



Empowering Elderly Voters with Special Health Conditions in Pemecutan Kaja Village: Socialization and Education to Prevent Voter Abstention

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ABSTRACT

Elections are an important moment for every citizen to participate in determining the direction of governance. However, voter participation, especially among the elderly, faces significant challenges. In Indonesia, the low voter turnout, partly due to the phenomenon of "golput in Bahasa" (abstain voters) or not exercising the right to vote, has become a serious concern. In several previous elections, there has been a noticeable decline in participation among the elderly, indicating a lack of understanding of their important role in the democratic process. The lack of socialization is one of the factors contributing to elderly voters not exercising their voting rights. Additionally, specific health conditions often experienced by the elderly add complexity to the issue of abstaining voters. As a vulnerable group, the elderly frequently face physical and mental challenges that hinder their participation in elections. To address this issue, a community service program themed "Socialization and Education on Preventing Abstain Voters for Elderly Voters with Special Health Conditions in Pemecutan Kaja Village" is expected to provide the necessary education to encourage the elderly to exercise their voting rights in elections.

Keywords: Abstain Voters; Elderly; Elections; Socialization; Voter Participation

INTRODUCTION

Elections are a form of democratic realization in Indonesia, where every citizen has the opportunity to participate in determining the direction of governance (Razak, Sajidin, & Rivai, 2024). However, voter participation, especially among the elderly, faces significant challenges, one of which is the phenomenon of "golput in Bahasa" or abstaining from voting (Suwardi & Budiyanto, 2020; Ulum, 2011; Thovani & Syihabuddin, 2024; Syihabuddin et al., 2024). Abstaining voters is a serious concern as it reflects low political participation among the elderly, who should play an important role in the democratic process (Prajoko, 2017). This phenomenon not only reduces the votes they should cast but also indicates deeper issues

related to understanding and accessibility to the electoral process (Karlawish & Bonnie, 2007; Schrauben, 2006; Powell et al., 2012).

The research problem in this study is: "What are the factors that abstain voters among the elderly, and how can their participation in elections be increased?" This question is important to answer in order to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by the elderly in participating in elections. In several previous elections, there has been a noticeable decline in voter participation among the elderly, indicating a lack of understanding of their important role in the democratic process (Bhatti & Hansen, 2012; Binstock, 2012). Many elderly individuals do not comprehend the electoral system, both in technical and procedural aspects, leading them to choose not

to participate and remain at home (Petruzak, 2015). This highlights an urgent need to enhance socialization and education regarding elections within this group (Campbell & Lynch, 2002).

Previous studies have shown that physical limitations and the knowledge possessed by the elderly contribute to their low participation in elections (Saputra et al., 2019). Furthermore, health conditions both physical and cognitive have a significant impact on elderly participation (Prince et al., 2007; Hayward et al., 2000; Stafford et al., 2018). However, there remains a gap in research specifically addressing abstain voters among elderly individuals with special health conditions (Van Der Lee et al., 2007; Perrin et al., 1993). This gap indicates the need for further research that not only identifies the factors causing abstain voters but also explores innovative ways to enhance elderly voter participation (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2017; Naeher et al., 2007).

Health-related barriers such as chronic illnesses (Victora et al., 2011), mobility limitations (Fadilla & Sulaksono, 2023), and cognitive decline (Gurney, McPheeters, & Davis, 2006) can significantly reduce elderly engagement in voting processes. Moreover, mental health factors are also crucial, as poor mental health has been linked with reduced civic engagement (Graham, Higuera, & Lora, 2011; Prince et al., 2007).

To address this issue, a work program titled "Socialization and Education on Preventing Abstain Voters for Elderly Voters with Special Health Conditions in Pemecutan Kaja Village" has been designed to provide the necessary education. This program will be implemented in collaboration with the elderly exercise community in Banjar Semila Jati, Pemecutan Kaja Village, with the hope of raising awareness and participation among elderly voters in the elections.

Through this program, it is expected to provide a better understanding of the importance of

their voting rights and how to access the electoral process, thereby minimizing abstaining voters among the elderly.

METHODS

The method used in this program is through structured socialization activities, which are conducted in Pemecutan Kaja Village, specifically at the Playgroup of Banjar Semila Jati. The socialization activities regarding steps to prevent abstention from voting in the elections for elderly individuals with special health conditions are carried out in collaboration with KKN (Community Service) students, the local Head of the Dusun, and the Village Voting Committee (PPS) of Pemecutan Kaja.

These socialization activities consist of several forms, including: first, an educational presentation where KKN students explain the importance of participation in elections and the negative impacts of abstaining voters, including the electoral process, voting rights, and how to properly exercise the right to vote. Second, an interactive discussion is held after the presentation, providing participants with the opportunity to ask questions and share experiences related to the elections, with the aim of enhancing understanding and addressing any doubts that the elderly may have. Third, educational materials in the form of brochures and leaflets are distributed, explaining the steps to prevent abstaining voters and the importance of participating in elections, designed with easy-to-understand language and engaging illustrations to capture the attention of the elderly.

In the implementation of this activity, each party has clear responsibilities. KKN students are responsible for designing and executing the socialization activities, including presentations, discussions, and the distribution of educational materials, as well as serving as facilitators during the Q&A sessions. The Head of the Dusun supports the program by providing permission and facilities for the implementation of the activities, as well as

assisting in inviting participants from the elderly community. The Village Voting Committee (PPS) plays a role in providing information related to the electoral process and ensuring that participants understand the correct voting procedures. Meanwhile, KKN participants assist in the preparation and execution of the activities, including setting up the venue, providing presentation equipment, and accompanying participants throughout the event.

The socialization and education Program on Preventing abstain voters took place on Sunday, January 28, 2024, at 18:00 WITA, at the Playgroup of Banjar Semila Jati, North Denpasar District, Denpasar City, Bali. The target audience for this program is elderly individuals with special health conditions residing in Pemecutan Kaja Village. Through this activity, it is hoped that a better understanding of the importance of participating in elections and the negative impacts of abstaining voters can be provided to the elderly, thereby reducing the rate of abstaining voters among elderly voters.

RESULTS DAN DISCUSSIONS

The successful implementation of the socialization and education program on preventing abstain voters among the elderly in Pemecutan Kaja Village is largely due to the support of various related parties, namely the local Head of the Dusun and the Village Voting Committee (PPS) of Pemecutan Kaja. Through this socialization activity, the audience gained an understanding of the importance of participating in elections and the consequences of abstaining from voting. This socialization not only provided the audience with a deep understanding of the significance of participating in elections but also made them aware of the potential impacts that could arise from abstaining voters. Therefore, this program aims to motivate elderly individuals with special health conditions to actively participate in elections as a form of democracy in Indonesia. Additionally, the socialization encourages

elderly voters to enhance their political awareness.

Table 1. Comparison Before and After Socialization

Before Socialization	After Socialization
Low participation rates among elderly voters, particularly those with special health conditions.	The audience becomes more motivated and confident to exercise their voting rights in the elections.
Lack of understanding regarding the impact of abstention from voting) and the consequences of non-participation in elections.	The audience understands the importance of participating in elections.
Lack of political awareness.	There is an increase in political awareness among the audience.

In the previous election period, there was a decline in voter participation, particularly among the elderly with special health conditions. This highlights the need for actions that can increase the participation of elderly voters. Such improvements can be achieved by participating in or conducting socialization activities related to the elections. By engaging in these activities, elderly voters gain an understanding of the importance of participating in elections.

After gaining an understanding of the electoral process, elderly voters are expected to realize that their participation has a direct impact on governing Indonesia. This awareness is a crucial key in motivating elderly voters with special health conditions to actively participate in determining the direction of governance. With this understanding, it is hoped that the elderly will be more active in involving themselves in the elections.

Through this socialization and education initiative, it is expected that elderly voters will not only understand the importance of participation in elections but also recognize the

negative impacts of their non-participation, such as abstention from voting (See Figure 1). Awareness of abstained voters serves as an additional motivation to encourage elderly voters to take part in the electoral process.



Figure 1. Socialization Regarding Abstain Voters

It is hoped that during every election period and KKN activities, this program will always be implemented as an effort to enhance electoral participation in Indonesia, especially among elderly individuals with special health conditions.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion based on the program implemented during the Community Service (KKN) activities is that the socialization and education program on preventing abstention from voting among the elderly in Pemecutan Kaja Village has been successfully carried out. The issue of low voter participation, particularly among elderly voters with special health conditions, must be addressed seriously. Therefore, it is hoped that this socialization will motivate elderly voters to feel more confident and actively participate in the electoral process, thereby contributing to democracy in Indonesia.

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