

# Uncertainty Reduction on President Candidates' Social Media for Presidential Election 2019

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**Abstract**— This research aims to see the extent of Instagram-based political campaign can reduce public uncertainty towards the presidential candidates for the 2019 Presidential Election. This research use Uncertainty Reduction Theory to find the research result, positivist as its paradigm, with quantitative method as its research approach. The data is collected by using questionnaire to 106 respondents in Jabodetabek, West Java. The result of this research indicates the Instagram-based political campaign is less successful in influencing people decisions about their choices for 2019 Presidential Election. Politics is a very interesting subject to discuss, especially in 2019 which is a political year for Indonesian citizens. This year, the president and vice president will be elected by the Indonesian citizens as a form of democracy. Mr. Joko Widodo, as a PDI Perjuangan Party representative and who was elected in 2014 will challenge Mr. Prabowo Subianto of Gerindra Party once again. Both of these figures are often be discussed in public sphere. There are many platforms can be used to operate their political strategies, such as internet-based mass media. In political context, mass media, especially social media occupies a strategic position as one of campaign media because it is considered as one of communication channels that has a wide range.

**Keywords**—uncertainty reduction theory, political campaign, presidential election, social media.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Political communication is very interesting when studied in depth. Political communication channels or media, besides traditional and conventional media, there are also somethingcalled new media or digital media. The development of social media is in an important position in the dynamics of politics, like at the time of each general election. Social media presents alternative ways of communicating differently. The crowd of ideas and vision and mission seemed to begin to move. Discussions, debates, and even accusing each other of being accused frontally are so free to occur on various social medias.

In the political context, social media occupies a strategic position as one of the campaign media. According to the survey results released by the Internet World Statistics (IWS) as of October 2012, the number of Internet users in Indonesia reached 55,000,000 or around 22% of the total

population of cellular telephone subscribers in Indonesia which reached 269,989,000 people.

Now the use of campaigns on social media is considered more effective if it is compared to billboards or banners. Social media is undeniably and also one of the concerns in political strategy. It's just that we need to see the extent of social media is used by presidential candidates. New media, one of its functions as social media has been used effectively and intelligently in the political sphere. Social media in political campaigns helps to reduce uncertainty among intrapersonal relationships.

There are reasons for using social media for a political campaign, those are: *First*, strengthening effect, the first step in planning political communication is to identify the main message of the campaign. This message then conveyed through offline and digital channels i.e. print media, door to door, town hall meetings and television debates. This plays an important role in creating communication and raising awareness in voters' minds, though the messages that have been delivered could be forgotten. Hence, in this case, social media works as documentation, reminders while strengthening messages to the public.

*Second*, building a personal connection simultaneously. Social media is one of the most powerful media because of its speed spreading the messages and targets. Presidential candidates form their connection through social media because they want to be heard by their citizen and social media provides the attributes they seek.

*Third*, the advanced devices we are using now make it much easier to deliver the messages. The infrastructure progress like web and mobile applications are also make us easier to access information in a greased lightning. We just have to choose a device system and application format that suits to our needs.

*Fourth*, building audience ability to respond the message. Conflicts can occur and affect at any time. When social media users bond tightly to another person, they tend to minimize the negative effects and public perception.

*Fifth*, more than just broadcasting messages. There are many other things social media able to do. Social media-based research produces a large amount of data and new information everyday. When the campaign team gathers information and then can analyze it well, it will produce a good program planning and strategy for the campaign. Social media use for political campaigns also helps in reducing uncertainty among intrapersonal relationships.

In communication theory, the theory of uncertainty, explains how communication is used to reduce uncertainty among strangers involved in each other's conversation for the first time. Uncertainty Reduction Theory is a theory rooted in a social psychology perspective that focuses on the basic processes of how we add to our knowledge of others. According to the theory of uncertainty reduction, if we want to predict the behavior of others, we will have to find information about them.

So that in social media, especially in political campaigns, the public can find out more about candidates for political campaigns so that their knowledge of them increases and reduces uncertainty information towards them. This research was held several months before the election of President and Vice President of Indonesia 2019.

Judging from the use of social media that has now changed and has spread for politics, this study wants to see how the influence of social media use in reducing public uncertainty in the Indonesian presidential candidates election 2019.

The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of the use of social media as the campaign media in reducing public uncertainty toward Indonesia's presidential election 2019.

## II. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used is quantitative, with 106 respondents and ages ranged from 17 to 35 years old in the Jabodetabek area. We chose this age range due to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), where almost half of the total internet users in Indonesia were people in the 19-34 age group (49.52%).

This study used a randomized questionnaire in the Jabodetabek area. The theory used is the Uncertainty Reduction Theory (URT). The purpose of this theory is to explain how communication is used to reduce uncertainty between strangers who engage in conversations or meetings when they meet or interact for the first time. This theory is based on Charles Berger and Richard Calabrese's study in 1975. They believe when strangers first meet, they are primarily concerned with increasing predictability in an effort to make sense out of their communication experience.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory (Berger and Calabrese 1975):

1. Proactive process, this process occurs when a person thinks about how he will communicate before he actually meets or communicates with other person.
2. Retroactive process, this process consists of attempts to explain behavior after the encounter itself.

Berger and Calabrese suggest that uncertainty is related to seven other concepts rooted in communication and relational development: verbal output, nonverbal warmth (asking questions), self-disclosure, reciprocity of disclosure, similarity, and liking. These concepts believe can reduce some of their uncertainty.

Uncertainty Reduction Theory is an axiomatic theory. Axioms are the facts of previous research and also come from our common senses. Axioms, which can be referred as propositions, don't require more evidence to prove the accuracy of the theory. The Uncertainty Reduction Theory has nine axioms based on Berger and Calabrese's study, they are:

Axiom 1: Given the high level of uncertainty present at the onset of the entry phase, as the amount of verbal communication between strangers increases, the level of uncertainty for each interactant in the relationship decreases. As uncertainty is further reduced, the amount of verbal communication increases.

Axiom 2: As nonverbal affiliative expressiveness increases, uncertainty levels decrease in an initial interaction situation. In addition, decreases in uncertainty level will cause increases in nonverbal affiliative expressiveness.

Axiom 3: High levels of uncertainty cause increases in information seeking behavior. As uncertainty levels decline, information seeking behavior decreases.

Axiom 4: High levels of uncertainty in a relationship cause decreases in the intimacy level of communication content. Low levels of uncertainty produce high levels of intimacy.

Axiom 5: High level of uncertainty produce high rates of reciprocity. Low levels of uncertainty produce low levels of reciprocity.

Axiom 6: Similarities between people reduce uncertainty, whereas dissimilarities increase uncertainty. This axiom asserts a negative relationship.

Axiom 7: Increases in uncertainty level produce decreases in liking; decreases in uncertainty produce increases in liking.

Axiom 8: Uncertainty is negatively related to interaction with social networks. The more people interact with the friends and family members of their relational partner, the less uncertainty they experience.

Axiom 9: There is an inverse, or negative, relationship between uncertainty and communication satisfaction.

## III. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Out of 106 respondents, 92.5% were 17 to 22 years old, with female leads by 68.9%. 92.5% or 98 respondents claimed that they are active Instagram users. This indicates that social media, especially Instagram can be used as a campaign media because there are a lot of people using it.

106 respondents stated that only 22 people follow Mr. Jokowi's Instagram account while only 8 respondents claimed to follow Mr. Prabowo's Instagram account. But, 45.3% of respondents stated they have liked Mr. Jokowi's posts and 25.5% have liked Mr. Prabowo's posts, even though they aren't following Mr. Jokowi's and Mr. Prabowo's Instagram account. But, not a few respondents have ever liked both of their Instagram posts.

After seeing presidential candidates' Instagram posts, 46.2% of respondents felt that they were more familiar or attached to the figure. But, 73.6% of respondents felt they did not have the same traits as the two presidential candidates. Only 12.3% have ever left comments on both presidential candidates' Instagram accounts and 98.1% of their comments have never been replied to.

66% of respondents didn't feel close to the figure based on their posts, and 57.5% of respondents also didn't feel more interested just because they see their daily activities on their Instagram account. 62.3% of respondents felt that they got information from the characters' Instagram accounts, but 67.9% said they did not make them feel they would tend to vote because of the contents in their Instagram account. 54.7% of respondents felt that what was posted by the candidates presented themselves as candidates for Indonesia's presidential candidate, and 72.6% of respondents stated that through their Instagram accounts, candidates could influence the public for the 2019 presidential election.

#### IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The use of social media in political activities has now become a new trend, besides the development of technology and information progress, its rapid spread has become one of the reasons for its use. Through an Instagram account, it became one of the media campaigns during the 2019 Presidential election. There is a sense of doubt or uncertainty in an individual about these presidential candidates leads us to do this study.

In this case, we want to see the extent to which social media is used to reduce uncertainties that occur in society. We conducted a survey of 106 respondents in the Jabodetabek area on this topic.

The result stated that through their Instagram account, they felt a little more familiar with the presidential candidates because showed presented themselves as presidential candidates. But the respondents stated that they did not feel that they were more interested in one of the candidates just because they saw their Instagram post. The survey result presentation showed that social media can clearly influence the public in the 2019 presidential election.

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