

Student Voter Resistance to Vote Buying in the 2024 General Election (Case Study of Students of the Department of Business Administration, Manado State Polytechnic)

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Resistance Vote Buying, Student Election</p>	<p><i>Vote buying is a form of money politics that is a serious threat to the integrity of the democratic process, especially among young voters, including students. This study aims to analyze student voter resistance to the practice of vote buying (money politics) in the 2024 election, with a case study of students of the Department of Business Administration of the Manado State Polytechnic. This study uses a quantitative survey mix method approach supported by group discussions and in-depth interviews. The findings show that student resistance to vote buying is partial and tends to be passive. As many as 50.5% of students stated that they rejected the offer of vote buying, but another 49.5% admitted to accepting. The rate of active rejection in the form of reporting of candidates who do vote buying is very low, with only 26.1% of students supporting reporting. This low active resistance is influenced by factors such as personal relationships with candidates, normalization of money politics in the surrounding environment, and uncertainty in attitudes as reflected in the average Likert scale score of 3.3 (neutral/hesitant). However, support for anti-vote buying campaigns is quite high, with an average scale of 3.9, and 86.9% of students agree to be a pioneer in rejecting the practice. This study highlights the gap between the moral attitude of students who reject vote buying and the concrete actions needed to stop the practice, as well as the importance of intervention through education and legal protection for whistleblowers.</i></p>

INTRODUCTION

Vote buying or money politics has become a recurring phenomenon in every election in Indonesia. This practice involves giving money or gifts to voters with the aim of gaining vote support. According to Aspinall and Sukmajati (2014), vote buying is one of the biggest threats to democracy because it hurts electoral fairness and reduces public trust in political integrity. Students, as part of young voters, have a strategic role in elections. They are not only a group of voters with great potential, but also agents of social change that can support the democratic process. However, several studies show that students' resistance to vote buying is often passive, even pragmatic, where they accept offers but still vote according to their preferences (Muhtadi, 2019; Maya Mustika, 2023).

This study aims to analyze student voter resistance to vote buying in the 2024 Election. This study focuses on three main objectives: (1) describing the process of vote buying against students, (2) calculating student responses to vote buying, and (3) analyzing student resistance to vote buying.

METHOD

This study employs a mixed-method approach, with quantitative methods serving as the primary approach. The population and sample consist of 184 students from Manado State Polytechnic, selected through random sampling to participate in the survey. Additionally, 26 students were chosen as interview informants based on their direct experiences with vote buying, providing deeper insights into the issue. Group discussions were conducted with five classes of students to collectively explore the phenomenon and gather a broader perspective.

Data collection was carried out through multiple techniques. The survey, distributed via Google Forms, aimed to measure students' perceptions, responses, and resistance to vote buying. In-depth interviews were conducted to delve into students' personal experiences and uncover the underlying reasons behind their decisions to accept or reject vote buying. Furthermore, group discussions were facilitated to gather collective viewpoints and enrich the understanding of shared experiences and attitudes.

The analysis of data followed a structured process. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using the Likert scale to assess trends and patterns in students' responses. Meanwhile, qualitative data obtained from interviews and group discussions were examined through thematic analysis, enabling the identification of key narratives and recurring themes. This comprehensive approach allows for a nuanced understanding of vote buying among students, integrating both statistical insights and personal narratives to provide a holistic view of the issue.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Process of Vote Buying

The results of interviews and questionnaire surveys reveal that the vote-buying process among students follows several distinct stages. First, successful candidates or their teams identify targets, typically selecting students based on economic vulnerability or existing social relationships. Once targets are identified, candidates or their representatives initiate an approach, often leveraging social connections or engaging through various media channels.

In the next stage, offers are made to the students, which may include money, gifts, basic necessities, assistance, or promises of future benefits. These offers serve as incentives to secure student votes. Following this, deals and transactions are conducted informally or through verbal agreements, reflecting the discreet and non-binding nature of such arrangements.

Finally, to ensure compliance, students are required to provide some form of vote guarantee. This often involves submitting photographic evidence of their completed ballot papers or a verbal commitment to vote for a specific candidate. This structured yet informal process highlights the strategic and targeted nature of vote buying within the student community.

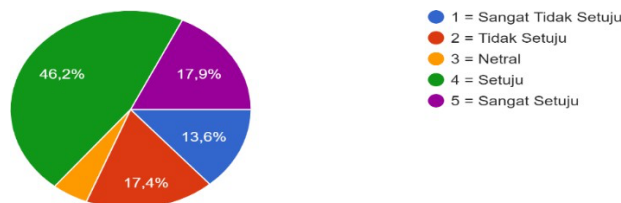
Student Voter Response to Vote Buying

Personal Experience

Ever Offered Money/Gifts/Basic Needs

The survey results showed that of all student voters, 64.1% (a combination of responses that answered "yes" and "strongly agree") stated that they had received a vote buying offer from a political candidate or their successful team. This figure illustrates that the majority of students are faced with a situation where they are offered money or gifts or basic necessities to choose a particular candidate. Meanwhile, 34% of respondents stated that they had never received the offer, and 4.9% of respondents were neutral or hesitant to give a definite answer regarding the experience of receiving a vote buying offer.

Figure 1: Vote Buying Offer



Source: Processed Data (2024)

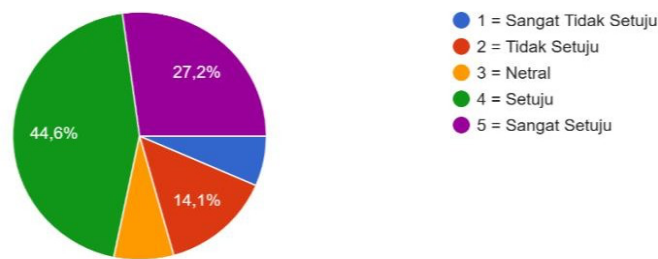
From interviews with 26 informants, this finding was supported by only 3 informants (11.5%) who never received a vote buying offer due to external factors. Their reasons are; 1 informant moved his residence while his ID card and constituency were still at the old address. The 2nd informant was not at home while the 3rd informant refused to provide his ID card and personal data when the team approach process was successful. These findings show that the practice of vote buying is very widespread among students. This is in line with Muhtadi's research (2019), which states that vote buying is a structured and massive political practice in elections in Indonesia. Students as young voters are often targeted because

they are considered an easily influenced group. Rejection of vote buying offers is passive because it is influenced by external factors.

Watching Others Accept Offers

The survey results showed that the experience of witnessing others receiving vote buying offers among students was quite high, with 44.6% of respondents stating "agree" and 27.2% "strongly agreeing". In contrast, only 14.1% "disagree", 6.6% "strongly disagree", and 7.6% neutral. This data indicates that more than 70% of students have direct or indirect experience of witnessing the practice of vote buying in their environment. The majority of students (71.8% agreed and strongly agreed) reported that they had witnessed others receiving vote buying offers. This shows that the practice of vote buying does not only target certain individuals but has become a common phenomenon in the student social environment, especially ahead of the election.

Figure 2: Witnessing Others Accept Offers



Source: Processed Data (2024)

The findings from the interviews reveal a troubling normalization of vote buying among students, driven by social and environmental pressures. Informant Nd expressed a sense of resignation, stating that while they might have hesitated, the collective acceptance by those around them, including local community leaders, left little room for refusal. This sentiment was echoed by informant Jm, who admitted to accepting vote-buying offers simply because it was common practice in their environment. The perception of widespread acceptance created an atmosphere where rejecting such offers felt unnatural or even isolating.

Similarly, informant Sd recounted a personal experience of receiving a vote-buying offer. Despite recognizing the unethical nature of the practice, they felt compelled to accept due to the overwhelming influence of their social circle. This highlights how the normalization of money politics perpetuates a cycle where individuals, even those with moral reservations, succumb to external pressures.

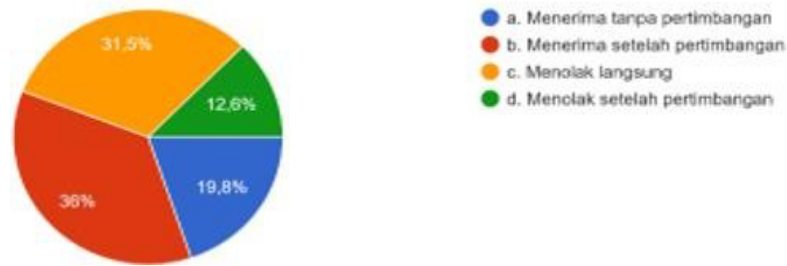
These findings align with Muhtadi (2020), who argues that frequent exposure to money politics leads to its acceptance as a standard practice, creating societal pressure that discourages individuals from rejecting such offers. Aspinall and Sukmajati (2014) further emphasize that the entrenchment of money politics within Indonesian society fosters an environment where resisting vote buying becomes increasingly difficult. Observing this phenomenon firsthand reinforces the belief that monetary transactions are an inherent part of political engagement, making it challenging to disrupt the cycle. This normalization ultimately blurs ethical boundaries and diminishes efforts to cultivate integrity among young voters.

Attitude to Offers

Accepting Vote buying with consideration

The perception that votes buying is common in elections causes students to accept vote buying offers with the attitude of accepting after consideration (36%), refusing directly (31.5%), accepting without consideration (19.8%), and refusing after consideration 12.6%. In other words, 55.8% accept and 44.1% refuse. Greater than 9.2% of respondents who received an offer.

Figure 3: Student Reaction

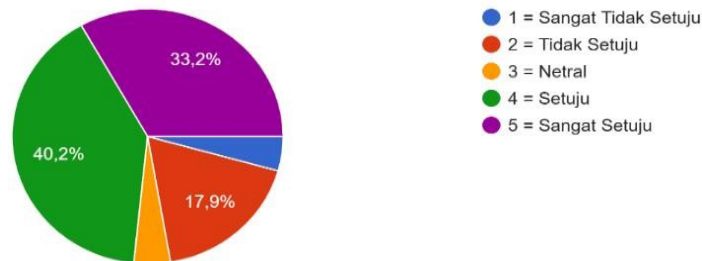


Source: Processed Data (2024)

Accepting Vote Buying but Voting as You Want

The data findings stated that of the 184 respondents, the majority (40.2%) agreed with the statement if I accepted the vote buying offer, I would still vote according to my desire to support the statement, 33.2% strongly agreed or 73.4% and 17.9% disagreed. 4.3% strongly disagree and 4.3% are neutral. The average figure is 3.8, indicating that most respondents agree.

Figure 4: Exercise of the Right to Vote



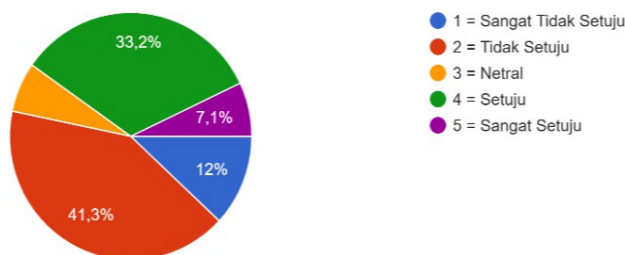
Source: Processed Data (2024)

This data shows that respondents tend to support or align with these statements although on the other hand there is a tendency of respondents, 26.5% show a pragmatic attitude (an attitude made based on practical and direct benefits received) where they choose according to their personal decisions despite vote buying interventions. This means that even if the candidate gives vote buying, it does not guarantee that the student will vote for the candidate. In accordance with Muhtadi (2019); The effectiveness of vote buying is reduced if voters only receive incentives without having to fulfill commitments. The same thing was put forward by Aspinall & Sukmajati (2014) that educated young people tend to separate material incentives from political decisions.

Feeling Pressured If You Receive Vote Buying

In Figure 5, regarding the feeling of pressure to accept offers of money, gifts, or necessities (vote buying), the results show the following results: the majority of 41.3% of respondents stated that they did not agree that they felt depressed, 33.3% agreed, 7.1% disagreed, and 6.5.3% neutral.

Figure 5: Students' Feelings of Depression



Source: Processed Data (2024)

The figures mentioned above show that the respondents' social environment does not put too much pressure on them to accept offers. With 40.8% of respondents domiciled in Manado, our environment in Manado does not pressure in determining student votes. On the other hand, 33.2% of respondents who agreed and 7.1% who strongly agreed, or a total of 40.3%, admitted that they felt pressured to accept vote

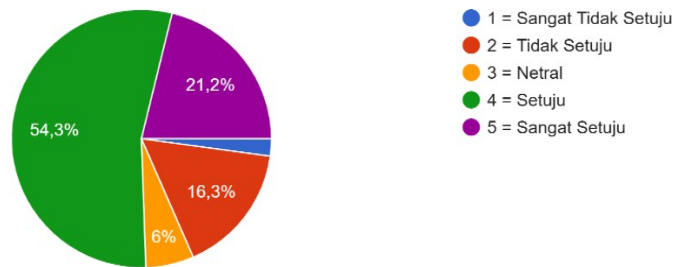
buying. This suggests that there is a group of students who, while perhaps aware of the negative impact of vote buying, still feel pressure to accept it.

This pressure can come from social or environmental influences, such as friends, family, or the surrounding community who may consider vote buying to be common and common in the context of elections

Feeling Guilty when Receiving Vote Buying

Survey data shows that the response to feelings of guilt when receiving vote buying is the majority of 54.3% agree, 21.2% strongly agree, 16.3% disagree, 6% neutral.

Figure 6: Feelings of Guilt When Receiving Vote Buying



Source: Processed Data (2024)

The guilt of the majority of respondents (75.7%) reflects that most of them have moral awareness of the adverse effects of vote buying. Only a small part (16.3%) showed that there was a group that cared less or was too tolerant of vote buying. The average Likert score for guilt was 3.8, which indicates a significant tendency toward "agreeing" that they feel guilty after receiving a vote buying. This reflects the existence of moral awareness and ethical values among students that are contrary to the act of accepting vote buying.

According to Festinger (1957) in Theory of Cognitive Dissonance, cognitive dissonance occurs when a person performs actions that are contrary to their values or beliefs, which results in feelings of discomfort or guilt. In line with Wijayanti's (2018) research that students often feel together after receiving vote buying. In this context, even though students receive vote buying, they experience moral conflicts that show an understanding of the negative impact of this practice.

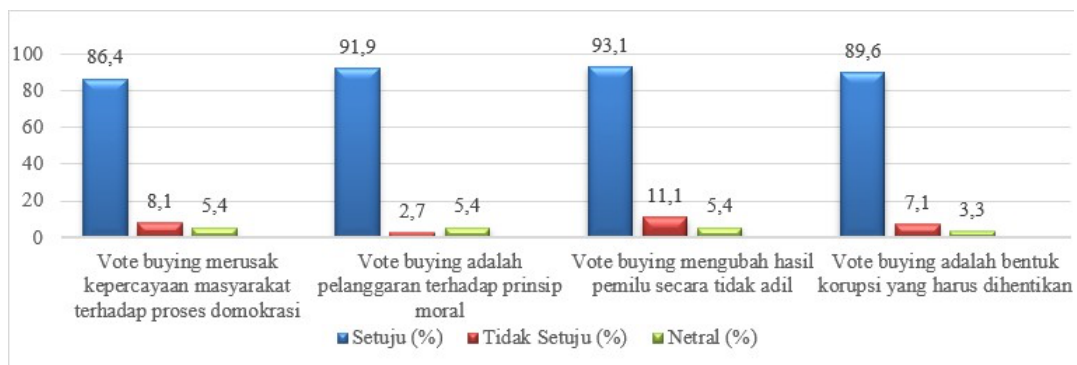
Perception of Vote Buying

Negative Views on Vote Buying

The student's view is their personal understanding and assessment of vote buying, whether this practice is considered an act of corruption that undermines democracy or as an acceptable thing in certain situations. This view affects their attitude of resistance and ultimately the actions they take, such as refusing or accepting vote buying.

Most students have a negative perception of vote buying. The findings stated that 86.7% of students had awareness that vote buying damaged public trust in democracy; 91.9% of vote buying also violates principles and morals and 93.1% of vote buying unfairly changes the election results and 89.6% of vote buying is a form of corruption that must be stopped.

Figure 7: Students' Negative Perception of Vote Buying



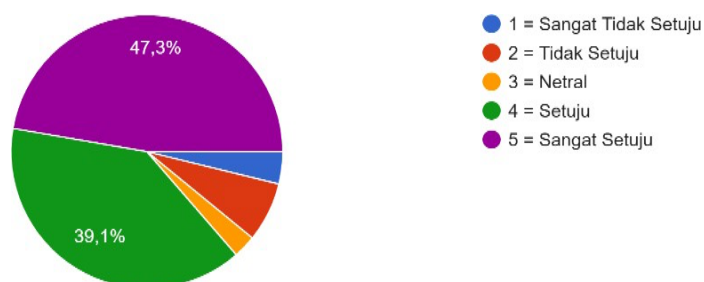
Source: Processed Data (2024)

From the figure above, it can be seen that students with an average score of 90.25% agree that vote buying is widely negative. The dominating negative perception reflects the high moral and political awareness of students towards the adverse impact of vote buying. According to the opinion of Hellman et al. (2015): Moral awareness influences rejection of vote buying. Supported by Sukmajati (2014): Moral perception can be formed through political education.

Believe that vote buying offers are difficult to avoid in elections.

A survey on student perceptions related to the difficulty of avoiding vote buying offers in elections produced data, namely; 47.3% of respondents strongly agreed that vote buying offers were difficult to avoid in elections, 39.1% of respondents agreed, 2.7% of respondents were neutral or did not have a clear opinion, 7.1% of respondents disagreed that vote buying was difficult to avoid and 3.8% of respondents strongly disagreed (figure 8)

Figure 8: Vote Buying is Difficult to Avoid



Source: Processed Data (2024)

From these results, the majority of respondents, namely 86.4% (a combination of "strongly agree" and "agree"), are of the opinion that vote buying offers are indeed difficult to avoid in the context of elections. If students feel that vote buying is inevitable in the election, they may be permissive and less motivated to reject the offer. Only 10.9% of respondents (a combination of "disagree" and "strongly disagree") indicated that only a small group still believed that vote buying could be avoided by raising student awareness. The group that was in doubt assessed as much as 2.7%. This uncertainty shows that students have not fully understood the negative impact of vote buying or because of lack of information or indifference to money politics issues.

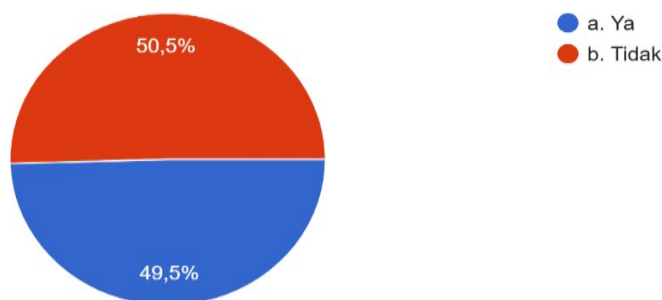
Student Voter Resistance to Vote Buying

Active Rejection of Vote Buying

1. Reject a Vote Buy Offer outright

The survey results showed that 50.5% of respondents stated that they did not accept vote buying, on the other hand, 49.5% admitted to accepting vote buying offers in the form of money or other forms in the 2024 election (pictured). This data shows almost balanced results between students who accept and those who reject vote buying. With this almost balanced number, it can be seen that active rejection of vote buying among students is still low.

Figure 9: Percentage of Rejection and Acceptance of Vote Buying



Source: Processed Data (2024)

The results of the above survey are corroborated by the results of interviews from 26 informants, only 3 informants (11.5%) admitted that they received money offers but rejected them. The reason for the rejection is, knowing that vote buying is not good for democracy, already having a candidate chosen, not wanting to accept because from a young age my parents taught me such things are not good plus the family's economic situation is sufficient. The low rejection rate indicates that this practice is quite widespread among students.

It was further strengthened by the results of a group discussion involving 5 classes of students. In the discussion, it was revealed that more than 75% of students admitted to having received money or gifts from the practice of vote buying. The findings indicate that students are vulnerable to the practice of vote buying with a low level of active rejection.

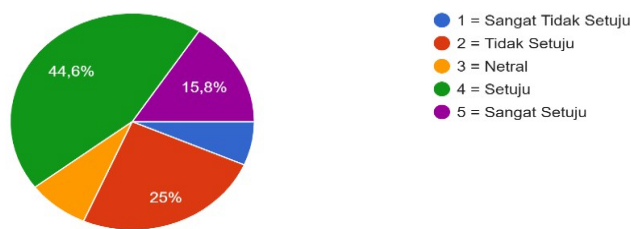
Based on the findings of the 59.8% attitude scale survey, students rejected the offer and 34.8% accepted the offer with details of 43.5% of students stating "agree" to reject the vote buying offer, 16.3% stating "strongly agreeing," while 28.3% stated "disagree," 6.5% stated "strongly disagreed," and the other 5.4% were in the "neutral" position. The average attitude score on the Likert scale reached 3.3, which shows a tendency towards a neutral attitude or hesitation (not strong) in rejecting vote buying offers.

In line with the opinion of Aspinal and Sukmajati (2014) stated that money politics in Indonesia is often considered part of a "normal" political process, which can influence the perception of voters, including students, to be ambivalent or permissive towards this practice. Schedler (2002) in "The Menu of Manipulation" states that in societies with permissive political norms, practices such as vote buying tend to be accepted as commonplace, thus encouraging individuals, including students, to accept such offers even though they are aware of the negative impact.

2. Not Voting for Candidates Involved in Vote Buying

The survey showed that the attitude of students towards candidates involved in vote buying varied, with the following results: A total of 44.6% of students stated that they "agreed" not to vote for candidates involved in vote buying, and 15.8% stated "strongly agreed," indicating that the majority of students tended to reject candidates who used the practice of money politics. On the other hand, 25% of students said they "disagreed" with this statement, suggesting that they may still be willing to vote for a candidate despite knowing their involvement in vote buying. Meanwhile, 8.2% of students were in a "neutral" position, and 6.5% stated "strongly disagree".

Saya tidak memilih kandidat yang saya tahu terlibat dalam vote buying
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The average value on the Likert scale for this item is 3.4 in the neutral category. This indicates that there is an indecisive attitude among students, with a slight tendency towards rejection of candidates who use vote buying.

The average score on the Likert scale of 3.4 shows that although most students agree not to vote for candidates involved in vote buying, this attitude is not strong enough and decisive. The percentage of students who stated "agree" and "strongly agree" (60.4%) shows that there is a moral awareness among most students to reject candidates who are involved in the practice of vote buying. However, this ambivalence is reflected in the fact that quite a number of students "disagree" (25%) or "strongly disagree" (6.5%) with this statement, indicating that they are still willing to vote for candidates involved in vote buying under certain conditions. This attitude indicates that there is a moral conflict or cognitive dissonance among students who understand that vote buying is unethical, but may be influenced by social, economic, or cultural factors that make them still consider

candidates who use money politics. Festinger (1957) in the Theory of Cognitive Dissonance explains that cognitive dissonance occurs when a person performs actions that are contrary to their values or beliefs, which then results in feelings of discomfort. In this context, students may experience an inner conflict between the ethical awareness to reject vote buying and the pragmatic need that makes them more permissive.

This result illustrates that student resistance to vote buying in the form of active rejection is still partial and not fully strong. Despite the tendency not to support candidates involved in vote buying, the average result of 3.4 reflects that this resistance has not yet become a fully solid stance

3. Choosing Candidates Who Have a Vision, Mission

Even if there are offers from several candidates or successful teams, students tend to accept all offers that come from 1-4 successful candidates/teams. They will choose from several candidates who offer vote buying rewards with the largest criteria: namely %, who have vision, mission, credibility and capability 33.3%, 7.2% who are famous/known, none of them choose any 31.5%, the closest 18% and 9.9% who give great rewards. This shows that respondents tend to choose candidates who have a vision, mission and credibility.

Figure 10: Student Choice Decision



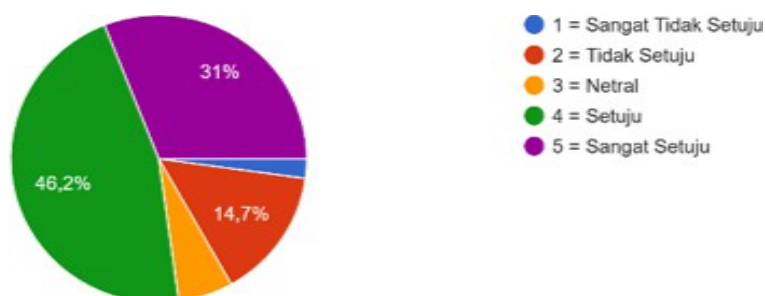
Participation in Anti-Vote Buying Campaigns

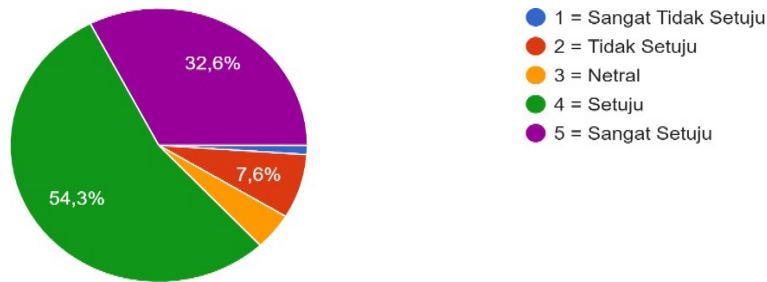
Support anti-vote buying campaigns

From the survey, data was found regarding student support for the anti-vote buying campaign in the 2024 election. The distribution of support for the vote buying campaign can be seen from the majority of students or 46.2% agree, 31% strongly agree, on the other hand, 14.7% disagree, 6% neutral and 2.2% strongly disagree. The average likert scale of 3.9 attitude is close to the agreeing category. This indicates the high support for the vote buying campaign among students. This shows that students have a good awareness of the negative impact of vote buying and can become agents of change in society that reject money politics.

Becoming a Pioneer in Rejection of Vote Buying

Students are pioneers in rejecting vote buying, most (54.3%) agree, (32.6%) strongly agree, (7.6%) disagree, (4.3%) neutral, (1.1%), Likert scale 4.1.



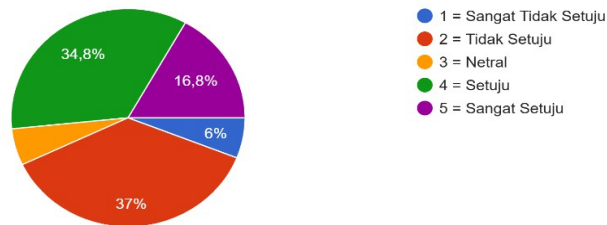


Showing that students agree, the majority understands and accepts responsibility as pioneers in rejecting vote buying, reflects the high moral and social awareness of students.

Remind friends or family to decline vote buying offers.

Another form of student participation in the vote buying campaign is to remind friends or family to reject the offer of vote buying", The findings of the survey data are 37% disagree, 34.8% agree, 16.8% strongly agree, 6% strongly disagree and 5.4% neutral,

Saya mengingatkan teman atau keluarga untuk menolak tawaran vote buying.
184 jawaban

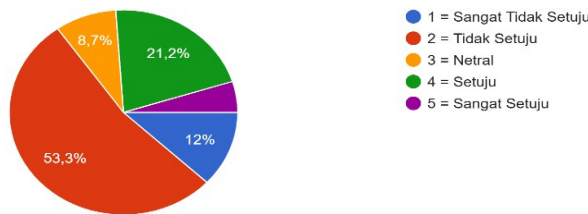


The average Likert Scale score of 3.2 shows an attitude that tends to be neutral./hesitant to remind others to reject vote buying. Although students have the basis of the importance of rejection of vote buying, they are afraid to face their social environment. According to Hellman et al. (2015), resistance to vote buying is often limited to individual actions, without extending to advocacy or community education.

Reporting Successful Candidates or Teams Who Vote Buying

The findings of the distribution of student attitudes towards vote buying reporting are 53% Disagree: Most students show an attitude of refusing to report candidates or successful teams who do vote buying. 21.2% Agree: A small percentage of students expressed support for reporting the practice. 12% strongly disagreed: Some students had a more vocal rejection of the idea of reporting. 8.7% Neutral: A small percentage show a neutral attitude, signaling uncertainty or disinterest in the issue. 4.9% Strongly Agree: Only a few strongly support reporting and the majority refuse to report.

Saya melaporkan kandidat/tim sukses yang terlibat dalam vote buying kepada pihak berwenang
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The survey results showed that the majority of students had a clear attitude of refusing to report successful candidates or teams involved in vote buying and only a minority supported the Statement. An average scale of 2.5 indicates a negative tendency of respondents to report events. The support for reporting only covers 26.1% (a combination of "agree" and "strongly agree"), with a neutral level of 8.7%. This low support shows that despite awareness of vote buying, students do not consider reporting to be a feasible or necessary action. Students' reluctance to report shows that students' resistance to vote buying is only limited to rejecting offers without taking active action to stop the practice.

In discussions with several student groups, it was found that 100% of students did not report the act of vote buying to the Election Supervisory Institution/person. Their reason is because the candidate or the successful team is family/acquaintances, does not want to be involved in the matter or is not his business, is afraid of the consequences, everyone around him/environment is involved, not his business, does not know and other reasons. This data emphasizes that students' rejection of vote buying is passive. There is a gap between the moral attitude that rejects vote buying and the concrete action that actively reports to stop the practice of vote buying.

In line with Aspinall & Sukmajati's (2014) theory in Indonesian Electoral Dynamics, voters are often reluctant to report the practice of vote buying because they are worried about personal or social consequences. According to Hellman et al. (2015) in *Electoral Studies*, the normalization of money politics practices reduces individual initiative to act against. Cognitive Dissonance (Festinger, 1957) Respondents who reject may feel that certain actions are contrary to their values or morals, thus creating cognitive dissonance that causes them to reject the practice. Corroborated by Clark & Wilson (2019) in *Youth and Political Activism* found that younger generations tend to reject political practices that are contrary to their morality, but often face moral dilemmas in expressing those views.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that vote buying occurs through stages: target identification, approach, offer, deal/transaction, and vote guarantee by the candidate or successful team. The response of students to vote buying was almost balanced: 50.5% refused on the grounds of morality, political partisanship, or family values, while 49.5% accepted offers in the form of money or gifts. Group discussions showed that more than 75% of students had received a prize, with an average attitude scale of 3.3 (which tended to be neutral), reflecting doubts about outright rejection. Student resistance is partial and passive, with only 26.1% supporting the reporting of vote buying practices, hampered by personal relationships, social fears, and the normalization of these practices. The majority of students (77.2%) supported anti-vote buying campaigns, and 86.9% were willing to take the lead, but this support was not strong enough to encourage collective action such as reporting violations or alerting others.

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