



Research Article

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Using Media for Voting Decision among First-time Voter College Students in West Java, Indonesia

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Abstract

This study aims to highlights the interactive effect between two different media in making voting decisions. Interaction between traditional and social media as the primary knowledge outlets adopted by students in decision making becomes the focus of the research. The study was conducted with the social context of the 2019 Indonesian General Election. The survey method used data from 1066 first-time voter college students at six public colleges in West Java, Indonesia. The results showed that social media that interact with television, radio, and newspapers significantly influenced voting decisions. The growing trend in online political talks significantly influenced the voting decision. It is worth noticing that the influence of the interaction used between social media and newspapers on voting decisions had a negative impact, thereby signifying that there was a decrease in the opportunity to vote using social media. This study shows the importance of interaction between social media as the primary political information source and traditional media to complement students' decision-making.

Keywords: voting decision, voter, media system dependency, news use, political participation

1. Introduction

The democratic system requires every citizen to participate in the act of organizing their country through voting decisions. Indonesia experienced a significant decline in Democratic Index value in 2017, despite the slight increase in previous years, thereby leaving it at 64th, far below Malaysia, which ranked 43rd (EIU, 2019). The voting decision for young adults echoes the notions of information on where and how to vote, candidates' details, confidence, and social motivation (Glasford, 2008). Sears & Levy (2003) defined political socialization as an overview of young people's processes and mechanisms as early as possible and sustained for a more extended period. Demirci (2013) stated the need to expand the democratic discourse of citizens beyond voting rights. According to previous studies, first-time

voters who participate in the political system can predict subsequent political behavior's strength. Besides, they depend on the media in making decisions (Aalberg & Jenssen, 2007).

The Indonesian law stipulates that first-time voters comprise citizens who carry out voting at a minimum age limit of 17 years or married. Nowadays, there are no data that shows the level of first-time voter participation nationally. However, several papers have reported that 2004, 2009, 2014, and 2019 data on the overall level of voter participation in the presidential election were 78.2%, 71.7%, 70.9%, and 81%, respectively. New voters currently utilize digital natives to take proper advantage of elections; therefore, this calls for serious concern in studying their political experience (Moeller, de Vreese, Esser, & Kunz, 2014). The lack of studies on the political participation of first-time Indonesian voters serves as the study's rationale.

Several previous studies confirmed the role of the media as an information source for young voters. Various sources of information are examined to determine the role of online and offline media exposure to a candidate's political participation (Aldrich, Gibson, Cantijoch, & Konitzer, 2016). The study of general elections needs to be conducted by referring to the media's role at the individual or community level, with changes in the media environment capable of affecting a candidate's political behavior (Prior, 2007). Okoye et al. (2020) found that many Nigerian youths boycott the votes in their 2019 presidential election because of the assumption that there will be no change in the problem. The presence of the media should educate youth about citizenship.

College students are expected to have the skills to make a political choice. It is necessary to conduct background checks on first-time voters to elaborate on their participation in using television, social media, radio, and newspapers (Lubis, 2019; APJII, 2018). The study was conducted with the social context of the 2019 Indonesian General Election and evaluates the explanation of choosing media and the consequences on voting decisions among first-time college students in West Java, Indonesia. This study aims to evaluate the interactive effect between traditional and social media in making voting decisions.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 *The use of social media and voting behavior*

Social media provides political information that leads to different kinds of contact, such as direct communication with actors. This platform, therefore, allows the availability of information from different sources. Social media has more advantages than other media types due to its ease of access, the possibility of mass-production, and the distribution of content in increasing a candidate's exposure. Also, direct political communication on candidates or parties is often conducted on social media platforms (Bruce Bimber, Cunill, Copeland, & Gibson, 2015).

Political information from social media, especially among young people, influences their involvement in elections. Campaigns can increase attention on topics that serve as the precondition for one's participation. Previous studies found that access to social media policy knowledge offers political learning and influences voting behavior among young people (Bode (2015); Biswas, Ingle, & Roy (2014)). Direct online contact with political players activates electoral effects among the United States and United Kingdom citizens (Aldrich et al., 2016), while posts on social media influence election decisions among young voters in the Scottish Referendum 2014 (Munir, 2018). As a familiar social media platform among students, Facebook had a significant impact on their intention to vote; it was recognized that they preferred a representative student organization based on what their peers believed (Chininga et al., 2019).

2.2 *Use of Television, Radio, and Newspapers among first-time voters*

According to Baumgartner & Morris (2010), traditional offline media is a common source of information. The strong influence of newspapers on first-time voters at the election (O'Keefe & Liu,

1980) requires a re-assessment because young people pay less attention to the traditional sharing information. Studies were more focused on examining the impact and access of social media than the traditional; therefore, further studies are required (Dimitrova, Daniela, Strömbäck, Shehata, & Nord, 2014).

Overall, media exposure affected the United States Senate and House elections (Shields, Goidel, & Tadlock, 1995). Fox News provides an election effect on its audience by increasing the number of voters, and in line with these results, it was found that television debates influence their attitudes (Vigna & Kaplan (2007); Aalberg & Jenssen (2007)). Media coverage strongly influences voting intentions, the trend to vote for the specific party associated with positive media coverage (Dewenter, Linder, & Thomas, 2019). A study on Indonesian television viewers, especially on *Metro T.V.* and *T.V. One*, showed that the 2014 presidential election information was majorly obtained from these platforms (Sulistiyo & Suwartiningsih, 2016).

2.3 Discussion, Political Knowledge, Political Efficacy, Gender, Age, and Expenditure

Social interaction with the characteristics of mutual interests and trust allows the receipt of information as credible and facilitate political decision making (Huckfeldt & Sprague, 1995). The discussion network is a significant factor in determining voting choices (Partheymueller & Rudiger, 2012). According to previous studies, young people who accept online messages from family and friends are significantly more likely to vote (Aldrich et al., 2016). However, they discuss physically with family and colleagues using political information from social media while considering the discussion result of their desired candidates (Perangin-angin & Zainal, 2018). Political discussion and political talks have the same term, which significantly influences voters' election decisions (S. H. Chaffee & Choe, 1980).

Political participation requires factors that trigger a candidate's knowledgeable involvement and confidence to join the political process. (Verba, Schlozman, & Brady, 1995). The previous study results showed that internal political efficacy plays a vital role in first-time voter participation, especially predicting turnout (Moeller et al., 2014). Besides, the sociodemographic factors that play a role in voting are education, age, gender, and income (Aldrich et al., 2016; Bimber, 2014). Highly socioeconomic status and education tend to pay close attention to the news media, thus increasing political participation (Sadhvani, 2020).

2.4 Voting decision

Some voters that afraid of making the right decision need to rely on various sources of information such as media and social networks. Individuals tend to adjust to other people's choices when they think their decisions are better (Baron, Vandello, & Brunzman, 1996). The short word of mouth transmission is a social media strategy that can influence the voters (Pancer & Poole, 2016).

In the decision-making process, voters tend to gather the necessary information before evaluating the information. Political messages affect voters, assuming they are exposed and open to receive the data (Zaller, 1992). Acquisition of information increases in line with one's preference. According to previous studies, people are more conscious of political advertising and campaign reports in newspapers and television (S. Chaffee & Rimal, 1996).

According to Beck, Dalton, and Greene (2002), there is a relationship between social influences and a vote decision, which is influenced by a partisan suggestion from the social network on vote decision in the 1992 United States presidential election. Sinclair (2012) stated that social networks influence vote choice. Individuals intend to choose a candidate supported by their discussion partners (Ryan, 2010). Meanwhile, Ryan & John (2011) reported that social networks deliver important information shortcuts for citizens under their individual decisions. Weak ties of social network function to introduce new information, exposure to diverse political views, and participation (Rolfe, 2012). Campus, Ceccarini, & Vaccari (2015) also stated that voters could make choices amidst uncertainty due to social media.

The development of internet technology has become a source of policy knowledge and a means for discussion. Social networks connect people in the world and shift traditional communication methods, thereby influencing their political life. Social media competes with traditional media in a political context (Waddell, 2009). The 2008 United States election was the beginning of social media use, such as Facebook and Twitter, to carry out campaigns (Woolley, Limperos, & Oliver, 2010). It can grow youths' interest in the democratic process since young people prefer to use the Internet to acquire political information (Di Gennaro & Dutton, 2006). Facebook and YouTube played essential roles in providing political information and decision support on Tunis voters (BenM'barek, Jeddi, & Achouri, 2015).

Ball-Rokeach (1985) proposed the Media System Dependency perspective that determines the relationship between media dependence and political behavior, including the political talks in these relations (Ball-Rokeach, 1998). As a source of political information in this study, the media system includes social media, internet-based mainstream media, and traditional media such as television, radio, and newspapers. News with issue proximity forecasts the vote for traditional media and the Internet, but especially among high-profile news and independents (Johnson, 2016). Groshek & Krongard (2016) found relationships a blend of social media and traditional media with political engagement by placing conversation through digital landscape or face-to-face.

The following hypotheses were obtained to evaluate the relationship between the media, political talks, and voting decision:

H1: Online political talks significantly influence the voting decision.

H2: Offline political talks significantly influence the voting decision

H3: The interaction use of social media and news television significantly influence voter's political decision.

H4: The interaction use of social media and news radio significantly influence voter's political decision.

H5: The interaction use of social media and newspapers significantly influence voter's political decision.

3. Method

We build the study by testing hypotheses with cross-sectional survey data, a regional representative survey of first-time voter college students in West Java, Indonesia, conducted between October 14, 2019, and November 12, 2019. The survey includes multiple measures of media use, political engagement, online and offline activity. Such data help us analyze the trend of using social media and using alternative media to influence voting decisions among first-time voter college students in West Java. Besides, the influence of sex, age, expenditure, political talks, political knowledge, and political efficacy is considered.

The analyses deal with the data of the respondents who performed the survey. Four research assistants delivered the questionnaire in the Indonesian language version. All respondents completed a questionnaire consisting of some questions asked by the research assistant in a face-to-face interview. The questionnaire questions sent to the students were part of the presidential election campaign in 2019.

In West Java, Indonesia, there are six public colleges. Two departments were randomly selected from each college, and a proportion of first-year students were selected from each department, based on the list of student names. The age of first-time voters is considered to be the age of the first-year undergraduate.

Research assistants assign questionnaires to each student selected on their respective campuses. Also, students were asked if they would be willing to fill out a questionnaire. When they were able to do so, they filled out a consent form of willingness to participate upon completing the questionnaire. The questionnaire was completed by a total of 1066 students from six schools.

3.1 Measures

We have categorized the survey variables as independent or dependent on how they were observed.

Dependent Variables

- Voting decision

The respondents were asked whether they voted in the 2019 Presidential election and answered a score of 1 for 'yes' and 0 for 'no' Approximately 91% made a voting decision, while 9% were indecisive. (Mean=0.91 and SD=0.286)

Independent Variables

- Political knowledge

The respondents answered four political knowledge questions: 1) the elected vice president of the 2019 election, 2) the party with the most seats in parliament, 3) the presidential threshold for candidates, and 4) Luhut Panjaitan's position in President Jokowi's administration. On this scale, 52.6% of respondents chose correct answers to all questions, 16%, and 17.7% answered three and two questions exactly, while 8.5% responded to one question (Mean=3.06, SD=1.15 $\alpha = 0.703$).

- External and Internal Political efficacy

Sohl (2014) stated that the political efficacy involved in internal and external dimensions was generally used in preceding studies. The answer to questions has a five-point scale graded from 'strongly disagree' (1) to 'strongly agree' (5).

The external political efficacy question consisted of two statements, which asked respondents whether they thought government policies and public services care for the people. (Mean=2.27, SD=0.89 and $\alpha = 0.701$).

The internal efficacy question asked respondents to determine whether politicians needed acceptable qualifications, good sympathy, and adequate information on the common people to hold offices. (Mean=2.50, SD=0.72 and $\alpha = 0.751$).

- Social media use

The research questions included using social media to carry out the 2019 presidential election campaigns. It measures the frequencies of respondent's activities as follows: 1) receiving messages or information on politics from politicians, 2) following politicians, 3) campaigns and sharing opinions related to current events, 4) posting experiences related to politics, 5) arguing with other people with different views, 6) re-sharing other people's comments, and 7) sharing or posting photos, content, video, Campaign or current events. These answers were graded from 'never' (1) to 'always' (5) with a mean=2.03 and SD=0.73 ($\alpha=0.838$).

- News Television use

This study analyzed the respondents' frequency and duration of watching national, local, and cable traditional television. Respondents were asked the frequency of watching television, such as how often they watch television shows related to politics in a week. A five-point scale for the answers grading from 1='never' to 5='always'. The question was related to the average number of hours respondents watched television programs during the 2019 presidential election. These answers were as follows: 1 = never, 2 = less than 1 hour, 3 = between 1 and 2 hours, 4 = 2 to 3 hours, and 5 = more than 3 hours. (Mean = 1.98, SD = 0.66, $\alpha = 0.701$).

- News radio use

Two question items were asked to respondents associated with the frequency of listening to radio related to news and discussions. The answer had a five-point scale and graded from 'never' (1) to 'every day' (5). It has a mean, S.D., and α values of 1.53, 0.77, and 0.848.

- Newspaper use

The question covered the frequency of reading local and national newspapers during the 2019 presidential election campaign. The answer's option is similar to the news radio with a Mean=1.6, SD=0.85, and $\alpha=0.891$.

- Face-to-face Political Talks and online Political Talks
Political talks consist of two variables: face-to-face and online. The questions frequently asked are on the political conversation between respondents, such as friends, people with different opinions, family, and strangers. The answer ranged from 1 (never) to 5 (always).
Online political talks are political conversations conducted by social media and had a mean=1.81 and SD=0.74 ($\alpha=0.757$).
Face-to-face political talks directly with the person concerned and had a mean=2.22 and SD=0.73 ($\alpha=0.715$).

3.2 Analytic Approach

Logistic regression models are used to evaluate the hypothesis between media use and voting decisions, besides political talks and voting decisions. Each construct operationalized to nine of the latent variables, then calculated predefined indicators. The assessment of the measurement model indicates the significance of indicators for primary latent variables. Determine, using factor analysis, how much variation of one indicator shares to the concept. Table 1 shows that the KMO value is 0.827, suggesting that the sample size is sufficient to assess the factor structure. The significance of the Bartlett's test shows that factor analysis can be carried out. The communalities for each item were range from 0.510 - 0.902. Table 2 shows that nine components from factor analysis can explain the total variable by 63,169%.

Table 1: Bartlett's Test and Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin

Test	Result
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.827
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity Approx. Chi-Square	13084.480
df	496
Sig.	0.000
Communalities (Range)	0.510 – 0.902

Source: Field survey

Table 2: Total Variance Explained in Exploratory Factor Analysis

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.281	22.754	22.754	7.281	22.754	22.754	3.924	12.262	12.262
2	2.648	8.276	31.029	2.648	8.276	31.029	3.017	9.427	21.689
3	2.153	6.728	37.757	2.153	6.728	37.757	2.153	6.727	28.415
4	1.618	5.057	42.814	1.618	5.057	42.814	2.045	6.391	34.806
5	1.572	4.914	47.728	1.572	4.914	47.728	2.004	6.261	41.067
6	1.484	4.638	52.366	1.484	4.638	52.366	1.819	5.683	46.750
7	1.275	3.984	56.350	1.275	3.984	56.350	1.818	5.681	52.432
8	1.180	3.686	60.036	1.180	3.686	60.036	1.781	5.566	57.998
9	1.002	3.132	63.169	1.002	3.132	63.169	1.655	5.171	63.169

Source: Field survey

The exploratory factor analysis results display that nine variables (components) of social media use, news radio use, newspaper use, news television use, political knowledge, external political efficacy,

internal political efficacy, face-to-face political talks, and online political talks are one construct that meets the specified criteria. These results indicate that the measurement model meets the construct validity. The measurement reliability assessment used Cronbachs' Alpha, the results for the nine constructs ranging from 0.700 - 0.891.

The logistic regression model incorporates a voting decision as a dependent variable. Independent variables are social media use, news radio use, newspaper use, news television use, political knowledge, external political efficacy, internal political efficacy, face-to-face political talks, and online political talks. We analyzed data with SPSS software version 25.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

The respondents consisted of 720 females and 346 males, with an average age of 18.5 years (SD=0.557). Figure 1. shows the percentage of sex, the age of respondents ranging from 17 to 19 years old. The majority of the respondents were aged 19 years (52.81%), as seen in Figure 2. Furthermore, Figure 3. shows consumption per month of respondents with the majority, ranges from IDR 750,000 - 2,000,000 (66.04%).

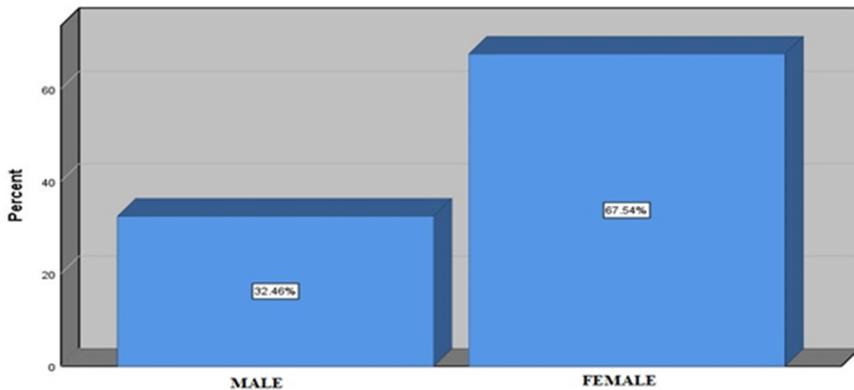


Fig. 1: Sex of respondents

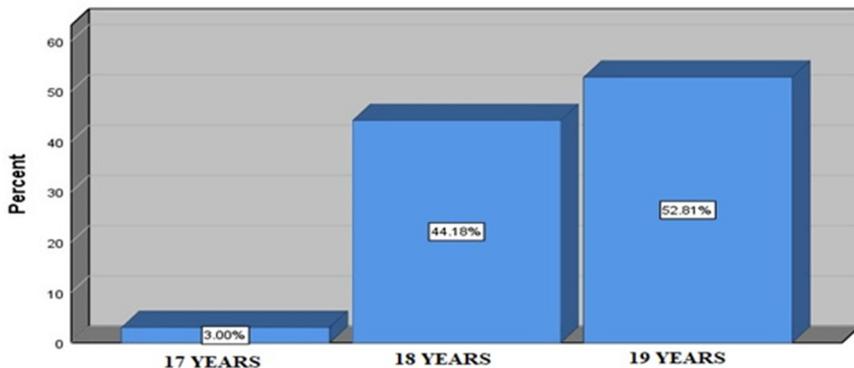


Fig. 2: Age of respondents

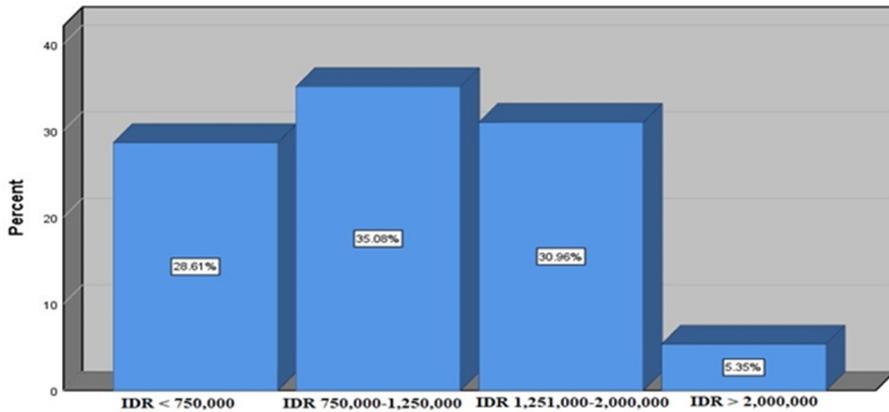


Fig. 3: Consumption of respondents

The analysis examines eight hypotheses on the consequences of using media in making voting decisions. A dichotomous measurement on a voting decision was used as a dependent variable to evaluate binary logistic regression. Furthermore, the independent variables include social media, television, radio, newspapers, and political talks. Models included demographic and attitudinal assessments such as gender, age, socioeconomic status (expenditure), political knowledge, and internal political efficacy. Table 3 shows the result of a voting decision on the primary model and other added interactions.

Table 3: Logistic Regression Model of Voting Decision

Variable	Model I		Model II	
	Coefficient	Std. Error	Coefficient	Std. Error
Sex (Male)	-0.322	0.230	-0.311	0.235
Age	-0.221	0.202	-0.242	0.205
Expenditure	-0.099	0.125	-0.110	0.127
News Radio	0.203	0.173	-1.136*	0.494
Newspaper	-0.005	0.146	0.991*	0.418
Political knowledge	-0.107	0.110	-0.091	0.111
Internal efficacy	-0.130	0.171	-0.135	0.174
External efficacy	0.250**	0.148	0.214	0.150
Social media	0.011	0.210	-1.886*	0.660
News television	0.221	0.182	-1.364*	0.498
Face-to-face political talks	0.195	0.222	0.198	0.225
Online political talks	0.431**	0.231	0.433**	0.232
Social media*Radio			0.767*	0.288
Social media*Television			0.859*	0.265
Social media*Newspaper			-0.463*	0.174
Constant	4.973	3.830	8.628*	4.090
% Correctly predicted	91%		91%	
N	1066		1066	

Significance levels *p < 0.05; **p < 0.10.

Source: Field survey

The first model results show that all control and media variables had no significant effect on voting,

with a significant effect on online political talks ($b=0.431$, $SE=0.231$, $p<0.1$). External political efficacy significantly influenced the voting decision ($b=0.250$, $SE=0.148$, $p<0.1$). Therefore, only H_1 was accepted, while H_2 was rejected. Therefore, the first model results were not under the theory, which led to the creation of the second model, which states the role of media use in voting decisions. In the second model, the interaction variables between social media and other media such as television were used by young people. The findings of the second model shows the importance of the social media ($b=-1.886$, $SE=0.660$, $p<0.05$), radio ($b=-1.136$, $SE=0.494$, $p<0.05$), newspaper ($b=0.991$, $SE=0.418$, $p<0.05$) and television ($b=-1.364$, $SE=0.498$, $p<0.05$) on voting decisions. The online discussion still influenced the voting decision ($b=0.433$, $SE=0.233$, $p<0.1$), so that H_1 was accepted, but H_2 was rejected. The interaction variables show that the use of social media and television ($b=0.859$, $SE=0.265$, $p<0.05$), social media and radio ($b=0.767$, $SE=0.288$, $p<0.05$), as well as social media and newspaper ($b=-0.463$, $SE=0.173$, $p<0.05$) significantly influenced the voting decision; therefore, H_3 , H_4 , and H_5 were accepted.

Figure 4 shows the interaction of addressing social media and newspapers. Newspaper users are divided into two; light readers read less than three days a week, while heavy readers read three or more days a week.

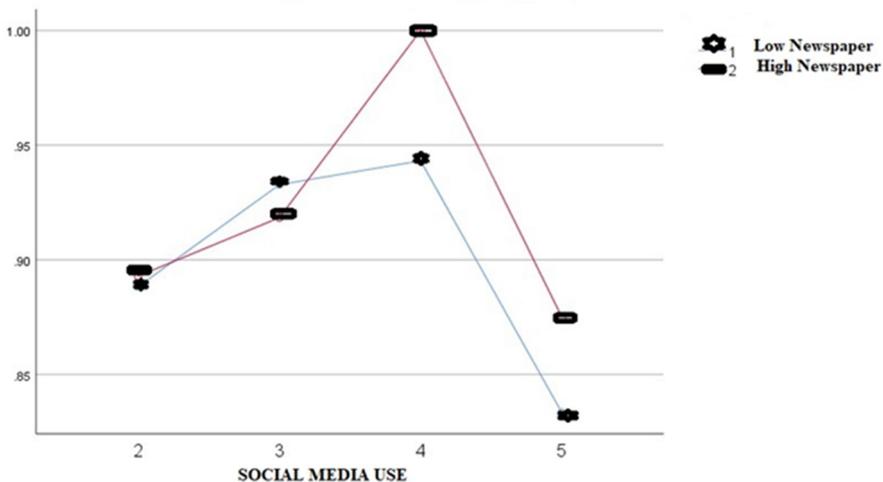


Fig. 4: Interaction of Social Media and Newspaper Use

4.2 Discussion

In the political context, the effectiveness of social media has been practiced. While the information posted on social media is not necessarily accurate or credible, young voters have provided as much political information as is apparent from social media. It proved to be an essential forum for dialogue and opinion during Indonesia's election campaign in 2019. Young voters talked related to politics in their social media messages. Social media campaigns have been successful enough to determine the voting behavior of young voters. Social media affected voting decisions as it is used in combination with other mainstream media. It can be a platform for dialogue and expression of opinion and proves to be sufficiently successful in the decision-making process.

This research assesses the relationship between media usage and the voting decision made after the 2019 Indonesian presidential election among first-time voters. The first model results in Table 1 show that all control variables, namely sex, age, expenditure, political knowledge, internal political efficacy, offline political talks, social media, television, radio, and newspapers, did not affect voters' decision. Meanwhile, online political talks and external political efficacy significantly affect voting

decisions and with the first correct predicted model at 91%. The result is in line with Len-Ríos (2017) that the use of television and newspaper news of the Latino public in the United States does not affect voting preferences.

Further to the analysis, the interaction model is needed. Table 1 consists of a single model and interaction model. In the model, both sex and socioeconomic status (expenditure) do not affect; this result does not follow previous studies (B Bimber, 2014). Other studies showed that gender does not significantly affect voting, both in traditional and social media users (BenM'barek et al., 2015). Moreover, the insignificant effect of age on voting is understandable because the respondents are first-year college students with a limited age range, which does not play a role in voting. Expenditure as a representation of socioeconomic status does not affect the voting decision, and it is parallel to previous studies (Aldrich et al., 2016). Also, political knowledge and internal efficacy possess no effect.

The interplay between social media and others significantly influences the voting decision. The interaction between television and social media usage, as well as radio and social media, led to significant positive effects, while the interaction between newspaper and social media usage had a negative effect. This second model led to a correct prediction of 91%. This result displayed that people on surveys report voting at a higher rate than the turnout rate. These findings show that the use of political information through social media influence voting decisions. Similarly, online political talks have a significant and positive effect on voting decisions, which signifies that the more often individuals discuss with people around them through social media, the higher the tendency to vote.

Figure 4 shows that interactive media's effect is diminished among those that read newspapers for light and heavy readers. Further studies need to pay attention to the appropriateness of issues between media outlets.

The study suggests that the 2019 presidential election campaign becomes information material for the media. Therefore, social media diffusion plays a vital role in the voting decision for first-time voters in their interaction with television and radio, as stated in previous studies by Munir (2018) and Biswas et al. (2014). This study assesses the nature of social media interactions with other media due to undetected each media influence. It has significant implications for the theory of how to conceptualize the interaction between social media usage and traditional media. These media are political information tools that encourage add theories related to the interaction of incidental and selective exposure.

It is possible to engage with media interaction for consumer needs in the objectivity of media performance (Bradshaw, Kenski, & Henderson, 2019). Political talks reinforce the daily frequency of using social media in seeking information; however, further studies are required to incorporate aspects of media trust (Kim & Choi, 2017).

This result is also in line with the research conducted by Aldrich et al. (2016), which stated that political talks affect voting decisions. Online political talks have a significant and positive effect on voting decisions, which signifies that the more often individuals discuss with people around them through social media, the higher the tendency to vote. This result support most previous research, which states that political talks reinforce the media's impact. Political information media positively encourages users to take part in the vote.

The effect of interactive media has decreased among those who read the newspaper. For newspaper readers, the impact of using social media on voting decisions has decreased. Further studies should pay attention to the appropriateness of the issues between media outlets.

This study is limited to first-time voter college students. However, many first-time voters do not attend education at the college level in Indonesia; therefore, future studies are encouraged to perform analysis on a broader range of respondents.

5. Conclusion

This research assesses the relationship between media usage and the voting decision made in the social context of the 2019 Indonesian General Election among first-time voter college students. Besides, social

media, television, radio, and newspapers affect a voting decision; the interplay between social media and others significantly influences the voting decision.

This study provides valuable information on the importance of interaction in traditional and social media as the primary knowledge outlets adopted by first-time voters in decision making. Also, political talks through social media were identified as another important factor.

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