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The relationship between student activism in islamic-based student organizations and voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election

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Abstract

The 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia highlights the increasing influence of young voters, particularly university students, whose political preferences are shaped not only by individual considerations but also by their involvement in student organisations. A notable phenomenon is the active participation of students in Islamic-based organisations such as HMI, PMII, IMM, and KAMMI, which intensively conduct political discussions, value internalisation, and foster ideological formation that may influence members' political orientations. These dynamics raise important questions about how organisational activism contributes to students' voting decisions. Therefore, this study aims to examine the relationship between activism in Islamic-based student organisations and student voting decisions in the 2024 Presidential Election. This study employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design based on sociological voting behaviour theory. The sample consists of 130 students who are members of the four organisations, selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires using a four-point Likert scale, measuring activism through indicators of organisational activity, frequency of participation in studies, and internalisation of values, while voting decisions were measured through candidate preferences. The results indicate a significant relationship between student activism and voting decisions, as evidenced by a chi-square significance value below 0.05. Higher levels of activism are associated with stronger political orientation and greater confidence in making political choices. The findings also reveal that internalisation of values and participation intensity have the most substantial contribution in shaping voting behaviour, with the majority of students tending to support candidates aligned with organisational values. These results imply that Islamic-based student organisations function as agents of political socialisation that shape value-based political attitudes. In a broader context, this study highlights the strategic role of student organisations in supporting the development of a more participatory, rational, and value-orientated democratic culture in Indonesia.

Keyword: *Student Activism, Islamic Student Organizations, Voting Behavior, 2024 Presidential Election*

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Introduction

Indonesia adheres to a democratic system of government, where all elements of society are involved in decision-making. In this system, sovereignty rests with the people and is exercised for their benefit (Ramadhan et al., 2025). One example of this is general elections, which give the people the freedom to choose their representatives. In a representative democracy, elections are the primary means of channelling popular sovereignty to trusted individuals or groups (Rai, 2022). The presidential and vice-presidential elections in Indonesia are regulated by the 1945 Constitution and the Election Law, with nominations required by political parties or coalitions that meet certain thresholds (D. A. S. Hidayat & Mustofa, 2025).

The 2024 Presidential Election was a national democratic celebration that was held in Indonesia on Wednesday, February 14, 2024. This election is an event for the direct election of the president and vice president for the 2024-2029 period by the people. This general election is the fifth time Indonesia has held a direct presidential election since the reform era (Setiawan et al., 2025). The General Elections Commission (KPU) has named three pairs of presidential and vicepresidential candidates competing in this election (Suberu, 2025). The three pairs are Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming, Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD, and Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar.

The electability of a candidate pair is crucial, as a high electability score increases the likelihood of the public electing political figures to serve as officials in general elections (Hendi Kariyanto et al., 2026). Having a good political culture will significantly impact the electability of presidential and vice-presidential candidates in 2024. According to Gabriel Almond, political culture is a set of values, attitudes, beliefs, and abilities shared by all individuals (Kasim et al., 2026). In deciding how to run a political system, political culture plays a crucial role in understanding citizens' attitudes toward their political orientation. This makes democracy effective when there is a positive relationship between the political system and political culture (Mbedzi et al., 2025).

The 2024 presidential election is a crucial moment in Indonesian politics, especially considering the very obvious religious-based political polarisation in the 2019 election (Tshishonga & Mthethwa, 2025). Young voters, especially students, are a strategic group that can influence national politics. According to data from the General Elections Commission (KPU) in Katadata.co.id, young voters (aged 17-35) contributed around 40% of the total voters in the 2019 election, and in the 2024 Presidential Election (Pilpres), the General Elections Commission (KPU) noted that Millennials and Gen Z comprised 56.45% of the total Permanent Voter List (DPT), or around 114 million people. This makes young voters, namely Gen Z and Millennials, a determining factor in a candidate's victory (Giyono & Suyitno, 2025). The study of voting behaviour is a field of study that focuses on voting

tendencies in elections and the factors behind those choices (I. R. Hidayat et al., 2025). This tendency is contextualised in how an individual's mind and heart shape their choices. Furthermore, a candidate's background also influences the decision-making process. Numerous factors are key considerations in choosing a presidential candidate, such as kinship, religious or ethnic considerations, the candidate's educational background, the ideology of the supporting party, and even money politics (Musendekwa, 2025).

On campus, there are numerous internal and external organisations, and joining a particular organisation is a significant factor in students' decision-making. Islam-based student organisations are one type of organisation within universities that adheres to Islamic law (Melian & Eliasa, 2026). These organisations significantly influence the dynamics of campus life, not only in religious matters but also in other aspects, such as social, cultural, and political (Misda, 2025). These Islamic-based organisations have a significant influence on shaping the political awareness of their members and serve as platforms for political socialisation, influencing their perspectives on current issues, both political and social.

This phenomenon is interesting to study because there is a perception that Islamic student organisations are controlled by political parties. A common form of control is the provision of funding by political parties to these Islamic student organisations (Munif et al., 2026). This funding is a tool to influence and support the policies implemented by the political parties, such as during presidential and vice-presidential elections (Asman & Mualimmah, 2023). Furthermore, political parties often exert ideological influence by providing members of these Islamic student organisations with an understanding of their party ideology. With this control, through funding and ideological instillation, Islamic student organisations can become a source of strength for political parties, especially during elections (Bezmenov, 2024).

There are several ways or mechanisms through which students involved in Islamic-based organisations influence their political preferences (Saputra & Hariri, 2025). The first is through internalising the values and ideology within the organisation, which shape their political views. The second is through discussions or studies that address political issues and relate them to Islamic perspectives. The third is through social connections within the organisation, which typically foster an exchange of ideas that shape new political preferences among members (Rochmat et al., 2025). However, sometimes the organisation itself doesn't have a significant influence on voting decisions. Sometimes, students within an organisation also have the freedom to make their own choices, which are often influenced by social media, academic discussions, and even personal experiences with presidential candidates' work programmes (Adibah Amir et al., 2026).

In a sociological theory approach, the study of voting behaviour can be explained theoretically. According to the sociological approach theory, voting behaviour can be influenced by several factors such as social factors, economic factors, traditions originating from the family, racial/ethnic

the study of voting behaviour can also be explained from a psychological approach, which explains that psychological aspects also play a role in voting behaviour, where the psychological approach highlights the existence of party identification aspects and the existence of emotional attraction to certain candidates (Faizin et al., 2025). However, in the rational approach theory, it was found that voters prioritise rational choices with supporting aspects in the form of the candidate's work programme and also the candidate's vision and mission (Kholis et al., 2024). In this study, it can be seen that a sociological approach can be key to understanding how activism in Islamic student organisations provides voting decisions to their members (Lo & Auld, 2025).

Previous studies have not examined the direct relationship between student activism in Islamic-based student organisations and voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election. These studies tended to focus only on the general influence of religious organisations or the level of political knowledge on young voter participation. However, researchers note that student involvement in Islamic-based organisations such as HMI, PMII, IMM, and KAMMI at UNESA has not been empirically analysed in terms of its influence on the formation of members' political preferences. Yet, these organisations actively engage in political and ideological discussions that have the potential to shape their members' political orientations. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by specifically examining whether activism in Islamic student organisations significantly correlates with student voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election.

The urgency of this research is heightened given the significant influence of students in the 2024 presidential election (Kharis, 2024), as well as the importance of understanding how Islamic-based student organisations can shape their voting decisions. By understanding student voter behaviour patterns, this research can provide academic insights for the study of political sociology and serve as a reference for student organisations in designing more inclusive and educational political cadre programmes. Furthermore, the results of this study can be used by policymakers to design more effective political education strategies for students.

Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design that aims to examine the relationship between student activism in Islamic-based organisations and voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study emphasises measuring the relationship between variables objectively through numerical data that can be analysed statistically. The explanatory design is used to explain the relationship between the independent and dependent variables and to test the formulated hypotheses. In this study, the independent variable (X)

is student activism as measured by active participation in organisations, frequency of participating in studies, and internalisation of values. Meanwhile, the dependent variable (Y) is the voting decision as measured by the level of student confidence and preferences in determining choices in the 2024 presidential election.

With this approach, researchers can systematically test formulated hypotheses through appropriate statistical analysis. Furthermore, the use of explanatory quantitative methods allows research results to be generalised to a broader population with a certain level of confidence. Within the framework of this research, hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship between the variables studied. The null hypothesis (H_0) states that there is no significant relationship between student activism in Islamic-based organisations and voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) states that there is a significant relationship between student activism in Islamic-based organisations and voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election.

This research was conducted at the State University of Surabaya (UNESA), chosen because of its large student population and diverse social and organisational backgrounds relevant to the research focus. Furthermore, there are various active Islamic-based student organisations, such as HMI, PMII, IMM, and KAMMI, which serve as an important context in examining student activism. The population of this study was all UNESA students who are members of these Islamic-based student organisations. The sampling technique used purposive sampling with the criteria of students active in organisations, resulting in a sample of 130 respondents. This sample size was determined based on considerations of population representativeness and the availability of data in the field, thus being considered capable of representing the characteristics of the population studied.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out by distributing questionnaires to predetermined respondents. The research instrument used a Likert scale with four answer categories to measure the level of respondent agreement with each statement posed. The independent variable (X) in this study is student activism, which is operationalised through indicators of activeness in organisations, frequency of participating in studies, and internalisation of values. Meanwhile, the dependent variable (Y) is the decision to vote, which is measured through candidate preferences in the 2024 presidential election. The questionnaire was systematically compiled based on variable indicators to be able to accurately measure the research constructs and has undergone validity and reliability tests to ensure the feasibility and consistency of the instrument before being used in data collection.

Tabel 1. Independent Variable Instrument

Variable	Indicator	Statement Items	Item Number
Student Activism in Islamic Student Organizations	Activeness in Organizations	4	1, 2, 3, 4
	Frequency of Study Attendance	4	5.6.7.8
	Internalization of Values	4	9, 10, 11, 12

Source: Data processed by researchers 2025

Tabel 2. Dependent Variable Instrument

Variable	Indicator	Statement Items	Item Number
Decision to Choose	Activeness in Organizations	4	1, 2, 3, 4

Source: Data processed by researchers 2025

In this study, validity testing was conducted on questionnaire items using the Spearman rank correlation technique because the data used were ordinal and the research approach was non-parametric (Sugiyono, 2017). If the Spearman correlation value (r_{count}) is greater than the r table at a significance level of 5%, then the item is declared valid. Meanwhile, for the reliability test in this study, measurements were conducted using the technique Alpha Cronbach, provided that the value of α (alpha) > 0.60 indicates that the items in the instrument are reliable (Sugiyono, 2017). Reliability is important to ensure that the measuring instrument produces stable and trustworthy data.

The data analysis technique in this study used the chi-square test to examine the relationship between student activism variables and voting decisions. This test was chosen because both variables analysed are categorical, making it suitable for identifying relationships between variables. The analysis was conducted by comparing significance values (Asymp. Sig.) with an error level of 0.05 as the basis for statistical decision-making. If the significance value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted, while if it is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H_0) cannot be rejected. Data processing was carried out using statistical software and supported by assumption tests, such as checking expected frequencies, to ensure the analysis results are valid, systematic, and accountable.

Result and Discussion

This study presents the results of an empirical analysis of the relationship between the level of student activism in Islamic-based organisations and voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election.

The analysis was conducted in two stages: cross-tabulation to illustrate the data distribution and a chi-square test to test the significance of the relationship between variables. Cross-tabulation was used as an initial step to identify patterns of student confidence in determining political choices based on their level of activism. Through this approach, variations in the distribution of respondents in each category can be observed, indicating an indication of a relationship between the variables. The results of the cross-tabulation are then presented in the following table as a basis for further analysis.

Tabel 4. Cross Tabulation

Variable	Dependent						Total (%)	
	Not Sure		Doubtful		Sure			
	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Independet	Low	10	71,40	4	28,60	0	0	14 (100)
	Medium	13	43,30	4	13,30	13	43,30	30 (100)
	High	36	41,9	5	5,80	45	52,30	86 (100)
Total		59	45,4	13	10,00	58	44,60	130 (100)

Source: Primary Data, processed by researchers 2025

The cross-tabulation results in the table above indicate a trend toward a relationship between student activism and voting decisions. Students with low levels of activism tended to be in the category of less certain about their choices, at 71.4%. Meanwhile, students with moderate levels of activism showed a more diverse distribution pattern, with relatively balanced proportions between the categories of less certain, undecided, and certain. This indicates variations in students' levels of confidence in determining political choices based on their level of organizational involvement. Overall, these data indicate that levels of activism are related to differences in belief patterns in political decision-making.

Analytically, this condition indicates that low organizational involvement limits students' access to discussion, exchange of ideas, and deeper political understanding. These limitations impact students' low levels of confidence in determining their political choices. At a moderate level of activism, organizational involvement begins to provide exposure to the process of political orientation formation. However, the intensity and depth of value internalization are not yet fully established, resulting in variations in students' levels of confidence (Sumarni & Fadhli, 2025). Thus, students at this level are in a transitional stage toward the formation of more stable and consistent political preferences.

Among the student group with high levels of activism, there was a strong dominance in the confident category, at 52.3%. This data confirms that the more active students are in organisational activities, the greater their level of confidence in the political decisions they make (Serafimovska & Marijana Markovikj, 2024). Organisational activities provide a space for students to discuss, exchange views, and deepen their understanding of their political and religious values. Through these experiences, students learn to evaluate candidates rationally and based on the values of the groups they believe in. Thus, organisational activity reflects not only their level of participation but also their maturity in political attitudes.

The results of this tabulation demonstrate that organisational activism plays a significant role in strengthening students' political convictions. Islamic organisations on campus serve as effective platforms for instilling social, religious, and political values that shape students' thinking orientations in making choices. Organisational activity also strengthens individuals' self-confidence and political awareness of their responsibilities as voters. Therefore, the higher the level of activism, the stronger the stability of students' political decisions. This is clarified by the results presented in the following chi-square test table.

Tabel 5. Chi-Square Test

Statistical Test	Mark	df (Degrees of Freedom)	Significance (Sig. 2-tailed)
Pearson Chi-Square	16,427 ^a	4	0,002
Likelihood Ratio	20,913	4	0
Linear-by-Linear Association	7,012	1	0,008
N	130	-	-

Source: Primary Data, processed by researchers 2025

Based on the results of the chi-square test in the table above, the Pearson chi-square value was 16.427 with a degree of freedom (df) of 4 and a significance value of 0.002. This significance value is smaller than the significance level of 0.05 ($0.002 < 0.05$), so it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the level of student activism in Islamic organisations and the decision to vote in the 2024 Presidential Election. These results indicate that the higher the level of student activity in Islamic organisations, the greater the likelihood that they will have stronger political beliefs. In other words, organisational activity is an important factor that influences the level of political awareness and decisiveness of students in making choices. This shows that student involvement in organizational activities not only broaden insight but also strengthen the ability to make rational and valuable political decisions.

These findings also strengthen the research hypothesis that organisational activism significantly contributes to the formation of students' political behaviour. Students active in Islamic organisations on campus are more exposed to activities that instil social, moral, and political values based on religious teachings. The interactions established within the organisations also foster group solidarity and a shared orientation toward political issues and national leadership. Therefore, it can be concluded that the null hypothesis (H_0), which states there is no relationship between the two variables, is rejected and the alternative hypothesis (H_1) is accepted. This conclusion confirms that student activity in Islamic organisations plays a significant role in shaping more conscious, rational, and value-based political mindsets and orientations.

The results of this analysis can be explained using Tajfel's Social Identity Theory, in which individuals shape their political behaviour and choices based on the group identity they deem relevant (Billig & Tajfel, 1973). In this study, specifically for students in Islamic organisations, group identity emerged when the organisation's values and views were internalised and became part of the individual's self. This social identification process led organisational members not only to participate formally but also to imitate the mindsets, norms, and political orientations that developed within their group. One respondent explained that he often assessed potential leaders based on the values taught in the organisation and not because of external influences (M, personal interview, 2025). This indicates that social identity within the organisation has become a source of moral legitimacy in determining political choices.

Several respondents also explained that organisational activities such as studies, meetings, and discussions often emphasise values such as honesty, responsibility, and trustworthiness, which are then used as benchmarks when selecting potential leaders (Personal Interview, 2025). From this statement, it can be concluded that students do not vote due to emotional factors or social pressure, but rather because of the alignment of values between religious identity and political attitudes. This explains why the Chi-Square test results show a significant relationship between organizational activism and voting decisions. because political decisions are rooted in values embedded through the process of group identity formation. Furthermore, the cross-tabulation results show a phenomenon where active students tend to be consistent and confident in making choices compared to students who are passive in organisations. This occurs because organisational activism strengthens social identity and clarifies political orientation through shared values. This phenomenon is also consistent with one respondent who explained that they tend to choose candidates who are considered to reflect Islamic values and justice as a form of moral responsibility to the organisation's teachings (Z, Personal Interview, 2025).

Furthermore, in the social environment theory, this theory emphasises the influence of the social context on the formation of individual political attitudes. In this study, Islamic student organisations play a role as a social environment that shapes student interaction patterns, views, and political orientation. Through activities such as studies, discussions, and internal forums, students exchange ideas and collectively assess political issues. Several respondents explained that organisational activities often serve as a place for them to learn to understand political conditions and the importance of having a clear view of potential leaders (personal interview, 2025). This indicates that the social environment of organisations has become an active and constructive political learning space for students.

The social environment within Islamic organisations encourages members to think critically about national political situations and leadership values. Through a culture of intense discussion, students have the opportunity to compare views and test their political arguments with their peers. This process creates a strong social influence, where group opinions and values serve as a reference in shaping individual political attitudes. Sociologically, social environment theory explains why research findings indicate a relationship between levels of organisational activism and voting decisions. More active students interact more frequently with social environments that are rich in organisational values and ideologies, thus developing more mature political views. This interaction process allows for the internalisation of mutually agreed-upon political values and norms, forming a stable political consciousness. One respondent explained that discussions within the organization made them more careful in making choices because they felt educated through the exchange of ideas with fellow members of the organisation (personal interview, 2025). This indicates that the social environment within organisations serves as a forum for developing political behaviour that is rational, ethical, and in accordance with shared Islamic values.

The two theories described above are interrelated and align with the Theory of Political Socialisation, which explains that individual political attitudes and behaviour are formed through social learning and interactions within specific environments. In Islamic student organisations, political socialisation occurs through activities such as studies, discussions, cadre training, and deliberations. Through this process, students gain political knowledge and moral values in assessing national issues.

Political socialisation within Islamic organisations not only fosters an understanding of the democratic process but also instils ethical values and responsibility in politics. Organisational activities provide students with a platform to understand the relationship between Islamic values and morally grounded political action. Respondents explained that they were taught to view elections not as mere formalities but as a mandate that must be carried out responsibly (personal interview, 2025).

This statement illustrates that the political socialisation process has fostered an awareness that political participation is a manifestation of religious and national values. The political socialisation process within Islamic student organisations also explains why the chi-square test results show a significant relationship between levels of activism and voting decisions. More active students experience a higher intensity of political socialisation through interaction, learning, and organisational activities. They not only learn the concept of leadership but also learn to assess potential leaders based on Islamic values and social responsibility.

From a sociological perspective, the relationship between activism and voting decisions is not solely individual but also a result of social interactions within religious groups. Islamic organisations create social networks that strengthen solidarity and consistency in political attitudes. Students who are active in organisational activities interact more frequently with other members who share their views, thereby strengthening their political convictions. This process demonstrates that students' political decisions do not emerge spontaneously, but rather through the social dynamics that occur within the organisation. Therefore, Islamic organisations play a strategic role as a space for the formation of students' political identities (Syarifah et al., 2026).

In addition to serving as a platform for socialisation, Islamic organisations also serve as a medium for internalising values. Values such as responsibility, morality, and social awareness taught within the organisations are reflected in the political behaviour of their members. Students who internalise Islamic values tend to be more selective and rational in making political choices. As one respondent expressed, "When I joined an organisation, I understood that choosing a leader can't be done haphazardly; we have to assess their trustworthiness and track record." (Interview, September 26, 2025). This demonstrates that organisational activism contributes to the formation of political decisions based on moral and ideological considerations, rather than simply pragmatic preferences (Biswas, 2024).

Overall, the results of this study confirm that student activism in Islamic organisations has a strong relationship with voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election. Therefore, there is a pattern where the higher the level of student participation and involvement in organisational activities, the stronger their confidence in their political choices (Atmojo, 2025). These findings demonstrate that Islamic organisations on campus function not only as religious forums but also as agents of political education that shape students' democratic awareness. Through group identification mechanisms, a supportive social environment, and a continuous process of political socialisation, Islamic organisations have played a role in shaping students' political orientations that are rational, ethical, and based on Islamic values (Linda et al., 2026).

Conclusion

This study concludes that the level of student activism in Islamic-based organisations is significantly related to their voting decisions in the 2024 presidential election. Organisational activism plays a crucial role in shaping students' political orientation, particularly through the internalisation of values and the social interactions that occur within them. The higher the level of student involvement, the stronger their tendency to have clear and consistent political beliefs. These findings confirm that Islamic-based student organisations serve not only as a forum for religious activities but also as a medium for forming value-based political attitudes. Thus, this study demonstrates that internal organisational dynamics significantly contribute to strengthening the quality of student political participation in a democratic context.

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