The Influence of Social Media on University Students' Choice of Presidential Candidates in 2024

Laurencia Primawati Degodona, Jonson Rajagukguk, Zeni Oktavianis Sarumaha
Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas HKBP Nomensen Medan, Indonesia

e-mail: laurenciadegodona@uhn.ac.id

Abstract
Social media has become a primary tool in influencing voter decisions, especially among young generations, in the 2024 Election. With a creative and interactive approach, platforms such as TikTok dominate in delivering political messages to university students, who are part of the millennial and Gen Z generations. This research employs a quantitative descriptive method using questionnaires on 120 students from HKBP Nommensen University to measure the influence of social media on the decision to vote for presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The hypothesis test results indicate a significant influence of social media on students' voting decisions. 70.9% of respondents consider social media as the main factor influencing their choice, with TikTok being the most influential platform (74.2%). Additionally, entertaining and creative political slogans such as "Ok Gas 02 Tabrak-Tabrak Masuk" influenced 57.5% of respondents. These findings support the hypothesis that social media significantly affects voting decisions. The significance value in the ANOVA test is 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating that the regression model is significant. Therefore, the alternative hypothesis (H_a) is accepted, meaning there is an essential influence between the use of social media and voting decisions, with a contribution of 78.1%. This reinforces the importance of political communication strategies based on social media with engaging and informative content. Indonesia's 2024 election demonstrates how social media, especially TikTok, shapes young voters' preferences by transcending regional boundaries and creating new spaces for political engagement.

Keywords: media, university students, presidential candidates, voting decision, 2024 election.

INTRODUCTION

Social media is a digital platform that allows all users to interact, share information, and build social networks without spatial and temporal limitations(Shankar & Sparks, 2023). Through social media, users can upload content in the form of text, photos, and videos that can be accessed by the public 24 hours a day. Along with the development of the internet, social media has proliferated and significantly impacted social communication and socialization patterns (Jain et al., 2021). Social media has a global impact, with more than 4.66 billion users in 2021 (Rao et al., 2022). Facebook is the most popular platform, with 2.7 billion users

nearly 90% of people aged 18–29 use at least one form of social media.

Indonesia has approximately 190 million social media users, with an average usage time of 3.5 hours per day via mobile devices (Meilani et al., 2023). Social media use has changed how humans communicate, access information, and shape public opinion. Besides being a means of socialization, social media is also used for documentation, information exploration, marketing, and campaigning (Jenkins et al., 2022). With its broad influence, social media plays a significant role in various aspects of life, including politics, business, and education (Reisach, 2021). The wide role of social media in different aspects of life is also reflected in the political sphere, particularly

in campaign strategies and interactions between candidates and voters (Muhtar & Rohman, 2023).

In political geography, social media has a role in shaping the political landscape by accelerating the spread of political information and forming patterns of political communication between regions. Political geography highlights how space and place influence political dynamics, including mapping political support based on areas and how social media is a primary tool for virtual campaign distribution without geographical boundaries (Falkenberg et al., 2022). For example, in the 2024 General Election (Pemilu) in Indonesia, social media became the leading platform for candidates to convey their vision and mission and attract voter sympathy in various regions, including remote areas that are difficult to reach using conventional campaign methods.

Political marketing through the media has become a crucial aspect of modern politics. In Indonesia, the use of social media and the transformation of political marketing have developed rapidly (Hamid et al., 2022). Social media has become the center of attention in every discussion regarding presidential and vice-presidential candidates ahead of the 2024 General Election held on February 14, 2024. The 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election, held on February 14, aimed to elect a new leader to succeed Joko Widodo, who had completed his two-term tenure (Obidje & Pakereng, 2024). From a political geography perspective, social media influences political support patterns based on regions. Data shows that each region has different patterns of political interaction on social media. Urban areas, for example, predominantly use Twitter and Instagram as primary media for political discussions, whereas in rural areas, Facebook remains the dominant platform for spreading political information. This demonstrates how geographical factors influence media preferences and political campaign patterns.

The 2024 General Election utilized social media as a campaign tool that provided easy access for voters and candidates, enabling direct interaction among voters. Campaign marketing through social media targets Millennials and Generation Z, who currently constitute the majority of voters. Platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter (X), and Facebook were used to convey their vision and mission and build a positive image in the eyes of the public (Cheng et al., 2021). The political marketing strategy of the party's campaign team engaged the target audience by interacting through social media platforms, including responding to netizens' comments casually and uniquely. This approach attracted young audiences by demonstrating that politics was no longer rigid and formal as in the past (Fahruji & Fahrudin, 2023). Using humor and comedic approaches became a persuasive strategy in conveying political messages.

The campaign of candidate pair number 02 stood out with a clear vision, catchy slogans like "Oke Gas 02 Tabrak-Tabrak Masuk," and creative strategies targeting Generation Z. Prabowo Subianto's nickname, "Presidenku Gemoy," became a campaign signature, especially on TikTok. A massive event at GBK further boosted their electability, supported by key figures and celebrities (Saputri et al., 2024). Presidential candidate number 03, Ganjar Pranowo, used the Three Finger Salute, inspired by The Hunger Games, to attract young voters, symbolizing obedience to God, adherence to the law, and loyalty to the people. Meanwhile, candidate number 01, Anies Baswedan, built an intellectual image and engaged young audiences through TikTok, featuring casual interactions, viral trends, and moments highlighting his closeness to the Muslim community. Each presidential and vice-presidential candidate in the 2024 General Election had their political marketing strategy through various social media platforms. The main objective was to influence voters, particularly Millennials and Generation Z.

Previous research has examined the influence of social media on voting decisions in various elections in Indonesia. Wahyudi (2023) Studied the impact of social media, particularly Instagram, on voting decisions in the General Election in Malang City, with public trust as a moderating variable. The research found that Instagram usage positively and significantly influenced voting decisions, where higher social media usage intensity correlated with a greater likelihood of voting decisions. Additionally, public trust in politics strengthened the influence of social media on voting decisions.

Meanwhile, research conducted (Ilham et al., 2024) highlighted the impact of social media on presidential elections, particularly among the Gen Z-lennial demographic. Using a quantitative method with data processing through SPSS, the research found that social media significantly shaped perceptions, opinions, and political decisions among Generation Z in selecting a presidential candidate. Research Maulidussyukron (2022) examined the influence of social media content on voter behavior in the 2020 Surabaya mayoral election. Using a correlational quantitative method and simple linear regression analysis, the research found that social media significantly impacted voter behavior, with an influence level of 11.4% based on the determination coefficient ($R^2 = 0.114$). Additionally, this research identified that most voters influenced by social media were in the 18–27 age range.

Therefore, this research aims to measure how much social media influences university students, as part of the Millennial and Gen Z generations, in determining their choice of presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the 2024 General Election. This research is expected to provide insights into the influence of social media on the political preferences of Millennial and Gen Z students, as well as how aspects of political geography influence campaign patterns and political support.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research is descriptive research conducted using a method that allows the researcher to generate descriptions of the social phenomena being studied. The researcher can identify how the phenomenon occurs through the descriptive data obtained. In this research, the researcher will quantitatively describe the influence of social media on students' decision-making in choosing presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the 2024 election. The influence of social media is measured through several aspects, such as the use of social media to obtain news about presidential and vice-presidential candidates, preferred political slogans, the impact of social media on voting decisions, the most influential social media platforms, and the candidate image shaped by social media.

Population and Sample

The population in this research consists of students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at HKBP Nommensen University, totaling 326 individuals. Due to the large population size, this research employs a sampling technique using the non-probability sampling method, specifically quota sampling. This technique does not consider the total population but instead classifies it into several groups. The sample is taken by allocating a specific quota to each group, and data collection is conducted directly from the sampling units.

The sample characteristics in this research are determined purposively with the following criteria:

a. Using social media
b. Accessing social media
c. Exercising voting rights in the 2024 election

Of 326 students, 120 were selected as samples based on the predetermined criteria.

Data Collection Technique

The data collection technique used in this research is the questionnaire method, which consists of a series of questions related to the research topic. The questionnaire model used is a mixed questionnaire, which combines open-ended and closed-ended questions in a single questionnaire. This questionnaire was administered at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at HKBP Nommensen University in May 2024.

Data Analysis Technique

This research utilizes IBM SPSS 27.1 software to analyze the collected data. The data analysis is conducted using a quantitative descriptive approach. To calculate the percentage of respondents' answers, the following formula is used:

$$P = \frac{F}{N} \times 100\%$$

Explanation:
P = Percentage
F = Frequency / Number of respondents answers
N = Total number of respondents

Based on the data analysis, a hypothesis is formulated to examine the relationship between social media and voting decisions. The hypothesis proposed in this research is as follows:

H_0 : There is no influence of social media on voting decisions.
H_a: There is an influence of social media on voting decisions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research uncovered interesting findings about students' preferences in accessing political information and the factors influencing their choices in the upcoming 2024 presidential election. The results show that social media, particularly TikTok, is dominant in spreading political information to students. Additionally, certain political slogans are preferred because of their unique nature and memorability, while social media remains the key factor influencing voters' decisions on choosing presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

Table 1. Social Media Most Frequently Accessed for Political News About Presidential and Vice-Presidential Candidates During the Campaign Period

Social Media	Quantity	Percentage
Facebook	2	1,6%
Instagram	26	21,7%
Tiktok	86	71,7%
Twitter	6	5%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

Based on Table 1, TikTok emerges as the most frequently accessed social media platform for news about presidential and vice-presidential candidates, with 71.7% of respondents. This indicates that TikTok's visual and interactive content format attracts more students than other platforms like Instagram (21.7%) or Twitter (5%). This finding is consistent with research Vaughan & Johns (2021) highlighting the significant influence of short video content in attracting young voters.

Table 2. Political Slogans Most Liked by Respondents

Political Slogan	Quantity	Percentage
Ok gas, ok gas, tabrak tabrak masuk	69	57,5%
Gwencana, respect forever	5	4,17%
Satset, Salam 3 jari	31	25,84%
Gemoy	11	9,16%
Sorry yee…	4	3,33%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

Table 2 shows that the political slogan "Ok gas, ok gas, tabrak tabrak masuk" is the most liked by respondents (57.5%). Respondents find this slogan attractive because of its uniqueness, humor, and ease of memorability. This finding aligns with Weninggalih & Fuady (2021) which found that viral political slogans on social media could enhance young voter engagement due to their simplicity, entertainment value, and relevance to popular culture.

Table 3. Reasons for Liking Political Slogans

Reason	Quantity	Percentage
The slogan contains vision and mission	60	50%
Funny, cool, easy to understand	60	50%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

In Table 3, 50% of respondents stated that they liked the political slogans because they conveyed the vision and mission of the candidates. In comparison, the remaining 50% appreciated slogans that were entertaining and easy to understand. This finding is supported by Kfrerer, Bell, & Schermer (2021) those who emphasized the importance of humor and creativity in political slogans to capture the attention of young voters.

Table 4. Factors Influencing Respondents' Choice of Presidential and Vice-Presidential Candidates in the 2024 Election

Influence	Quantity	Percentage
Friend	5	4,1%
Family	30	25%
Social Media	85	70,9
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

In Table 4, 70.9% of respondents chose social media as the main factor influencing their decision in selecting presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Furthermore, the research shows that students are more influenced by social media content than other factors such as family (25%) or friends (4.1%), as indicated in the table. This underscores the dominance of social media in shaping political opinions among students. Kubin & von Sikorski (2021) Support this finding, stating that social media has become the primary platform for

sharing and accessing political information
quickly and widely.

Table 5. Reasons Most Influencing Respondents' Choice in Selecting Presidential and Vice-
Presidential Candidates in the 2024 Election

Reason	Quantity	Persentage
Social media provides all information and easier to access	85	70,9%
Guidance from family	30	25%
Discussions with friends	5	4,1%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

Data from Table 5 shows that social media is dominant in influencing respondents' choices regarding presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the 2024 election, with a percentage of 70.9%. This highlights that the ease of access and comprehensive information on social media make it the primary source for voters to learn about candidates' visions, missions, and track records. Social media also facilitates direct interaction between candidates and voters through platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, which are frequently used for political campaigns. Meanwhile, family influence remains significant at 25%, indicating the strong role of family in shaping individuals' political preferences. Conversely, discussions with friends have a minor impact, at 4.1%, likely due to the dominance of information acquired through social media.

Table 6. Social Media is Most Influential in the Selection of Presidential and Vice-
Presidential Candidates in the 2024 Election

Social Media	Quantity	Persentage
Facebook	0	0
Instagram	31	25,8%
Tiktok	89	74,2%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

The most influential social media in the respondents' choices is also dominated by TikTok (74.2%), as shown in Table 6. Instagram ranks second with 25.8%. This suggests students are more drawn to platforms featuring short, interactive video content than other social media platforms. Research (Karimi & Fox, 2023) supports this finding, asserting that TikTok is a highly effective platform for engaging young voters through visually appealing content

Table 7. Image or Persona Displayed by Presidential Candidate No. 1 on Social Media

Image/Persona	Quantity	Percentage
Authoritative	5	4.1%
Intellectual	85	71%
Good Speaker	20	16.7%
Down-to-earth	5	4.1%
Promotes a particular religion	5	4.1%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

Candidate number 1's image shapes students' perceptions, as shown in Table 7. The candidate is perceived as intellectual (71%), while other traits, such as being a good speaker (16.7%) or authoritative (4.1%), are less emphasized. This aligns with research by Sevi (2021) that notes that young voters, particularly students, value intellectualism and empathy when evaluating candidates, especially when these qualities are visible on social media.

Table 8. Image or Persona Displayed by Presidential Candidate No. 2 on Social Media

Image/Persona	Quantity	Percentage
Authoritative/Commanding	15	12.6%
Funny/Cute (Gemoy)	30	25%
Ambitious	5	4.1%
Sensitive to the People	70	58.3%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

In Table 8, the humorous or "gemoy" trait of Candidate No. 2 caught the attention of 25% of respondents. This characteristic is appreciated by students for giving the candidate a friendly, approachable image. Meanwhile, sensitivity to the needs of the people was identified by 58.3% of respondents, highlighting that students value empathy and responsiveness to societal issues. This aligns with Zulli & Towner (2021) what was found that simplicity often reflects honesty and approachability, qualities young voters value.

Table 9. Image or Persona Displayed by Presidential Candidate No. 3 on Social Media

Image/Persona	Quantity	Percentage
Simple	100	83.3%
Hard-working	20	16.7%
Total	120	100%

(Source: Processed Data, 2024)

Table 9 shows that 83.3% of respondents perceive presidential candidate number 3 as simple, reflecting authenticity in lifestyle and communication, which appeals to young voters (Zulli & Towner, 2021). Additionally, 16.7% describe the candidate as hardworking, an image shaped by social media content showcasing work activities and public engagement (Sevi, 2021). This strategy highlights a close connection with the people, aligning with Vaughan & Johns (2021), who found that candidates displaying relatability online build stronger voter trust. The effective use of TikTok and Instagram further reinforces this narrative, making candidate 3 stand out in the 2024 election (Karimi & Fox, 2023).

Validity Test Using Pearson Product-Moment

Based on the collected data, the r-table value at a 5% significance level is 0.195. The validity test results show that the calculated r-value is greater than the r-table value (0.195), indicating that the instrument used in this research is valid. Data validity can also be assessed through the significance value (Sig). If Sig < 0.05, the data is considered valid, whereas if Sig > 0.05, the data is considered invalid. Based on the analysis results, the obtained significance values indicate that the data in this research is valid and can be used for further analysis.

Correlations		Media_Memp engaruhi	Media_Paling _Sering	Faktor_Pemili han	Jargon_Disuk ai	Alasan	Faktor_memp engaruhi_Re sponden	ID_Responde n
Media_Mempengaruhi	Pearson Correlation	1	.837**	.884**	.474**	.590**	.897**	.758**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Media_Paling_Sering	Pearson Correlation	.837**	1	.807**	.560**	.554**	.817**	.776**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Faktor_Pemilihan	Pearson Correlation	.884**	.807**	1	.484**	.603**	.986**	.772**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Jargon_Disukai	Pearson Correlation	.474**	.560**	.484**	1	.803**	.474**	.867**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001	<,001
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Alasan	Pearson Correlation	.590**	.554**	.603**	.803**	1	.591**	.866**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001	<,001
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
Faktor_mempengaruhi_ Responden	Pearson Correlation	.897**	.817**	.986**	.474**	.591**	1	.765**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001		<,001
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120
ID_Responden	Pearson Correlation	.758**	.776**	.772**	.867**	.866**	.765**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	<,001	
	N	120	120	120	120	120	120	120

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Figure 1. Results of data processing with SPSS 27.1

Reliability Test Using Cronbach's Alpha

The reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha value is 0.872, indicating that the questionnaire used in this research is consistent and can be used repeatedly.

Table 10. Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.872	6

Source: Results of data processing with SPSS 27.1

Explanation:
- Cronbach's Alpha refers to the Cronbach's Alpha value.
- N of Items represents the number of questionnaire items.

Normality Test Using Kolmogorov-Smirnov

Based on the normality test results, the obtained significance value is 0.200, greater than 0.05 (0.200 > 0.05). Thus, the residual values are normally distributed, indicating the appropriate regression model. As a result, the analysis derived from this model can be considered valid.

Figure 2. Normality Test (Source: Results of data processing with SPSS 27.1)

Linear Regression Test

The linear regression test determines whether the independent variable (Social Media) significantly influences the dependent variable (Voting Decision). Based on the regression test results, the R-Square value is 0.781, indicating that the independent variable (Social Media) significantly influences the dependent variable (Voting Decision) by 78.1%. Based on the ANOVA results, the obtained significance value is 0.001, smaller than 0.05 (0.001 < 0.05). Therefore, the regression model is significant, and it can be concluded that social media significantly influences voting decisions, thus accepting Ha.

Figure 3. Linear Regression Test (Source: Results of data processing with SPSS 27.1)

Figure 4. Anova Test (Source: Results of data processing with SPSS 27.1)

The Dominant Influence of Social Media on Young Voters' Political Preferences

Social media has become an integral part of young people's lives, as a means of communication and entertainment, and as a primary source of information, including in the political sphere. The growing reliance on digital platforms, particularly TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter, has significantly shaped political engagement among younger demographics. Studies (Vaughan & Johns, 2021) found that short-form video content simplifies complex political messages, making them more digestible for young audiences. This aligns with the findings of this research, which demonstrate the pivotal role of social media in influencing young voters' political preferences.

Based on Table 1 and Table 6, TikTok is the most frequently used platform by university students to obtain information about presidential and vice-presidential candidates, with 71.7% of respondents accessing it. This reinforces TikTok's role in shaping political preferences through short and interactive video content, aligning with the findings of (Karimi & Fox, 2023) which state that TikTok effectively reaches young voters. The platform is an engaging visual content format, and a personalized algorithm gives users a unique experience, making political information more accessible and understandable for students.

Table 2 shows that the slogan "Ok gas, ok gas, tabrak tabrak masuk" is the most favored by 57.5% of respondents due to its unique and memorable nature. The elements of humor and creativity in this political slogan align with the research Kfrerer, Bell, & Schermer, 2021), which emphasizes that these aspects are essential in capturing the attention of younger generations. Additionally, respondents appreciated slogans that reflect the candidates' vision and mission, as seen in Table 3, where 50% of respondents stated that their primary reason for choosing a slogan was its relevance to the candidates' ideas.

Social media is the main factor influencing students' decisions in selecting presidential and vice-presidential candidates, as reflected in Table 4 (70.9%). This result is consistent with (Kubin & von Sikorski, 2021), which highlights that social media plays a crucial role in shaping political opinions through the rapid and widespread dissemination of information. These platforms provide direct access to candidate information, enhancing their appeal and credibility in students' eyes. According to Table 7, 71% of respondents perceive candidate number 1 as an intellectual figure, while most respondents (83.3%, Table 9) view candidate number 3 as humble. These findings align with the research (Sevi, 2021) stating that intellectual image and authenticity are highly valued attributes among young voters. The strategy of candidate number 3 in showcasing simplicity through social media successfully created a narrative that resonates with students.

Similarly, research conducted (Sevi, 2021) in 51 countries found that young voters prefer political content that is not only informative but also entertaining. This aligns with the results shown in Tables 2 and 3, where respondents favor political slogans

that are humorous and easy to remember. The viral nature of these slogans allows political messages to spread rapidly, fostering engagement and discussion among young voters. The findings (Sevi, 2021) also suggest that political candidates who effectively utilize humor and relatability in their online campaigns tend to attract more support from young voters.

TikTok and Instagram are the primary platforms influencing students' perceptions (Table 6). Candidates who use social media to showcase their human side are more effective in building emotional connections with young voters, as found in the research (Vaughan & Johns, 2021). The short video format on TikTok provides an advantage in effectively conveying candidates' narratives, for example, by depicting relatable daily activities for students. Table 5 shows that most respondents (70.9%) consider social media the most comprehensive and accessible source of information. This result supports the research (Zulli & Towner, 2021) stating that the accessibility of information on social media strengthens its influence on voters' decisions. The information presented on these platforms includes candidates' vision, mission, and daily activities, key factors in students' decision-making.

Weninggalih & Fuady (2021) Highlighted the role of social media in shaping political identities among Indonesian youth. Their research found that candidates who maintain an active and interactive social media presence are perceived as more approachable and relatable. This is evident in the present research's findings (Table 7, Table 8, and Table 9), where different candidates project distinct personas that resonate with student voters. For example, the portrayal of candidate number 3 as a simple and hardworking individual reflects a strategic use of social media to establish credibility and authenticity, which is crucial in gaining young voters' trust. The "funny and adorable" persona of candidate number 2 attracted the attention of 25% of respondents

(Table 8). The researchers found that this element provided a friendly and approachable impression, consistent with the findings (Zulli & Towner, 2021). This indicates that humor and creativity are crucial in creating appeal among students. Meanwhile, candidate number 3 successfully highlighted simplicity as a key attribute (Table 9). This simplicity is reflected in lifestyle and the candidate's communication style on social media. Sevi (2021) Asserts that young voters appreciate candidates who demonstrate openness and honesty, which is evident in the straightforward narrative of candidate number 3.

These comparative findings reinforce the argument that social media, particularly platforms with strong visual and interactive features like TikTok and Instagram, play an essential role in shaping the political attitudes of young voters across different regions. The ability of social media to present political content in an engaging, digestible, and personalized manner makes it a powerful tool for political campaigns. However, the potential for misinformation and political polarization remains a concern, as highlighted by researchers (Karimi & Fox, 2023), who stress the need for critical media literacy among young voters to navigate the digital political landscape effectively. This research indicates that social media, particularly TikTok, plays a dominant role in shaping students' decisions in selecting presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the 2024 election. Creative, interactive, and informative content formats are the key elements in attracting young voters' attention. Therefore, it is recommended that political candidates maximize the potential of social media with innovative and authentic communication strategies to build strong emotional connections with voters.

Political Geography and Digital Influence on Voter Preferences in Indonesia's 2024 Presidential Election

In elections, political geography has a role in shaping voter preferences based on regional identity, accessibility to information, and socio-political environment. Indonesia's 2024 presidential election demonstrates how the digital landscape, particularly social media, interacts with geographic factors to shape young voters' political choices. One of the most notable findings in this study is the dominance of TikTok as the primary platform for accessing political news, with 71.7% of respondents using it (Table 1). This trend highlights how digital space transcends traditional geographical boundaries, allowing young voters from various regions to engage with political content. Egbulefu & Nwaoboli (2023) Unlike traditional campaign methods relying on physical presence, social media has become a primary tool for candidates to reach diverse audiences regardless of location.

Moreover, political slogans resonate differently across geographic and social segments. The most popular slogan among respondents, "Ok gas, ok gas, tabrak tabrak masuk" (57.5%) (Table 2), suggests that catchy, humorous, and memorable slogans have a stronger appeal among young voters, reflecting the cultural nuances of online communities. These slogans act as digital markers of political identity, influencing voter engagement across regions. This finding aligns with the research Munis (2021), which shows that political geography also affects how voters perceive candidates based on their public personas. For instance, Candidate 1 is primarily regarded as intellectual (71%) (Table 7), potentially attracting urban, educated voters who value policy expertise. In contrast, Candidate 2 is perceived as empathetic to public needs (58.3%) and "adorable" or humorous (25%) (Table 8), making them more relatable to a broader demographic. Meanwhile, Candidate 3 is viewed as modest (83.3%) and hardworking (16.7%) (Table 9), aligning with

rural and working-class voters who prioritize authenticity and practical leadership.

Social media's influence extends beyond traditional political influences such as family and friends. With 70.9% of respondents citing social media as the primary factor shaping their political choices (Table 5), this underscores how digital political geography, defined by algorithmic content distribution and online engagement, reshapes political discourse. Unlike conventional political geography, which emphasizes physical territories, digital political geography creates new spaces of influence where young voters form opinions based on trending content rather than local political dynamics (Coffé & von Schoultz, 2021).

According to Temple (2023) the digital era, political geography is increasingly shaped by online platforms that bridge regional gaps and create new political affiliations beyond traditional boundaries. The role of social media, particularly TikTok and Instagram, in shaping voter perceptions indicates that political engagement is no longer confined to physical spaces but extends into a dynamic digital ecosystem. This shift signifies a transformation in political communication strategies, where candidates must adapt to the digital landscape to effectively connect with young voters across diverse geographic and socio-political backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Based on the data analysis results, all research data were declared valid (r calculated > r table, sig. < 0.05) and reliable (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.872). The normality test showed a normally distributed residual (sig. = 0.200). In contrast, the linear regression test produced an R Square value of 0.781, indicating that social media explains 78.1% of the voting decision variable—the ANOVA . Results (sig = 0.001) confirmed that the regression model is significant, leading to the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (H_a). Thus, social

media is proven to influence voting decisions significantly. This research demonstrates that social media significantly impacts students' political choices in the 2024 election, with 70.9% of respondents considering it their primary source of information. TikTok emerged as the most influential platform (74.2%), followed by Instagram (25.8%), with creative slogans like "Ok Gas 02 Tabrak-Tabrak Masuk" (57.5%) capturing the attention of young voters.

Political geography influences voter behavior through regional identity, information accessibility, and socio-political factors, with Indonesia's 2024 election highlighting the role of social media, especially TikTok, in shaping young voters' choices. Digital political geography transcends physical boundaries and creates new spaces of influence where candidates must adapt to online platforms to engage diverse electorates effectively. Candidates with an authentic and straightforward image are more appreciated than those who appear overly formal. Short and interactive video formats effectively build emotional connections with young voters. Therefore, an innovative and creative social media-based campaign strategy is highly recommended to attract this generation's attention.

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