

# Factor affecting the political knowledge of first-time voters: a survey on first-time voters in Indonesia

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**Abstract.** Democracy is prerequisite for a society that is active in politics. Political participation itself is measured by political knowledge. This study wants to find out the extent of the political knowledge of first-time voters in Depok, West Java, and what factors make up their political knowledge. This study uses six concepts developed by Penny S Visser, namely self-interest, social identification, value-relevance, media use, attitude-importance, and attitude-relevant knowledge. By using path analysis method in testing, this research produces a model of modification that has been previously developed. After calculating the fit model coefficients, this study finds that the self-interest variable was removed from the model because it was not significant. Following this, it can be concluded that the knowledge of first-time voters in Depok is influenced by only four main factors.

## 1 Introduction

In a democratic life, political participation among every member of the society is needed. Countries that are categorized as democratic are countries that provide opportunities for their citizens to participate in political activities. One component of effective political participation is political knowledge, which is significant to enable citizen to form informed opinions.. Political knowledge is important for other reasons as well. For instance, any decisions that result from procedures in which participants are exposed to a number of well-supported arguments, such as those in democratic and deliberative procedure, may be more balanced and well-justified [1].

The study of political knowledge itself has developed a lot since the emergence of the Gallub survey. After that, many studies have been developed by scientists, including Carpini and Keeter who argues that "once we have a measure that we believe to represent various behaviors related to nature, we can evaluate its performance in terms of theories that utilize these traits [2].

Besides Carpini and Keeter, there are also researchers, such as Penny S. Visser, who analyze political knowledge using other model [3]. Visser interprets the level of political

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knowledge of the members of the society in a rather controversial way. According to Visser, regardless of one's interpretation, the fact remains that most citizens do not know much about the society, policies, and institutions that make up their political system [3]. Visser also formulated a model of political knowledge [3].

## **2 Theoretical Review**

### **2.1 Attitude's Importance**

This variable is related to the importance of an issue for someone. The more important an issue is for someone, the more political knowledge a person will have on the issue. Individuals who consider an important issue, will tend to seek information about the issue, and as a result political knowledge will be high. Studies conducted by some experts prove the importance of these variables for one's political knowledge [4].

### **2.2 Self-Interest**

This variable is related to individual interest with an issue. Individuals who are interested in an issue have a greater chance of having greater knowledge related to the issue. Studies conducted by several experts show the importance of individual interest in one's knowledge [5].

### **2.3 Social Identification**

Social identification is related to the association of individuals with social groups (such as peers, work colleagues, etc.). These social groups can be a source of information for individuals, and at the same time become a pressure for individuals. When groups know information, individuals will be moved to find out the same information. Individuals feel uncomfortable when they do not know information that is known to group members. Studies conducted by several experts show the importance of social identification for political knowledge [6].

### **2.4 Value Relevance**

This variable relates to the relevance of one's attitude. Terkat with political knowledge, issues that concern individuals will affect one's political knowledge. The more relevant an issue, the higher one's political knowledge. The study conducted by Krosnick shows there is a positive relationship between political knowledge and the relevance of the issue for someone [4].

### **2.5 Media Use**

The use of media is predicted to affect the level of political knowledge. People with high media use tend to have high political knowledge. Studies conducted by many experts show there is a positive relationship between political knowledge and media consumption [7,8,9,10].

### **2.6 Attitude-Relevant Knowledge**

This concept refers to the compatibility between attitude and knowledge. This concept is generally measured by the extent to which someone holds discussions and conversations with other people about political issues. A number of studies show a positive relationship between political discussion and one's political knowledge [11,12].

### 3 Research methods

This study uses a survey method. The study was conducted on high school students in the city of Depok, West Java, Indonesia. The population of this research is all high school student students in Depok City. The research sample was taken randomly as many as 400 students. The concept and operationalization are as follows

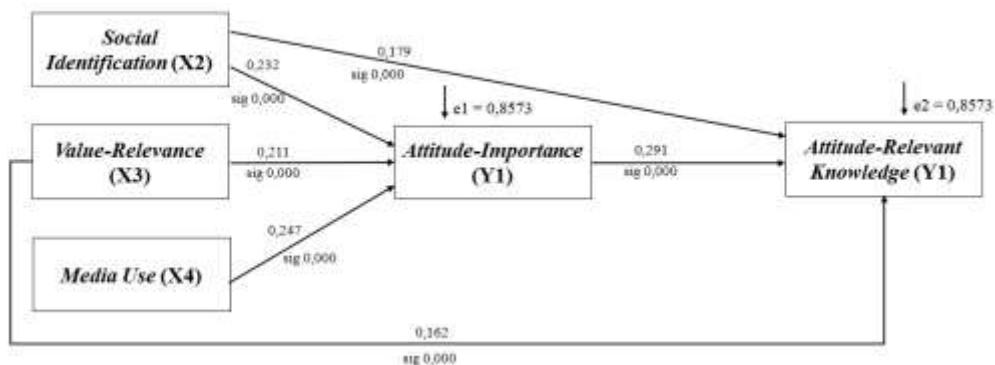
Table 1. Concept Operationalitation

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Indicator</b>
Attitude Importance [13]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How important an object of attitude towards them personally is.</li> <li>2. How deeply they care about that.</li> <li>3. How concerned they are about that</li> </ol>
Self-Interest [13]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How vital their interests in this problem.</li> <li>2. How big the impact on them personally is.</li> <li>3. How easy for them to think of ways the problem affects them.</li> <li>4. How relevant the problem with their lives is.</li> </ol>
Value Relevance [13]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To what extent they think this issue is related to their personal values.</li> <li>2. How often they assume that their attitude towards the issue is related to their values.</li> <li>3. To what extent their attitude is based on their Ordinal-Likert general beliefs about how life should be lived.</li> </ol>
Social Identification [13]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How many problems affect the people they care about,</li> <li>2. How easy for them to think about ways the problem can affect their close friends.</li> <li>3. How much their close friends care about this problem.</li> </ol>
Media Use [14]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Selectivity</li> <li>2. Intentionally</li> <li>3. Utilitarianism</li> <li>4. Involvement</li> <li>5. Imperviousness to Influence</li> </ol>
Attitude-Relevant Knowledge [14]	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political Discussion</li> <li>2. Political Participation</li> </ol>

### 4 Results

Based on the interpretation of the data above, the following is a description of the model and equation. The adjustment of the model above is based on Ingram, Cope, Harju, and Wuensch' argument which states that the purpose of cutting the model is to illustrate the results of the analysis carried out by statistical software [15]. Model adjustments are made based on the significance value that is above the significance value threshold of 0.05.

Adjustment of the above model illustrates the three cutting paths. First, the path between Self-Interest to Attitude-Importance is cut because the significance value is above 0.05 (0.180). Second, the path of the Self-Interest variable to Attitude-Relevant Knowledge is also cut because the significance value is above the 0.05 threshold (0.119). Third, the path between Media Use to Attitude-Relevant Knowledge is cut as well because the significance value is 0.622.



The objective of testing the fit coefficient model is to find out which model of the basic model or model that has been adjusted is better, based on regression testing. Joreskog suggests that if there are two models that are made the choice, then the best model of competing Omnibus Test must be further tested and determined. The formula used to measure Fit Coefficients is:

$$x2 = - (N - df) \log Q.$$

Table 2. R Square Basic Model

<b>Exogen</b>	<b>Endogen</b>	<b>R Square</b>
<i>Self Interest</i>	<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	0,061
<i>Social Identification</i>	<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	0,232
<i>Value-Relevance</i>	<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	0,211
<i>Media Use</i>	<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	0,247
<i>Self Interest</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,072
<i>Social Identification</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,179
<i>Value-Relevance</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,162
<i>Media Use</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,023
<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,291

Table 3. R Square Adjusted Model

<b>Exogen</b>	<b>Endogen</b>	<b>R Square</b>
<i>Social Identification</i>	<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	0,232
<i>Value-Relevance</i>	<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	0,211
<i>Media Use</i>	<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	0,247
<i>Social Identification</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,179
<i>Value-Relevance</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,162
<i>Attitude-Importance</i>	<i>Attitude-Relevant Knowledge</i>	0,291

Based on these calculations, for a significance level of 0.05 and a degree of freedom  $df = 3$ , a critical value of 0.705 is obtained. A comparison between critical values and  $x^2$  values indicates that the  $x^2$  value is greater than the critical value. Thus, it can be concluded that the adjusted model has a better fit model than the base model. Therefore, the adjusted model is accepted.

## 5 Conclusion

In general, the purpose of this study is to find the relationship between self-interest, social identification, value-relevance, media use, attitude, and attitude-relevant knowledge among first-time voters in Depok using path analysis. Based on the results of the research above, three out of nine proposed hypotheses were found incorrect. Based on these findings, it can be interpreted that the model formed in this study is a factor that influences one’s political knowledge (Attitude-Relevant Knowledge). Someone can be influenced by social identification and value-relevance directly and can also be influenced by social identification, value-relevance and media use through the variables of attitude-importance.

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