Political Communication Strategy of the General Election Commission (KPU) of Kediri City for Increasing Public Political Participation in the 2024 Election

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Abstract

This research aims to explain the political communication strategy of the KPU of Kediri City in increasing public political participation in the 2024 election and the supporting and inhibiting factors for the KPU and the people of Kediri City. This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation methods for collecting primary and secondary data in research. The subjects of this research are the team from the KPU of Kediri City (Its Secretary and Commissioner), an official institution responsible for organizing elections in Kediri City, and the people of Kediri City who are involved in the general election process in 2024. The results of this study indicate that the KPU's political communication strategy is through face-to-face socialization and online media, as well as the "goes to school" and "goes to campus" programs. The delivery of political messages has three stages: beginning, middle, and end. Increased public participation is seen in the percentage of community attendance at polling stations. Election indicators are seen after voting or election. In 2024, it reached 86.72 percent; from 2019 to 2024, the percentage of public participation increased by 0.53 percent. Supporting factors for the KPU are the voter pyramid and partnership with community organizations. In contrast, the inhibiting factors are the KPU's few internal human resources and schedules that conflict with other activities.
***Keywords**: Political Communication Strategy, Public Participation, General Election Commission.*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan strategi komunikasi politik KPU Kota Kediri dalam meningkatkan partisipasi politik masyarakat pada pemilu 2024 dan faktor-faktor pendukung dan penghambat bagi KPU serta masyarakat Kota Kediri. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan penelitian deskriptif kualitatif melalui metode observasi, wawancara mendalam dan dokumentasi. Metode ini sebagai metode mengumpulkan data primer dan sekunder dalam penelitian. Subjek penelitian ini adalah Tim dari KPU Kota Kediri (Sekretaris dan Komisioner KPU Kota Kediri) sebagai Lembaga resmi yang memiliko tanggung jawab dalam penyelenggaraan Pemilu di Kota Kediri dan masyarakat Kota Kediri yang terlibat dalam proses pemilihan umum di tahun 2024. Hasil penelitian

ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi komunikasi politik KPU melalui sosialisasi secara tatap muka dan media online, serta program *"goes to school"* dan *"goes to campus"*. Penyampaian pesan politik dengan 3 tahap yaitu awal, tengah dan akhir. Peningkatan partisipasi masyarakat dilihat dari presentase kehadiran masyarakat di TPS. Indikator Pemilu terlihat pasca pencoblosan atau pemilihan. Di Tahun 2024 mencapai 86,72%, dari tahun 2019 ke tahun 2024 presentase partisipasi masyarakat naik 0,53%. Faktor-faktor pendukung bagi KPU yakni piramida pemilih dan partnership dengan organisasi masyarakat, sedangkan faktor penghambatnya yakni SDM internal KPU yang sedikit serta jadwal yang berbenturan dengan kegiatan lain.

Kata kunci: Strategi Komunikasi Politik, Partisipasi Masyarakat, Komisi Pemilihan Umum

INTRODUCTION

Election contestation is one part of the political culture in Indonesia. With this understanding, some events involve all Indonesian people carrying out elections simultaneously. The contestation of the 2024 General Election certainly involves political communication. The term political communication is very familiar in politics or government. According to Budiarjo, the study of political communication examines the close relationship between communication and political processes in the political system (Budiardjo, 2004). Elections in Indonesia have a democratic mechanism to replace leaders and representatives directly elected by the people. With the election of people's representatives directly through the general election process, it is hoped that a government will gain strong legitimacy from the people themselves so that a stable government can be established accompanied by high support from the people (Biroroh, 2021).

The concept of political communication in political science became popular in the 1960s, especially after Gabriel Almond published his book "The Politics of Development Area". In the book, Almond emphasizes that political communication is one of the important functions that always exist in every political system (Palupi E, 2019). The election is not only a tool for democratic participation but also a fierce battle for leadership positions, power, and access to resources. (Kühne, 2010). Updating the voter list is a crucial stage in organizing elections because it is through this stage that citizens' constitutional or voting rights are regulated. A high-quality voter list will ensure Indonesian citizens can cast their votes, and a poor-quality voter list can deprive them of their votes (Syaiful et al., 2023).

According to Lasswell, communication can be defined as a process that involves sending a message from one person to another, taking into account factors such as who sends the message, what is said, how the message is delivered, to whom the message is addressed, and what effects are produced (Effendy, 2007). In essence, political communication contains information or messages about politics. The messages are processed through political socialization, political

participation, voting in elections, and decision-making on public policy (Arifin, 2010). Political participation may be conceived as any activity that citizens undertake voluntarily to influence authorities' decisions at different levels of the political system (Reichert, 2010).

In the context of general elections, political strategy is a key component for political parties to achieve success. Political parties that want to succeed in general elections must have effective strategies to win the hearts and minds of voters (Haris, 2014). The political communication strategy is also crucial for the General Election Commission (KPU) of Kediri City in planning and implementing general elections, especially in increasing public political participation and influencing the results of political party votes. Almost every activity carried out by a citizen can sometimes be considered a form of political participation (Van Deth, 2016). As with all human interactions and actions, they are essentially political (Rubenson, n.d.). Thus, political participation also includes discussing individual activities or groups of individuals in political life (Djumadin, 2021).

Public political participation is a tangible manifestation of democracy, where people can be directly involved in the General Election process (Fauzi, 2018). Public participation is an essential component of representative democracy in a democratic state. It is how the people exercise their sovereignty by participating in democratic elections (Pratama & Suswanta, 2021).

In this context, citizens have a significant role in electing leaders and state officials who will manage the government and make decisions that affect the country's future. Through the election process, citizens can determine who will lead and make strategic decisions for the country (Suryadi, 2007). Every citizen has the same rights and opportunities to assess and choose their leaders. Good political communication is required to increase effective political participation (Sa'ban et al., 2020). Communication, as the essence of human interaction, plays an important role in all aspects of life, including politics (Amanah, 2021). Political communication functions as a liaison between various components of the political system so that the aspirations and interests of the community can be translated into appropriate and wise policies (Anshori, 2019). In principle, it is done by conveying political messages and information, public policies, and political decisions for good and clean governance so that political communication is creativity and interaction between humans, political actors, and society, respect for human rights, equal rights as responsible political leaders (Unmuha et al., 2022).

Each stage of the implementation of the General Election, which took place following the schedule and program set, led to dynamic activities in the political process in Kediri City. Based on these conditions, the KPU of Kediri City continues to make maximum efforts to succeed in organizing elections by carrying out several strategies, such as establishing communication with

various stakeholders and the community. The forms of communication can be face-to-face meetings in the framework of socialization and coordination. In addition, delivering formal information through letters and mass media is one of the efforts to achieve a uniform understanding of the 2024 election. Thus, all parties involved must understand and follow the election process properly.

According to the results of a preliminary study by interviewing Surya, an informant from the KPU of Kediri City, a condition is revealed that there is a lack of maximum public political participation in Kediri City's election activities where in the 2014 election, the level of community participation reached 77.32 percent. Meanwhile, based on previous research on the 2019 election, the level of public participation in Kediri City reached 86.19 percent, which shows that the level of public participation is categorized as high and has exceeded the national target of 75 percent.

As the main actor in this election, the public must be more participatory in all stages of organizing the 2024 election, especially in Kediri City. Based on the above phenomenon, this research aims to explain the political communication strategy of the KPU of Kediri City in increasing public political participation in the 2024 General Election and to explain the factors that support and inhibit actors of the KPU of Kediri City and the people of Kediri City in increasing public political on the 2024 General Election in Kediri City.

METHOD

This research utilizes a qualitative descriptive method to provide a detailed and in-depth description of the conditions that actually occur in the field (Sutopo, 2002). This qualitative method is a research procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words that come from people and behaviors that can be observed (Moleong, 1998). The data collection technique in this research is an in-depth interview with informants, namely the team from the KPU of Kediri City (Its Secretary and Commissioner), an official institution that has responsibility for organizing elections in Kediri City and the people of Kediri City who are involved in the general election process in 2024. An in-depth interview is the main technique in searching for primary research data and presenting current constructions regarding personal data, events, activities, organizations, feelings, motivations, responses or perceptions, levels, and forms of involvement (Koentjaraningrat, 1986). The observation technique is also used to explore data from data sources in the form of events, places or locations, objects, and image recordings (Creswell, 2012). In this study, observations were made by observing the activities of the KPU of Kediri City in the 2024 Election. The following technique is documentation as content analysis, meaning researchers record the important contents expressed in documents or archives and their

implied meaning (Sutopo, 2002). This technique is applied to collect supporting data that can clarify the primary data sourced from official documents and archives. This research documentation was conducted at the KPU of Kediri City and the public environment. Data processing and analysis techniques in this study are done qualitatively by focusing on the meaning and quality of the data. This research performed data analysis methods in three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. (Burhan, 2003).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

a. Political Communication Strategy of the KPU of Kediri City in Increasing Public Political Participation

Communication strategy is one way to organize the implementation of a communication process, from planning and implementation to evaluation to achieve a goal. (Fitriani et al., 2023). According to Rush and Althoff, political communication is disseminating politically relevant information from one part of the political system. It is dynamic; political socialization, participation, and recruitment processes depend on it (Asri, 2023). Political strategy is needed by a concerned political party or party participating in the General Election. Political communication strategy is a tactic that plays a very important role in winning elections.

The success of a political communication strategy contributes significantly to the use and strategic planning of candidate pairs or political parties to strategize not only in the face of elections but also post-election (Djuyandi, 2017). The strategy here is understood as a plan to achieve a specific goal (Romarheim, 2005), among others, to produce a significant impact on the political process, such as building a positive image of political candidates or parties, forming a favorable public opinion, and encouraging active community participation in political activities (Anastasya Supriyadi & Nurdin, 2024).

The political communication strategy of the KPU of Kediri City is an important element in increasing public participation in the 2024 elections. In this case, the political communication strategy aims to influence the audience to increase their political participation. (McNair, 2011). According to the resource theory of political participation from Brady, Verba, and Schlozman in 1995 states that with the same motivation to participate in society, political activity must be supported by various resources. These resources include time, money, and the civic skills necessary for communication and organizational capacity (Xu et al., 2018). Targeted socialization programs and the

application of political communication strategies will significantly help increase community participation (Muhazir et al., 2023).

Some of the stages of this political communication planning or strategy initiated by Gregory in the book Political Communication by Deddy Mulyana include problem analysis, formulating goals or targets, segmentation and identification of targets or targets, determining messages, creating strategies and tactics, allocating time and financial resources, and evaluation (Mulyana, 2014).

1. **Problem Analysis**

The problem analysis used by the KPU of Kediri City to increase public participation is done by looking at the age segmentation of the people of Kediri City. The segmentation starts with baby boomers, millennials, and Generation Z. The KPU of Kediri City has its own strategy in each segmentation because the strategies implemented are also different. The problems faced in each segmentation are also different. The problems seen for the current segmentation of novice voters who are over 17 years old tend to be apathetic or do not believe in the existence of elections. The willingness and self-consciousness to come to the polling station and vote is also a challenge for the KPU of Kediri City. According to the KPU of Kediri City, limited human resources at the KPU make socialization less widespread in various segments of society. However, with this limitation, the KPU is increasingly considering the best strategy to increase community participation in the 2024 election.

2. **Setting Goal or Target**

The target of the KPU of Kediri City in the 2024 General Election is that the participation rate of the people of Kediri City reaches 80 percent. The national participation target reaches 75 percent in the election. According to the KPU of Kediri City, this target makes socialization necessary because people must understand and be aware that democracy is essential in Indonesia, especially in Kediri City. The target of the KPU of Kediri City in the 2024 General Election is that the participation rate of the people of Kediri City reaches 80 percent. The national participation target reaches 75% in the election. According to the KPU of Kediri City, this target makes socialization necessary because people must understand and be aware that democracy is essential in Indonesia, especially in Kediri City. Even the target of community participation in the 2024 elections has exceeded the national target and has increased by 0.53 percent, specifically from 2019 of 86.19 percent to 2024 of 86.72 percent.

3. Segmentation and Target Identification

To determine the program's target audience, it is necessary to conduct audience analysis and segmentation. Since the type of public at hand will significantly influence the type of planning, this analysis is critical. Communication programs should at least divide the public into three groups. There are three groups of publics: *Latent Public*, which is the group that faces the problem but does not pay enough attention; *Aware Public*, which is the group that takes responsibility for the problem; and *Active Public*, which is the group that acts on the problem, such as analyzing voter typologies based on audience tendencies. (Tehubijuluw, 2020).

Age segmentation within the Kediri City people starts with baby boomers, millennials, and Generation Z. Meanwhile, other segmentations that exist in the community also include religious segmentation, women's segmentation, disability segmentation, beginner voter segmentation and young voters, marginalized segmentation, and (special) communities.

In religious segmentation, the KPU partners with religious organizations, namely NU, Muhammadiyah, Indonesian Islamic Da'wah Institute (LDII), and Wahidiyah. The partnership model in the religious segmentation is participating in recitations or assemblies that insert one or several sessions to socialize voter education. The disability segmentation also has a different partnership model. The KPU of Kediri City involves people with disabilities in KPU events. In the 2024 elections, the KPU specifically involved people with disabilities with the 'Mascot Kirab' event. The KPU also invited people with disabilities to participate in the peace campaign. The KPU carries out this method to give a sense of closeness to the KPU and to trust the disabled community with capabilities like other voters. The segmentation of beginner and young voters who are very strong with gadgets makes the KPU strategy to use social media. KPU utilizes social media for socialization materials and information about elections. Political communication through social media has two-way characteristics. Social media allows audiences to receive messages or information and become actors in creating messages or information (Alayya, 2022). In addition, the KPU also partners with community organizations consisting of young people and student organizations such as the Islamic Students Association (HMI), the Indonesian Islamic Student Association (PMII), and others.

4. **Determining the Message**

Socialization is divided into three parts: beginning, middle, and end. The emphasis on socialization at the beginning, middle, and end must be different. At the beginning (long before D-day), the emphasis of socialization is on the level of public knowledge of the day of the election or voting. In the middle (the day approaching the voting), the emphasis of socialization is on encouraging people to know the track record of prospective leaders, voting techniques, how to become rational voters, and how to choose a candidate following their own needs and desires. In the end (before the election day), socialization emphasizes how voters vote or vote correctly, explaining valid, invalid, or damaged ballots. This socialization is inseparable from the KPU's partnership with community groups and communities.

The KPU also utilizes social media to attract public participation by creating photo competitions at polling stations. Both individual and group photo competitions. This competition aims to accommodate the success of socialization. Creating content that attracts the younger voters to make the socialized generation. In the 2024 elections, the KPU involved voters with disabilities in the 'mascot cavalcade' event. In the cavalcade of voters with disabilities, disabilities show that they have an art group. The KPU also socializes with the community, stating that voters with disabilities generally have capabilities. The socialization of the KPU helps to raise the disability's trust in the KPU. Furthermore, young and beginner voters are considered high school and college students. KPU programs for beginner voters and students are "Goes to School" and "Goes to Campus". This program targets beginner voters aged 17 years by teaching them the importance of voting.

5. **Creating Strategies and Tactics**

Strategy, also known as the guiding principle, or the big idea, is an overall approach utilized in political communication. This strategy serves as a frame of reference to direct and integrate various aspects of political communication to achieve the desired goals. The KPU of Kediri City has a strategy for socialization through face-to-face media and mass media. Capitalizing on partnerships with community organizations, youth, and students. Of course, not all socialization activities are carried out by the KPU of Kediri City, but mass organizations and communities assist them in reaching broader segments of society.

Partnership is a form of cooperation between the KPU of Kediri City and the community so that socialization reaches broader segments of society. In a month, the

KPU of Kediri City can reach four to eight times socialization with the community. The meetings can be held in places of recitation, social gatherings, schools, mass organizations, and campuses.

There are also programs, "KPU Goes to School" and "KPU Goes to Campus," which plan for KPU Kediri City to socialize with students or beginner voters and students. This program aims to teach the importance of voting and add knowledge about politics to understand better and become responsible voters. This program certainly increases public participation in democracy.

Socialization on social media is also one of the strategies of the KPU of Kediri City to utilize the media as content material. Content containing elections, supporting offline activities, and becoming a means of controlling discourse or negative information and hoaxes. In social media content, the KPU of Kediri City also continues to provide information about elections even though there is no election. Given this year's election, there are no democracy volunteers who help the Kediri City KPU. In contrast, in 2019, some volunteers helped the KPU of Kediri City.

6. **Time Allocation and Funding Source**

The time taken by the KPU of Kediri City to socialize and increase community participation is very far in advance. In a month, the KPU of Kediri City can carry out four to eight community socialization times. The meeting can be conducted by the KPU of Kediri City or the community agenda that invites the KPU of Kediri City to an event that aims to provide knowledge about the election in 2024.

7. **Evaluation**

The percentage of public attendance at polling stations is an evaluation material for the KPU of Kediri City in socializing election programs. Election indicators are seen after voting or election. KPU is an institution that markets products but cannot determine which KPU products themselves. The products are candidate leaders, legislative candidates, and presidential candidates.

The KPU of Kediri City team verified the data of registered voters, including identifying registered residents and those who need to be corrected. From the recapitulation results, the number of registered voters in Kediri City reached 233,962, showing an increase compared to the previous election. The KPU of Kediri City noted some challenges, such as double data and residents who have not registered, but they have designed strategies to overcome these problems.
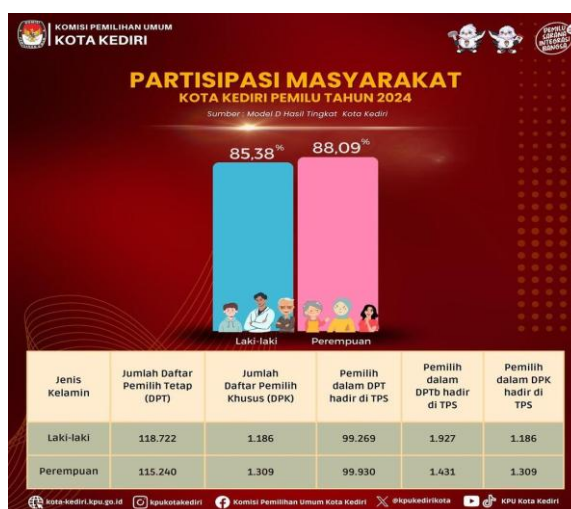
Table 1.1 Kediri City DPT Recapitulation Data 2024

Recapitulation of The Permanent Voter List (DPT) of Kediri City					
Number of Districts	Number of Sub-Districts	Number of TPS	Male	Female	Total
3	46	856	118.722	115.240	233.962

Based on the DPT data recapitulation above, Kediri City has three districts, 46 sub-districts, and 856 polling stations (TPS). The DPT recapitulation data is detailed, with the number of males being 118,722 and females being 115,240, totaling 233,962. The amount of this data is detailed based on each district below:

Tabel 1.2 Data Recapitulation of DPT District in Kediri City 2024

NO	Name of District	Number of Sub-District	Number of TPS	Number of Voters		
				M	F	M+F
1.	Kecamatan Mojoroto	14	361	52.768	46.202	98.970
2.	Kecamatan Kota	17	247	32.572	34.600	67.172
3.	Kecamatan Pesantren	15	248	33.382	34.438	67.820
	TOTAL	46	856	118.722	115.240	233.962

Picture 1.1 Data Graph of Percentage of Public Participation in Kediri City 2024

Based on the DPT recapitulation data per district or *Kecamatan* in Kediri City, the details are as follows: Kecamatan Mojoroto has 98,970 voters, Kecamatan Kota has 61,172 voters, and Kecamatan Pesantren has 67,820 voters. During this process,

public participation was essential. Many citizens came to inquire about their registration status and provide input related to data updating. The KPU of Kediri City also conducted socialization on the importance of smart and registered voters, considering the significant impact of active public participation in the election.

Picture 1.2. Data Graph Percentage of Public Participation per District of Kediri City in 2024

In the analysis of Brady, Verba, and Schlozman's resource theory of political participation, which is related to the existence of a common motivation to participate in society, various resources must support political activity. These resources include time, money, and civil skills needed for communication and organizational capacity. Time resources prepared by the KPU of Kediri City to increase community participation require a long time. However, the 2024 election and socialization to the public have been conducted since 2023. Additionally, related to the financial resources, since the KPU of Kediri City is a state-independent institution at the municipal level, they annually plan budgets for activities. Regarding civil skills, the KPU of Kediri City also collaborates with various stakeholders to ensure the continuity of the event.

As a result, based on the percentage data in the graph above, male community participation is 85.83 percent, and female participation is 88.09 percent. Public participation in planning and decision-making at the local level has also started to get more attention. Through socialization from the KPU of Kediri City to the community, citizens can convey their aspirations and needs so that policies follow the actual conditions in the field. Based on data on the percentage of public participation per district, it is shown that Kecamatan Mojoroto in regular polling stations is 85.72

percent and in special polling stations is 79.08 percent. Moreover, Kecamatan Kota in regular polling stations reached 83.99 percent and 0 percent in special polling stations. Lastly, Kecamatan Pesantren in regular polling stations is 87.01 percent, and in special location polling stations, 70.67 percent.

Picture 1.3. Data Graph of Disability Participation Percentage by the Districts of Kediri City 2024

Based on the data, the percentage of people with disabilities participating per district in Kecamatan Mojoroto reached 42.09 percent. Furthermore, Kecamatan Kota gained 60.04 percent, while Kecamatan Pesantren had 46.17 percent. This graph proves the activeness of voters with disabilities in the 2024 elections.

b. **Supporting and Inhibiting Factors for the KPU Of Kediri City in Increasing Public Political Participation in the 2024 Election**

The KPU of Kediri City plays an important role in organizing democratic elections. However, like other institutions, it faces various factors affecting its performance. Supporting factors at the KPU of Kediri City are seen in the Voter Pyramid, which is balanced between Baby Boomers, Millennials, and Gen Z. Therefore, the KPU of Kediri City uses a relevant socialization strategy according to age and community segmentation.

The subsequent supporting factor is the government budget; with an adequate budget, the KPU of Kediri City can carry out its duties better. To the theory of political participation, resources, funds, or budgets become one aspect of an effort to increase public participation. This financial support not only helps provide facilities and infrastructure but also supports training, socialization, and the application of modern technology. This contributes to creating more transparent, fair, and participatory elections, ultimately strengthening democracy in Kediri City. In addition, the person in charge of KPU of Kediri

City has a target of public participation in 2024. This motivates election organizers to be more responsible in socializing the public even though it is non-budget.

The KPU of Kediri City, as an institution responsible for organizing elections, often faces various challenges that can hinder its performance. Some inhibiting factors must be considered so the KPU can carry out its duties more effectively. The first inhibiting factor experienced by the KPU of Kediri City is the existence of few human resources, so they made a strategy to maximize the role of the Voting Committee (PPS) and the Voting Organizer Group (KPPS) in their respective areas to cooperate with the partnership model.

The second inhibiting factor is that there are conflicting schedules between socialization in the community and the KPU, which sometimes gets sudden invitations from the Central KPU or the Provincial KPU that need to be attended. This clashing schedule creates a dilemma. On the one hand, the regional KPU must attend and carry out the tasks given by the Central KPU or Provincial KPU. On the other hand, they are also responsible for reaching out to the community and adequately understanding the upcoming elections. As a result, the time that should be used for socialization can be used for other activities, and the opportunity to interact directly with the community is reduced.

Furthermore, the inhibiting factor felt by the KPU of Kediri City in the 2024 Election is the absence of volunteers. Compared to the 2019 election, some volunteers helped with the socialization process in the public. The volunteers referred to here are students from universities from Kediri City who help socialize according to the specified segmentation.

CONCLUSION

The political communication strategy of the KPU of Kediri City in increasing public political participation in the 2024 election through (a) problem analysis, (b) having a target in increasing community participation in Kediri City to reach 80 percent, (c) age segmentation, (d) making interesting messages in socialization, (e) strategy or tactics, (f) time allocation and funding sources, (g) evaluation. The supporting factors for the KPU of Kediri City are the voter pyramid and partnership with community organizations. In contrast, the inhibiting factors are the few internal human resources of the KPU of Kediri City and the schedule that clashes with other activities. Based on the analysis of the theory of political participation resources from Brady, Verba, and Schlozman states that there is the same motivation to participate in society; various resources must support political activity. Therefore, the political communication strategy of the KPU of Kediri City in increasing public participation involves various elements of time resources,

financial resources, and human resources. These three elements are the key to increasing the amount of community participation in the 2024 election. As a result of the efforts of the KPU of Kediri City to increase public participation, the level of public participation in Kediri City reached 80 percent. In comparison, the national participation target reached 75 percent in the 2024 election. Thus, the target of public participation in the 2024 General Election has exceeded the national target and has increased by 0.53 percent from 2019 of 86.19 percent to 2024 of 86.72 percent.

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