



The Effect of Social Media on Public Opinion in the 2024 Medan Regional Election Campaign Based on the Perception of PPKN E 2021 Students

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of social media on public opinion of PPKn E 2021 students in the 2024 Medan Pilkada campaign. Social media, as a dominant communication platform in the digital era, has a significant role in shaping public perception and opinion. This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a phenomenological approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 10 PPKn E 2021 students who actively use social media. The results of the study indicate that social media is the main source of political information for students, but also has the potential to cause information bias. Social media content, such as campaign videos and posts about visions and missions, influences students' perceptions of candidates. Social media also facilitates political participation, but is susceptible to manipulation and polarization due to the influence of hoaxes and black campaigns. Political campaign strategies on social media can increase or decrease students' trust in the democratic process. This study highlights the importance of digital literacy and ethical and professional use of social media in political campaigns.

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INTRODUCTION

In today's digital era, social media has become one of the most influential means of communication in the world, including Indonesia. Its impact on politics cannot be ignored, as platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have changed the way politicians interact with voters, disseminate information, and support demonstrations. Social media enables broader and faster political participation, giving voice to those who are not heard. However, behind these benefits are challenges such as the spread of false information and manipulation of public opinion. Therefore, it is important to understand how social media impacts the dynamics of Indonesian politics and how this will affect the future of democracy in this country.

The influence of social media on public opinion in the 2024 Medan Pilkada campaign is very large, especially among PPKn E 2021 students. Social media not only

functions as a source of information but also as a platform for active interaction between prospective leaders and voters. The survey found that around 29.4% of respondents used social media to obtain information related to the election, and social media was used more often than online media or television. This reflects the tendency of students as a digital native generation who seek and share political information through platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, and Tik Tok. However, the use of social media also has challenges, such as the spread of misinformation and polarization of opinion. The algorithms used by platforms often amplify content that fits the user's perspective, creating a "filter bubble" that can limit the user's perspective. Social media has the potential to expand the reach of information, but users must be smart in consuming content and making policy decisions based on accurate and balanced information.

The development of information and communication technology, more precisely in the form of social media, has fundamentally changed the socio-political landscape in this digital era. This transformation has several significant impacts on the dynamics of political and social change in various countries in the world. This dynamic illustrates how social media and community involvement have become important forces in shaping political and social order.

Social media has become the main platform for individuals and groups to talk about various socio-political issues, share information, and organize. This provides citizens with unprecedented opportunities to participate in political decision-making, interact with people who agree with them, and convey their aspirations. However, in addition to its potential benefits, social media also has potential dangers that must be carefully considered. The development of the use of mass media by the problem of the needs of the community itself Will public information increase the type and number of mass media that are developing that enter the public area.

Public space, also called the public space that Habermas found is all aspects of social life that allow people to interact with each other think, talk, and make public ideas as a whole. In the digital era, it can provide challenges as well as increase the prospects for political participation in the younger generation. Digital technology opens up new spaces for students to get involved in politics. Social media and other online platforms allow them to easily connect, share information about political issues, and voice their opinions. Students can also use digital technology to organize political action, rally support for issues they care about, and even run for new political office.

RESEARCH METHODE

The research method is a step owned and carried out by researchers in order to collect information or data and conduct investigations on the data that has been obtained. The research method provides an overview of the research design which

includes among others: procedures and steps that must be taken, research time, data sources, and with what steps the data is obtained and then processed and analyzed. The research method used in this study is qualitative descriptive research, meaning a problem formulation that guides research to explore or photograph the social situation that will be studied comprehensively, broadly and in depth. Collecting data by conducting field observations, interviews and documentation.

The location of the research to be carried out in this study is in the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, State University of Medan.

1. Population and Research Samples

Sugiyono's research (2018:130) states that population as a general area consisting of objects/subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions are drawn. Samples according to Sugiyono, (2016:118) samples are part of the number and characteristics possessed by the population. This research was conducted at the Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education, Faculty of Social Sciences, State University of Medan.

2. Research Variables and Operational Definitions

According to Sugiyono (2017:61) research variables are attributes or traits or values of people, objects or activities that have certain variations determined by researchers to be studied and then conclusions drawn. In this study, the variables used consist of one variable, namely: The Effect of Social Media on Public Opinion in the 2024 Medan Pilkada Campaign Based on the Perception of PPKN E 2021 Students.

3. Data Collection Instruments and Techniques.

a. Data Type

The type of data used in this study is qualitative data, where examples of qualitative data are such as interview data, observation data or conducting direct observations at the research location in obtaining information.

b. Data Collection Technique

Data collection techniques are used to collect data according to research procedures so that the required data is obtained. According to Sugiyono (2012:224), data collection techniques are the most strategic step in research, because the main purpose of research is to collect data. Data collection techniques in this study use documentation, observation, and interview techniques.

- Observation

According to Sugiyono (2012:166), observation is a data collection technique to observe directly in the research. In this study, the researcher conducted

direct observation to observe how the Effect of Social Media on Public Opinion in the 2024 Medan Pilkada Campaign Based on the Perception of Civic Education Students Class E 2021.

- Interview

The interview in this study took place when the researcher was chatting or asking questions to Civic Education Students Class E Stambuk 2021.

- Documentation

Documentation is a method used to trace "historical" (Burhan 2008: 122), The documentation method is used to collect guidelines for implementing research carried out in the Pancasila and Citizenship Education Department, Faculty of Social Sciences, State University of Medan.

c. Data Collection Instruments

The instrument in this study is the researcher himself, but after the focus of the study becomes clear, the research instrument or data collection is developed which can be expected to complete the data and compare the data that has been found through observation and interviews. The other instruments are:

- Interview guidelines
- Interview recording tools
- Image capture tools (photos, videos)

4. Data Analysis Techniques

- a. Data Reduction is the process of selecting, focusing on simplification. Abstracting and transforming raw data that emerges from records that appear in the field. This technique plays a role in classifying and discarding unnecessary data so that the data can produce meaningful information and facilitate drawing conclusions.
- b. Data Display is data that is arranged systematically. The form of data presentation is in the form of a chart. Through this data presentation, the data will be organized and arranged in a relationship pattern.
- c. Data Verification is the final stage in data analysis techniques. This stage aims to find the meaning of the data collected by looking for relationships, similarities, and differences to draw conclusions as answers to existing problems.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research Results

The research location is the location where the process of searching and researching the research object takes place. In the research conducted by the researcher, the research location taken was Medan State University. PPKn Department Stambuk 2021 in class E, by conducting interviews and documentation.

Based on the results of the study, it can be seen how the understanding of students of the State University of Medan, PPKn Department, Stambuk 2021 class E regarding the Effects of Social Media on Public Opinion in the 2024 Medan Pilkada Campaign. To find out the answers from the respondents, the researcher conducted interviews with several students related to this study. Based on the results of this study, according to the interview instruments conducted are as follows:

- a. Students regarding the effects of social media on public opinion in the 2024 Medan regional election campaign based on the results of interviews conducted by researchers that according to students' opinions, social media has a very big influence on public opinion sent through social media platforms.
- b. Regarding the perception of PPKN E 2021 students regarding the content of candidates in the 2024 Regional Election, it is very influential, especially on public views through the vision and mission carried out by candidates in the Pilkada content carried out on social media, one of which is Instagram and TikTok social media.
- c. Regarding the influence of social media on the level of voter participation in the 2024 Medan Pilkada, it was found that students showed that this had quite an influence on the level of voter desire in choosing the regional head candidate they wanted. This is what causes the level of political participation to be very influential from the use of social media by the 2024 Medan Pilkada candidates from each candidate.
- d. Regarding the spread of false information (hoaxes) that influence public opinion, it is known that this often occurs in society, especially among class E PPKN 2021 students. The spread of false information (hoaxes) often appears from various social media which generally often appear from Instagram and TikTok. This information is generally used to incite and argue between regional head candidates who are competing, causing a commotion on social media platforms. This is what gives rise to the perception of students that false information can influence public opinion on the 2024 Medan regional election campaign.
- e. According to students, one of the strategies that regional head candidates can do to increase public trust in the democratic process in the 2024 Medan regional election is by providing a clear and real vision and mission and not just promises or mere dreams.

Discussion

The results of the study show that social media has a significant influence on public opinion of PPKn E 2021 students in the 2024 Medan Pilkada Campaign. Through the results of this study, it can be linked to the article (Salman Farid, 2023) that there are 3 influences caused by political campaigns from social media, namely:

1. Impact of Social Media on Political Participation. Based on data analysis, it was found that the use of social media in political campaigns has a positive impact on political participation. People who actively use social media are more likely to participate in political discussions, share political information, and vote in elections. Using social media as a means to express political opinions and arguments, support candidates, and interact with others who have similar political interests. Thus, social media provides a platform that allows for broader political participation and increases public access.
2. Impact of Social Media on Public Perception The use of social media in political campaigns also has a significant impact on public perception of political issues and candidates. Social media has become an important channel for disseminating political messages, and these messages can spread quickly and influence public opinion. People access political information through social media, including messages, posts, and comments from other users. Public awareness arises through interaction with various political views presented through social media. Thus, social media plays a role in shaping public opinion and contributing to the dynamics of community politics.
3. Challenges in using social media Although the use of social media in political campaigns can have a positive impact, there are also challenges that need to be overcome. One of the biggest challenges is the spread of fake news and disinformation. In an open social media environment, unverified information can easily spread and influence public perception.
4. Mutual Communication and Voter Engagement One of the benefits of using social media in political campaigns is that it allows for two-way communication between political candidates and voters. Social media provides an opportunity for candidates to interact directly with voters, listen to public opinion, and answer their questions and concerns. This can strengthen the relationship between candidates and voters, increase public trust, and encourage more active political participation among voters.

Based on the results of interviews with PPKn class E 2021 students as voters for the 2024 North Sumatra Pilkada, the use of social media can make it easier to find and evaluate candidates for the 2024 North Sumatra regional head so that students can choose the best candidate according to them. PPKn class E students of the 2021 batch can quickly receive information from the internet which is very well mastered by students as generation Z who are quite familiar with surfing on social media. Various political issues appear on various social networks that can be accessed by anyone, especially PPKn students as voters who want to know the political situation in Indonesia.

Furthermore, it is hoped that the vision must be implemented that the election system has a major impact if it is in accordance with justice and agreement with the community. The existence of a clear and precise election system provides relief for the community, one of which is students, to be able to express their opinions in determining their choice. The 2024 Indonesian Election should be held based on the results of a comprehensive assessment of the elections in the last few periods. Starting from the constitutional order, democracy, fraud, political costs, election budgets, and human rights. It is feared that with the current system, this will only worsen democracy and people's sovereignty, as well as the people's political intelligence. Open proportionality should be enhanced, including the possibility of closed system discussions with strict internal party conventions..

In (Fahruji & Fahrudin, 2023) regarding research conducted by Saraswati (2018), it was found that the use of social media plays an important role in shaping public opinion, especially in the context of elections. The points obtained from the results of the research discussion are:

1. Social media is the main source of political information for PPKn E 2021 students. They access information through various social media platforms, which makes it easy for them to get political information quickly and easily. However, this also has the potential to cause bias in the information they receive, because social media content is often colored by certain political interests.
2. Social media content such as campaign videos, posts about visions and missions, and comments from other users influence the perceptions of PPKn E 2021 students towards the 13 candidates. This shows that social media can easily shape public opinion, especially among the younger generation who actively use social media.
3. Social media facilitates the political participation of PPKn E 2021 students by providing a platform for discussion, expressing opinions, and disseminating political information. This shows that social media can be an effective tool to increase political participation, especially among the younger generation who tend to be more active on social media.
4. The spread of false information (hoaxes) through social media is a serious threat to public opinion. PPKn E 2021 students have difficulty distinguishing between true information and hoaxes, which has the potential to influence their decisions in choosing candidates. This shows the need for better digital literacy to counter the spread of hoaxes on social media.
5. Political campaign strategies on social media can influence PPKn E 2021 students' trust in the democratic process. Candidates who use social media professionally and responsibly tend to gain higher trust. This shows that social media can be an

effective tool to build public trust in the democratic process, but it can also be used to manipulate public opinion and undermine trust in democracy.

6. In addition to shaping public opinion, social media can also influence voter behavior. PPKn E 2021 students revealed that they are sometimes influenced by trends on social media, such as "movements" to support certain candidates or "14 black campaigns" that bring down other candidates. This shows that social media can be an effective tool to mobilize the masses and influence voter behavior.
7. Social media has great potential to increase political participation and transparency in political campaigns. However, social media also has several challenges, such as the spread of hoaxes, manipulation of public opinion, and political polarization. To maximize the potential of social media in political campaigns, efforts are needed to improve digital literacy, build responsible social media platforms, and encourage ethical and professional use of social media.

CONCLUSION

Research on the understanding of PPKn Stambuk 2022 students regarding the perception and behavior of voters in the 2024 North Sumatra Pilkada shows that there are various factors that influence students' voting decisions. Socio-economic background, the influence of social media, transparency of information from candidates and political parties, and the role of family and peers have been shown to have a significant impact on voter perceptions and behavior. In addition, student participation in political discussions and access to official sources of information are also important factors that shape their understanding of candidates and work programs.

The results of this study emphasize the importance of continuing political education for students so that they can make more informed and rational decisions when voting. Increasing political awareness among first-time voters, as well as providing accurate and transparent information about candidates and political parties, are strategic steps to strengthen intelligent and responsible voter participation.

PPKn Stambuk 2022 students at Universitas Negeri Medan are influenced by various factors in determining their political choices. Internal factors such as socio-economic background and the influence of family and peers, as well as external factors such as the influence of social media, transparency of information, and participation in political discussions, play an important role in shaping the perception and behavior of student voters.

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