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Democratic Literacy of First-Time Voters in the 2024 Election Through Social Media Consumption

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ARTICLE INFO	A B S T R A C T
    Keywords: Democracy Literacy Election, First-Time Voters, Social Media.	Social media plays a significant role in giving information to first-time voters. It can also be a public sphere for first-time voters to participate in the Presidential Election. The knowledge of first-time voters is influenced by sociological and psychological factors, which are different from the previous generation. This study aims to know democracy literacy among first-time voters, particularly in using social media. Democratic literacy encourages citizens to speak up bravely and criticize the policy. This study uses qualitative research with the Focus Group Discussion method with eight participants. The participants of the FGD are first-time voters actively involved in the student press. The results show that first-time voters have a foundation of democratic literacy so that they are able to analyse the political issues on social media and the hoaxes around political issues. Social media becomes the primary medium for the participants to access political issues, ranging from Instagram, X, and TikTok. These first-time voters conduct only two activities when using social media, namely consuming and participating in political issues, such as giving *likes* on a post from politicians. However, they do not create political information on social media and choose private spaces to discuss political issues because they are aware of the risks and consequences of discussing politics on social media.
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INTRODUCTION

First-time voters' involvement is important for the success of the 2024 election in Indonesia. Based on data from the General Elections Commission (KPU), there are 46.8 million first-time voters, who are Generation Z (17 to 21 years old) (Finaka, 2024). This is a significant number because, from the total of the Final Voters List (DPT), the first-time voters will contribute the most votes besides millennials. The first-time voters may include high school students and college students who will be using their right to vote for the first time. Based on the Voter Education Guideline (Pedoman Pendidikan Pemilih) book from KPU (Komisi Pemilihan Umum Republik Indonesia, 2024), first-time voters are considered strategic targets, as they are first-time voters who require a good understanding of democracy.

In making political choices, Sentosa and Karya (2022) argue that first-time voters rely on some factors, including ethnicity, popularity, and emotional proximity. Another factor that may have an influence is social media. Saldana, McGregor, and de Zuniga (2015) explain that social media consumption increases political knowledge and familiarity with political issues. Social media has a strong impact on determining political participation. A study from Arumsari, Septina, and Saputro (2020) showed that social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter, are used by intellectuals to discuss political issues, including elections. Personal opinions become public opinion once they go viral and are reported in the mass media. During the presidential campaign in 2019, opinions from intellectuals on social media significantly increased the participation of first-time voters. First-time voters accessed 63.5% of information about the 2019 presidential election from social media (Arumsari,

Septina, & Saputro, 2020). Benedetto, Wieners, Dijkstra, and Stoof (2023) state that social media also influences voters' political views. Social media encourages them to seek similar political views, resulting in the creation of the echo chamber. In this echo chamber, all opinions, political tendencies, and users' beliefs about a certain topic will be reinforced due to repeated interactions with peers or sources that have similar tendencies. Prihatini (2020) argues that social media is popular in Indonesia for conducting political communications. Twitter, for example, played a role in the legislative election and to presidential election in 2014 because the candidates used it to interact with voters. Social media popularity in Indonesia may also be an impact of the high internet penetration. Research from APJII (Indonesian Association of Internet Service Providers) in 2024 reports that internet penetration in Indonesia has increased from 78,19% in 2023 to 79,5% in 2024. Meanwhile, the contribution of internet usage in Indonesia is dominated by Generation Z, accounting for 34.40%. This generation is the first-time voters in the election. The second contributors are millennials with 30,62%. The data shows that the popularity of social media as a medium for political communication is because the largest voter target in the election is Generation Z and millennials.

According to Zollo, Cinelli, Etta, Cerqueti, and Quattrociocchi (2025), social media plays a significant role in political discourse. Social media becomes a tool for political actors to disseminate a partisan narrative, which is framed in short slogans using hashtags. The microblogging feature in social media to share short messages facilitates political actors to share information. Social media also serves as the main information source about political content. Additionally, social media also

facilitates political actors to influence voters' choices by collaborating with political influencers. The political influencers will assist political actors in informing about their political stance, including their vision, candidate position, and political party. The influencers also help political actors to interact with the voters, to mobilise voters using the emotional approach, to ensure the candidate appears regularly in influencers' content, and to win public trust for the candidate (Borchers, 2025). Peter and Muth (2023) also emphasize that youth and adults can understand political information from influencers. Youth and adults are willing to accept knowledge from influencers when they have built a parasocial relationship with the influencers (Cheng, Chen, Peng, & Shoenberge, 2024).

When it comes to first-time voters, they have different political attitudes compared to the previous generation. Sentosa and Karya (2022) note that first-time voters have characteristics such as being volatile, apathetic, and lacking political knowledge and tend to follow their peers. But on the other hand, first-time voters use social media to increase their political knowledge. Study from APJII (2024) supports this argument by stating that internet contents that are frequently accessed by first-time voters are political news (33,40%), the second by sports (41.36%).

Even so, social media as their primary source of political information is are medium that dominantly spreads hoaxes. Social media accounts for 83.11% in spreading hoaxes compared to chat media (40.45%) and news (15,48%) (APJII, 2024). Kasman et al. (as cited in Santoso, Setyaningsih, & Supadiyanto, 2024) stated that social media facilitates the sharing of hoax news and attracts many users, indirectly contributing to the spread of fake news, which has many negative impacts. Besides, children and youth are still considered a vulnerable group to the negative influence of the internet. Livingstone (2011) states that children and youth are the most enthusiastic, flexible users of technologies. Technology in this sense is the media that provides resources to build children and youth's identity and to mediate their social relations. However, children and youth are considered to lack understanding of the whole concept of information and its consequences; they are also considered to have limited self-defense in facing those consequences. Meanwhile, the internet may expose them to misinformation, pornography, violence, cyberbullying, and hate speech (Lutfia, Wibowo, Widyakusumastuti, & Angeline, 2021). In politics, first-timer voters are vulnerable to hoaxes, hate speech, or violence in political content. Negative content consumed by first-timer voters may impact their participation in the elections. Hence, political education for youth is important to increase their involvement and participation in politics (Pontes, Henn, & Griffiths, 2019).

Political involvement and participation of first-time voters are a symbol of democracy. Mason (in Santoso, Pramesti, Puspita, & Wulandari, 2024) states that democracy functions effectively when the citizens are well-informed. Democratic literacy is one of the tools needed by first-time voters to have the required knowledge about politics. UNESCO (2022) notes that literacy is linked to individual learning to achieve certain objectives, develop knowledge, and increase an individual's participation in the broader community and society. Moreover, a democratic, literate citizen understands their rights and responsibilities and can advocate for policy. Democracy, according to Morais (2017), refers to elections to freely choose political functions.

Morais (2017) argues that democratic literacy is more than just an understanding of political information. Democratic literacy enables individuals to analyze and connect information (facts, evaluations, concepts, and

ideas) from various sources. Democratic literate individuals will critically evaluate what they read and express it in coherent writing. Morais (2017) emphasises that there is a close, reciprocal relationship between literacy and democracy. The more literate voters are, the more actively and effectively they participate in governance. The less literate voters are, the weaker their involvement in public debate and collective decision-making.

Democratic literacy is needed by first-time voters to critically choose information from the media. Furthermore, Nasrullah (as cited in Sanityastuti, Virga, & Zahra, 2024) states that digital literacy also requires every user to be responsible for the content on social media itself. This study aims to investigate how first-time voters use social media to access information about politics. This study particularly focuses on first-time voters who join the student press, assuming that they have concerns about state affairs. Referring to its history, the student press contributed to political movements against oppression from the government. Student press also actively disseminates information about political conditions (Persma, id.., n.d.). It is assumed that this specific group has the foundation of democratic literacy in the 2024 election.

There are various and evolving studies about social media and elections or political stances, for example, from Borchers (2025), Zollo, Cinelli, Etta, Cerqueti, and Quattrociocchi (2025), Benedetto, Wieners, Dijkstra, and Stoof (2023), Sentosa and Karya (2022), and Arumsari, Septina, and Saputro (2020). However, few studies specifically discuss social media consumption, democratic literacy, and first-time voters among student press members.

Media consumption may be related to users' motivation to socialise and users' self-actualisation. Media is not only considered as technology but also conveys certain messages, creating togetherness and real interactions (Dunas & Vartanov, 2020). Taneja, Webster, Malthouse, and Ksiazek (2012) state that there are two approaches to analyzing motivational factors of media users. Firstly, a structure that refers to a specific program schedule, in which ratings and audience share serve as key indicators of success. Secondly, a psychological factor that refers to needs and media choices. Those two factors are based on users' awareness of using media to accomplish certain objectives. Motivations for using media are discussed in Uses and Gratification Theory (U&G). Falgoust et al. (2022) explain five assumptions of U&G theory: 1) Media usage depends on the objective, 2) audiences are active media users, 3) media compete against other sources to satisfy users' needs, 4) audiences are aware of their motivation in using media, and 5) audiences can evaluate media content and the satisfaction they get from the media. Whiting and Williams (2013) describe 10 users' motives based on U&G theory, which are social interactions, information seeking, leisure, entertainment, relaxation, communication, comfort, expression, information sharing, and knowledge building on a certain issue.

Shao (2009) developed the U&G theory and stated that in social media, audiences conduct three activities, which include consumption, participation, and production. Consumption refers to an individual's activity to see, read information in the media without participating in anything. Meanwhile, participation relates to users' interaction, like sharing, commenting, or giving likes. Production, on the other hand, refers to producing and publishing content in the form of texts, pictures, and videos.

Democracy practice depends on citizens' level of knowledge (Mason et al., 2018). News media, both traditional and digital, play a significant role as the pillar of democracy. Media should be free, credible, and independent because the media function to influence voters' knowledge in making the

right decisions (Borchardt, 2019). The quality of the news and information consumed by the citizen may decide whether a democratic country can evolve or at least survive (Ukka, 2019, p. 229). Thus, democratic literacy becomes the foundation of a democratic society.

To choose a responsible leader and to criticize people-oriented public policies, citizens need competencies and skills to identify, understand, and interpret the information they consume. It is important that citizens can critically analyse and connect various information sources to obtain a good quality of information. These competencies and skills are crucial to make citizens become active agents in a democratic society (Morais, 2018).

Literacy is a lifelong learning process that enables individuals to achieve their goals, develop knowledge and potential, and fully participate in their communities and the broader society (UNESCO, 2022). Fardiah et al. (2020) emphasise that media literacy includes an individual's ability to access, analyse, and communicate media messages. Similar to Fardiah, Park (2012) also states that media literacy is linked to the ability to access, understand, and create media messages. Park (2012) divides media literacy indicators into device literacy and content literacy. Based on the above illustration, media literacy is an important aspect for citizens to master to analyse media messages.

On the other hand, democratic literacy supports citizens to be more aware that they have equal rights to freely articulate their views and opinions (Prah, 2007). Democratic Literacy refers to the capacity development of the society to be heard, seen, and acknowledged as a citizen. It can be obtained by developing skills to identify and understand problems in the surroundings, using logical arguments to understand problems from various perspectives, and providing inputs for problem-solving with credible data. Democratic literacy can also support the society to bravely voice their aspirations and criticise policies (North, 2009). Literacy activities, including democratic literacy, are dynamic processes that involve advocates and participants (Kern et al., 2018). Democratic literacy advancement can be obtained through education that can improve citizens' knowledge to be active agents who educate others to develop the abilities and skills needed to understand democratic issues.

This study focuses on first-time voters, who consist of youth aged 17 years or not yet 17 years but already married (Wardhani, 2018). This group is those who will use their rights to vote for the first time in elections. First-time voters are also voters who have access to technology-based information. Based on research from APJII 2024, internet penetration for the 12-27-year-old age group is 87,02% from 221.563.479 internet users, dominated by students with internet penetration up to 95,92%. This data shows that first-time voters are the largest internet users in Indonesia. However, the high level of internet penetration may also increase the potential for exposure to hoaxes. Hence, first-time voters need democratic literacy to minimize that risk.

Meanwhile, social media serves an important role in giving preliminary information for first-time voters about political issues. Even so, their participation in politics is still low due to their lack of understanding about political parties and political actors (Perangin-angin & Zainal, 2018). Compared to studies from Perangin-angin and Zainal (2018), which were conducted in the 2014 election and without specific criteria for the participants, this study can provide social media usage by first-time voters who join the student press. The research question is how digital literacy is among the first-time voters who join in press student group.

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METHODOLOGY

A qualitative approach is employed in this study, which is suitable for exploring and understanding an individual's or group's interpretation of a certain phenomenon or social issue (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Data is collected using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) to capture heterogeneity and the unique perspective of a certain group, in this case related to first-time voters as members of the students' press (Hennink et al., 2020, p. 139, 234). By the study's objective to describe democratic literacy of first-time voters through their social media consumption, FGD can provide heterogeneous data from participants. Participants in this study are first-time voters in the 2024 election who are in the 17 to 21-year-old age group.

To select suitable candidates, purposive sampling was employed to ensure that potential participants possessed sufficient knowledge and experience regarding the issues under investigation. Potential participants were sought through student press organizations across Yogyakarta, and they were contacted via WhatsApp to inform them about the study's purpose. Afterwards, a face-to-face meeting was arranged to discuss their rights and responsibilities in participating in the study. Participants were asked to provide voluntary consent by signing a form indicating their willingness to participate. The researchers also sought permission to use the participants' data while ensuring their identities remained confidential to respect their privacy. Each participant was offered an incentive of Rp 100,000 (USD 6.78) in cash and a goodie bag for their participation in the study.

FGD was conducted on Sunday, 22 November 2022, for two hours. The FGD was guided by the moderator, who began with small talk to establish a relaxed atmosphere, followed by a discussion based on a predetermined question guide. The FGD guide focused on democratic literacy and social media consumption.

Data was analysed using Braun and Clark's thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 35), including (1) data familiarization: the researchers transcribed the FGD recordings following the data collection phase. The transcripts were then meticulously studied while listening to the recordings to ensure the accuracy and comprehensiveness of the data. (2) Coding: The researchers coded the data relevant to the research questions. (3) Theme development: codes were organized into broader themes or patterns. first-time voters, democratic literacy, and social media usage, (4) reviewing themes: critically evaluating the initial themes to ensure they can answer research questions, (5) defining themes: providing explanations for each theme and identifying the key patterns, (6) producing the report.

All aspects of methodology were reviewed and agreed upon by LPPM Universitas Atma Jaya Yogyakarta to ensure that the study was conducted ethically.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

First-time voters' Democratic literacy

Based on the data, participants as first-time voters understand democracy as a political process, a government system, and elections. Meanwhile, the democratic activities, according to the participants, include choosing leaders, joining discussions, conducting deliberation, and joint decision-making. The data shows that the majority of the participants have literacy about democracy, as shown in the statements below. Everyone owns equal rights. Democracy can be related to fair government. So, when the government promises that everyone has equal rights, they must fulfil it. (Participant 1, FGD, June 2023)

> Democracy is closely linked to freedom of speech. Thus, if someone is not satisfied with the government's policy or

realization, people can and have the right to voice it. (Participant 2, FGD, June 2023)

Democratic literacy is also reflected in participants' statements about issues in Indonesia. According to the participants, democracy in Indonesia faces its challenges, as stated below:

> We can see that many politicians think only about their own selves and their political parties. (Participant 2, FGD, June 2023)
>
> I think the politicians mostly think about themselves or their own families. They corrupt people's money to satisfy themselves. (Participant 3, FGD, June 2023)

Participants' understanding of the issues around democracy practices helps them consider their choice of members of parliament. This consideration is manifested in their decision to follow politicians' social media accounts, like Instagram, X, and TikTok. These social media accounts become their information source to follow the politicians' work. The majority of the participants admit that they tend to follow social media accounts from politician who seems close to the people, demonstrating genuine goodwill toward the people and delivering measurable performance rather than simply showcasing it. Besides, participants also tend to follow politicians' accounts that seem to resonate with millennial generations and demonstrate a humorous, interactive, entertaining, and engaging personality. This preference for certain accounts stems from the popularity of politicians who frequently appear on their social media timelines. Participants' interest in the content motivates them to follow the account. Below are statements from the participants.

> I do not follow Ganjar (Pranowo) on TikTok, but his content appears often (on my timeline). I think his content is interesting. Oh, Ganjar seems like a fun person and is entertaining, and he can joke with the people. (Participant 4, FGD, June 2023)
>
> Ganjar (Pranowo) is very interactive, as you can see in the captions and the comment box. Then there's also the way Ganjar presents himself—his videos can be edited with text overlays, which makes them more appealing (Participant 1, FGD, June 2023)

The data also shows that social media accounts can give information about politicians' activities. According to participants, they also interact with the account by commenting, giving likes, or sharing the content with their friends. Interestingly, participants think it through before interacting with the account, as can be seen below.

> I will give the post a 'like' to show I thank them for their work. (Participant 5, FGD, June 2023)
>
> There are many negative comments on social media. Not many people have a high literacy level. So, I tend not to comment because there are too many negative comments. (Participant n, FGD, June 2023)

Even when the participants interact with the politicians' accounts, participants still feel doubtful about the politicians' work. For example, participants only give a 'like' because the politicians are entertaining. The findings show that participants have not really understood the vision from the politicians whom they will choose. It is shown in the statement below.

> Yeah, personally, it's the same for me—I like them because they can give us good humor. I enjoy that, but how they carry out their work is a whole different matter. So, you can't mix their job performance with their funny or entertaining personality. (Participant 1, FGD, June 2023)

First-voters' social media usage

For participants, social media provides information that is more concise and easier to understand, as stated below.

> Based on what was explained earlier, reading the law itself feels tedious—it's long, and we might not even understand it. But when it comes from the news or social media, it's much easier to understand (Participant 4, FGD, June 2023).

> Social media is very useful for those of us who are generally reluctant to read laws filled with numerous articles, especially since we don't need to read every single one of them. (Participant 2, FGD, June 2023)

Participants also consider the impact of their social media algorithm, which makes them choose social media as their information source. According to participants, information about politics is consumed by many people. Thus, it always appears on their timeline and makes the participants consume it too.

Even so, participants also search for credible social media accounts to fulfill their needs for information. Based on the data, Participants realize that information about politics may contain hoaxes. Participants tend to choose credible sources to avoid hoaxes. The trusted source, according to participants, is official accounts that have been verified or have a blue tick on their profile. Participants also distinguish between accounts that share important information and those that merely spread gossip, as expressed in the following statements.

> Usually, in those accounts, there are replies—some netizens believe the account, and others don't. So, like it or not, I have to double-check whether the information is true or not. On the other hand, I also follow social media accounts that are already verified, like for the elections, I've seen information on the KPU's Twitter or Instagram accounts. (Participant 3, FGD, June 2023)

> So far, the accounts I follow seem to share accurate news. Whether the news is true or not depends on the account itself. There are a lot of accounts that mainly focus on gossip, like Lambe Turah, for example. They don't just cover entertainment but also talk about politics. But I also reflect on accounts like Folkative or other verified ones. (Participant 1, FGD June 2023).

The findings of this study show that participants are aware of hoaxes around election news on social media. Their knowledge about this is gained by reading the comments on the post. If participants find an indication of hoaxes, they will verify the information through more credible sources like news media. Moreover, the data also show that participants are worried about whether they are involved in spreading hoaxes. Thus, before they share, they choose to verify the information first.

Participants' awareness about hoaxes and their danger makes them cautious in giving comments or getting involved in discussions related to political issues. The majority of the participants agree to discuss political topics with friends or family instead of on social media. For participants, social media is analogous to a jungle full of positive and negative views. Participants said that discussing political issues in a private sphere is safer and more comfortable. This is reflected in the statement below.

> If a friend discusses a political issue intensively on their social media account, I will contact them privately. I will continue the discussion, even if it's pro and contra, but it's fun because it can add to my knowledge. (Participant 2, FGD June 2023)

> Social media is like a jungle full of risks, which is why I prefer not to engage in open discussions. I'm either afraid or simply reluctant to face verbal attacks from people who disagree with

me. That kind of experience doesn't just affect my mental well-being—it also gradually decreases my confidence to participate in discussions. (Participant 6, FGD Juni 2023)

Democratic literacy among first-time voters who participate in student press organizations

Political involvement and participation of first-time voters are manifestations of democracy. Mason (in Santoso, Pramesti, Puspita, & Wulandari, 2024) argues that democracy depends on well-informed citizens to function effectively. Democratic literacy becomes an important aspect to guide first-time voters to acquire knowledge about politics. The findings indicate that participants, who are members of the student press, have literacy about democracy. As first-time voters, they understand how democracy is implemented and its implications for national progress. Participants' democratic literacy drives them to participate in the 2024 election.

Participants' understanding of democracy is not obtained instantly. Their active engagement in the student press drives them to slowly understand national issues. In the student press organisations, participants are trained to be critical in discussing social issues. Their critical thinking is usually proven in their published article of publication. Even though student press activities are seen only as a training ground to publish an issue, they also train participants to think critically, bravely state their opinion, express their ideas, and be criticised by the readers. This sense of critical thinking is an essential part of democratic literacy (North, 2009).

In student press activities, participants are involved in a group dynamic to reach the organisation's objective. One of the objectives is to be a space to discuss issues about journalism and socio-political dynamics in society (Persma, id). To achieve this goal,

gathering and producing written publications has become a routine activity. Furthermore, when there is a movement to protest the government's policy, student press members will organize to collectively voice their rights. The dynamics in student press activities drive the members to be literate. The dynamics of the press serve as evidence that democratic literacy is a dynamic process involving participants (Kern et al., 2018).

Knowledge about politics is no longer seen as taboo or a heavy topic. Political issues are actively discussed in the student press and make the participants familiar with them. Discussion about political issues enhances participants' knowledge and skills and makes them active agents in Indonesian democracy (Kern et al., 2018; UNESCO, 2022). Additionally, as active agents, they hold equal rights to voice their opinions on any given issue. Their understanding of equal rights can be identified as democratic literacy (Prah, 2007).

Democratic literacy through social media consumption

Social media, such as Instagram, TikTok, and X, is popular among first-time voters. The findings show that social media has become the primary source of information for them to get political information. For participants, social media provides easy and unlimited access to information, is interactive, and enables them to widen their networks. Those benefits motivate them to use social media.

Meanwhile, participants conduct three activities in social media, namely consumption, participation, and distribution. Those activities can be seen as a development of Uses and Gratification (U&G) theory in social media (Shao 2009). Consumption is related to participants' way of seeing, reading, or enjoying information in social media; in this context, it refers to their consumption of information related to the 2024 election. Not only that, but participants from the student

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press also make political information a regular issue to discuss.

Political issues become popular among first-time voters, particularly participants in this study. Political issues always appear in their social media algorithm. It shows that participants tend to look or search for political issues, even if it is part of their activities as a student press member. Participants' democratic literacy shows that knowledge about political issues is a priority for them. It supports the study from APJII that political news on the internet is the most accessed information by first-time voters (33.40%), the second highest after sports (41,36%).

Meanwhile, participation conducted by participants is related to user-to-user interaction, like 'share', 'comment', and give 'like' (Shao, 2009). Based on the findings, particularly related to political issues, the process of 'share' is done after participants verify the information. The majority of the participants have democratic literacy and can filter negative information. Participants are aware that negative information, such as hoaxes, can appear on their social media timelines. Data shows that in response to hoaxes, participants verify the information to be sure that it is credible. By verifying information, participants show caution in sharing information that might be dangerous for them and others.

Participants also give 'likes' to posts from politicians who participate in the 2024 election. Participants usually give 'likes' to politicians whom they consider relatable to young people. 'Likes' are usually given to posts from politicians when they undergo their program in society. Participants tend to like light, entertaining posts with good visuals. Participants are inclined to choose representatives they perceive as being closely connected to the people. The act of liking posts reflects that first-time voters are also involved in analyzing information. It shows that first-time voters' democratic literacy also

involves a thinking process on political information (Fadilah, 2020).

On the other hand, the 'sharing' process, which is based on verification, impacts how participants give comments on political issues. The findings show that comments or discussions on political issues will be taken to the private sphere with their close community, like family or friends. For participants, the private sphere can give more clarity instead of ambiguity and can also be verified. Participants are aware that social media is like a jungle that drives the audience to positivity or negativity. This demonstrates participants' ability to access, analyse, and communicate political information in line with the principles of democratic literacy (Fardiah, 2020; Park, 2012)

Meanwhile, production activities in social media include the production of texts, pictures, audio, and video (Shao, 2009). However, it is different when it comes to political issues. Participants showed hesitation or reluctance to create texts, visuals, or audio content concerning political issues. They are aware that they still lack understanding about political issues. Thus, they are hesitant to share any posts about politics. Participants' preference for the private sphere shows that they understand the risks of sharing about issues that they have yet to master. The private sphere in the social media era is still needed by first-time voters to avoid a negative impact on social media.

Participants only do two active activities related to political information as first-time voters on social media: consumption and participation. The two activities are related to the fact that social media is participants' main source for information related to politics. First-time voters have their preferences for searching for information. Some choose X because most politicians are active on this platform and bring up good discussions. Some choose Instagram because they prefer the visual design and captions, and others choose

TikTok because the contents are short videos, simple, and easy to understand. The data shows that participants are aware of their aims in accessing social media. They are also able to evaluate media content, as well as be aware of their satisfaction with the contents, which follows the Uses and Gratification theory's assumption (Falgoust, 2022).

Whiting and Williams (2013) identified ten audience motivations for using social media, based on the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. Those factors include social interaction, information seeking, leisure, entertainment, relaxation, communication, comfort, expression, information sharing, and knowledge building on a certain issue. In the context of the 2024 election, social media is mostly used by first-time voters for obtaining information about political issues, social interaction, communication, relaxation, and knowledge building.

Based on the data, first-time voters from the student press already have the foundation of democratic literacy. It helps them to think and act critically when consuming political information on social media, such as choosing the social media, following only verified accounts, commenting wisely on social media posts, and evaluating hoaxes. Participants choose not to do reckless activities on social media because they are aware of the positive and negative impacts of discussing politics on online platforms. This study demonstrates that first-time voters are not merely individuals lacking political knowledge, but they already have political awareness, as reflected in their habit of discussing political issues, including through student press organizations.

CONCLUSION

Democratic literacy of first-time voters, who join a student press organization, is internalised in their democratic lives that start in the student press' activities. First-time voters are trained to discuss and respond to social and political issues as a part of the student press's vision. In the dynamic of student press, where equal rights are acknowledged, individual members can express their opinions freely. It ultimately fosters democratic literacy, particularly among first-time voters. Democratic literacy in first-time voters drives them to be critical of political issues and the government's policies. First-time voters are aware that their involvement in political issues is an essential aspect of the success of a democracy.

Democratic literacy impacts first-time voters' social media consumption. They are aware that social media is their primary source of information. Moreover, they are also aware of the positive and negative impact of the media they consume. The findings demonstrate that first-time voters follow several processes on social media platforms, including choosing political issues, choosing accounts to follow, and verifying political Writing—Conceptual Draft, Methodology, Data Gathering, Analysis, Data Curation, Supervision, Reviewing, And Editing. Birgitta Bestari Puspita: Writing, Methodology, Data Gathering, Editing, Analysis, Reviewing, and Data Curation. Nobertus Ribut Santoso: Data Gathering, Analysis, Data Curation, and Reviewing. Theresia Diyah Wulandari: Data Gathering, Analysis, and Data Curation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

We certify that there is no conflict of interest with any financial, personal, or other relationships with other people or organizations related to the material discussed in the manuscript.

development of similar research and knowledge for the wider community. Authors declare that there is no potential conflict of interest in this study.

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