RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPOSURE TO INFORMATION AND ENGAGEMENT IN SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN ATTEMPT TO ATTRACT YOUNG VOTERS IN THE ELECTIONS

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ABSTRACT

Young people are often considered to be the group that does not care and apathetic toward politics, but their voices are important for the development of democracy. Therefore, efforts should be made to encourage them to participate in an election that has become a symbol of democracy. Social media is able to change the view as well as encouraging young people to become more actively involved as citizens, including participating in the elections. This research aims to study the effects of exposure to social media content on the university students' knowledge of elections. The method used is survey research and Jakarta Governor Election Campaign 2012 became a research context.The findings in this study are political information and menus available in social media that allow users to interact directly with the candidates, have a relationship with knowledge of elections and encourage interest among young voters in elections.

INTRODUCTION

In many countries, the internet is a crucial aspect of election campaigns and is growing more important. In developed countries and vibrant democracies, it seems clear that the internet is increasingly playing a role in political processes and outcomes. Advances in technology can enable a restructuring of the political system. Political actors now can use websites to supply the original message that they want to present to citizens. With a unique combination of textual, auditory, and visual components, new technologies show the potential to present political and civic material to citizens. Messages distributed by the internet have the potential to reach very large and plural audiences anonymously. The messages conveyed can be utilized to inform, convince and influence people. Young people have often categorized as a group apart from conventional politics and this disengagement contributed to the growing sense of apathy even alienation towards politics. The biggest obstacle for young people to get involved in politics is their negative view of the politicians is perceived by many young people that they donot care and no attempt to address the issues that matter to them (Ward, 2007). Social media is a phenomenon that could dramatically change how and how many young people participate civically, including voting (Kahne & Middaugh, 2012).

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Social media is media that "content is created and distributed through social interaction" (Haynes & Pitts, 2009). Social media is "lined up internet applications that are made based on web 2.0 technology and allows the exchange of information from each internet users" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Social media content is information, engagement, and participation that are created, shared and exchanged in virtual communities and networks (Carlson & Strandberg, 2007). Social media is a general term covering nontraditional ways of delivering information. Social media platform have paved the way for the reconceptualization of political engagement, especially among the youth. Unlike other types of mass media, social media is a means to connect, interact, and engage actively with others. According to Graber (1980), people who are exposed to the mass media already possess a fund of knowledge and attitudes, which they bring to bear on new information. Political information, which many people look for in the media are about candidates and campaigns (Baek & Wojcieszak, 2009). Exposure to political information on media is likely to increase people's campaign interest (Bartels, 1993). "Interest, in turn, affects turnout even when one controls for political knowledge" (Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995). "Media use is instrumental in increasing political knowledge, efficacy and even voter turnout" (McLeod & McDonald, 1985). Exposure to media content on users will increase political knowledge that ultimately enhances turnout (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996). Political knowledge makes people become know where, how, and who will they choose.

Further, people who have political knowledge is more willing to accept the differences between candidates and tend to vote rather than abstentions (Palfrey & Poole, 1987). The person's response to the exposure of an information always going through three levels, i.e. the level of cognitive, affective, and conative (Kotler & Keller, 2006). Cognitive level always appears before the affective level, which later extended to the action or conative. Cognitive effects occur when exposure to media affects a person's mental or intellectual activity in processing the information or stimulus (Yang, Richardson, French, & Lehman, 2011). The product of the intellectual activity is people becomes to know or understand of events or issues (Potter, 2012). When using social media, users will be exposed to social media content; further users follow and understand messages in social media so that users ultimately gain knowledge and become familiar with something. Knowledge is a familiarity with someone or something, especially regarding the election.These prior research resultson effects of exposure to political information through media on the knowledge led to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1: Social media that have various types of political information will exhibit more cognitive effects than those with no variations in content options

Social media enables young people to discuss with peers who have similar interests and views on a global scale. "This social interaction creates opportunities for individuals to gather information about politics that allows them to live beyond personal resource constraints, thereby supporting the political activity of many people" (McClurg, 2003). "Social exchange exposes people to a social supply of information that broadens their exposure to and understanding of politics" (Huckfeldt, 2001). Benkler (2006) discussed how the emergence of the networked public sphere allows individuals to take advantage of capabilities that make them greater participants in the conversation. Candidate with high levels of interaction on their sites was perceived as more sensitive, responsiveness and trustworthiness (Sundar, Kalyanaraman & Brown, 2003, p. 48). Friendship ties expose people to more heterogeneous political ideas and promote political tolerance (Mutz, 2002); it is encouraging to see that those conversations also make participation more likely. Based on the findings in previous studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis 2: Social media that have various menus to facilitate connection between users and candidate will exhibit more cognitive effects than those with no availability of menus

The internet can propel individuals into political life especially in terms of allowing them to gather political information, connect with others, mobilize, recruit individuals to causes and actions because the internet can significantly reduce the cost of participating (Norris, 2004). The media can help increase voter participation by not only providing citizens with information to make aninformed voting decision but by stimulating interest in elections. Scholars who have studied the media over time generally conclude that the media reinforces political interest and voting intentions, because political interest, voting and learning from the media reinforce each other (Weaver, 1996). Political knowledge and turnout in elections closely related due to exposure to political information can motivate people to vote

(Prior, 2005). Findings in previous research that says media can raise political interestled to the following hypothesis:

Hypothesis 3: There are differences in the level of interest before and after the use of social media

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This studyused the Jakarta Governor Election 2012 as the research context. Jakarta Governor Election 2012 was interesting to watch. Not because of the racial issue but because of the new campaign model creative and innovative with the help of communication technologies such as social media. Jakarta Governor Election 2012 was the first election in Indonesia that utilize the social media in political campaigns. More creative and unusual ways of campaigning were used bycandidates. In the campaign, candidates took advantages of the social media to reach out to the young voters. They employed social media such as Facebook and Twitter, which at that time was the most used social media in Indonesia (Kompas.com, 2012). Besides Facebook and Twitter, they alsoused an online game called "Selamatkan Jakarta" (Save Jakarta). Campaign on the internet can also be seen from the visualization adaptation "What makes you beautiful", a song of the international fame, One Direction that is uploaded on YouTube. Therefore, social media in this study will be Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and online game used in Jakarta Governor Election 2012.

The purpose of this research is to study cognitive effects caused by social media content exposure on university students in Jakarta, therefore, the research data will be collected from students with a survey method. Because thetotal population is 976,242 (Badan Pusat Statistik, 2010), students in this study are limited to only those who registered as a student in the department accredited 'A'. Furthermore, by using Krejcie and Morgan's formula, theresearcher then determine the number of samples. The sample size needed is 385 students. Based on data from the Indonesian Education Ministry, the numbers of departments who have grade 'A' are 30 departments at 14 universities in Jakarta (Badan Akreditasi Nasional-Perguruan Tinggi, 2013). Furthermore, researchers determined that in each department, takes 12-13 respondents. The random technique used is lottery method. Then researcher will give a questionnaire to students who are respondents in this study to be filled. The next step is data analysis to estimate the value of one variable based on the value of another variable. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient will be used to measure theassociation between independent and dependent variables.

RESULTS

The new media in general and social media in particular, have advantages that other types of media do not have it. Second-generation internet on social media, making this medium can provide more ways to get information to users and provide access to more people comfortably for information. In terms of encouraging engagement, interactivity owned by social media enables two-way communication between the user and the candidate, also provides an opportunity directly and instantaneously to the sender and the receiver to exchange feedback.

Table 1. The Correlation between Information on Social Media with the Knowledge

No.	Information	Social Media			
		Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	Online Game
1.	Candidate profile	0.797	0.627	0.768	0.854
2.	Candidate achievement	0.714	0.783	0.758	0.856
3.	Candidate principles or philosophies	0.741	0.823	0.756	0.856
4.	Endorsements for candidate	0.580	0.620	-	-
5.	Anyone who supports candidate	0.533	0.635	0.744	-
6.	Anyone who is opposed to the candidate	0.562	0.690	0.761	-
7.	Issues positions held by candidate	0.740	0.839	0.749	0.852
8.	Voting record	0.756	0.742	0.761	0.853
9.	Electoral campaign process	0.750	0.742	0.735	-
10.	Societal expectation	0.707	0.867	0.758	0.859
11.	Speeches by candidate or party representatives	0.589	0.715	0.772	-
12.	Candidate images, characters, photographs or graphics	0.725	0.725	0.764	0.852
13.	Candidate audio or video files	0.760	0.700	0.772	-
14.	Link on images, characters, photographs, logos & others	0.566	0.721	0.765	-
15.	Calendar or list of prospective election-related events	0.799	0.721	0.774	0.839
16.	Comparison of issue positions of candidates	0.737	0.873	0.782	-

Note. $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 2. Correlation between Menus to Engage on Social Media with the Knowledge

No.	Information	Social Media			
		Facebook	Twitter	YouTube	Online Game
1.	Contact information	0.796	0.752	0.727	0.848
2.	Become candidate's 'Friend'	0.784	0.876	0.766	-
3.	Opportunities to volunteer for electoral campaign	0.757	0.755	0.732	0.852
4.	The option of donationto support candidate campaign	0.741	0.769	-	0.852

Note. $\alpha = 0.05$

Table 3. T-Test: Paired Two Sample for Means of Level of Interest in Political Issues Before and After Using Social Media

No.	Social Media	p(T ≤ t) two tail	t-Test	t-Critical
1.	Facebook	1.4418E-180	-53.6762699	1.966160961
2.	Twitter	7.5702E-143	-42.59160084	1.966557085
3.	YouTube	5.2558E-160	-51.46650487	1.9671568
4.	Online game 'Save Jakarta'	1.6904E-133	-46.65070789	1.968533975

Note. $\alpha = 0.05$

Profile of students in this study are 116 (30.1%) were male and 269 respondents (69.9%) were female. The majority of respondents was 20-22 years those were 233 students (60.5%). Three hundred and forty-five respondents (345 or 89%) had social media accounts for more than > 2 years, 34 respondents (9%) had accounts 1–2 years, and three respondents, and eachhas an account media social for 1-6 months and 7-12 months.

Diversified Information and Effort to Build Knowledge about the Elections

The relevant political messages must be submitted to the voters as a weapon attempting to win an election. Generally, there were sixteen types of information on social media that are used in the Jakarta Governor 2012 i.e. information about the profile of candidates, voting records, campaign process, endorsements, supporters, opponents, societal expectation, also about candidate's speeches, images, audio-video files, and link to get the files. However, there is one information that did not exist on YouTube and online games were only eight information as can be seen in Table 1. There is 11 information on Facebook, which has a strong correlation with the knowledge, on Twitter, there is 12 information, while on YouTube and online games all the information has a strong correlation with knowledge.

Based on the test statistic, there is acorrelation between information on social media and political knowledge especially regarding Jakarta Governor Election 2012 because all the information in the four social media correlated with knowledge with $r \geq 0.5$. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media witha variety of political information about Jakarta Governor Election 2012, tend to exhibit more cognitive effects than those who do not.

Engagement: Effort to Create a Two-Way Communication

Engagement in this study means that there are menus in social media that facilitate connections between users and candidates so that users can interact directly with the candidates. Menus in social media to encourage interactivity between the users and the candidate are contact information, opportunity to become a member or volunteer, and the option of donation. However, on YouTube, no menus that allow users to make donations online while on an online game is no menu to be a friend of the candidate as can be seen in Table 2. The menu that allows users to interact with the candidates, to be a friend of the candidate, volunteering, and the opportunity to donate, have a strong relationship with the knowledge for $r \geq 0.7$. Therefore, it can be concluded that social media with a variety of menus to facilitate the interaction between the users and the candidates,

tend to exhibit more cognitive effects compared to the unavailability of themenu.

The Level of Interest Regarding Elections Before and After Using Social Media

To determine whether there are differences of interest among young voters about political issues, before and after the use of social media, can be seen in Table 3. On Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and online game, the different on thelevel of interest regarding political information before and after using these social mediaare significant. On Facebook, *p-value* two tail = 1.4418E-180, and on Twitter, *p-value* two tail = 7.5702E-143. While on YouTube *p-value* two tail = 5.2558E-160 and on an online game, *p-value* two tail = 1.6904E-133 or these four types of social media has the *p-value* two tail <0.05. It means 99.9% chance that level of interest regarding political information before and after using Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and the online game is significantly different. Social media significantly affected the level of interest regarding political information. Based on statistical tests were conducted to determine the presence or absence of differences in the level of interest before and after the use of social media, on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and online game 'Save Jakarta' there are differences in the level of interest. Therefore, we can reject the null hypothesis because of t-test less than t critical two-tail. It can be concluded that social media significantly affected the level of interest regarding political information.

DISCUSSION

The findings in this study are political information in social media and menus available in social media that allowusers to interact directly with the candidatehave a relationship with anunderstanding of the messages contained in social media used in Jakarta Governor Election 2012. This can be understood as social media has the ability to combine a variety of activities such as the integrate technology, social interaction, and construct words and pictures that make the messages conveyed through it become easy to understand. The diverse information conveyed through social media help to establish knowledge about elections and candidates so that voters have a clear picture of the figure should be their vote. Voters do require extensive information that can give a clearer picture of the candidates and the internet provides more avenues for information seeking (Cutbirth & Coombs, 1997). Social media also has the potentialto intensify the interaction, two-way communication flows between constituents and political actors. The interactivity factor preferred by those who are reluctant to get involved in politics because it can be used as a sign of the character of the candidate, especially in terms of responsiveness and trustworthiness.

The eminence of social media, which allows users to interact, collaborate, and participate actively in it, has the effect of knowledge. Unlike the political participation in thetraditional political era, participatory politics in the era of social media are more interactive, peer-based, and not guided by political parties or mass media (Bennett, 1998). The internet is also improving access to information; allows users to perform political expression and political action online, affiliated with the citizens who support, comfort or novelty to engage online, all of which can attract people who are disillusioned with traditional ways of participating in politics (Boulianne, 2009).

Political observers have long lauded the internet for its ability to enhance voter engagement and re-engage voters through interactivity (Corrado & Firestone, 1996). Youth see that engage in participatory politics by doing activities such as status updates, tweets, share, post comments, etc. are ways to get involved in politics (Bennett, 1998). The internet reduces the barriers to participation and thus reduces social inequality that exists in public life (Tolbert & McNeal, 2003). Moreover, many agree that political information and participation are important to democracy (Cassel & Lo, 1997). Social media has become a tool to increase awareness of a particular issue or topic as well as a way to validate information for their social network.Many citizens rely on their trusted friendship network and are vetting official information they hear through their friendship ties. They are paying attention to news and information shared by their trusted online contacts. Social networking platform has become a way to validate information as well as have become a tool to increase awareness of a particular issue or topic because it is attractive in their social network. Social media are additional channels for public engagement and participation as well as increased transparency (Mergel, 2012). The technology allows individuals the means not only to build a network of connections but also to be influenced and to influence that network exponentially (Bond, Fariss, Jones, Kramer, Marlow, Settle, & Fowler, 2012). Since individual understanding, information, resources, and ability are inherently limited, this means that social interaction provides people with another opportunity to accrue resources that lower the barriers to political participation.In the end, political knowledge can help users make decisions about candidates who will be chosen in the elections.

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