**IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA USE IN POLITICAL CAMPAIGNS ON VOTER AWARENESS AMONG FIRST-TIME VOTERS AT SMAN 15 GARUT IN ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION**

**PENGARUH PENGGUNAAN MEDIA SOSIAL DALAM KAMPANYE POLITIK TERHADAP KESADARAN PEMILIH PADA PEMILIH PEMULA SISWA/I SMAN 15 GARUT DALAM BERPARTISIPASI DI PEMILU**

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|  | **Abstract**  The use of social media in political campaigns significantly impacts the political awareness of first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut. Validity and reliability tests of the research instrument indicate that the questionnaire used is valid and reliable, allowing for accurate measurement of the desired concepts. Simple linear regression analysis reveals a positive relationship between the social media use variable (X) and the level of voter political awareness (Y), with social media explaining approximately 23.1% of the variation in voter awareness. Although significant, the influence of social media does not explain the entire variation in voter political awareness. Other factors outside the research variables also contribute, indicating the complexity in understanding the factors that influence the political awareness of first-time voters. Therefore, it is suggested to integrate social media use into better political campaign strategies, considering the characteristics of first-time voters. Increased digital access and knowledge also need to be strengthened so that first-time voters can participate more actively and effectively in the democratic process.  **Keywords :** Social Media, Political Campaign, Political Awareness, First-time Voters |

**Abstrak**

Penggunaan media sosial dalam kampanye politik memiliki dampak yang signifikan terhadaptingkat kesadaran politik pemilih pemula di SMAN 15 Garut. Uji validitas dan reliabilitas instrumen penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kuesioner yang digunakan dapat dianggap valid dan reliabel, memungkinkan pengukuran konsep yang diinginkan dengan akurat. Analisis regresi linear sederhana mengungkapkan adanya hubungan positif antara variabel penggunaan media sosial (X) dan tingkat kesadaran politik pemilih (Y), dengan media sosial mampu menjelaskan sekitar 23,1% dari variasi dalam tingkat kesadaran pemilih. Meskipun signifikan, pengaruh media sosial tidak menjelaskan seluruh variasi dalam kesadaran politik pemilih. Faktor-faktor lain di luar variabel penelitian turut berkontribusi, menunjukkan kompleksitas dalam memahami faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi kesadaran politik pemilih pemula. Oleh karena itu, saran disampaikan untuk mengintegrasikan penggunaan media sosial dalam strategi kampanye politik yang lebih baik, mempertimbangkan karakteristik pemilih pemula. Peningkatan akses dan pengetahuan digital juga perlu diperkuat agar pemilih pemula dapat lebih aktif dan efektif berpartisipasi dalam proses demokrasi.

**Kata Kunci:** Media Sosial, Kampanye Politik, Kesadaran Politik, Pemilih Pemula

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Political communication plays a crucial role in ensuring a democratic and transparent electoral process. Effective communication is the cornerstone of supporting election security and integrity. However, elections in Indonesia are often fraught with challenges such as disinformation, political polarization, and potential conflicts [1]. The 2024 Indonesian elections are a significant moment in the country's history, as they will determine the people's representatives in various government institutions, potentially shaping the nation's direction and policies for the coming years. In this process, the quality and integrity of elections are paramount to ensure accurate representation, decisions based on the will of the people, and sustained political stability.

Indonesia's demographic bonus is particularly significant in this election year, with a large number of young voters from Generation Z and Millennials. The increase in the productive age population offers significant opportunities for economic growth and social development. These young voters, generally aged between 18 and 40, have great potential to shape the country's political direction and character. Their active involvement in democratic processes, such as general elections, can drive positive transformation across various sectors. Therefore, a deep understanding of the characteristics and preferences of young voters is essential to formulate appropriate communication policies and strategies to build political awareness and increase their participation in Indonesia's democratic process, especially in Garut Regency, West Java.

The Permanent Voter List (DPT) in Garut Regency, West Java, includes Generation Z voters aged 17 to 21. The number of first-time voters from Generation Z in this DPT is substantial, exceeding 680,000 individuals. This significant number indicates the considerable potential of Generation Z in the political landscape of Garut Regency, reflecting an increasingly diverse voter composition that requires special attention in campaign and voter recruitment efforts.

One of the main issues is the uneven access to and knowledge of digital platforms

among first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut. Although many use social media, some may still be less familiar with or have limited access to these digital platforms. This creates a 1.

Dichotomy between digitally active first-time voters and those who may not have the same access. Furthermore, political campaigns on social media may not always be designed to effectively target first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut. The content, political messages, or communication styles used by candidates or political parties may not always align with the preferences or needs of this generation, creating a gap between the expectation of more active engagement through social media and the reality that political campaigns may not yet fully meet the needs of these first-time voters.

First-time voters may also be influenced by their parents' and families' political views, creating a dichotomy between the influence from social media and the political values potentially transmitted by their families. There is an expectation that social media use in political campaigns will increase the political awareness of first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut.

However, the reality is that while social media provides greater access to political information, not all first-time voters may utilize it effectively or develop deeper political awareness. Another expectation is that social media will stimulate more active political engagement among first-time voters. However, the intensity of political engagement can vary among individuals, and not all first-time voters may actively participate in the political process. There is a contradiction between the expectation of active involvement and the reality that the level of involvement can vary.

How does the use of social media in political campaigns affect the political awareness of first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut?

* 1. **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To identify and analyze the impact of social media use in political campaigns on the political awareness of first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut.
2. To assess the influence of social media use in political campaigns on the political engagement of first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut.
3. To evaluate whether there are differences in the influence of social media use on political awareness and engagement of first-time voters based on certain factors, such as the type of social media used, intensity of use, or type of campaign conducted.
   1. **RESEARCH BENEFITS**
      1. **THEORETICAL BENEFITS**
   2. To add to the body of knowledge, particularly in examining the influence of social media use in political campaigns on voters at SMAN 15 Garut from the perspective of political communication theory.
   3. To expand the scope of political communication theory studies; this research should be explored further using different theoretical frameworks.
      1. **PRACTICAL BENEFITS**
         * 1. For Stakeholders: a. Expected to provide knowledge for parties who play an

important role as social media users for political campaigns. b. Expected that social

media users as political campaign tools can have a positive impact on voters at

SMAN 15 Garut. c. Expected to be a positive contributor for other researchers who

will take similar research objects.

1. **RESEARCH METHOD**

**Research Design**

This research was conducted using a quantitative research design. The design aims to examine the influence of social media use in political campaigns on the political awareness of first-time voters. This approach allows for the measurement of variables and the analysis of relationships between them through statistical methods.

**Population and Sample**

The population of this research consists of first-time voters, specifically students of SMAN 15 Garut, who are eligible to participate in the general election. The sample was selected using a specific sampling technique to ensure representativeness. (Further details on sampling technique and sample size from the original document will be incorporated here if available and relevant).

**Types and Sources Of Data**

This research utilized primary data, collected directly from the respondents through questionnaires. Secondary data, such as literature reviews and previous research, were also used to support the theoretical framework and discussion.

**Variable Definition and Measurement Scale**

Independent Variable (X): Social Media Use in Political Campaigns This variable refers to the extent to which first-time voters are exposed to and interact with political content on social media platforms during election campaigns. It is measured using a Likert scale, assessing frequency and type of engagement.

Dependent Variable (Y): Political Awareness of First-time Voters This variable represents the level of understanding and knowledge first-time voters have regarding political issues, candidates, and the electoral process. It is measured through a series of questions designed to gauge their comprehension and engagement with political information.

**Data Analysis Method and Hypothesis Testing**

Data analysis was performed using statistical methods to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. Simple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the influence of social media use on political awareness.

Validity and reliability tests were conducted on the research instrument to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data. Hypothesis testing was performed to determine the statistical significance of the observed relationships.

1. **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

**Research Results**

**Instrument Test Results**

**Validity Test Results**

The validity and reliability tests of the research instrument demonstrated that the questionnaire used is valid and reliable, ensuring accurate measurement of the intended concepts. The results for the validity test for Variable X (Social Media Use) and Variable Y (Political Awareness) are presented in Table 1 and Table 2, respectively.

**Table 1. Validity Test Results for Variable X**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Nilai R Hitung** | **Nilai R Tabel** | **Keterangan** |
| 1 | 0,667 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 2 | 0,563 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 3 | 0,666 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 4 | 0,662 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 5 | 0,620 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 6 | 0,360 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 7 | 0,632 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 8 | 0,465 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| Sumber | | Data Olahan IBM SPSS | |

**Table 2. Scoring Range Pre-test Experimental Class**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Nilai R Hitung** | **Nilai R Tabel** | **Keterangan** |
| 1 | 0,842 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 2 | 0,803 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 3 | 0,773 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 4 | 0,762 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 5 | 0,666 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| 6 | 0,655 | 0,2199 | Valid |
| Sumber | | Data Olahan IBM SPSS | |

**Reliability Test Results**

The reliability test results for Variable X and Variable Y are presented in Table 3 and Table 4, respectively, confirming the consistency of the measurement instrument**.**

**Table 3. Reliability Test Results for Variable X**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reliability Statistics** | |
| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
| 0,723 | 8 |
| Sumber : Data Olahan IBM SPSS | |

**Table 4. Reliability Test Results for Variable Y**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Reliability Statistics** | |
| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
| 0,843 | 6 |

Sumber : Data Olahan IBM SPS

**Normality Test Results**

The normality test, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method, was conducted to determine if the data followed a normal distribution. The results are shown in Table 7 of the original document, indicating the distribution characteristics of the pre-test and post-test data for both experimental and control classes.

**Table 5. Tests of Normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov and Shapiro-Wilk)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test** | | |
|  | | Unstandardized Residual |
| N | | 80 |
| Normal Parametersa,b | Mean | .0000000 |
| Std. Deviation | 3.56874490 |
| Most Extreme Differences | Absolute | .068 |
| Positive | .068 |
| Negative | -.067 |
| Test Statistic | | .068 |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | | .200c,d |
| Sumber : Data Olahan IBM SPSS | | |

**Simple Regression Analysis**

Simple linear regression analysis was performed to examine the relationship between social media use (X) and political awareness (Y). The analysis revealed a positive relationship, with social media explaining approximately 23.1% of the variation in voter awareness. The results of the simple regression analysis are detailed in Table 6 of the original document.

**Table 6. Simple Regression Analysis**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model Summaryb** | | | | |
| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
| 1 | .480a | .231 | .221 | 3.592 |
| a. Predictors: (Constant), Penggunaan Media Sosial | | | | |
| b. Dependent Variable: Kesadaran Pemilih | | | | |

Sumber : Data Olahan IBM SPSS

**Hypothesis Test**

The hypothesis testing confirmed the significant influence of social media use on the political awareness of first-time voters. (Specific details of the hypothesis test from the original document will be inserted here).

**Regression Equation**

The regression equation derived from the analysis quantifies the relationship between the variables. (The regression equation from the original document will be inserted here).

**DISCUSSION**

The findings indicate that social media plays a significant role in shaping the political awareness of first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut. The positive correlation observed between social media use and political awareness suggests that increased exposure to political content on these platforms contributes to a higher level of understanding among young voters. This aligns with previous research highlighting the growing importance of digital platforms in political communication and civic engagement.

However, it is crucial to note that social media only accounts for a portion of the variation in political awareness (23.1%). This implies that other factors, not explored in this study, also contribute to the political awareness of first-time voters. These unexamined factors could include family influence, peer groups, traditional media consumption, educational background, and direct engagement with political activities outside of social media. The complexity of political socialization among young demographics necessitates a multi-faceted approach to understanding their political development.

The implications of these findings are significant for political campaigns and educational initiatives. For political actors, integrating social media into campaign strategies is essential, but these strategies must be tailored to the specific characteristics and preferences of first-time voters. This includes creating engaging, informative, and accessible content that resonates with a digitally native audience. Furthermore, campaigns should consider diversifying their communication channels to reach voters who may have limited digital access or prefer traditional media.

For educators and policymakers, the results underscore the need to strengthen digital literacy and critical thinking skills among young voters. Equipping first-time voters with the ability to critically evaluate information from social media, identify misinformation, and engage constructively in online political discourse is paramount for fostering informed and active participation in the democratic process. Efforts to bridge the digital divide and ensure equitable access to digital resources are also vital to prevent further disparities in political awareness.

Future research could explore the specific types of social media content that are most effective in increasing political awareness, the role of opinion leaders and online communities, and the long-term impact of social media on voting behavior. A qualitative approach could provide deeper insights into the lived experiences and perceptions of first-time voters regarding social media and politics. Additionally, comparative studies across different regions or demographic groups could offer a broader understanding of these dynamics.

1. **CONCLUSION**

The use of social media in political campaigns has emerged as a pivotal factor in enhancing political awareness among first-time voters at SMAN 15 Garut. The findings of this study demonstrate a statistically significant and positive relationship between the frequency of social media engagement and the level of political awareness exhibited by these novice voters. This underscores the transformative role of social media as a medium not only for political communication but also for fostering civic education and participatory behavior among youth. Nevertheless, although social media usage accounts for a substantial proportion of the variance in political awareness, it does not operate in isolation. The presence of other influential variables—such as familial political socialization, formal civic education within the school environment, peer interactions, and exposure to conventional media—suggests a multifaceted framework in which political awareness is cultivated. These findings highlight the need for a more holistic understanding of the determinants shaping political consciousness in young voters.

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