



Journal of Social and Political Sciences

Khasabu, S., Pawito, P., Rahmanto, A. N. (2023). Social Media Preference to Reach Young Indonesian Voters. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 6(1), 121-126.

ISSN 2615-3718

DOI: 10.31014/aior.1991.06.01.399

The online version of this article can be found at:
<https://www.asianinstituteofresearch.org/>

Published by:
The Asian Institute of Research

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Social Media Preference to Reach Young Indonesian Voters

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Abstract

Politics is currently exposed to information technology. The usage as a political communication channel is becoming increasingly broad and diversified. The significance of social media is heightened by the involvement of young people. This study examines the phenomena of using social media to seek out political information. Using a quantitative approach, researchers administered an online questionnaire to determine social media preferences. Twitter became the most popular site for political conversation, according to the findings. Meanwhile, TikTok is a popular social media platform among Indonesia's youth. Politicians and political parties should explore utilizing social media to connect with supporters. Nevertheless, it is vital to modify the type of communication and information that will be supplied in the future.

Keywords: Electoral, Gen Z, Politics, Social Media

1. Introduction

The Indonesia election is coming nears. Young people are a great asset in politics since they have authority. Their voices are critical in electoral battles, including those for the president, regional leaders, and people's representatives. Widi (2022) forecasts that young voters will continue to be essential to winning the 2024 election. This age group will continue to dominate Indonesia's political contests in 2024. Participation of each consecutive generation of young people in the traditions and institutions of democratic governance in society is vital to ensuring that the political system retains the legitimacy required for efficient operation (Loader et al., 2014). When effectively harnessed, the potential of young people may help political parties meet the difficulties of a changing political landscape and the reasonable demands of the electorate.

The new political landscape will undoubtedly give rise to new communication strategic developments. In the past, many people relied on older forms of media; however, nowadays, one of the most important aspects is the utilization of modern information technology. This is also impacted by first-time and younger voters, who are profoundly influenced by the proliferation of digital media. The global influence of social media on political campaigns cannot be denied. Social media have altered how political campaigns are conducted, how politicians and the general public access and exchange political information, and how we learn about politics, acquire ideas and attitudes, and ultimately engage or disengage with the political process.

According to recent polls, approximately 88% of today's youth rely heavily on the Internet (Monika & Gautama, 2022). This is one reason why the Internet, especially social media, plays such a pivotal role in political competition in Indonesia. As a result, political parties are competing to strengthen their online positions to gain influence. Political parties have been known to monitor various social media sites to promote the policies they support. Using the Internet and being politically active are two different things, as discovered by Dimitrova & Matthes (2018). Only expressive social media usage predicts both online and offline political involvement, including voting, according to research by Gil de Zuniga et al. (2014). To a positive extent, research by Dimitrova and Bystrom (2017) shows that social media use influences political engagement.

According to Munzir et al. (2019), the number of young people using social media will continue to rise, allowing political news obtained on social media to influence the political engagement of the younger generation. Social media politics rising due to the growth of the Internet has transformed the media into an informational agent of democracy. In addition, the new media provide a vast array of current information, including debate and information exchange. It is believed that social media can increase the amount of interactivity in politics by allowing individuals to select their preferred information source (Salman et al., 2018). Social media gives scholars vast volumes of data, which is beautiful and challenging (Dimitrova & Matthes, 2018). These enormous data sets demand new analytical methods like social networking analysis and topic modeling, which might open up new research possibilities. The preceding argument will serve as the basis for the researcher's intention to investigate the phenomena of social media usage, most frequently utilized for political reasons by young people in Indonesia. According to Meijer's (2012) findings, the advent of new media has molded the landscape of virtual communication, creating a fertile ground for developing social interactions and expanding people's range of possible involvement. Many different parties can utilize this opportunity for a variety of purposes, such as in the field of government (Margo, 2012; Kavanaugh et al., 2011); corporate (Aichner & Jacob, 2015); psychology (Kelly et al., 2018; Ni et al., 2020); and education (Aji et al., 2022; Dennen et al., 2020). These studies demonstrate that the effects of using social media depend significantly on the user's settings and demographics. Those who work in politics are not immune to the benefits of social media and utilize it often. There have been several studies that have concentrated on the use of social media for political reasons, including Zhuravskaya et al. (2020), Valenzuela et al. (2019), Casero-Ripollés (2018), and much more. Many studies focus on politics in the context of American presidential elections, such as Howard et al. (2019) and Garrett (2019). Meanwhile, Indonesian social media research itself focuses a lot on social media upheaval in the world of politics (Jatmiko, 2019), political strategy (Alfiyani, 2018; Anshori et al, 2021), social media buzzers (Mustika, 2019; Juditha, 2021) to the role of the younger generation in social media politics (Komariah & Kartini, 2019; Munzir, 2019).

Before we take on a political role, we will have a quick conversation about the various features of social media platforms, as described by fen-fen (2019). Because of the enormous number of people who use it, this platform can rightfully claim the title of "most popular in the world." Facebook can actively engage the community while also consistently providing information that is beneficial and can be distributed. The second platform is known as Instagram, and it features content in the form of images or photographs, as well as short videos, with an emphasis on aesthetics. Even though it is constantly being updated with new features, it is still considered one of the most widely used platforms by youngsters. In addition, YouTube is the most popular platform for watching videos and is currently the second most popular search engine, behind Google. At the same time, Twitter is the most lively and boisterous because of its role as microblogging. Bearita.com (2021) also analogizes Twitter to a square where everyone talks without dividing walls. Finally, the viral social networking platform among young people, TikTok. It has a similar personality to YouTube but is faster and shorter. Very compatible with the personality of modern youth. They will swipe away if the information does not capture their attention within the first 3 to 8 seconds.

There are benefits and drawbacks to using every single type of social networking. While Justin Trudeau's political usage of Instagram in Canada is very different in tone from that of Trump in the United States, the two leaders' use of Instagram to communicate politically is very similar. Trudeau's youthfulness, friendliness, and upbeat outlook on politics have made him a household name. According to Lalancete & Raynauld's (2019) analysis of Trudeau's post frequency on Instagram in the year after his election, the prime minister's account was an essential means of communicating with his constituents. This means that Instagram can be utilized as a political platform. Moving to a nearby country, the United States, we shall encounter a different use of social media, notably Twitter,

by the then-presidential candidate. Slightly different, Buccoliero et al. (2018) argue that the Twitter accounts of American presidential candidates are not utilized to alter their appearance but rather to showcase and emphasize their individuality, which represents their positioning strategy. This is consistent with social media's open, curious, and influential aspects (Chlistina, 2022). So providing an original number will get the follower closer.

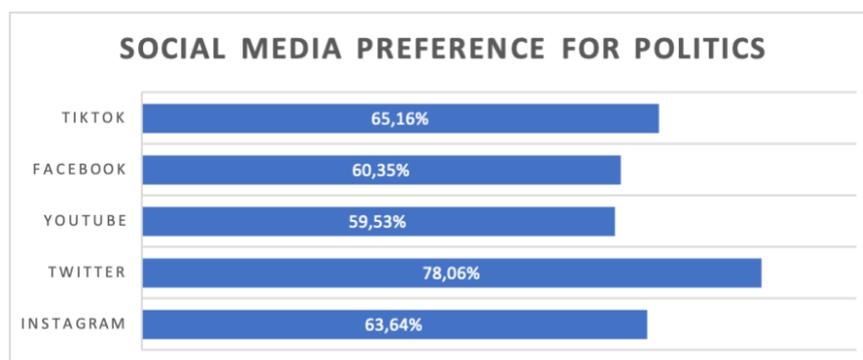
Politicians have direct access to both message generation and dissemination outlets through social media. This has altered the relationship between politicians (and their campaigns) and mainstream journalists and media. In addition, social media differ from radio and newspapers in their participatory capability, which becomes a vital pillar in any debate of political communication. Therefore, the use of social media needs to consider the characteristics and audience that are in it. If they take advantage of social media for the benefit of communication channels, it is necessary to carefully consider the political communication built along with the platform used.

2. Method

Three hundred fifty-six individuals were requested to conduct an online survey via Google Forms. This poll is only open to 17–22-year-old students from various academic disciplines. This is because they will be eligible to vote for the first time in the Indonesian elections of 2024; although some may have voted in previous elections. Participants who did not utilize social media networks were omitted from the analyses when asked to identify their preferred platform. Consequently, the final sample consisted of 341 college students chosen from a subject pool at a large metropolitan institution. Before participating in the survey, participants were told of the survey's topic and duration and asked for their consent. After completing the demographic information, participants were randomly assigned to one of two survey pathways, with the order of scales based on the assigned pathway. Participants were questioned about their preferred social networking site for political information gathering. What social media platforms frequently appear on your homepage? to several additional questions concerning social media and Indonesian politics. To find non-normal distributions for responses to each non-binary measure, we evaluate with kurtosis and skewness. The descriptive analysis examines data by summarizing or describing the acquired data as it is, without drawing conclusions or generalizations.

3. Result

Social media enable users to represent themselves, communicate, share information, and cultivate virtual social ties. Social media offer a different method of technological communication than traditional media. The "cyber" communication mediums establish a dense network without spatial or temporal limitations. The selection of social media platforms under personal characteristics makes some platforms some of the favorites and some less. TikTok is the preferred social media platform among the students participating in this study. This is understandable, given that social media platform dashes and a great deal of content has been optimized for the format. Even though not all users of TikTok seek political material, For-your-page occasionally includes political stuff. Instagram, Youtube, and Twitter trail in terms of popularity.



Twitter, however, occupies the top place, with 78,06%, when searching for political information and discussions. This is possible considering Twitter's nature as an open forum for debate and discourse (bearita.com, 2021). According to research by the Pew Research Center in 2021, 38% of social media users "like" or support the

political or social content of others. This platform's accessibility enables many individuals to initiate discussions and arguments. This survey indicated slightly different that young Indonesians are more individualistic in politics. In contrast to the Pew Research Center's study from 2021, respondents liked/promoted political content more than posting their opinions on politics. They prefer to initiate the discussion and shape it according to their thought. This does not preclude the use of other platforms. Twitter may currently meet the requirements of young people. Searching for political information on TikTok has also become quite popular among the younger population.

The often garish graphics of politicians that surface on Instagram may be a contributing factor to the platform's low popularity. Sometimes, it is overly artificial and does not reveal its genuine self. In the meantime, young people in this day and age require genuine examples of people to look up to. Because so many videos on YouTube are designed to get clickbait rather than provide practical knowledge, the platform could be more appealing. In addition, today's consumers tend to shy away from excessively long sizes. Tiktok and Twitter are two examples of social media networks that young people in Indonesia may choose to use. Despite this, it will be good to test out both platforms. When investigating Instagram and YouTube for politics, some suggestions for further research include researching the construction of a powerful and honest communication strategy on these two platforms. Facebook, on the other hand, has been relatively free of political chatter. Facebook, which has a strong sense of community, will likely become one of the venues that politicians can use in the future. Due to the diversity of Facebook's readership, it may become a useful tool for managing political information in the future.

Despite this, most young people are not very interested in politics, at least not just yet. This is, of course, because many politicians and political parties have yet to participate or declare themselves ultimately. It is widely believed that the primary influence on the political preferences of young people comes from their parents. According to Loader et al. (2014), scholars explore how young people form their political beliefs since the opinions and engagement of parents are vital. These researchers believe studying how young people form their political ideas is essential. A linear learning approach is taken toward forming values and political orientations.

4. Conclusions

According to the most recent survey findings, the social media platforms with the greatest demand for political information are TikTok and Twitter. Both options are chosen by young people in Indonesia mostly based on the advantages and qualities of the site, particularly the various communication modes offered and the possibilities for engagement. These social media platforms allow for conversations and debates, which politicians and political parties may utilize. When deciding on a political communication strategy, it may be important to consider social media perspectives and the politics that will emerge from them in the future. The political viewpoints and aspirations of today's young are frequently considered as providing a look into the future and are recognized as drivers of important social and political change.

In addition, despite the limited usage of Instagram, YouTube, and other social media platforms in political discourse, this may be connected to the limits of our research. It is possible that politicians are still planning and preparing for future political contests, given that there are still several years of political competition left. As a result, this study could serve as a point of reference for politicians interested in utilizing social media, which is a tool that can be utilized to gather supporters up to the day of the election. However, there are several restrictions regarding this research. To begin, this is what's known as a cross-sectional study, and it was only ever done at one point in time. The approach for collecting data has one flaw: it is unable to understand the phenomenon as a whole by looking at the chronology. Second, when it comes to political news, social media may be quite silent, which makes it an interesting research subject. This results in a polarization of political opinion that is not immediately apparent. The use of social media is merely one route and way to communicate with those who are sending their best wishes. In order to be successful in politics, politicians need to focus on a variety of different techniques. If you try to win the election only by appealing to too many young people, you might not succeed. However, you can capture their attention if you use social media, such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook or YouTube.

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