

# First-Time Voters and Social Media: Exploring Factors Shaping Political Preferences

## *Pemilih Pemula dan Media Sosial: Menelusuri Faktor-Faktor Pembentuk Preferensi Politik*

Sesdia Angela <sup>1</sup>, Fadhiilatun Nisaa<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup>Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: [sesdiaangela@lecturer.unri.ac.id](mailto:sesdiaangela@lecturer.unri.ac.id)

### Abstract

This study aims to investigate the factors influencing the political preferences of first-time voters (Gen Z) in the digital landscape, emphasizing the role of social media as a campaign tool and source of political information. A quantitative approach was adopted through a survey of 206 first-time voters in Pekanbaru. The collected data were statistically analyzed to identify correlations between the intensity of social media use, types of platforms, and shifts in political preferences. The findings reveal that social media is the primary source of political information (80% of respondents), with TikTok and Instagram being the most utilized platforms. Key factors influencing political preferences include: (1) creativity in campaign content (55%), (2) responsiveness to current issues (40%), and (3) the impact of misinformation (30%). Candidates' vision and mission were the top consideration (85%), followed by experience (70%) and leadership qualities (65%). Approximately 30% of respondents changed their preferences after exposure to social media, while 70% maintained their initial choices due to emotional connections or shared values. This research significantly contributes to the understanding of digital political communication by illustrating the shift from traditional campaigns to visual content-based strategies. The findings also offer recommendations for the election commission and political parties to design data-driven campaigns, enhance voter media literacy, and address misinformation challenges. Theoretically, this study expands the concepts of digital political participation and selective exposure theory within the context of Indonesia's digital democracy.

### Keywords

First-Time Voters; Social Media; Political Preferences; Political Participation; Digital Era.

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi preferensi politik di kalangan pemilih pemula (Generasi Z) dalam konteks digital, dengan penekanan pada peran media sosial sebagai alat kampanye dan sumber informasi politik. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif melalui survei yang melibatkan 206 responden pemilih pemula di Pekanbaru. Data yang diperoleh dianalisis secara statistik untuk menemukan hubungan antara frekuensi penggunaan media sosial, jenis platform, dan perubahan dalam preferensi politik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa media sosial menjadi sumber utama informasi politik (80% responden), dengan TikTok dan Instagram sebagai platform yang paling banyak digunakan. Faktor-faktor yang berpengaruh terhadap preferensi politik meliputi: (1) kreativitas dalam konten kampanye (55%), (2) kecepatan respons terhadap isu terkini (40%), dan (3) dampak hoaks (30%). Visi dan misi kandidat menjadi pertimbangan utama (85%), diikuti oleh pengalaman (70%) dan karakter kepemimpinan (65%). Sekitar 30% responden mengubah pilihan mereka setelah terpapar informasi di media sosial, sementara 70% tetap pada pilihan awal karena kedekatan emosional atau kesamaan nilai. Penelitian ini memberikan kontribusi signifikan terhadap pemahaman komunikasi politik digital dengan menunjukkan pergeseran dari kampanye tradisional ke strategi berbasis konten visual. Temuan ini juga memberikan rekomendasi bagi KPU dan partai politik untuk merancang kampanye yang berbasis data, meningkatkan literasi media di kalangan pemilih, serta menangani tantangan disinformasi. Secara teoritis, penelitian ini memperluas konsep partisipasi politik digital dan teori pemaparan selektif dalam konteks demokrasi digital di Indonesia.

### Kata Kunci

Pemilih Pemula; Media Sosial; Preferensi Politik; Partisipasi Politik; Era Digital.



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## 1. Introduction

First-time voters, also known as first-time voters, according to Executive Director of Perkumpulan Pemilu untuk Demokrasi (Perludem) Khoirunnisa Nur Agustyanti, are groups of people who in previous elections have not been eligible to vote, usually due to insufficient age. In the context of the 2019 Simultaneous Elections, they are not yet classified as voters who are entitled to exercise their voting rights. Based on the latest data, this group includes individuals who have just reached the age of 17 and fall into the category of young voters whose numbers are significant in the national voter structure.

Statistically, from KPU data, 17-year-old voters account for around 6,697 people or 0.003% of the total voters. Meanwhile, the 17 to 30 age group, which also mostly consists of first-time voters, reaches around 63,953,031 people or 31.23% of the total voters. This figure shows that young voters, including first-time voters, have significant potential to influence election results, given that they constitute one of the largest demographic groups in Indonesia's electoral system.

This group has unique characteristics as they have grown up in the digital age, where social media plays an important role in everyday life. First-time voters are often targeted by political campaigns as they tend to be more open to new information and influences from various digital platforms. Therefore, understanding the factors that shape their political preferences, especially those derived from their interactions with social media, is important to be analyzed more deeply ([Andriyendi et al., 2023](#)).

A study examining the difference in voter turnout in Riau Province between the 2018 regional elections and the 2019 general elections revealed a significant gap even though both events took place within a short period and in the same region. The study identified three main factors as the cause, namely: the number of political actors who provide stimulus to voters, the strong political resonance that encourages voters to identify with certain candidates, and the influence of mass media and social media in disseminating political information. These findings highlight how differences in stimulus intensity and the effectiveness of political communication directly affect voter participation, which in turn provides an important basis for developing strategies to increase participation in future elections ([Hasanuddin et al., 2021](#)).

While shifting political dynamics ahead of the 2024 elections, the era of disruption has fundamentally changed the political order. New parties are utilizing advances in information technology to mobilize the masses through digital campaigns that are not only more efficient and cost-effective but also able to reach a wide range of people. This transformation opens up new opportunities for candidates to build a base of supporters through innovative digital marketing strategies, but at the same time poses challenges, such as the potential for internal conflict and fierce competition in the social media realm ([Barokah et al., 2022](#)).

In elections, the presence of first-time voters not only enriches the dynamics of democracy but also reflects the changing patterns of political participation that are increasingly influenced by technology. With a large proportion and the dominant influence of social media in shaping opinions, this group is one of the important pillars in determining the political direction of the nation.

Generation Z, also known as Gen Z, includes the group of individuals born between 1997 and 2012. The name is used as a continuation of the previous generation, Generation Y or Millennials, with the letter "Z" considered the logical sequence in the alphabet. The term became widely recognized after various proposals and processes, one of which was through a USA Today reader vote in 2012 that chose the name "Generation Z" to describe the generation born after the Millennials. This generation is characterized as "digital native" because they grew up

in the era of technology and the internet, so they are very adept at using technological devices and adapting to digital developments (Hadi, 2019).

In the 2024 General Election, Generation Z plays a significant role as a group of first-time voters. According to data from the General Elections Commission (KPU), the number of first-time voters from this generation is estimated to reach 46.8 million people, which is part of the total 204,807,222 voters in the Permanent Voter List (DPT). This large number shows the great potential of Generation Z in determining the direction of the election. The use of social media as a communication optimization tool, where information about election stages and voter education is widely disseminated to achieve higher participation targets (Sari, A. E., & Hadi, 2024). In addition, their characters who are very familiar with technology make them the main target of various digital-based campaign strategies. The combination of their numerical dominance and digital skills makes Generation Z one of the key elements in modern political dynamics.

Social media platforms have now become an integral part of everyday life, especially among the younger generation who are very familiar with digital technology. In the political context, social media is not only used as a means of communication but also utilized as a strategic tool to deliver campaign messages and shape public opinion. According to research by Violin et al. (2024) Social media serves as the main medium for first-time voters, especially university students, to obtain political information as well as participate in the electoral process. For this group of young people, social media is the main source that provides various political information. Therefore, social media plays a crucial role in influencing their political preferences.

This study aims to uncover the various factors that influence the political preferences of first-time voters by emphasizing the role of social media. First-time voters, who have the right to vote in elections for the first time, often face confusion in making the right political choices. Several factors, such as duration of social media use, types of content frequently accessed, and digital campaign strategies, are thought to have a significant influence on the formation of their preferences.

This research is based on the urgency to understand the relationship between first-time voters and social media, especially in the context of the 2024 presidential election, which is increasingly influenced by the development of digital technology. As a generation that actively uses social media, beginner voters play an important role in determining political direction, so understanding their interaction patterns with social media is a crucial aspect that needs to be studied more deeply. The role of social media is not only limited to information dissemination, but also as a tool for shaping political perceptions and preferences that can influence voters' decisions in elections.

The results of this study are expected to make a significant contribution to understanding the influence of social media on the political behavior of the younger generation. In addition, the results of this research are also expected to serve as practical guidelines for political campaign teams in designing more effective digital communication strategies. That way, this research is not only beneficial for the development of political communication theory, but also has high applicative value in political practice in the field.

## 2. Methods

This research uses a quantitative approach with the survey method as the main tool for collecting data. The data analyzed in this study are primary data obtained directly from filling out questionnaires by respondents. The research subjects are novice voters from Generation Z who live in Pekanbaru city and have met the requirements to vote in the election. The sampling technique was carried out using the probability

sampling method, which provides equal opportunities for all members of the population to become research respondents.

This research uses a quantitative approach to examine the influence of social media as a campaign tool on the political participation of novice voters in the digital era. The quantitative method was chosen because it allows measurable data collection and analysis that can describe the pattern of interrelationships between the variables studied.

The population in this study is Generation Z who live in Pekanbaru city and actively use social media Twitter, TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook during the 2024 national election campaign. The determination of the sample size was carried out using the Slovin formula to ensure a good representation of the population. Based on the calculation, the number of samples required in this study was 206 respondents. This number is considered adequate to obtain valid results and describe the characteristics of the population.

Data collection was conducted online through a digital survey platform. The survey link was shared through social media and online discussion groups attended by first-time voters. The survey lasted for two weeks, ensuring the confidentiality of respondents' data by the principles of research ethics..

### 3. Results and Discussion

The results of this study reveal the complex dynamics between social media and the political preferences of young voters, with a focus on the factors that influence their decision to choose a presidential and vice-presidential candidate pair. Based on the data collected, social media proved to be the main platform for young people to access political information, with most respondents spending 5-10 hours per day on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter (X). Based on research by [Suprianti et al. \(2023\)](#) Twitter (X) is one of the platforms that enables the analysis of public opinion related to elections. Social network analysis studies show that information regarding a particular candidate can spread very quickly on this platform, with thousands of interactions occurring in a short period.

The findings indicate that social media serves not only as a source of information but also as an interactive space that influences political perceptions and attitudes. In addition, the study identified key factors that first-time voters consider, such as the candidate's vision and mission, experience and leadership, while social media activity and charisma also play a role in attracting early attention.

The following research results describe the demographics of the research respondents presented in the table below.

**Table 1.** Distribution of Respondents by Age and Gender

Age	Gender	Number of Respondents	Percentage
17-21 years old	Male	30	15%
17-21 years old	Female	90	45%
22-26 years old	Male	20	10%
22-26 years old	Female	40	20%
27+ years	Male	10	5%
27+ years	Female	10	5%

*Source: Processed by Researchers, 2024*

The table above shows the distribution of respondents by age and gender. The majority of respondents were aged 17-21 years (60%), with females (45%) dominating over males (15%). The 22-26 age group accounted for 30% of respondents, with women again dominating (20%). Meanwhile, respondents aged

over 27 years only reached 10%, with a balanced distribution between men and women (5% each). This data reflects the characteristics of first-time voters, who are dominated by young women, especially from the 17-21 age group.

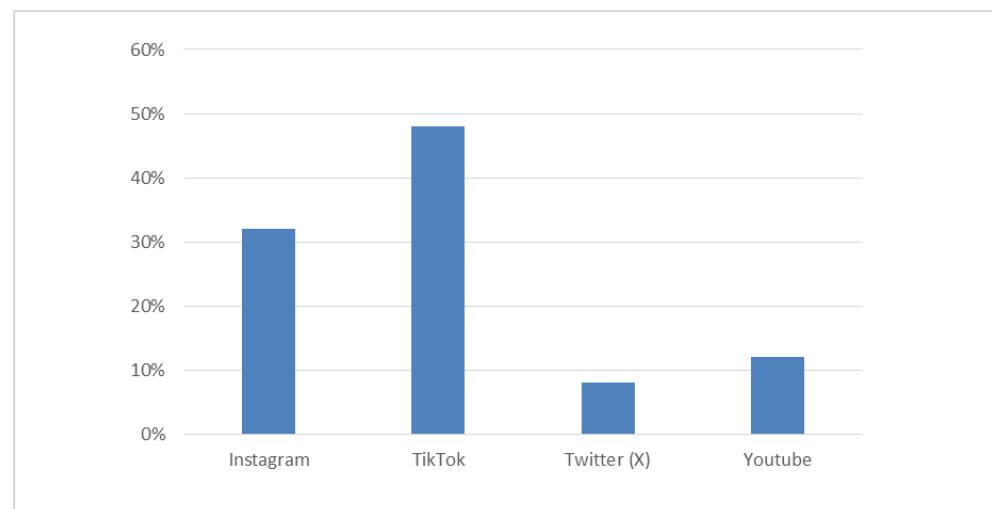
**Table 2.** Intensity of Social Media Use

Duration of Use per Day	Number of Respondents	Number of Respondents
5-10 hours	124	62%
3-5 hours	50	25%
> 10 hours	26	13%

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2024

The survey results show that most respondents have a high intensity in using social media as a source of political information. As many as 62% of respondents spend between 5 to 10 hours per day accessing various social media platforms. Meanwhile, another 25% use social media with a more moderate duration, which is around 3 to 5 hours per day. The group that accesses social media for more than 10 hours a day is recorded at 13%. These findings indicate that social media plays a very significant role in providing access to political information for voters. With the high frequency of use, digital platforms have become one of the main channels that shape people's political opinions and preferences, especially for groups of first-time voters. This is also by research [Solakhudin, A. Z., & Al-hamid \(2024\)](#) This emphasizes that social media has become a strategic tool that allows political parties to build transparent and dynamic communication, thus encouraging more active political participation among voters. Transparent communication is very important from various aspects. This is reinforced by the results of research. [Lestari \(2023\)](#) This emphasizes that the lack of transparency in party recruitment mechanisms is a major factor that allows political elites to maintain dominance through patronage practices and kinship networks.

**Figure 1.** Percentage of Social Media Platform Usage by Respondents



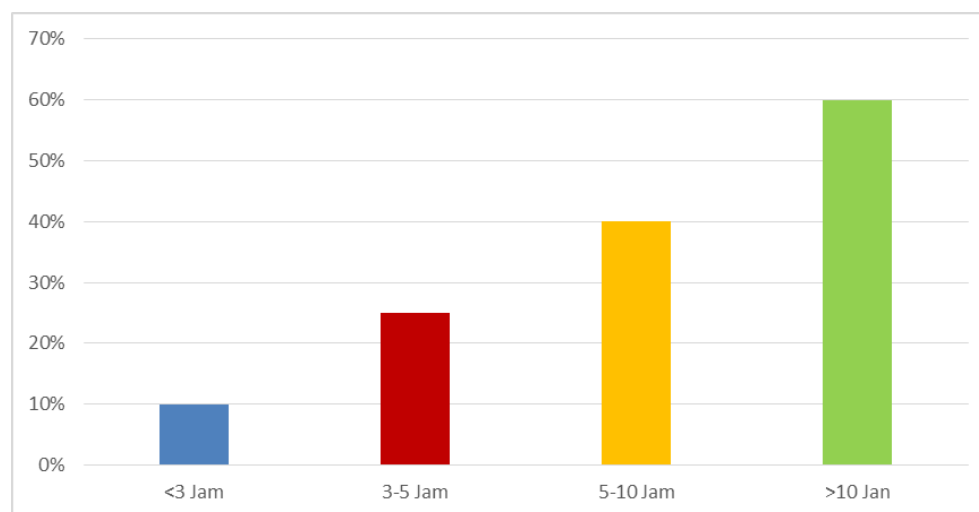
Source: Processed by Researchers, 2024

This graph shows that TikTok and Instagram are the main platforms for young voters to access political information. This is in line with the characteristics of the younger generation who prefer visual and interactive content. Meanwhile, YouTube and Twitter have a smaller role, perhaps due to their longer or less viral content.

Based on the data collected, social media proved to be the main source of political information for respondents, with 80% relying on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter to access content related to candidate pairs. This reflects a significant shift from conventional media to digital platforms, especially

among the younger generation. Meanwhile, 15% of respondents still rely on television or the general internet as a source of information, indicating that while traditional media still has a role to play, its influence has been drastically reduced. Only 5% of respondents accessed information through campaign banners or posters, indicating that these conventional campaign methods are less effective in reaching first-time voters. This finding confirms that social media has become the main channel for disseminating political information, while also requiring political parties and campaign teams to be more active and creative in utilizing digital platforms.

The role of social media as a space for political interaction has undergone a significant transformation in the context of first-time voters. The Needs Fulfillment Theory (Elihu Katz, 1974; Alhabash, S., & Park, 2021) corroborates this finding by showing that young people utilize digital platforms not only to obtain political information but also as a means of entertainment and social networking. The research data revealed that 8 out of 10 participants accessed political content through applications such as TikTok and Instagram, indicating the dominance of social media as the main source of political literacy. This finding is in line with research. Violin et al. (2024) This confirms that 62% of university students allocate 5-10 hours per day for activities on digital platforms, while confirming the high intensity of social media use as a non-traditional form of political participation. The paradigm shift from conventional to digital media Andriyendi et al. (2023) is further evident through respondents' minimal reliance on physical media - only 5% still consider campaign banners or posters relevant. This phenomenon not only changes the pattern of information consumption but also creates a public dialectic space where collective perceptions of political issues continue to be formed through digital interactions.



**Figure 2.** Correlation between Social Media Use and Change of Choice

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2024

Based on the research findings, social media has a significant influence on shaping the political preferences of novice voters. A total of 45% of respondents stated that social media was "very influential" in determining their choice of candidate, while 35% recognized a "moderate" level of influence. Only 20% rated the influence as "low", indicating that most first-time voters consider social media a crucial factor in the political decision-making process.

The main factors that strengthen the influence of social media are divided into three aspects:

- a. Creative Campaigns (55%): Viral content such as challenges, political memes, or short videos is successful in attracting respondents' attention. For example,

- humor-based campaigns or interactive content (e.g., quizzes or polls) can increase voters' emotional engagement.
- b. Quick Response to Issues (40%): The campaign team's ability to respond to current issues (e.g. government policies or political scandals) is considered effective in building the candidate's image as a reactive and progressive figure.
  - c. Hoaxes and Disinformation (30%): Although not dominant, hoaxes influenced preferences by reducing trust in certain candidates. Some respondents admitted that they were hesitant to vote for candidates who were often associated with unverified negative narratives.

3.1. Hierarchy of Factors Determining Political Preferences of Young Voters

The results show that candidates' vision and mission are the main factors in determining the political preferences of young voters, with 85% of respondents placing them as the top priority. This confirms that young voters prioritize the substance of ideas and work programs in considering their political choices. Candidates' experience and track record are also crucial factors with 70% of respondents considering them important. This shows that young voters are not only looking at campaign promises, but also at candidates' track records and real achievements in the past.

In addition, leadership is the third most influential factor, with 65% of respondents prioritizing it, indicating that strong, decisive, and inspiring leadership characteristics count for a lot. Another influential factor was proximity to youth (55%), indicating that candidates who can communicate with the younger generation and understand their aspirations have their appeal. By the results of research [Yozani, R. E., Situmorang, J., & Firdaus \(2024\)](#) Responsive and empathetic communication styles play an important role in supporting performance and public trust in leadership. Meanwhile, charisma and physical appearance were also considered by 40% of respondents, although these factors were not as significant as vision, experience, and leadership.

On the other hand, party or religious affiliation has the least influence in determining the choices of young voters, with only 25% of respondents considering it a major factor. This indicates that young voters tend to be more independent in making their political choices, not solely based on party ideology or religious factors.

**Table 3.** Hierarchy of Factors Determining Political Preferences of Young Voters

Determining Factors	Percentage
Vision and Mission	85%
Experience and Track Record	70%
Leadership Spirit	65%
Proximity to Youth	55%
Charisma and Physical Appearance	40%
Party/Religious Affiliation	25%

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2024

The research revealed that 30% of respondents changed their vote after being exposed to social media campaigns. This change was triggered by three main factors:

- a. Persuasive Campaign Content (40%): Creative content, such as inspirational videos, testimonials, or touching narratives, successfully influenced respondents' perceptions. For example, campaigns that highlight candidates' visually appealing visions and missions are considered more effective.

- b. Exposure to Negative Issues/Hoaxes (30%): Negative narratives or hoaxes spread on social media also influenced the change of choice. Some respondents admitted that they doubted or withdrew their support after being exposed to information that doubted the integrity of the candidates.
- c. Influence of Influencers/Digital Volunteers (30%): Public figures or digital volunteers active on social media play an important role in changing preferences. Recommendations or endorsements from influencers that respondents follow are often a key consideration.

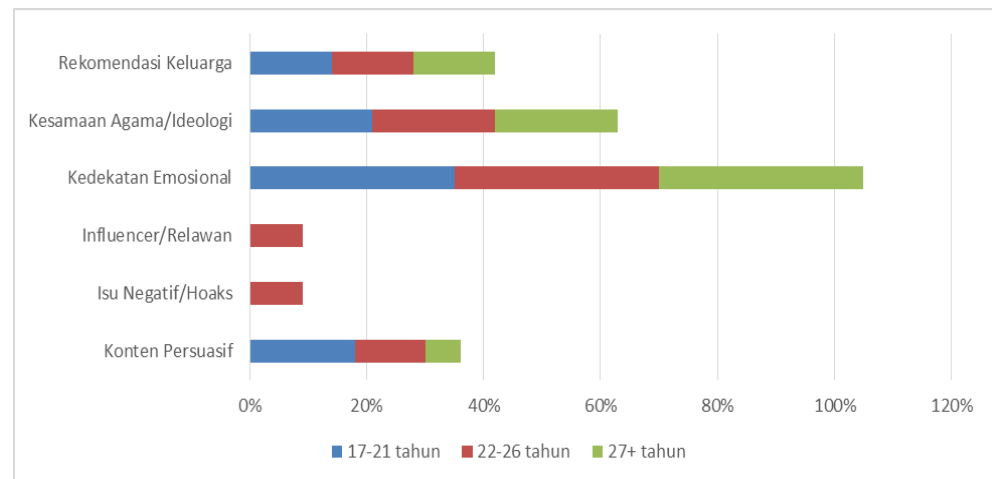
On the other hand, 70% of respondents chose to stick with their original choice. The main reasons include:

- a. Emotional closeness to the candidate (50%): Respondents feel they have an emotional bond or personal identification with the candidate, such as similar backgrounds, experiences, or values.
- b. Similarity of Religious/Ideological Values (30%): Religion or ideology was a strong determinant for some respondents, especially those who felt that the candidate represented their beliefs or principles.
- c. Family Recommendations (20%): Family influences, such as political advice or tradition, also play a role in maintaining initial choices.

The dynamics of disinformation in digital campaigns pose complex ethical challenges, as explained through the lens of the Spiral of Silence Theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). This theory suggests a tendency for individuals to withhold expression of opinion when they feel ideologically isolated, a phenomenon reinforced by research findings: one-third of participants admitted to being exposed to hoax content, signaling the potential for information distortion in shaping collective perceptions (Yang, Y., Wei, R., & Lo, 2020). This ethical implication is in line with (Allcott & Gentzkow, 2017) research that proves the correlation between political disinformation and the erosion of public trust in democratic institutions (Tucker et al., 2018). The context of this research reveals a particular vulnerability in first-time voters, where 30% of respondents experienced a change in political preference after being exposed to systematic negative narratives. Such findings not only confirm the risks of cognitive manipulation but also highlight the dilemma of freedom of expression versus protecting the integrity of digital spaces.

The complexity of young people's political preferences reveals a dialectic between policy substance and digital appeal. Rational Choice Theory Downs (1957) and Gordon, S. C., Huber, G. A., & Landa (2017) states that voters should ideally act based on benefit calculations, but the research findings show deeper nuances: 85% of participants admitted that the candidate's vision-mission was the main consideration, although the influence of social media remained significant in mediating perceptions. This pattern is confirmed Febrina, R., & Isril (2018) study, which found that emotional affiliations-such as close identity or personal values-contributed to 50% of respondents' political choice consistency. This is also in line with the results of research. Robi Ulzikri et al (2021) Which argues that support for Ma'aruf Amin in the 2019 election is based on cultural values and affective ties that have established mechanisms in the NU community.

The unique dynamics of Generation Z as digital natives, Hadi (2019) further clarify this interaction, with 40% of participants acknowledging the role of influencers in shaping preferences. This tendency to trust the recommendations of relatable figures reflects a shift in political authority from formal institutions to digital people that are more familiar with their daily lives.



**Figure 3.** Post-Campaign Change in Choice and its Proportion by Age

Source: Processed by Researchers, 2024

The findings reveal significant variations in the dynamics of preference change by age group. In the 17-21 age group, 45% of respondents experienced preference change, with persuasive content (18%) and exposure to negative issues/hoaxes (13.5%) as the dominant factors. This phenomenon is in line with the Elaboration Likelihood Model theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), where adolescents tend to rely on peripheral routes in information processing, such as emotional appeal or external context, rather than in-depth analysis. On the other hand, 55% of respondents who maintained their initial choice were driven by emotional closeness (35%), corroborating Social Identity theory [Firdaus \(2020\)](#) on the importance of group identity in decision-making. This finding is in line with Foster (2018) in [\(Firdaus, 2020\)](#), which states that group loyalty creates social pressure that is internalized as a moral obligation, so individuals tend to maintain their initial choice to maintain group cohesiveness. This finding is consistent with research [Reza & Amanda \(2024\)](#) which states that the younger generation is vulnerable to hoaxes, but still maintains loyalty to internalized values.

In the 22-26 age group, the percentage of choice change is lower (30%), with persuasive content (12%) and influencer influence (9%) as key factors. This reflects the transition towards information processing through the central route (ELM), where individuals begin to consider religious/ideological values (21%) as a rational basis. However, the presence of influencers indicates that digital authority figures remain relevant in shaping the opinions of this group [Freberg et al., \(2011\)](#) in [\(Riadi et al., 2022\)](#). Most respondents (70%) maintained their initial choice, supported by emotional closeness (35%) and similarity in religious/ideological values (21%). This pattern is in line with the Cognitive Dissonance theory [Festinger \(1957\)](#) in [\(Mudjiyanto et al., 2022\)](#), Where alignment between personal values and choices reduces psychological tension. This result is reinforced by the study of [Tucker et al. \(2018\)](#), which found that young adults began to build a stable self-concept despite being exposed to social media dynamics.

Meanwhile, the 27+ years age group showed the lowest level of change (15%), with persuasive content (6%) and negative issues (4.5%) having minimal impact. These findings support the Selective Exposure theory, where individuals selectively filter information according to established beliefs. The tendency to consume information that aligns with political beliefs while ignoring opposing views is often found in individuals with firm ideologies. This pattern of selective information consumption not only widens the political divide but also limits the opportunity to understand the other side's arguments. As a result, healthy discussions and efforts to reach common ground are increasingly difficult to realize [\(Tucker et al., 2018\)](#).

Preference stability (85% maintaining choice) is also in line with the Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 1991), which emphasizes the role of experience and cognitive control in the face of external influences. Tucker et al. (2018) research confirms that this age group tends to rely on bounded rationality - decisions based on personal value priorities - because of accumulated life experiences. This is in line with Arceneaux, K., Johnson, M., & Ruth (2020), who argues that individuals are more likely to choose news sources that align with their views rather than trying to change the thinking of others who have different opinions.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce Piaget's concept of cognitive development, where analytical capacity increases with age, as well as Value-Belief-Norm theory the role of core values in maintaining behavioral consistency. The implication is that younger generations (17-26 years old) are more susceptible to digital nudging through social media algorithms, while adults (27+ years old) build bubble filters to minimize cognitive dissonance.

### 3.2. Theoretical and Practical Implications

This research makes a dual contribution in the realm of political communication theory and practice. Theoretically, the findings on the dominance of visual-interactive platforms as a transformative force in digital campaigns expand the perspective of political communication theory, particularly complementing the study. Rijal et al. (2024) On public participation in policy planning. On a practical level, political actors need to adopt TikTok/Instagram-based micro-content strategies-such as 15-second videos or interactive quizzes-to reach first-time voters. For the KPU, the urgency of drafting digital campaign ethics guidelines is crucial to mitigate the spread of disinformation, while education policymakers need to design media literacy modules that are integrated into the school curriculum or community programs.

Despite providing new insights, this study has geographical limitations with the sample centered in Pekanbaru, so it does not reflect Indonesia's socio-cultural variations holistically. The quantitative approach used also does not reveal the deep psychological motivations behind respondents' preferences. For this reason, further research is recommended using qualitative methods (such as in-depth interviews) to explore the flow of digital platform preferences, as well as longitudinal studies to examine the impact of social media exposure on the consistency of voter behavior. In addition, the exploration of algorithm bias in forming ideological isolation bubbles among Gen Z is a critical topic that needs further investigation.

## 4. Conclusion

This research proves that social media is a dominant factor in shaping the political preferences of first-time voters, especially Generation Z. Data analysis shows that TikTok and Instagram are the main platforms used by respondents to access political information, where the creativity of campaign content and the speed of responding to actual issues are the main drivers of preference change. Candidates' vision and mission, track record, and leadership quality remain crucial considerations in making political decisions. On the other hand, the findings reveal that 30% of respondents experienced a change in choice due to exposure to hoaxes and negative narratives on social media, emphasizing the vulnerability of young voters to disinformation. The implications of this research emphasize the urgency of developing campaign strategies based on data analysis, increasing voters' digital literacy, and strengthening regulations to mitigate the spread of manipulative content. Thus, this study not only reflects the transformation of political dynamics in the digital era but also provides an empirical basis for the development of political

participation models that are adaptive to the characteristics of Indonesia's younger generation.

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