

THE EFFECT OF EDUCATION LEVEL AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN THE 2014 ELECTION IN MAKASSAR CITY

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ARTICLE HISTORY

Received : 20-10-2025

Revised : 07-11-2025

Accepted : 30-11-2025

KEYWORDS

*education level,
access to information,
community participation,
general election,
Makassar City.*

ABSTRACT

The Influence Of Education Level And Access To Information On Public Participation In The 2024 Election In Makassar City. Postgraduate Program Makassar State University. (Supervised by Ibrahim and Hasruddin) This study aims to analyze the effect of education level and access to information on community participation in the 2024 General Election in Makassar City. This research employs a quantitative approach using a survey method. The population consists of residents in Tamalanrea, Biringkanaya, Bontoala, and Tallo Districts, with a sample of 81 respondents selected using the Slovin formula. Data were collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis. The results indicate that education level has a significant effect on community participation in the 2024 General Election, as evidenced by a t-test significance value of 0.003. Access to information also shows a significant effect on community participation, with a t-test significance value of 0.000. Simultaneously, education level and access to information significantly influence community participation, as indicated by the F-test significance value of 0.000. The coefficient of determination (R Square) of 0.438 shows that education level and access to information explain 43.8% of the variation in community participation, while the remaining 56.2% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that improving the quality of education and ensuring equitable access to information play an important role in encouraging more active and meaningful community participation in democratic processes, particularly in general elections.

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INTRODUCTION

Political participation is one of the main pillars in maintaining the sustainability of a democratic system. Citizen involvement in political processes, particularly in general elections, serves as an indicator of how well public aspirations are represented and how governmental legitimacy is established. In Indonesia, the dynamics of political participation continue to evolve in line with developments in social, economic, and information technology sectors. This condition

makes the study of factors influencing political participation increasingly relevant, especially within complex urban contexts such as the city of Makassar.

Data from the General Elections Commission (KPU) indicates an increase in the number of voters who exercised their voting rights in the 2019 and 2024 elections in Makassar City. Nevertheless, this rise in voter turnout does not fully reflect the quality of political participation, as there are still segments of society that remain passive or reluctant to engage in political discussions and decision-making processes. This suggests the presence of gaps in knowledge, political awareness, and access to information that may influence citizens' political behavior.

The level of education is one of the key factors contributing to the formation of political behavior. Education not only enhances literacy and critical thinking skills but also broadens individuals' understanding of their rights and responsibilities as citizens. Individuals with higher levels of education tend to possess better political understanding and stronger political efficacy, motivating them to participate more actively in political activities. Previous studies have shown that higher education correlates positively with greater political participation, both in electoral and non-electoral forms.

On the other hand, access to information also plays a central role in enhancing political participation. The digital era has transformed the landscape of political communication by providing information access through television, news portals, social media, and other digital platforms. Easily accessible information offers opportunities for the public to understand political issues, evaluate candidates, and follow the dynamics of political contests. However, disparities in information access and low levels of digital literacy can lead to the risks of misinformation or political apathy.

As the center of social and economic activity in South Sulawesi, Makassar City is characterized by a heterogeneous population in terms of education, economic level, and access to information. Although internet penetration and the use of digital media are relatively high, not all social groups possess equal abilities to access and utilize political information effectively. This condition results in variations in the level of political participation among different community groups.

So far, studies examining the relationship between education level, access to information, and political participation have mostly been conducted at the national or regional level, with limited research specifically focusing on Makassar City. In fact, understanding these factors is crucial for formulating strategies to enhance political participation that are responsive to local conditions. Therefore, this study is significant in addressing that empirical gap.

Based on this background, the present study aims to analyze the influence of education level and access to information on the political participation of Makassar City residents in the 2024 General Election. The findings of this research are expected to contribute to the development of contemporary political literature, as well as provide recommendations for policymakers in designing political education programs and promoting equal access to information to strengthen the quality of democracy at the local level.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach with a causal associative research design, aimed at examining the influence of education level and access to information on the political participation of Makassar City residents. The quantitative approach was chosen because it enables the generation of objective empirical findings through the measurement of variables using structured instruments and statistical analysis. The research was conducted within the administrative area of Makassar City, selecting four districts that represent socio-demographic diversity: Bontoala, Biringkanaya, Tallo, and Tamalate. Data collection took place from August to September 2025.

The population of this study consists of all residents of Makassar City who meet the criteria as eligible voters, namely individuals aged 17 years or older, or those who are married or have been married. To obtain a representative sample, the proportional random sampling technique was employed. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in a total of 81 respondents, proportionally distributed across the selected districts.

This study involves two independent variables and one dependent variable. The first independent variable is education level, which refers to the respondents' highest level of formal education completed. Education level reflects the extent of one's formal learning experience that may shape their cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and awareness of political rights and responsibilities. The second independent variable is access to information, defined as the respondents' ability and frequency in obtaining and utilizing political information from various media, such as television, online news portals, social media, and other digital platforms. This variable illustrates how exposure to political information influences individuals' knowledge, attitudes, and engagement in political processes. The dependent variable is political participation, which encompasses the respondents' involvement in political activities, both electoral such as voting and campaign

engagement and non-electoral forms, including attending political discussions, joining civic organizations, or expressing opinions on political issues. Political participation serves as an indicator of the extent to which citizens exercise their democratic rights and contribute to the functioning of the political system.

The primary instrument used in this study was a closed-ended questionnaire designed using a Likert scale. The questionnaire was developed based on the indicators of each research variable to ensure that all aspects of education level, access to information, and political participation were comprehensively measured. The instrument was distributed directly to respondents across selected districts in Makassar City to obtain firsthand and accurate data. Prior to data collection, the questionnaire underwent validity and reliability testing to ensure the accuracy, consistency, and quality of the measurement. The validity test assessed whether each item in the instrument accurately measured the intended variable, while the reliability test evaluated the internal consistency of the responses. Only items that met the established criteria for validity and reliability were used in the final survey instrument. The data obtained from the respondents were analyzed using inferential statistical methods through multiple linear regression analysis. This technique was employed to determine both the partial and simultaneous effects of the independent variables education level and access to information on the dependent variable, political participation.

The analysis process included several stages: instrument validity and reliability testing, classical assumption tests (covering normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity), partial regression test (*t-test*), simultaneous regression test (*F-test*), and the determination coefficient test (*R*²). These tests were conducted to ensure that the regression model met statistical assumptions and provided accurate estimations of variable relationships. All data analyses were performed using statistical software to ensure computational accuracy and the reliability of results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Description of Research Data

This study involved a total of 81 respondents drawn from four districts in Makassar City, namely Bontoala, Biringkanaya, Tallo, and Tamalate. Data collection was carried out using a Likert-scale questionnaire designed to measure three main variables: education level (X_1), access to information (X_2), and political participation (Y). Each variable was assessed through several indicators reflecting respondents' experiences and perceptions related to political engagement.

The descriptive analysis was conducted to provide an overview of respondents' characteristics and the distribution of scores for each research variable. The statistical results include measures of central tendency (mean), dispersion (standard deviation), as well as minimum and maximum values, as summarized in **Table 1** below. These results serve to illustrate the general trend of respondents' education levels, their access to political information, and the extent of their political participation.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Minimum	Maximum
Education Level (X_1)	81	3.37	1.12	1	5
Access to Information (X_2)	81	3.82	0.71	2	5
Political Participation (Y)	81	3.89	0.65	2	5

Based on the descriptive results, it can be observed that the respondents generally exhibit moderate to high levels of education and access to information, which may contribute positively to their engagement in political activities. However, variations remain among respondents, indicating differences in how education and information exposure influence individual participation behavior.

Validity and Reliability Test

Before conducting hypothesis testing, the research instrument was examined for its validity and reliability to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the measurement. The validity test aimed to determine whether each questionnaire item accurately measured the construct it was intended to assess. The results of the validity test indicated that all items had

correlation coefficients (r) greater than 0.30, which means that each item met the validity criteria and could be used for further analysis.

The reliability test was performed to assess the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. A variable is considered reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha value exceeds 0.70, indicating that the items within the variable measure the same construct consistently. Based on the results, all research variables demonstrated reliability values above the required threshold, as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Criterion Description
X_1 – Education Level	0.79	> 0.70 Reliabel
X_2 – Access to Information	0.82	> 0.70 Reliabel
Y – Political Participation	0.85	> 0.70 Reliabel

These results confirm that all research instruments used in this study are both valid and reliable, ensuring that the collected data accurately reflect respondents' actual conditions and can be confidently used in further statistical analysis.

Classical Assumption Test

Before performing regression analysis, a series of classical assumption tests were conducted to ensure that the data met the statistical requirements for multiple linear regression.

The results of the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality test showed a significance value (Sig.) of 0.091, which is greater than 0.05. This indicates that the data are normally distributed, meaning that the residuals of the regression model do not deviate significantly from a normal distribution.

The multicollinearity test results showed that all independent variables had Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values below 10, indicating the absence of multicollinearity between variables. Additionally, the heteroscedasticity test revealed no symptoms of heteroscedasticity, suggesting that the variance of residuals across observations is constant.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the regression model fulfills the assumptions of normality, multicollinearity, and homoscedasticity, making it suitable for further inferential analysis.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

The multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of education level (X_1) and access to information (X_2) on political participation (Y) among Makassar City residents. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Results

Variabel	B	Std. Error	t	Sig.
Constant	1.214	0.291	4.17	0.000
Education Level (X_1)	0.278	0.081	3.44	0.001
Access to Information (X_2)	0.392	0.103	3.80	0.000

The regression results indicate that both independent variables have a positive and statistically significant influence on political participation. The education level variable (X_1) has a regression coefficient of 0.278 with a significance value of 0.001, suggesting that higher education levels contribute significantly to increased political participation. Similarly, the access to information variable (X_2) shows a regression coefficient of 0.392 with a significance value of 0.000, indicating that better access to political information strongly enhances individuals' political engagement.

These findings imply that both education and information access play essential roles in shaping citizens' active participation in political activities.

Regression Model and Hypothesis Testing :

$$Y = 1.214 + 0.278X_1 + 0.392X_2$$

Where:

Y = Political Participation

X₁ = Education Level

X₂ = Access to Information

The equation indicates that both independent variables education level and access to information have a positive effect on political participation. The coefficient for access to information (0.392) is higher than that of education level (0.278), implying that access to information exerts a more dominant influence on citizens' political engagement.

Hypothesis 1 (H1)

H1: Education level has a positive and significant effect on the political participation of Makassar City residents.

t-value = 3.44

Significance value (Sig.) = 0.001 < 0.05

Regression coefficient (B) = 0.278 (positive)

Decision: H1 is accepted.

Interpretation:

Education level has a positive and statistically significant influence on political participation. Individuals with higher education tend to possess better political awareness, critical thinking ability, and a stronger sense of civic responsibility, which in turn encourages them to participate more actively in political activities such as elections, political discussions, and civic movements.

Hypothesis 2 (H2)

H2: Access to information has a positive and significant effect on the political participation of Makassar City residents.

t-value = 3.80

Significance value (Sig.) = 0.000 < 0.05

Regression coefficient (B) = 0.392 (positive)

Decision: H2 is accepted.

Interpretation:

Access to information is identified as the most dominant factor influencing political participation. Citizens who frequently access political information through various media such as social media, news portals, television, and public discussions tend to be more informed and motivated to engage in political activities. This finding underscores the crucial role of information accessibility in shaping participatory behavior in a digital society.

Hypothesis 3 (H3)

H3: Education level and access to information simultaneously have a significant effect on the political participation of Makassar City residents.

F-value = 28.412

Significance value (Sig.) = 0.000 < 0.05

Coefficient of determination (R²) = 0.464

Decision: H3 is accepted.

Interpretation:

The results show that education level and access to information jointly exert a significant influence on political participation. Together, these two variables explain **46.4%** of the variation in political participation among Makassar residents. This indicates that improving educational attainment and ensuring equitable access to political information play a vital role in strengthening the quality of local democracy. The remaining 53.6% of variation is likely influenced by other factors not examined in this study, such as socioeconomic conditions, political efficacy, and cultural values.

Simultaneous Test (F-Test)

The simultaneous significance test (F-test) was conducted to determine whether the independent variables education level (X₁) and access to information (X₂) together have a significant influence on the dependent variable, political participation (Y). The results of the F-test are presented in Table 4 below.

Table 4. F-Test Results

Source of Variance	F	Sig.
Regression Model	28.412	0.000

The results show an F-value of **28.412** with a significance value of **0.000**, which is less than the threshold of 0.05. This indicates that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning that education level and access to information **simultaneously have a significant effect** on political participation among Makassar City residents. Thus, the proposed model is valid for explaining variations in political participation.

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The coefficient of determination was used to measure the extent to which the independent variables explain the variation in the dependent variable. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²
0.681	0.464	0.451

The R² value of 0.464 indicates that 46.4% of the variation in political participation can be explained by education level and access to information. Meanwhile, the remaining 53.6% of the variation is influenced by other factors not included in this study, such as political culture, socioeconomic conditions, political efficacy, and party orientation. These results highlight that while education and information access are substantial determinants of political participation, other contextual and psychological variables also play crucial roles in shaping citizens' engagement within a democratic framework.

DISCUSSION

The Influence of Education Level on Political Participation

The findings of this study indicate that education level has a positive and significant effect on political participation. The higher an individual's educational attainment, the better their understanding of political issues, electoral mechanisms, and civic responsibilities. This aligns with the Civic Voluntarism Model, which posits that education enhances individuals' civic skills, political literacy, and sense of political efficacy factors that collectively foster greater engagement in political life.

In the context of Makassar City, education plays a crucial role in shaping citizens who are more critical and participatory in political activities, particularly in electoral processes. Educated individuals are generally more capable of evaluating political information, identifying credible sources, and making informed decisions during elections. Thus, education not only provides knowledge but also cultivates civic consciousness, enabling citizens to contribute more effectively to the democratic process.

The Influence of Access to Information on Political Participation

Access to information is also found to have a significant and dominant effect on political participation. Citizens with broad access to political information through social media, online news portals, television, or public discussions tend to exhibit higher levels of political engagement. This finding reflects the transformative impact of the digital era, in which technology facilitates the rapid dissemination of political information, making it easier for individuals to stay informed about government policies, political debates, and electoral developments.

However, the findings also underscore that mere access is not sufficient; media literacy remains a crucial moderating factor. Without the ability to critically evaluate information, individuals are vulnerable to misinformation or political manipulation. Therefore, improving digital literacy should accompany efforts to expand information access, ensuring that citizens not only receive but also understand and utilize political information responsibly.

The Combined Influence of Education Level and Access to Information

The simultaneous test results reveal that education level and access to information jointly have a significant impact on political participation. This suggests that the two factors complement each other in shaping active and rational political behavior. Education provides individuals with the cognitive and analytical abilities needed to interpret political information, while access to information supplies the stimuli and content that activate those abilities.

Together, these factors foster a more engaged and informed citizenry capable of participating meaningfully in democratic processes. In the context of Makassar City characterized by high urbanization and broad internet penetration yet persistent disparities in educational access the synergy between education and information becomes particularly relevant. Strengthening both dimensions can serve as a strategic foundation for enhancing democratic quality and reducing gaps in political participation across social groups.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the influence of education level and access to information on the political participation of Makassar City residents. Based on the results of data analysis and discussion, several key conclusions can be drawn.

First, the education level variable has a positive and significant effect on political participation. Individuals with higher educational attainment tend to demonstrate greater awareness and involvement in political activities, both electoral (such as voting and campaigning) and non-electoral (such as public discussions and civic movements). Education enhances political literacy, critical thinking, and civic responsibility, all of which are essential foundations for active democratic engagement.

Second, access to information also exerts a positive and significant effect on political participation and represents the most dominant influencing factor in this study. Citizens with broad access to political information particularly through digital media tend to be more aware of political issues and more willing to participate in democratic processes. However, the quality of participation is also dependent on the accuracy and credibility of the information consumed, emphasizing the need for improved digital and media literacy.

Third, when analyzed simultaneously, education level and access to information jointly influence political participation with a combined explanatory power of 46.4%. This indicates that the interaction between cognitive capacity (derived from education) and adequate information accessibility significantly shapes citizens' political behavior. The remaining variation, approximately 53.6%, may be explained by other factors such as political culture, socioeconomic status, or party orientation.

Overall, the findings of this research suggest that political participation is not solely determined by structural factors such as education, but also by the accessibility and quality of political information. These results reinforce existing literature asserting that a high-quality democracy requires educated citizens with equitable access to accurate political information. Strengthening both educational opportunities and information dissemination systems will therefore be essential in fostering a more participatory and informed electorate in Makassar City and beyond.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations can be proposed to strengthen political participation and support the development of a more informed democratic society:

Enhancement of Political Education Programs. Local governments and educational institutions should expand political education initiatives that emphasize critical literacy and civic awareness. Such programs can help the public better understand political processes, rights, and responsibilities, thereby fostering informed and active citizen participation.

Equitable Access to Information. Efforts to improve equitable access to political information should be prioritized, particularly in areas with limited internet connectivity or among groups with low levels of digital literacy. Providing

inclusive access will ensure that all citizens, regardless of their social or economic background, can engage meaningfully in political life.

Strengthening Electoral Socialization Strategies. The General Elections Commission (KPU) is encouraged to enhance its public outreach strategies through digital media platforms that are informative, engaging, and easy to understand. Interactive and visually appealing content can increase citizens' interest and participation in electoral activities.

Future Research Directions. Further research is recommended to include additional variables such as economic status, political orientation, family political socialization, and political culture. Incorporating these factors would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants influencing political participation in different social contexts.

Improvement of Media Literacy among Citizens. The general public is encouraged to continuously improve their media literacy skills and ability to critically evaluate political information. By doing so, citizens can participate more rationally, responsibly, and constructively in political processes, contributing to the consolidation of democratic values.

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