

## THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PEOPLE'S POLITICAL PREFERENCES: EVIDENCE FROM THE INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN 2019

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### Abstract

*This paper discuss about the influence of social media on people's political preferences, the case of Indonesia presidential elections in 2019. Social media as a new communication platform used in elections in several democratic countries specifically in Indonesia. From several existing social media platforms, the two social media platform in this paper used are Twitter and Instagram. This is because most of social media users especially when it comes to the youth in Indonesia use both social media (Twitter and Instagram) compared to the other types of social media. The purpose of this paper is to examine and analyze the influence of the social media on political preferences of Indonesians in 2019. This is an attempt to understand social media as a new communication technology in the modern era of presidential elections. This paper uses a variety of qualitative methods to examine the data. The data sources were online survey, agencies (several survey institutions), newspapers, and some published research reports. The data analysis in this paper can be used to measure the influence of social media on people's political preferences in Indonesia. The result of this study shows the impact of social media on people's political preferences. It is also strengthen by the data analysis that social media has big and small influence on people's political preferences in the 2019 presidential election.*

**Keywords:** social media, election, Indonesia, Twitter, Instagram

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### INTRODUCTION

In this era of globalization, social media is one of the most-used and popular communication tools. Social media enables people to share ideas, content, and information quickly and without many restrictions. However, instead of the multifunction of social media, there are some negative aspects though. Social media platforms in the world's largest democracies, like India and Indonesia, have been inundated with false or hoax information and news that has spread pretty quickly to be corrected, also sometimes with real political consequences.

In any democratic country, social media has an important role, since inhabitants receive a lot of news from the social media. Social media shapes how people interpret and observe political information, especially election coverage and other political events. People's aspirations want to be heard by the elite, and social media serves as the best advice for the community. Social media explicitly seeks to directly involve the public in political activities, such as voting, contacting public officials, volunteering in their communities, and taking part in the movements (Owen, 2018). Furthermore, there is possible influence on political preference according to their political

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behavior. The Obama presidential campaign in 2008 is an excellent example of social media usage. The team of Obama campaign used features on social media that utilized the potential of networking, collaboration, and community development from social media to create political movements. The social media software used in this campaign are Facebook, Twitter and YouTube (Owen, 2018). This study is concerned with the extent of influence on people's political preferences through social media in the 2019 Indonesian presidential elections.

Social media served as a mechanism of information-delivery and influence for each candidate in the election. According to research conducted by We Are Social\* about total population in Indonesia on January, 2018, the total of population in Indonesia reaches 265.4 million and for internet users it is 132.7 million and the average of Indonesia citizens spend three hours 23 minutes a day to accessing social media.

General elections in Indonesia are held in every five years. Participants in general elections start for every Indonesian citizen from the age of 17 years (those who already accept a resident card). The political system in Indonesia is a multi-party system. Traditional campaigns began 8 months before the election. However, there is no limit to campaigning on social media, in the sense that candidates can make some posts to attract the attention of voters on social media. This is due to the large number of social media users in Indonesia, which consists of various groups and the most active are young people.

Two Presidential candidates who competed in the presidential election in Indonesia in 2019 are Joko Widodo – K.H Ma'ruf Amin and Prabowo Subianto – Sandiaga Uno. Joko Widodo was the current president and incumbent candidate at the time of the 2019 election. Joko Widodo having won the 2014 Indonesian Presidential election. His challenger also the same one as in 2014, Prabowo Subianto. Both candidates in the 2014 election had different vice-presidential candidates than in the 2019 election. Joko Widodo – Jusuf Kalla officially won the Presidential election in 2014 with 53.25% of the vote from the national legitimate (General Elections Commission, 2019).

A major factor in determining the re-election of incumbent candidates is the economic performance of their country over the course of their first term. According to the World Bank data in 2019, total GDP of Indonesia is increasing from 2014 to 2017, which is from 890,815 Billion to 1,016 Trillion. Similarly, the population in Indonesia increase from 255,131,116 to 263,991,379 in 2014 - 2017. On the other hand, poverty rate has decreased in 2014-2017 from 11,3 to 10,6. The Global Economic Prospects also experienced a significant increase during this time period. At The beginning of Joko Widodo's first administration in 2014, public satisfaction was very low at around 40% because of poor macro-economic conditions. According to survey by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting in September 2017, the level of public satisfaction with the Indonesian government was quite stable at around 68% (Saiful Mujani research and consulting, 2019). This shows a marked increase

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\* We Are Social is a global conversation agency, provides social media marketing and

communications services to organizations in the United Kingdom and internationally.

in public support for Widodo, perhaps due in part to the better economic conditions that happened during this period.

The 2014 presidential election was the first major Indonesian election where social media have a role. This is not only obvious but backed up by a survey on the influence of social media on people's political preferences. The survey was conducted by Charta Politika during 19-25 March 2019 then with a face-to-face interview method on 2000 respondents (Komara, 2019). The sample was chosen randomly in all regions of Indonesia. While the margin of error in this survey reached 2.19%. The results of the survey obtained were 24.4% of respondents said that social media was very influential on people political preferences and 37.8% said it was quite influential. While 19.1% of respondents said that the information in social media influenced political preferences; 13.6% thought information in social media had no effect, and 5% did not know or did not answer. However, in 2019, social media has become even more become popular than mass media such as television or newspaper. This preceded an enormous opportunity for both candidates to persuade voters that they were the better candidate directly instead of through a traditional medium.

However, given the fact that voter behavior can determine presidential elections in the 2019 due to the influence of social media, this topic is worth revisiting. It is quite clear that social media is the medium used by politicians and candidates during elections. Furthermore, it is also important to analyze how big the influence of social media is in the political process especially in the election.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this paper, the author uses the qualitative methods to analyze and interpret observations from field's data to understand the accuracy of the data collection done by previous experts. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research collects data through examining documents, observing behavior, or interviewing participants. In the qualitative research, the intent is to explore the complex set of factors surrounding the central phenomenon and present the varied perspectives or meanings. Qualitative research needs to gain a deeper understanding about the phenomena and the problems associated with it to analyze and find out the best solutions. Qualitative research methods were developed in the social sciences to enable researchers to study social and cultural phenomena (Creswell, 2009).

The author chooses to research and case studies to obtain accurate previously collected data by some experts as well as statistical data in social media monitoring software. This will help to discover the range how influence social media on people's political preferences in the Indonesia presidential election in 2019.

The initial aim of this research was to analyze the influence of social media on people's political preferences in the Indonesia presidential election in 2019 through the two social media platforms, Twitter and Instagram. This is due to the fact that both candidates have an official Twitter and Instagram account. Additionally, Twitter and Instagram are the most popular social media platforms for the young voters during the election, those between the ages of 18-35. Twitter and Instagram are expected to be informative on the influence of social media on poli-

tical preferences in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the opinions and survey results of some experts and survey institutions in Indonesia can also be considered as sources in this study. The interpretation of various sources and data obtained could be interpreted as a preliminary benchmark that provides an assessment of the significance of social media as an influencing force on people's political opinions in the 2019 Indonesian presidential election.

### **Data Collection of Online Survey**

Sources in this paper use primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly through research sessions with related resource persons. Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained through books, journals, newspapers, and research reports.

An online survey conducted used to understand the influence of social media had interaction among young voting cohort's to understand about their political preferences. The online survey is in the form of questionnaire consisting of 10 questions related to social media in the presidential election in Indonesia. Several questions consists of: (1) Do you have either Twitter or Instagram account? (2) Does social media have an influence in the 2019 presidential election? (3) What kind of social media platform has the most influence in the 2019 presidential election? (4) Which one you think, Instagram or Twitter has the most influence in the 2019 presidential election? (5) Do you have candidate preferences in the 2019 presidential election? (6) Does Twitter and Instagram affect your preference during the 2019 presidential election? (7) How does Twitter and Instagram influence your preference in the 2019 presi-

dential election? (8) Do you change your political preferences due to social media (Twitter and Instagram) in case that you already have political preferences in the 2019? (9) Who do you follow on Twitter and Instagram from the two candidates and their representatives in the 2019 Presidential Election? (10) Does the content of each candidate impact your political preference in 2019?

Questionnaires submitted to 100 people, mostly highly educated. 60 percent of participants are students and 40 percent are workers. The targets are the members of the young voting cohort, those between the ages of 18-35 and active on social media and have both a Twitter and Instagram account in Indonesia. To ensure that the target has Twitter and Instagram social media accounts, the first question to ask is whether you have Twitter and Instagram social media. Most of the data will be shown as statistical descriptions.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Mainstream Media vs Social Media**

There are two types of mass media, electronic media and print media (Newton & Deth, 2010). Electronic media encapsulates television, radio and the internet. While print media such as magazines, newspapers, books and so on. Nowadays, electronic media such as internet is the most widely used channel for people to convey or receive information regarding an issue. This is because the internet is faster and more appropriate in giving or receiving information.

According to Newton and Deth (2010) there are four theories to explain the presence or absence of mass media influence: (1) Strengthening theory: this

theory argues that the influence of mass media is minimal. What is done by the mass media is basically nothing more than a reflection and strengthening of opinions that occur in society? (2) Setting agenda theory: in this theory, the mass media is considered unable to determine what people think. However, the mass media is considered able and has an influence on what people think. (3) Priming and framing theory: in the view of priming theory, the media has influence, it is more focused on certain issues, not others. Meanwhile, in the framing theory, media sets up to influence the interpretation of readers, viewers, and listeners about an issue in a certain meaning. (4) Direct effects theory: media is seen as having a direct influence on a person's attitude and behavior, including political behavior. In this theory, mass media is not just an institution that reflects reality, but an institution that has an influence on that reality, including the influence in giving meaning to that reality.

Before the existence of electronic media, print media was a tool of delivering information to conveying information to the people, which was conveyed in writing. The development of print media technology makes it easy for people to access information by reading. On the other hand, print media still exists in this modern era as a source of information in every field such as politic, economic, and social. However, because of the rapid development of technology in electronic media, namely television, it is emerged as a new source of information that made it easier for the people. In addition, television could shape public opinion in the political issues. Television could be used as a form of imaging for politicians

to gain public sympathy through shows on television.

On the one hand, in the era of advances in technology and information, print media such as newspapers and books could be accessed through online media by the internet. The internet is a global communication network that is interconnected across billions of individual devices (Strauss *et al.*, 2003). The internet is a media technology that is very fast and easily obtained and accepted by society. With many resources available on the internet, people can easily get information by only using search engines to surf the internet. In addition, the most popular in internet is social media. Social media have several advantages such as, the information delivered is personal directly to users, has wide reached at the same time, user segments tend to be diverse and do not require special events for users to enjoy the information provided.

Williams and Carpini (2011) endeavor to provide a new framework for analyzing and evaluating the role of media in political life in this era of 24 hours cable news and "reality" TV, the Daily Show and Colbert Report, Facebook, and Twitter and Tumblr. The authors argue reigning categories of the broadcast era must be critically reexamined and even set aside the rigid differentiation between "news" and "entertainment," between "fact" and "opinion," and between professional journalists and the rest of us. The authors argue that our dominant empirical and normative models of the media are products of a bygone era the "age of broadcast news." Seen through those still reigning models, today's media environment spells mostly doom for democracy. Traditional public affairs

news delivered through authoritative media outlets is on the decline. Fewer outlets are producing "serious" news and for shrinking audiences.

### **Social Media: Twitter And Instagram**

The presence of social media in the past decade has given rise to a digital revolution for anyone with internet access. The digital revolution has changed the various behavioral and interpersonal sectors of society, particularly when it regards communicating and consuming news. The presence of social media changes the transmission of information to be more personal. Social media is a form of democratization in the real sense. In the era of social media, the audience transforms into a user, from mono-media to multimedia, from periodical to real-time from the scarcity of information to abundance (Carpini *et al*, 2004). The presence of social media cannot be underestimated because the impact could really be felt personally.

In social media users easily participate in various and creative roles, especially blogs, social networks, wikis / online encyclopedias, virtual forums, and so on. Social media is a tool for people to share text, image, video and audio information to each other and companies and vice versa (Kotler & Keller, 2012).

Brogan (2010) in his book entitled "Social Media 101: Tactic and Tips to Develop Your Business Online" defines social media as a new set of communication and collaboration tools that enable many types of interactions that were previously not available to the common person. Social media is online content that is created using publishing technology that is very accessible and measurable

(Dailey, 2009). The most important of these technologies is the shift in how to know people, read and share news, and search for information and content.

Social networking sites are the interface between people and social media, and for many, the "Internet" is synonymous with social networking sites. There are several of social media channels as social networking that which is often used by people, especially the youth generation operating throughout the world today, with three major such as Facebook, LinkedIn 'and Twitter (Badri *et al.*, 2017).

Based on data from We Are Social in 2018, the number of Facebook users in Indonesia reaches 130 million accounts with a percentage of six percent of all users. According to e-Marketer in 2018, Facebook loses young users. Users aged 35 and under transfer their activities to Instagram and Twitter. For this reason, the younger generation prefers to use social media which is more a trend in 2018 such as Instagram and Twitter.

Twitter is a microblogging messaging service that limits you to 140 characters per message, including spaces and punctuation, to you update content (Dixon, 2012). Basically, Twitter is an instant messaging service that allows users to send posts anytime and anywhere to be read by anyone via a computer or smartphone. The users could use Twitter as a means to create media content by utilizing the features.

Meanwhile, Instagram is a social network founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010. Instagram is a photo sharing application that allows users to take photos, apply digital filters, and share them to various social networking services. The social system

on Instagram is to following accounts of other user. Thus, communication between fellow Instagram users can be intertwined by giving likes and also commenting on photos that have been uploaded by other users. Followers also become one of the important elements, and the number of likes from followers greatly influences whether the photo could be popular. Instagram can also provide inspiration for users and also increase creativity because Instagram has features that can make photos more artistic and excellent (Dwi, 2012).

Both Twitter and Instagram have some similarities. First, cultural intermediaries as influencers when people become opinion leaders to influence other users through writing or photos they post on Instagram or Twitter and they could form people opinions by what people post on Twitter or Instagram. Second, social media platforms such as likes, comment, follow, and shares. Last, the use of hashtags by users makes posts on Twitter and Instagram become famous and trend. People will use hashtags to find their interests and see other comments on this topic. No matter the content is words or pictures or videos, all content can be posted with hashtags.

### **Social Media In Indonesia**

A survey organized by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) revealed that the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2018 reached 143,26 million people or 54.7 percent of the country's total population. Meanwhile, with the development of internet technology and many people in Indonesia using the internet and having social media such as Facebook, Twitter, blogs and YouTube, it is clear that online

tools play an important role in shaping public opinion and setting political agendas (Wolley *et al.*, 2013). Politicians, citizens and journalists are increasingly adopting new social media such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube to support their political goals, whether to engage with other stakeholders in political public space, campaign, disseminate or retrieve information, or contribute to rational debate - critical (Habermas, 2006).

According to research conducted by We Are Social in 2018, the average Indonesian people spends three hours 23 minutes a day accessing social media. From the report entitled "Essential Insights into the Internet, Social Media, Mobile, and E-Commerce Use Around The World" published on January 30, 2018, out of Indonesia's total population of 265.4 million, 130 million active social media users with penetration 49 percent. The total Instagram monthly active users in the world reach 300 million users while in Indonesia it reaches 53 million with a percentage of 49 percent women and 51 percent are men. Meanwhile, based on data from PT Bakrie Telecom, Indonesia has 19.5 million active Twitter users out of a total of 500 million active Twitter users in the world

### **The Role of Social Media on Political Strategies**

Social media nowadays can be used as the most effective tool for conducting political campaigns. The sophistication and speed of information received by the public from social media make politicians use social media as a facilitator to give ideas on society in determining people's political preferences. For example, on Twitter, just by posting in the

form of text, it can immediately be seen and read by other users. Likewise, on Facebook, by uploading photos or videos it can be easily viewed and understood by other users. Thus, any posts by politicians can be accessed by the public quickly and easily. Politics on social media can be more traditional politics, not only memes and sound bites. Posts can contain real ideas and actions for the general good of the citizens of a particular country. Various social issues that are a burden on the community can often find crowdsourced solutions, new takes on an issue on social media. Social media has a big influence on the community, especially the young generation who are the main consumers. The influence of social media can be interpreted as a type of educational communication media in this way.

The media is not just a channel of communication and delivering news but also an increasingly important medium for politics. The relations between politicians and the media are like love-hate relationships (Newton & Deth, 2010). The term love-hate relationship conveys the idea that politicians have both positive and negative relationships with social media. On the positive side, social media is used as a tool for politicians to carry out campaigns and convey their messages in order to influence the public about their political choices and garner votes. On the other hand, it can also be politically negative for politicians. The lack of checks and balances on social media, alongside dubious practices like doxing, means that incorrect information and artificially manufactured disinformation is spread rapidly to potential voters or constituents without a chance for correction. In this way, it can be

argued that social media has a significant influence on voter decisions (e.g. Darwin & Haryanto, 2021).

Social media significantly influenced the political party perception surpassing political trust and only a marginally lower effect, than of political interest (Riezebos *et al.*, 2011). Analyzing voting behavior, they find a correlation between political trust, religion, and political social media as influencing factors. They concluded that social media has a positive impact on political campaigns. Through social media, politicians and potential political candidates can interact easily and quickly with the community so that people have a high level of trust in them.

### **The Impact of Social Media on People's Political Preferences**

In this era of globalization, social media is the most effective tool for conducting political campaigns. The sophistication and speed of information received by the public from social media make politicians use social media as a facilitator to give ideas on society in determining people's political preferences. For example, on Twitter, just by posting in the form of text, it can immediately be seen and read by other users. Likewise, on Instagram, by uploading photos or videos it can be easily viewed and understood by other users. Thus, any posts by politicians can be accessed by the public quickly and easily. Politics on social media can be more traditional politics, not only memes and sound bites. Posts can contain real ideas and actions for the general good of the citizens of a particular country. Various social issues that are a burden on the community can often find crowdsourced solutions, new takes on an issue on social media. Social

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The 2008 US President Barack Obama's campaign has often been described as the first election campaign in which the use of social media had a decisive impact (Wolley *et al.*, 2008). The core of the web-based campaign is a well-designed, flexible and dynamic website, "my.barack-obama.com" (Social media - The New Power of Political Influence Version 1.0 Ari-Matti Auvinen Center for European Studies). Through social networking sites, political organizations and candi-

dates have not only the possibility to directly communicate with their public but also to interact with them as a type of two-way communication. Furthermore, public figures including politicians can post any form of video on their personal accounts where the results of their posts are seen by everyone who follows them and then they start interacting directly with other users (the general public) through the comment column or direct message.

### **Previous Studies of Social Media And Elections**

Findings on motivation and user behavior indicate that demographics and predispositions largely determine how people use social media; people may either avoid or actively seek political information (Tang & Lee, 2013). This is supported by research conducted by Alina Muntean based on the presidential election in Romania in November 2014 and found that political participation was mostly carried out by young adults through social networks Facebook and Twitter (Muntean, 2015). The tendency of voter behavior can be determined from the active use of social media. In addition, Biswas *et al* (2014) argue that social media play an important role in voting behavior of young voters. It can be said that social media is a platform for people to connect with the people they like. Online polls are a number of encouraging strategies, it was found that there is a combined effect of "age" and "members of political parties" on polls that affect their decision to vote.

On the other hand, even if exposed to political content, users may not engage in political participation. Research of Effing *et all* (2012) shown that social media did

not significantly influence voting behavior during regional elections in the 2010/2011 period. The lack of interest of social media users in political participation can also be related to the existence of hoax political content through social media. The propagation of hoaxes on social media has contributed to political tension in many countries (Utami, 2018). For example, the 2016 US presidential election provides evidence of how fake news can generate more social media engagement than real news (Rogers & Bromwich, 2016).

From his research, Johansson (2016) argued that political actors have utilized social media during election campaigns and the political debate. In this study, the authors convey comparisons of traditional media and new media in Indonesia in politics. Social media such as Twitter and Facebook, have played a role in Indonesia's political process recently and there is the interplay between new media and politics in Indonesia. Political actors have utilized social media during election campaigns and the political debate (Dang-Xuan *et al.*, 2013). Strengthened by research of Ardha (2014), the focus is on several social media used in research such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Blogs where each political party has personal accounts. Furthermore, social media as a means used by political parties and politicians in conducting political campaigns through the post.

In the form of political strategies, Karlsen and Enjolras (2016) stated that social media has the potential to impact power relations in politics especially political parties since they permit politicians to campaign all the freer from the central party. In their research, they examined the relationship between individualiza-

tion and digital social media through candidate Twitter data. They focus on how the style of individual campaigns through personal accounts on Twitter and what kind of influence the campaign has on social media. As a finding, they believe that social media is used by individuals to gain influence in political parties. Other consideration of Yadav (2017) examines the concept of personalization in political campaigns in India through social media. He believes that candidates or politicians as individuals become more important to voters than political parties or related policies. This means that he broke the coattail effect on the political strategy through social media.

Also, politicians positively affect in any case politically withdrew residents as the government official's image depicted on social media appears "progressively human, loose with a comical inclination and equipped for having a past legislative issues life" (Vromen *et al.*, 2015). Furthermore, the interactions carried out by politicians as individuals through social media are very important to consider. People and voters tend to focus more and pay attention to the forms of interaction and activities created by individuals such as through social media.

Campaigns through social media are common in the era of digitalization. Various platforms on social media are used to get the attention of voters. This was supported by Vergeer *et al* (2013) and Liesbeth Hermans through a study of the campaign on Twitter in 2010 in elections in the Netherlands. They believe that through political campaigns on social media, people will be more interested in following political issues. Thus, this method seems easier to attract

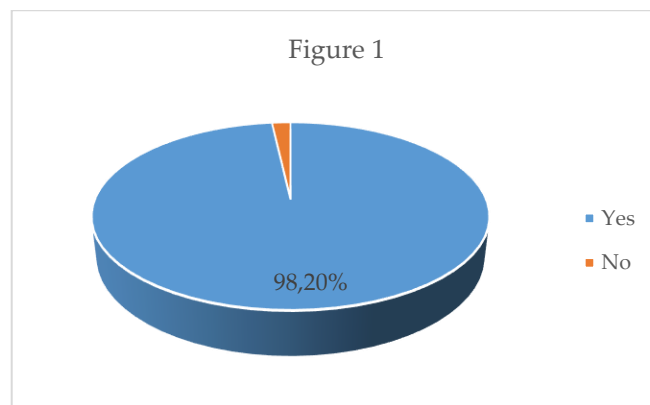
new voters who are still blind to political issues.

Kumar and Natarajan (2016) consider political strategy and marketing to be very easy to do through social media. Then, the political image of an individual will be easily formed through marketing techniques that are on social media. Interaction with other users is also a consideration for people to judge the political image held by politicians, especially a political candidate. For this reason, it is important for politicians to consider techniques in carrying out political campaigns through social media

because every move made by politicians on social media will be highly considered by the public, especially social media users.

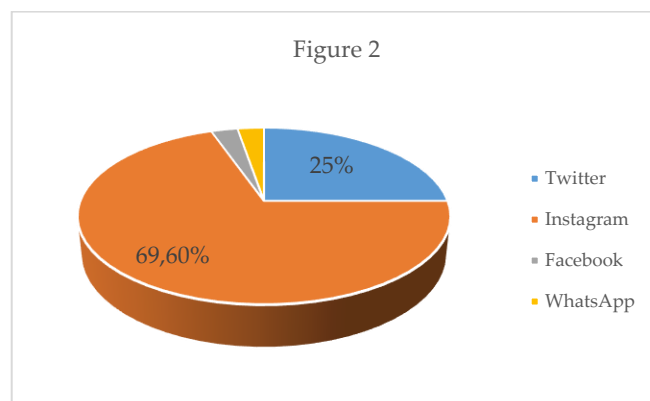
#### Data Presentation From Online Survey

Based on the data obtained by conducting an online survey after the 2019 Presidential Election among respondents who were certainly Indonesian. As the results, 98.2% of 100 respondents stated that social media had an influence on the 2019 presidential election in Indonesia and 1.8% stated no (see figure 1).



Another revelation found from the online survey was that most respondents chose Instagram as the most influential social media platform on their political preferences instead of other social media platforms (see figure 2). This demonstra-

tes that among the young voting cohort, Instagram is the most used platform, despite some reports show that Facebook has more accounts and engagement than Instagram in Indonesia.



Based on the data above, it could be evaluate that 69.6% of respondents chose Instagram as the social media that had the most influence on the 2019 Presidential Election, 25% for Twitter and the rest for other social media platform.

According to the social media accounts of each candidate, Twitter account Prabowo Subianto started joining Twitter since May 2019 with followers of 3.8 billion and following as many as 2.055, while for posts on Twitter as many as 8.924. On the other hand, Joko Widodo started joining Twitter since September 2011 with followers of 11.2 billion and following 60 and 1.710 Twitter posts. On Instagram accounts, Joko Widodo has followers of 19.2 billion and posts on Instagram as many as 1287 million and gets likes about four thousand and comments on each photo and video as many as one hundred thousand. Meanwhile, Instagram account of Prabowo Subianto has 4.3 billion followers and 404 posts with likes around 1.620 million for each post and comments on each photo and video around 236 thousand. Thus, from the exposure of each social media account, it can be concluded that on Twitter, Prabowo is more active while Joko Widodo is less active. On the one hand, based on Instagram platform of each candidates, Joko Widodo is more active while Prabowo is less active.

### **Big Influence of Social Media**

This paper also conducted a short interview in the form of online survey with 53 of respondents by asking the question, "How do you think Twitter and Instagram social media has influenced your political preferences in the 2019 Presidential Election?" Some respondents stated that Instagram and Twitter contained

news, photos and video content shared by users that influenced public opinion and some preferences in the 2019 presidential election. One respondent also mentioned about it is easier to obtain news through social media and thus the role of social media is very influential for the community in receiving information about the political candidates. To add considerations, other respondent also stated that Instagram and Twitter provided information based on some facts because the information on social media is still uncontrolled by the stakeholder. At this point, social media does not become a watchdog as media used to be.

As result, most of the respondents stated that social media could influence their political preferences. This is because it is very easy to access social media as their daily activities. Thus, from this point, people tend to be easier to develop and gain some ideas from the candidates, whether it is good or bad narratives. Meanwhile, one respondent stated that because of many issues related to the presidential election on social media, this respondent decided to become an active activist on some social media platform for one of the candidates to contain and monitoring about in and out news of the candidate. From this case, the respondent stated that he had an official account on Instagram and Twitter to attract public attention, and the aim was to influence people political preferences by the content he posted on his social media account. Come to the other aim was to strengthen the people preferences based on social media information.

### **Small Influence of Social Media**

Based on the data conducting online survey with the question drawn "Do you

change your political preferences due to Twitter and Instagram in case that you already have political preferences in the 2019 Presidential Election?". From 100 respondents, 86% stated that Twitter and Instagram do not affect their political preferences. It means that people already have their political preferences, but because of social media, then they become more confident with their preferences. Based on the content of politicians especially the candidates on their own social media, it makes easier for voters to understand and see the general ideas of each candidates. But, because they already know their preferences, at this stage social media has no big impact about their political preferences.

Other consideration why social media has small influence on the people's political preferences came from the question on the online survey of "Does the content of each candidate influence your political preferences in the 2019 Presidential Election?". The total of 57 respondents who participated in the online survey with the results of 57.9% of respondents stated that the social media content of each candidate influenced their political preferences and the rest of 42.1% stated that they had no deal with the content of social media by each candidate from social media platform.

From the data obtained through online surveys, there is low differences from this indicator, the gap is about 15.8%. However, with a slight difference, it still can be concluded that social media content of each candidate has been influence of people political preferences even with the low percentage.

### **Debate Sections of The Presidential Candidates**

A particular area of interest to analyze on this topic would be the interaction of presidential debates and social media and how that affected people's political preferences. Officially, there were five debates broadcasted on national television in Indonesia. Each of the debates has different topics for the presidential and Vice-Presidential candidates. The first de-bate between candidates for President and Vice-President candidates had the theme of law, human rights, corruption and terrorism. The second debate between presidential candidates discussed energy, food, infrastructure, natural resources and the environment. The third debate between candidates for the vice president was on the topics of education, health, employment, social and culture. The fourth debate between presidential candidates had the theme of religious ideology (Indonesia has six official religions, including Islam, the religion that the majority of Indonesians practice. It also had the topics of government security and international relations. And the fifth debate between candidates for President and Vice President had the topics of economy, social welfare, finance, investment, and industry.

On social media, people used hashtags related to the topics of each debate to support the candidate that they favored and their position. For example, some of the more popular hashtags were #Joko-wiAminMenang and #PrabowoIndonesiMenang on Twitter. In a comparative analysis, voters were more active in social media to support their candidate through the use of these targeted hashtags about the debates. Thus, people were more interested in participating in

social media because they could interact freely with other users to discuss the issues raised during the debates aired on television or that people viewed through social media platforms, such as YouTube.

## CONCLUSION

From the findings as explained from the data gain demonstrates social media has an impact on the people's political preferences in the Indonesia presidential elections in 2019. However, this is the strengthen by the number of users of social media in Indonesia with two social media platforms chosen, Twitter and Instagram. The impact of social media on people's political preferences in Indonesia has a big and small influence. The major influence of social media in this paper was about the active users on two platforms, Twitter and Instagram to spread the information and ideas by each candidate through these social media platforms.

In addition, the minor influence of social media shows that voters do not really influence by the information on social media about their political preferences. But they stated that from the information on social media platforms, it can be used to get new information about political news and some to getting to know more about the general ideas of each candidate. From the editorial summary of the findings, it is pretty clear that social media has influence on people's political preferences in the 2019 presidential election in Indonesia. However, it is believed that either big or small influences from social media, it is still have an impact on the political preferences.

Against the issue, the government should be more aware about using social

media in Indonesia when it comes to containing news. It is because somehow social media could just be controlled by some existing stakeholder and at this stage social media can be meaning as mainstream media namely as watchdog only. However, it is important for social media users to use social media wisely. Too much information on social media with or without control from the government also creates vulnerabilities for recipients (social media users) about the information, especially when it comes about the political information.

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