
The Influence of 'Santri Identification' on the Choice of Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidates Based on Religion in the 2024 Presidential Election

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Abstract

The phenomenon of the power of figures as a voter getter in democracy impacts the selection of candidates who will be nominated in the general election contest. Candidate pairs are not seen based on their abilities, but rather on how the candidates can win the general election. The use of figures as a means of attracting voters can be seen from the nomination of presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs in the 2024 presidential election. Two of the three candidate pairs have brought together figures from Nahdlatul Ulama as candidate pairs as a winning strategy. In the discipline of socio-political science, a person's voting behavior in a general election is not just a five-yearly activity; there are reasons and backgrounds as to why someone chooses a particular pair. This study aims to analyze more specifically the influence of Islamic boarding school identification on the choice of presidential and vice presidential candidates based on religion. This study uses a survey method with a correlational approach. The subjects in this study were students of the Al-Amien Islamic boarding school with a sample size of 207 students. The results of the analysis show that Islamic boarding school identification has a significant influence on voting behavior. However, the magnitude of the contribution of santri identification is relatively weak, reflected in the regression coefficient of 0.07, while the rational consideration variable, which includes the evaluation of the vision, mission, programs, and track records of the candidates, is proven to have a more substantial influence, with a regression coefficient reaching 0.43. Based on these findings, it can be concluded that although santri identification contributes to santri political preferences, rational considerations play a more dominant role in their decision-making process.

Keywords: elections, voting behavior, rational consideration, santri, self-concept

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is known as one of the most populous countries in the world. In addition to its large population, Indonesia is also blessed with vast cultural diversity, encompassing ethnic differences, regional languages, skin colors, and diverse socio-cultural traditions that thrive in various regions. This diversity not only represents a national treasure but also reflects a complex and dynamic social reality. With this diverse background, Indonesia cannot escape the reality of its heterogeneous society, both socially and culturally.

As a country that adheres to a democratic political system, Indonesia routinely holds general elections (Pemilu) every five years. Elections are an important mechanism in a democratic system, which aims to provide space for the people to determine the direction of the country's leadership and policies. Democracy itself is a concept and system of government that places sovereignty in the hands of the people, where the people have the power to determine who will lead and how the country is run. In the realm of political science, democracy is understood not only as a form of government but also as a benchmark for a country's development (Azyumardi Azra, 2000 *in* (Jati, 2023)). Indonesia, as a democratic country, upholds the principle of 'of the people, by the people, and for the people,' which is the basis for organizing political life.

In the national political contestation, the religious organization Nahdlatul Ulama is one of the organizations that has influence in the political contestation. In a study conducted by Haris and Dardum (2021), Nahdlatul Ulama plays an important role in political activities, which can be seen from the involvement of figures who participate in the election contest, both directly and indirectly. The nomination of Nahdlatul Ulama figures is seen as one strategy to gain a niche of votes from the Nahdliyin. According to Anang, a political observer from Brawijaya University, the nomination of Muhaimin Iskandar and Mahfud MD as vice presidential candidates from candidate pair no. 1 and candidate pair no. 3 is a winning strategy because they are considered to have large mass support among NU, especially in East Java (Ibrahim 2023).

Based on data compiled by the Alvara Research Center, it is known that more than half of Indonesians identify themselves as having close ties to the Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) organization. The founder of the Alvara Research Center, Hasanuddin Ali, stated that the large population of citizens affiliated with NU significantly influences the direction of political support, especially in the 2024 Presidential Election (Pilpres) contest. The survey results showed that as many as 59.2 percent of Muslim respondents stated they had close ties to NU, while 39.6 percent of them explicitly admitted to being members of the organization (Triono, 2023). This finding indicates that NU not only holds a significant position in the socio-religious realm but also has great potential in determining the configuration of national politics through the strength of its mass base.

The culture of voting behavior, which is also shown in the book *Indonesian Political Communication* (2008), sees Nahdlatul Ulama not only playing a role in the religious field but also having a significant influence in society. This is due to the large mass base, which is formed because of the strong bonds of religious solidarity (Nuzula, 2016). The potential for obtaining voters by collaborating with elite Nahdlatul Ulama figures is due to the large potential of *nadliyin* and the attitude of *sami'na wa'athokna* in the NU culture. This phenomenon is a special attraction for political parties and is often utilized by politicians to build a support base during elections. The influence of the votes obtained by affiliating with religious figures—such as ulama, kiai, and

santri—becomes a strategic medium for political parties, not only for those with an Islamic ideology but also for those with a nationalist ideology (Haris & Dardum, 2021b).

The Nahdliyin group (the term for the NU followers) is said to have its own characteristics in its social context (Bruinessen, 1995 in (Jati, 2023)). This typology can be clearly seen from their acceptance of the cultural reality of society formed from the past, as well as their attitude of respect and care for Islamic cultural symbols, kyai, and Islamic boarding schools. The santri culture, with the principle of "Sami'na wa athokna," becomes a tool to absorb votes in this election event by approaching Islamic boarding schools and kyai to influence their santri to choose a particular candidate pair, as well as serve as social capital.

Historically, the involvement of NU figures who have significant influence in election candidate contestation cannot be denied, as many Nahdlatul Ulama figures are candidates in the election contestation, such as Abdurrahman Wahid (Gus Dur), who became the fourth president of Indonesia. Gus Dur is one of the important figures in Indonesian political history and also one of the key figures in PBNU. Historically, figures from Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) have also been involved in the nomination of vice presidents, such as KH Hasyim Muzad, who became the vice presidential candidate accompanying Megawati Soekarnoputri. Salahuddin Wahid (Gus Solah) is a cleric, politician, and human rights (HAM) activist in Indonesia. In the 2004 election, he became the vice presidential candidate paired with Wiranto. Ma'ruf Amin is a cleric, lecturer, and politician known as a senior figure in NU. He was elected as Joko Widodo's vice presidential candidate in the 2019 election. The pair won the election with 55.5% of the vote (KPU, 2019).

The selection of figures from the Nahdlatul Ulama group is part of a strategy based on religious sentiment. As explained in the concept of Clifford Geertz's stream in his scientific work published in 1959, entitled *The Javanese Village*, published in a book, *Local Ethnic and National Loyalties in Village Indonesia*, according to Geertz, the political behavior of society can be classified by distinguishing social backgrounds, such as the religio-cultural backgrounds of society. In his research, Geertz divided society into three groups, namely: the santri, abangan, and priyayi groups. The concept of stream is not just an emphasis on choosing a political party or ideology, but it is a comprehensive pattern of social integration that is identified more or less by 'the opposition of one group to another' (Herdiansah, 2017).

The use of identity as a tool for politicization, not only related to religious issues but also to ethnic, religious, or ideological issues, is used by several political elites to create a negative image of their political opponents (Mietzner, 2014 in (Herdiansah, 2017)). The political culture of santri is heavily influenced by religious values, especially Islam, which serves as a guideline for santri in carrying out worship and life practices. Santri are generally known as a group that actively engages in worship and religious rituals and receive education at Islamic boarding schools or madrasas. When associated with the concept of stream politics initiated by Clifford Geertz in the formation of political parties in the 1950s, Geertz emphasized the similarity of ideology as the basis for the formation of political parties. In this context, abangan and priyayi groups, which are considered less obedient in adhering to Islamic teachings, tend to support nationalist parties such as PNI and PKI. Meanwhile, santri groups, which are more devoted to religion, tend to choose Islamic parties such as Masyumi and Nahdlatul Ulama..

A person's behavior in determining political choices is known as voting behavior. According to Eriza (2012), voting behavior is defined as the activity of making decisions about

whether to exercise one's right to vote in a general election. Voting behavior is not just about marking the ballot paper in the voting booth; this action carries a complex meaning, encompassing the use of rights and responsibilities as citizens and the expression of voting behavior as a study that examines the habits or tendencies of society in determining their choice of a particular candidate or political party in a general election, as well as the reasons behind that choice. This definition shows that voting behavior is not only about the act of voting but also about the underlying factors (Febriani, 2018).

Based on the phenomenon that occurred in the 2024 presidential election, with two pairs of candidates who supported Nahdlatul Ulama figures, the researcher wanted to investigate the influence of Islamic boarding school identification related to the nomination of presidential and vice-presidential candidates from Nahdlatul Ulama figures in the 2024 general election contest..

METHODS

This research method uses a survey approach with a correlational method. According to Sudijono (1997:167), correlation is defined as the relationship or level of association between two or more variables. The correlational method was chosen to analyze the relationship between these variables, including whether there is a correlation, the strength of the correlation, and the direction of the correlation. This study aims to analyze the self-concept of students at the Salaf Islamic boarding school regarding the behavior of choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates from Nahdlatul Ulama in the 2024 presidential election.

The study was conducted at the Al-Amien Islamic Boarding School in Kediri. This location was chosen because the Al-Amien Islamic Boarding School is one of the Salaf Islamic boarding schools in Kediri City. The population in this study includes students who already have the right to vote in the 2024 election. This study employed the accidental sampling technique to determine the respondents. The number of respondents in this study was 207 students.

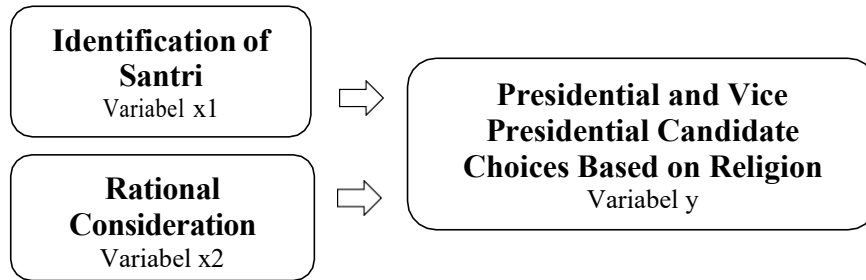
The data analysis technique used is multiple linear regression to examine the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable. This study has also passed the classical assumption test stage by conducting a normality test, a multicollinearity test, a linearity test, and a heterogeneity test, leading to the hypothesis tests such as the F-test, T-test, and determinant coefficient test. Quantitative data analysis techniques employ research instrument tests, namely validity tests using the Pearson Product Moment formula and reliability tests with the Cronbach Alpha formula. Hypothesis testing uses Multiple Regression Tests to assess the strength of influence, with contingency coefficients used to determine if there is an influence between the independent and dependent variables by reading the percentage table between variables.

Based on the formulation of the problem and the framework of thought that has been established, the hypotheses that can be developed in this research include:

H0: There is no positive and significant influence of the self-concept of Salaf santri on the behavior of choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates based on religion in the 2024 election.

H1: There is a positive and significant influence of the self-concept of Salaf santri on the behavior of choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates based on religion in the 2024 election.

Additionally, this study analyzes the influence of rational consideration variables on influencing student selection behavior, which is used as an alternative answer when the hypothesis is not accepted.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data Processing Results

This study uses multiple linear regression analysis as the main method with the objective of testing the formulated hypothesis. Specifically, this study aims to analyze the influence of two independent variables that are considered significant in the context of voting behavior among Islamic boarding school students in the 2024 presidential election contest. The variables in the study are the Islamic boarding school identification variable, which represents the extent to which a student internalizes values and identity as part of the Islamic boarding school community, and the rational consideration variable, which reflects the extent to which students base their choices on logical considerations and relevant information related to the selection of candidates.

Based on data processing in this study using SPSS software version 25, which includes classical assumption tests (normality test, heteroscedasticity test, linearity test, and multicollinearity test). The normality test ensures appropriate data distribution, the heteroscedasticity test detects residual variance inequality, the linearity test examines linear relationships between variables, and the multicollinearity test identifies significant correlations between independent variables. By passing all stages of these classical assumption tests, the requirements to continue to multiple linear regression analysis have been met. The results of the multiple linear regression analysis data processing are described in the following table:

Table 3.1 Coefficients

roaModel	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.003	.001		-2.372	.019
X1_Share	.070	.021	.383	3.367	.001
X2_Share	.430	.112	.438	3,849	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y1_Bagi

Source: Data Primary, processed by researchers 2025

Based on the Coefficients table, in determining whether or not the hypothesis that has been formulated previously is accepted, the value of the t-table used as a comparison for the calculated t must be known beforehand. To find out the t-table, it can be done by calculating the degree of freedom, and the t-table is 1.652. In addition, to determine the hypothesis, it can be seen from the significance value obtained; if the significance value is less than 0.05, then there is an influence. Conversely, if it exceeds 0.05, it is stated that there is no relationship.

Based on the calculation results, the santri identification variable shows a t-value of 3.367 with a significance level of 0.001. This t-value is greater than the t-table value (1.652), and the significance value obtained (0.001) is smaller than 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that, partially, santri identification has a significant effect on voters' decisions in choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates based on religion. Based on the analysis results, the rational consideration variable shows a t-value of 3.849 with a significance level of 0.000. This t-value is greater than the t-table value (1.652), and the significance level obtained (0.000) is smaller than 0.05. This indicates that, partially, rational consideration has a significant effect on santri's decisions in choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates based on religion.

Based on table 4.1, the regression equation values are as follows:

$$Y = c + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + R$$

$$Y = - 0.003 + 0.070X_1 + 0.430X_2$$

Information:

- Y = Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidate Choices Based on Religion
 X1 = Identification of Islamic Boarding Schools
 X2 = Rational Consideration
 = Coefficient Regression
 c = Constant
 R = Residual

Table 3.2 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.807 ^a	.651	.647	.00142

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2_Bagi, X1_Bagi
 Source: Data Primary, processed by researchers 2025

The Model Summary table of the coefficient of determination is used to measure the ability of the model to explain the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The model's effectiveness can be assessed based on the value of R. If the R obtained in the coefficient of determination approaches 1, then the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable becomes stronger. Conversely, if the value of the coefficient of determination, R Square, approaches 0, then the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable becomes weaker.

Based on the data processing that has been conducted, it is known that the correlation coefficient value of 0.807 is greater than the r table value of 0.136 (with degrees of freedom 205), indicating that the relationship between the price variable (X) and the consumer variable (Y) is

significant. The R Square value is 0.651, which means that the identification of Islamic boarding school students and rational considerations provide a combined influence of 65.1% on the variable of choosing presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion, while the remaining 34.9% is influenced by variables or factors outside this study.

Discussion

The phenomenon of the power of figures as vote-getters in electoral democracy has an impact on the selection of candidates to be nominated in the general election. When figures become the dominant factor in attracting votes, the supporting parties tend to consider the personal aspects of the candidate, such as popularity, emotional closeness, or the image they possess compared to the track record and political ideas put forth. This creates inequality in the democratic process, where the public, who should choose a candidate pair that can work for the benefit of the community, is instead trapped in a patron-client relationship pattern. The community is only approached ceremonially for electoral interests. This study assumes that the nomination of figures from Nahdlatul Ulama in the 2024 presidential election contest will encourage students to choose the candidate pair because of the similarity in religious identity. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the power of figures in shaping voting behavior patterns, especially among students, both by strengthening emotional dominance in politics and by encouraging certain voters to be more rational in determining their choices.

Voting behavior, according to Plano in (Febriani, 2018), is described as the study of voter behavior that focuses on the tendencies of people's choices in determining their selections during general elections and analyzing the reasons behind those choices. Tendency refers to a person's preference or inclination towards their political choices, while background includes factors that influence people's choices. The reasons for someone choosing a legislative candidate can vary, ranging from kinship ties, religious or ethnic similarities, educational background, to party ideology. In addition, voters can also use rational considerations based on the vision and mission and track record of legislative candidates in determining their choices.

According to Eriza (2012), voting behavior is defined as the activity of making decisions about whether or not to cast and exercise one's right to vote in a general election. Voting behavior is not simply about marking a ballot in a voting booth; rather, this action contains complex meanings, ranging from exercising one's rights and responsibilities as a citizen to expressing individual preferences and tendencies. According to Dennis Kavanagh (in Efriza, 2012:482), there are five approaches that can be used to analyze the behavior of individuals and society in general elections. These five approaches are: first, the structural approach; second, the sociological approach; third, the ecological approach; fourth, the social-psychological approach; and finally, the rational approach.

In this study, the focus is on the santri identification variable as the first variable and rational consideration as the second variable. In formulating the concept of santri identification in this study, the researcher adopted Berzonsky's self-concept. The santri identification variable is measured through four aspects: physical, social, moral, and psychological aspects. According to Berzonsky, self-concept is a combination of physical, psychological, social, and moral aspects, which is a representation of a person, incorporating both perceptions of their actual self and assessments based on their expectations. This theory was put forward by Berzonsky (1981 *in* (Rija, 2021)). In formulating the rational consideration variable, the researcher adopted Dennis

Kavanagh's work on rational behavior in the book *Political Explore*, where the rational consideration variable is measured based on the dimensions of candidate orientation and the issues or policies being promoted (Efriza, 2012). Rational voting behavior is based on candidate competence and the policies they will implement, which is part of spatial theory. In this theory, voters tend to choose the candidate pair that is considered most appropriate or in accordance with policy references aligned with their aspirations. Meanwhile, the dependent variable is measured based on the choice of candidate pairs with religious backgrounds, distinguishing between candidate pairs affiliated with certain religious organizations and nationalists.

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing listed in the coefficients table, it was found that the significance value of the correlation between the santri identification variable and the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion is 0.001. This significance value is smaller than 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between santri identification and voter preferences for presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion. Based on the previously formulated hypothesis, hypothesis H1 is accepted;

H0: There is no positive and significant influence of the self-concept of Salaf santri on the behavior of choosing presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion in the 2024 election.

H1: There is a positive and significant influence of the self-concept of Salaf santri on the behavior of choosing presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion in the 2024 election;

In addition to the findings that confirm the acceptance of the H1 hypothesis regarding the influence of santri identification on the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion, this study also analyzes the role of rational considerations in influencing the political preferences of santri. Based on the data analysis listed in the coefficients table, the rational consideration variable also has a significant influence on the santri's decision to choose a presidential and vice-presidential candidate based on religion, with a significance value reaching 0.000 (sign value less than 0.05). This finding indicates that both santri identification and rational considerations partially influence the voting behavior of santri at the Al-Amien Islamic Boarding School. Thus, the results of this study emphasize that santri identification and rational considerations both play an important role in shaping election decisions.

The results of data processing in the coefficients table can not only be used to see the influence of independent variables on dependent variables, but can also be used to analyze the regression values obtained in this study. Regression analysis aims to measure how much influence there is between independent variables and dependent variables. In this study, multiple linear regression tests were conducted to obtain an overview of how independent variables, including the identification of santri and rational considerations, affect the dependent variable, namely the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion, with a significance level of 0.05(Ghozali, 2017). The results of the multiple linear regression test are based on the coefficient table with the following formula:

$$Y = c + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + R$$

$$Y = - 0.003 + 0.070X_1 + 0.430X_2$$

Multiple linear regression analysis in this study produces an equation with a constant value of -0.003. The interpretation of this constant value is that the variables of santri identification and rational consideration are considered non-existent or have a value of zero, so the value of choice for presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion is -0.003. The implication of the negative value of this regression analysis is that the two variables studied, santri identification and rational consideration, are not the main factors influencing santri preferences for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. In other words, there is an indication that other variables or factors outside this study play a greater role in shaping the santri's decision to choose, where other factors are not explained by the variables in this study.

Furthermore, the regression coefficient for the santri identification variable shows a positive value of 0.070. This implies that every one-unit increase in santri identification correlates with a 0.070-unit increase in the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion. In percentage terms, a 1% increase in santri identification is associated with a 7% increase in the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion. The rational consideration variable also shows a positive regression coefficient, with a value of 0.430. This means that every one-unit increase in rational consideration correlates with a 0.430-unit increase in the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion. In percentage terms, a 1% increase in rational consideration is associated with a 43% increase in the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion.

Examining further, the influence received between the santri identification variable and rational considerations has a different level of influence. Regression analysis on the santri identification variable with the choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on religion has a significance of 0.07, while the rational consideration variable has a significance value of 0.43. The results of the regression analysis show that although santri identification and rational considerations significantly influence the choice of santri, the influence of rational considerations is proven to be more dominant than santri identification. This finding indicates that although religious identity is an important factor, rational considerations such as the design of work programs or the capacity of prospective leaders greatly influence the political decisions of santri at the Al-Amien Islamic Boarding School.

The strength of the relationship between variables is measured based on the level of correlation that occurs. In relation to the interpretation of the degree of relationship between variables in this study, the strength of influence between variables X1 and X2 on variable Y can be categorized into the following levels of strength:

Table 3.3 Interpretation of influence levels

Interval	Interpretation
0.00 – 0.25	Weak
0.25 – 0.5	Quite
0.5 – 0.75	Strong
0.75 – 0.99	Very Strong

Source: Ali Sahab (2018)

The partial influence of the santrian identification variable has a significance of 0.07. If categorized according to the correlation coefficient, it is interpreted as having a weak level of

influence. Meanwhile, the rational consideration variable has a significance value of 0.43, which, when interpreted at the level of the correlation coefficient, indicates sufficient strength.

In the Model Summary table, the strength of the influence of the independent variables on the dependent variable can be observed. The results of the data processing in the Model Summary can be used to assess how well the statistical model explains the relationship between the variables studied. The strength of this relationship is measured by looking at the R-square value. An R-square value approaching 1 indicates a strong relationship between the independent and dependent variables, while a value approaching 0 indicates a weak relationship. In this study, the R-square value was 0.651, meaning that factors such as the identification of santri and rational considerations together explain 65.1% of the variation in the choice of presidential and vice presidential candidates based on religion. The remaining 34.9% is influenced by other factors not included in this study.

The rational approach, or rational choice, suggests that what determines voting behavior is not only based on social ties or social structures but also does not solely depend on emotional feelings towards a strong party; it is also influenced by rational assessments from the community itself. The rational approach focuses on orientation towards issues and candidates. Rational voters consider policy designs and handling of problems that occur. Meanwhile, orientation towards candidates refers to voters' attitudes towards the candidate's personality, such as capacity and integrity, without regard to the party affiliation that supports them.

Voter behavior based on consideration of issues and candidates is also known as spatial theory (Efriza, 2012). This theory assumes that voters tend to choose the candidate pair that best suits their expectations and can accommodate their aspirations. The public tends to pay attention to visions and missions that are considered realistic, relevant to their needs, and able to solve problems. A clear, measurable vision and mission delivered convincingly can increase public trust in the candidate pair and ultimately influence their voting decisions. The rational choice approach in the context of general elections assumes that voters act as intelligent consumers, evaluating candidates based on calculations of profit and loss. In this paradigm, voting is not merely an expression of identity or emotion but results from an in-depth analysis of the quality of the candidate and the work programs offered. Rational voters will examine the track record, vision, and mission of each candidate and compare their promises with the needs and aspirations of individuals and the wider community.

The rational approach defines voter behavior as not a decision made at the time of or while in the voting booth, but rather one that has been determined long before, even before the campaign begins. This approach emphasizes rational considerations such as principles, motivation, knowledge, and making political choices with logical considerations. One of the internal factors that influences voting behavior and attitudes is the level of education. As stated by Martin Lipset, the higher the level of education, the more information will be available about the options that will be chosen in the election, and vice versa.

The dominant influence of rational consideration variables on voting behavior among students at Al Amin Islamic Boarding School in Kediri is thought to be related to the characteristics of the respondents' education levels. Based on the results of the research sample that has been conducted, the majority have a college education level, with a total of 169 students (81.6%). The second highest level of education is high school, with a total of 31 students, 1 student with a junior

high school education, and 6 students who have not attended school. The high proportion of respondents with a college education indicates that rational voting behavior may be more prominent among highly educated voters. Voters with a higher level of education tend to be more critical and analytical in evaluating information and candidates, so they are more likely to make choices based on rational considerations.

In the study, the results of the analysis show that the model used has not been able to fully explain all variations in the dependent variable. This is indicated by the existence of 34.9% of factors that are not explained by the independent variables in this study. In other words, there are other factors outside the model that also influence the dependent variable but are not included in this analysis.

This finding aligns with research conducted by (Madani & Marijan, 2021), which stated in their research that the influence of kiai in determining the voting behavior of alumni has a significant relationship. However, if examined further, the value of the influence experienced by the students is categorized in the "sufficient" interval. Alumni view kiai as a patron figure in their lives, someone to be emulated and respected, but not to the point of significantly influencing voting behavior. Meanwhile, the rational choice variable has a greater significance value with a "sufficient" interval. Rational choices are influenced by the candidate's program and the candidate's experience in government. This indicates that although emotional ties and respect for kiai as an authority figure remain strong among alumni, pragmatic considerations related to the candidate's vision, mission, and track record play a more dominant role in determining their political choices.

The results of other research conducted by (Arravi, 2021), stated that the rational choice factor actually showed that there was a tendency for respondents to make their choices due to rational factors, namely the vision, mission, program, performance of the candidate pairs, and the track record of the candidate pairs. Meanwhile, sociological and psychological factors did not significantly influence the respondents. This research was conducted on students in the Nahdlatul Ulama area in Lasem. Another opinion was expressed by Zainuddin Syarif, who explained that political activities among Islamic boarding schools were not always monolithic and hegemonic but rather had undergone a more democratic and rational dynamic process. For example, students' disobedience to the kiai was usually carried out by alumni of the Islamic boarding school themselves, who were intellectually more educated and relatively open-minded, either because of formal education or because they often communicated and interacted with diverse communities. In fact, we often find that kiai and santri are both in the same religious organization, which of course has the same perception of religious teachings but has a different perspective on politics (Syarif, 2016).

CONCLUSION

This study focuses on the analysis of the relationship between santri identification and the tendency of santri to choose presidential and vice presidential candidates based on religion. Furthermore, this study also attempts to map and understand various aspects of rational considerations that color political preferences among the santri community. Statistical analysis reveals that santri identification has a statistically significant influence on the voting behavior of santri. However, it should be noted that the magnitude of the contribution of this santri

identification variable is relatively small, as indicated by a regression coefficient of 0.07. This finding provides an important indication that although identity as a santri plays a role in shaping political views and tendencies, there are other factors that also contribute significantly to their political decision-making process. In contrast, the rational consideration variable, which includes a careful evaluation process of the vision and mission, programs offered, and the track record of competing candidates, has a much more substantial influence on santri political preferences, with a regression coefficient value reaching 0.43. Based on these empirical findings, it can be concluded that although the identification of santri contributes to political preferences among santri, the rational consideration factor plays a more dominant and determining role in their decision-making mechanism regarding the choice of presidential and vice presidential candidates. The practical implication of the results of this study is that in the electoral political arena, santri preferences are not only formed by religious identity ties alone, but are also greatly influenced by their ability to conduct objective and reason-based evaluations of the available candidates. Thus, the rational consideration variable is confirmed to be a factor that has a stronger influence than the identification of santri in determining the choice of presidential and vice presidential candidates among santri.

In the study, the results of the analysis showed that the model used was not fully able to explain all the variations in the dependent variable. This is indicated by the fact that there are still 34.9% of factors that are not explained by the independent variables in this study. In other words, there are other factors outside the model that also influence the dependent variable but are not included in this analysis.

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