0.50 suggests that money politics has a significant impact.

Importance of the Connection between Money Politics and Political Communication for Binjai City Voter Political Participation in the 2024 General Election

The findings demonstrated that in the 2024 Binjai City General Election, voter political participation was significantly impacted by both political communication and money politics at the same time. These two variables account for 70.2% of the variation in political engagement, according to the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.702. This suggests that effective communication tactics and money politics play a major role in voter mobilization, even while other outside factors that have not been investigated in this study have an impact on the remaining 29.8%.

Money politics is frequently seen unfavorably, but it also has certain unavoidable good effects, as demonstrated by the practice in the context of the 2024 Binjai City General Election. Increased voter turnout is one benefit, particularly in low-income areas where people are more likely to view material incentives as a kind of direct aid. Furthermore, money politics can occasionally aid in the dissemination of candidate information, particularly when paired with other political communication techniques like in-person campaigns or social gatherings. But there are also several significant drawbacks to the practice. Among these is a deterioration in democratic integrity as voters increasingly choose candidates based on their pecuniary benefits rather than their qualifications. Furthermore, this practice runs the risk of fostering a transactional political culture by encouraging a reliance on gifts throughout the election season. Additionally, public confidence in the political system may be damaged if politicians chosen through money politics fall short of expectations.

A number of tactics must be methodically put into practice in order to lessen the detrimental impact of money politics. First, improving voter education is a crucial step. Continuous political education through local media, schools and communities can build public awareness about the long-term dangers of money politics to the quality of democracy and governance. Second, transparency and supervision need to be strengthened. Institutions such as Bawaslu must improve campaign supervision and utilize technology to provide access to reporting violations quickly and easily. Third, candidates and political parties must begin to develop alternative non-material incentives, such as organizing training, providing access to employment, or social activities that directly benefit the community. These efforts will be a more ethical and sustainable campaign option.

In the context of Binjai City, there are several recommendations that can be applied by candidates so that their political strategies are not only effective but also dignified. First, candidates need to prioritize programmatic communication, namely by focusing the campaign on delivering work programs that are realistic and relevant to the needs of local communities. Second, collaborating with community leaders can be an effective strategy to build public trust and strengthen the legitimacy of political communication. Third, the use of digital media must be optimized, especially in reaching young voters. Social media such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube can be a strategic tool to deliver political

messages in an interesting, participatory and public education-oriented manner. Therefore, although money politics can increase voter turnout, its long-term impact on the quality of democracy remains detrimental, and needs to be anticipated with a more ethical, participatory and informative political communication strategy.

Analysis of Political Communication Models of Election Participants in Increasing Voters' Political Participation in the 2024 General Election in Binjai City with the CASTLE Model

Political participation is an important aspect of democracy that can be influenced by various communication factors. In the context of the 2024 General Election in Binjai City, this research found the CASTLE model (*Candidate, Strategy, Team, Logistics, and Execution*) as a political communication framework that affects voter engagement. In order to determine how effective this strategy is in raising voter political participation, ten voters participated in a Forum Group Discussion (FGD). To offer a more comprehensive viewpoint, communication theories will be used to study the CASTLE model.

Candidate

The success of a candidate in political communication is highly dependent on his credibility, the way of delivering messages, and effective media utilization. In the context of the 2024 General Election in Binjai City, election participants try to build a strong self-image by highlighting work programs that are relevant to the needs of the community. Various communication media such as public debates, social media, and direct meetings with citizens are used to convey political messages. From the perspective of interpersonal communication theory, the success of candidate communication is largely determined by their ability to build authentic relationships with voters. Hovland, Janis and Kelly's source of credibility theory emphasizes the importance of the communicator's expertise, character and closeness in influencing the effectiveness of persuasion.

In this study, the CASTLE (*Candidate, Strategy, Team, Logistics, Execution*) political communication model formulated through the Discussion Group Forum (FGD) shows that candidates are the main factor influencing voter participation. Candidates not only act as political communicators, but also as representatives of community interests who must be able to articulate visions, strategies and values that are relevant to voters. Candidates who appear credible, understand the aspirations of the community, and use effective communication strategies will be more successful in building political support. The CASTLE model emphasizes the importance of synergy between the personal aspects of candidates and communication strategies that are carried out in a planned and measurable manner.

The link with previous research further strengthens the importance of good political communication in building voter engagement. According to Cangara, social media and public discussions are the two main ways that political communication in Binjai City is facilitated by a variety of media (Cangara, 2009). Eremenko goes on to say that when information is presented in an engaging way, political engagement rises (Eremenko, 2011). This study demonstrates that candidates in Binjai prioritize significant communication strategies to gain the trust of voters, even though Rochman et al. make reference to the practice of money politics (Rochman dkk., 2024). As a result, candidates' trustworthiness, comprehension of voter requirements, and communication tactics that adjust to changing sociopolitical conditions will all play a role in their success in the 2024 elections.

Strategy

Persuasive communication and political communication theory are integrated in Binjai City's political communication approach. Cangara and McNair (2003) stress that political communication serves as a vehicle for socializing public policies and disseminating information. KPU Binjai contributes significantly in this regard by holding public consultations, webinars, and discussion forums to guarantee openness and equitable information sharing. In order to raise public knowledge and encourage involvement in the democratic process, this strategy demonstrates the use of contemporary

political media that prioritizes the use of communication infrastructure like the internet and election information centers (Cangara, 2009).

Additionally, Perloff's persuasive communication theory, which holds that the channel, the power of the message content, and the reliability of the source all have a significant impact on communication efficacy, can be utilized to explain this inclusive communication strategy (Richard, 2017). The *Elaboration Likelihood Model* (ELM), which contends that active engagement rises when people are given the chance to react and critically evaluate information, is consistent with this technique by providing a forum for community comments. Thus, KPU Binjai's public consultations and discussion forums serve as a persuasive process that enhances the legitimacy and comprehension of elections in addition to serving as a socialization tool.

Furthermore, this communication strategy is also connected to the concept of political mobilization as described by Tarigan and Ivanna, through three dimensions: cognitive (provision of information), affective (community building), and instrumental (utilization of technology and means of communication). By reaching out to voters in various regions, including remote areas, this strategy broadens access and encourages more equitable political engagement (Tarigan & Ivanna, 2024). Eremenko and Ekman & Amna emphasize the importance of technology in expanding political participation, which in the case of Binjai City is reflected through the optimization of election information centres and digital platforms (Ekman & Amnå, 2012; Eremenko, 2011). However, the success of this strategy remains highly dependent on the availability of communication infrastructure that is inclusive and equitable for all levels of society (Umro'atin & Syafi'i, 2025).

Team

From the standpoints of leadership, contemporary campaign tactics, and political communication theory, the strategic function of success teams in Binjai City political campaigns can be examined. According to Cangara, political communication serves as a means of promoting political integration and public engagement in democracy in addition to serving as a channel for information (Cangara, 2009). Success teams are crucial in this regard because they help create campaign storylines, keep internal communications strong, and build strong connections with the public via a variety of communication platforms. Their capacity to emotionally connect with voters and craft campaign messaging that aligns with popular desires is a major factor in their success.

According to McCombs and Shaw's agenda-setting hypothesis, campaign teams have a say in which major problems are chosen to be the campaign's focal points. With the correct approach, they may dominate the narrative through digital and mainstream media and draw attention to topics that are advantageous to candidates (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). Furthermore, Robbins and Judge clarify that efficient organizational communication enhances coordination, expedites decision-making, and minimizes misunderstandings, making the campaign team's internal communication effectiveness essential. The team can react swiftly to shifting political dynamics when there is a clear communication framework in place (Judge & Robbins, 2017).

Leadership skills that inspire, motivate, and foster team loyalty are critical, according to Bass and Avolio's transformational leadership theory. Leaders who are communicative and visionary will foster unity and promote innovation in campaign tactics (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Additionally, a key element of the success team's approach is the utilization of technology and data analytics. Kreiss's idea of data-driven communication explains how the team may use data to better accurately segment voters and create campaign messages that align with audience characteristics (Kreiss, 2016).

All things considered, the success team in Binjai City was largely dependent on the cooperation of a sophisticated communication plan, capable leadership, and astute technological use. With this combination, they can create a favorable candidate image, handle internal and external communication as effectively as possible, and make the candidate more appealing to voters. In this perspective, political communication is a purposeful process that can influence political choices and promote active public engagement in elections, rather than merely conveying messages.

Logistics

One strategic component of political campaigns that significantly impacts how well political communication is implemented is logistics. Effective logistics management in the context of Binjai City elections enables election participants to contact voters in rural locations as well as other societal levels. Logistics include more than simply physical distribution; it also involves resource allocation to guarantee the best possible delivery of campaign messages. Logistics is the primary tool for equally distributing campaign materials, including pamphlets, billboards, and digital content, to the general public since Cangara highlights that information accessibility is a critical component of political communication success (Cangara, 2009).

An essential understanding of the spread of political information may also be gained from Rogers et al.'s diffusion of innovation theory. According to this hypothesis, logistics can speed up the dissemination of communications to different societal groups, ranging from innovators to the slow majority (Rogers dkk., 2014). Political messages can be disseminated more rapidly and extensively with effective logistics management. However, according to Drucker's resource management model, a campaign's effectiveness is mostly determined by how the budget and other resources are distributed. Inadequate preparation can make it more difficult to disseminate information, limit the campaign team's mobility, and even cause the public to view the effectiveness of the campaign negatively (Drucker, 1999).

The success of political campaigns is further enhanced by the use of digital technologies in logistical management. Kreiss claims that using data and digital technology can increase the effectiveness of distribution and guarantee that campaign materials are seen by the appropriate people. For instance, teams can measure the distribution of campaign materials depending on voter geography and demographics using digital tracking tools (Kreiss, 2016). Managing campaign events, such public debates or in-person campaigns, is another aspect of logistics in addition to delivery. According to McQuail's mass communication theory, context is crucial for delivering political messages; well-planned events can enhance the messages' appeal and boost public participation (McQuail, 2010).

All things considered, political campaign logistics are not merely a technical component; rather, they are a crucial component of a successful political communication plan. The ability of logistics to facilitate the effective use of resources, the development of strong relationships with voters, and the distribution of political messaging determines a campaign's level of success. Therefore, enhancing the caliber of political campaigns in Binjai City requires rigorous logistics preparation and the incorporation of contemporary technology.

Execution

Political campaign execution is a crucial phase where the previously planned communication techniques are put into practice through tangible measures. In the case of the Binjai City election in 2024, this procedure blends contemporary strategies including digital media with more conventional techniques like in-person meetings and direct campaigning. The candidates' active participation in a range of campaign events and the coherence of the messages they transmit are crucial to the stage's success. Political communication views execution as more than just a technical implementation; it is also an interactive process that uses structured information exposure and direct voter involvement to influence voters' opinions.

The rhetorical theory of Aristotle offers a crucial starting point for evaluating how well a campaign is carried out. According to Aristotle, rhetoric consists of three primary elements: *pathos*, or the audience's emotional appeal, *ethos*, or the speaker's credibility, and *logos*, or the logical or reasoned argument. Candidates are more likely to sway voters in Binjai City political campaigns if they can effectively incorporate these three components into their messaging. For example, a candidate's trustworthiness increases public trust, while rational and emotional appeals increase voters' interest in the issues being discussed.

Additionally, the choice and use of suitable communication channels have a significant impact on how well a campaign is executed. McCombs and Shaw's agenda-setting hypothesis highlights how the media shapes public opinion by deciding which subjects are considered significant (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). As a result, politicians are more likely to develop a favorable public perception if they can successfully use digital and mass media to spread their campaign messages. In this sense, social media turns into an extremely useful instrument for quickly disseminating information and encouraging candidacies and voters to engage in dynamic, two-way dialogue.

A good campaign execution also requires constant monitoring and assessment. Kotler and Keller stress how crucial it is to use analytics and data to evaluate the success of campaigns. Through a variety of metrics, including the quantity of social media interactions, the number of people who attend campaign events, and changes in public opinion, digital technologies allow campaign staff to monitor public reactions in real time. In order to stay relevant and sensitive to the changing political landscape throughout the campaign, these data enable teams to make flexible adjustments to their strategy (Keller & Kotler, 2015).

The CASTLE model, in conjunction with Burleson's adaptive communication theory, provides a thorough framework for comprehending the intricacy of campaign implementation. The success of political communication depends on campaign teams' capacity to modify their communication strategies in response to media trends, audience demographics, and political dynamics (Burleson, 2010). Election participants in Binjai City can create and carry out campaigns that are not only successful in reaching voters but also flexible enough to adjust to sociopolitical shifts during the election process by understanding the relationship between strategic and practical factors.

5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This analysis shows that voter political engagement in the Binjai City general election of 2024 is significantly influenced by both political communication and money politics. 60% of the rise in voter turnout is due to political communication, and 50% is due to money politics. Together, these two factors make up 70.2%, suggesting that they are the main factors influencing public political engagement. While money politics acts as a direct incentive, it also has the potential to degrade democracy. In contrast, effective communication helps voters comprehend the programs, visions, and goals of candidates.

The study's conclusions also include the CASTLE (Candidate, Strategy, Team, Logistics, Execution) political communication model, which highlights five essential components for strategically interacting with and swaying voters. In order to increase political engagement, this model emphasizes the significance of candidate credibility, flexible communication tactics, campaign team cohesion, effective logistics, and appropriate field execution. These results support the idea that a contextualized and organized approach to political communication might increase voter turnout, especially in places like Binjai that have a strong sense of place.

Money politics has been blamed for the rise in participation rates, but its effects on the caliber of participation and the integrity of democracy are cause for grave concern. Thus, it is vitally crucial to promote ongoing political education, increase voter literacy, and improve campaign finance transparency. It is anticipated that future voter turnout will become more logical, moral, and indicative of true democratic maturity by bolstering information-based political communication and decreasing dependence on tangible rewards.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all participants in the Forum Group Discussion (FGD) conducted in Binjai City, as well as to the local authorities and community leaders who facilitated the data collection process. Special thanks are extended to the political science research community for their valuable insights and support throughout the research process.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical research guidelines, ensuring that participants' privacy and data confidentiality were maintained throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all FGD participants, and no personally identifiable information was collected without prior consent. The study also adhered to the principles of non-coercion and voluntary participation, respecting the rights and autonomy of all participants.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest in conducting this research. The findings and conclusions presented in this paper are solely the result of the research conducted and have not been influenced by any external parties.

Funding

This research was conducted without any external financial support. All expenses related to data collection, analysis, and publication were borne by the researchers themselves.

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