

The Influence of Political Gimmicks as a Campaign Strategy in the Society 5.0 Era on New Voters in Semarang City

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Abstract

The digital era has significantly transformed political interactions, particularly through social media as a communication platform. Political gimmicks have become a new trend in campaign communication, especially to attract first-time voters in the Society 5.0 era. This research aims to identify its impact on the trust of first-time voters. A quantitative method was used for data collection, conducted by surveying 400 first-time voters in Semarang City. A simple linear regression test results show that political gimmicks significantly affect first-time voters' trust, with a significance value of $0.002 < 0.05$. This study emphasizes voter political literacy's importance in ensuring rational and informed political decisions. The research plays a crucial role in understanding the dynamics of political communication in the digital era and the critical role of first-time voters in maintaining the quality of democracy.

Keywords

Political Campaign; Political Gimmicks; Novice Voters

INTRODUCTION

The era of digitalization has brought a significant revolution in patterns of human interaction in various social fields, one of which is the virtual sphere in politics. The digitalization process is reflected in political communication, which has transformed in line with the dominance of social media as an interaction platform. This is strengthened based on the 2023 Data Report, which states that the survey results in internet use in Indonesia reached 212.9 million users, equivalent to 77% of the population. Of this figure, 60.4% use the internet to access social media (Kemp, 2023).

To keep up with changes in the scope of social interaction, political communication is transitioning to ensure that political communication is conveyed accurately to the public. Political communication in a democratic country is essential and cannot be neglected. Through communication, a democratic country allows people to participate in determining the direction of national development through leader regeneration (Nabus, 2021). Voters' understanding and knowledge of political messages are the key to forming participant perceptions and orientations in the electoral democracy

process. Digitalization also plays a role in spreading digital political communication through social media.

A previous study by Anggraeni and Sunarso (2022) showed that the digitalization of political communication has a significant role of 46.9% in influencing the level of political participation of young voters. Social media, as a platform for digital communication, conveys campaign messages from candidates to the public without limits. Political messages packaged in the form of content on social media posts have been proven to be able to encourage young voters to participate in the political process. This study also aligns with Alfiyani's research (2018), which states that in political communication, the role of social media is needed to make political campaigns successful. The influence of social media shifts campaign strategies, requiring communication methods and models to align with the habits of targeted voters.

Applying political gimmick methods has become a new trend for politicians in campaigning on social media because gimmicks can significantly change people's perceptions through an emotional approach. Political gimmicks are used as a strategy by politicians to attract attention, gain a positive image, and distract attention from important issues through dramatic, symbolic, or emotional means. Political gimmicks can create an emotional connection with the public, but the effectiveness of gimmick campaigns in gaining sympathizers is not in line with the

campaign's substance to educate the public and highlight policies and ideas. Using gimmicks contributes to tarnishing democratic principles from an ethical and moral perspective. Implementing political gimmick campaigns makes it possible to change the perception of elections into a battle for office rather than as part of democracy.

The ability of political gimmicks to manipulate emotions and change political messages is difficult to understand. It takes a sufficient foundation of political insight to understand sentences concretely and actually from the political message conveyed. This phenomenon certainly threatens the sustainability of democracy, especially the participation of novice voters who cannot decide on a choice and are full of instability. According to the Population and Family Planning Agency (BKKBN), teenagers are defined as individuals between 10 and 24 years old and unmarried. Teenagers are considered rebellious individuals who often experience conflict, are interested in fashion trends, tend to deviate, and be selfish (Diananda, 2018). Where novice voters are part of late adolescents aged 17 to 24, their involvement creates urgency in realizing leadership regeneration and can threaten political stability. However, active participation from first-time voters is also an important indicator of the current and future quality of Indonesian democracy.

This political urgency is also a concern in Semarang City. Based on data from the Semarang City KPU

(General Election Commission), new voters occupy almost 22% of the total Permanent Voter Data (DPT), which is 1,239,669 voters (Laeis, 2023). This figure shows that first-time voters in Semarang have great potential to influence the general election results. In other words, their votes have significant weight in determining voting decisions. These potential challenges ensure that new voters understand the democratic and electoral processes. Voters should evaluate leaders based on their qualities and abilities rather than being swayed by gimmicks used by political figures.

Studying this research is essential for understanding how political actors utilize gimmicks as a communication method during general elections. It also examines the impact of political gimmick campaigns on the confidence of first-time voters in the Society 5.0 era when making political decisions. Based on the problems described previously, we hereby conduct a study entitled "The Influence of Political Gimmicks as a Campaign Strategy in the Society 5.0 Era on New Voters in Semarang City". This research was conducted to identify the treatment of political gimmicks by political actors for audiences and the level of influence of political gimmicks on the trustworthiness of first-time voters. Through this research, researchers target action efforts that can direct the transition of political credibility in a positive direction so that the resulting output can be used as a model and reference recommendation for policy authorities to formulate methods for organizing literacy and political insight for new voters in society 5.0.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative research design with causal explanatory analysis to understand the causal relationship pattern between independent and dependent variables. The subjects of this study were respondents who were new voters aged 17-23 years in Semarang City, who had never participated in previous simultaneous elections.

The questionnaire distribution conventionally used random sampling techniques involving 400 people as samples. The number of samples was determined using the Slovin formula with a confidence level of 95% and a margin of error of 5%.

$$\begin{aligned}
 n &= \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2} \\
 \text{With } N &= 251.190 \\
 e^2 &= 0,05^2 \\
 n &= \frac{251.190}{1 + 251.190(0,05)^2} \\
 n &= \frac{251.190}{628,975} \\
 n &= 399,36 = 400
 \end{aligned}$$

Description:

n : sample size

N : population size

e^2 : precision

The percentage of respondents' questionnaire data distribution is as follows: 50% from students, 30% from college students, and 20% from the general public. Researchers use this research source as the main source of analysis to obtain data to compile research on Credibility Transition: Political Communication Analysis through the Phenomenon of Political Gimik on the Level of Trust of New Voters in the Society 5.0 Era.

The instrument in this study consisted of 30 questions obtained from the differential results of the

independent variable (X) political gimmicks and the dependent (Y) trust of new voters, each of which was derived from the Loeber (2011) trust scale and McNally & Speak's theory (2002) to determine the level of influence of political gimmicks on the decisions of new voters.

The assessment criteria for the instrument in this study were measured using the Guttman scale with answer options in a positive (yes) and negative (no) direction with H_0 = gimmicks campaigns used by political actors as part of political communication do not affect the level of trust of new voters in election contestants, and H_a = gimmicks campaigns used by political actors as part of political communication affect the level of trust of new voters in election contests.

This study is interpreted with a causal explanatory analysis that aims to understand the causal relationship pattern between independent variables and dependent variables with a regression test to determine the level of influence of variable X (political gimmicks) on variable Y (level of trust of new voters), regression equations through the function $Y = b + ax$. T-test is used to prove the hypothesis that has been set with significance criteria if the $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ then there is an influence of variable X on variable Y simultaneously so that H_0 is accepted and if the $p\text{-value} > 0.05$ then it is interpreted that there is no influence of variable X on variable Y simultaneously so that H_0 is rejected. This aims to test the relationship between each variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Political gimmicks involve tactics, tricks, or unethical actions to gain voters' attention, sympathy, and support (Syarwi, 2019). In politics, gimmicks refer to efforts by politicians or political parties to gain popularity or gain support by using dramatic or sensational actions. Therefore, from the previous definition, political gimmicks refer to communication strategies created by politicians to attract public attention that can arise from a combination of a person's natural talent and creativity in responding to political situations. In the modern context, political gimmicks are often used on social media to reach a wider and more diverse audience, especially new voters who tend to be more active on digital platforms. Political gimmicks are intended to attract attention and build a positive image and impression of the candidate or political party—**Influence of Political Gimmicks on New Voters.**

The study used a quantitative method with causal explanatory analysis to understand the causal relationship pattern between independent and dependent variables. The use of causal explanation follows the study's objectives, namely testing previously established hypotheses and determining the effect of political gimmicks on the level of trust of new voters in Semarang City. Data were collected through a questionnaire distributed to 400 respondents, with a research instrument consisting of 30 questions representing the independent variable (X) political gimmicks and the dependent variable

(Y) level of voter trust.

The study's results were analyzed using a regression test to determine the relationship between two variables that began with the classical assumption test. The assumption test is a prerequisite test that must be met to avoid problems in the regression test. The classical

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1 (Constant)	5.246	.500			10.482	.000
GIMIK	.108	.035	.152		3.074	.002

assumption tests include autocorrelation, heteroscedasticity, and normality tests with statistical analysis.

Table 1. Autocorrelation Test Result
Source: Output from SPSS 26

The autocorrelation test was conducted using the Durbin-Watson method. The test results on 400 respondents showed a DW value of 1.992, which is in the range of $1.8409 < 2 < 2.1590$ according to $DU < DW < 4 - DU$ requirements. Thus, the autocorrelation is zero, so the data does not show symptoms of autocorrelation.

Table 2. Heteroscedasticity Test Result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	2.175	.271			8.031	.000
GIMIK	-.025	.019	-.066		-1.323	.186

Source: Output SPSS 26

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted using the Glester Test

method. The test results showed a significance value of $0.18 > 0.05$, meaning there are no heteroscedasticity symptoms in the data. This indicates that the residual variance is constant and the data meets the assumptions for regression analysis.

The normality test is used to identify error terms in data distributed close to normal (Ajija, 2011). Based on the assumption of central limited theory, data that has more than 30 samples does not need to be tested for normality because the distribution of sampling error terms in the data tends to be normal, so the normality test does not need to be carried out and can be ignored (Gujarati, 2010). So, the data with 400 samples is free from the normality test, and the distribution of sampling error terms has a normal value.

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Test

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
				Durbin-Watson	
1	.152 ^a	.023	.021	2.178	1.992

Source: Output SPSS 26

Based on the results of the simple linear regression test, the coefficient value of the political gimmick campaign was obtained at 0.108. This result indicates a positive data direction that can be written in the function $Y = 5.246 + 0.108X$. This equation states that every 1% increase in the value of political gimmicks will increase the participation value by 0.108.

The results of data analysis from the test show a significance value of

t_{count} of 3.074 greater than t_{table} of 1.966, with a significance value of $0.002 < 0.05$. These results can be concluded that political gimmicks significantly affect the level of trust of new voters in the Society 5.0 era in Semarang City.

Based on the quantitative research method, results show that there is a significant influence between political gimmicks and political communication on the level of trust of new voters, indicating that the implementation of political gimmicks strategies plays an important role in shaping the perceptions and preferences of new voters. These results are consistent with qualitative findings that highlight how interesting and entertaining social media content can influence the younger generation's political attitudes. This data test shows the effectiveness of political gimmicks as a political communication strategy. Although legal, the use of political gimmicks is controversial because it can obscure the substance of campaign messages that should be informative and educational, especially for new voters. The substance of political strategies and increasing political literacy need to be emphasized to form a positive and rational voter orientation (Mansyur, 2020). So, the essence of voter participation in leader regeneration can be realized.

Positive Political Credibility Transition Direction Efforts

The right use of political gimmicks can create emotional bonds and strengthen the involvement of young voters in the political process. Viral and entertaining content can generate

interest and active interaction on digital platforms, often the main place for political interaction in this generation. In this context, political gimmicks not only serve to attract attention but also as a tool to build a relevant image and identity in the eyes of young voters.

Although political gimmicks are a legal, legitimate, and proven effective strategy to win elections, their use remains controversial. Political gimmicks often obscure the substance of campaign messages that should be informative and educational. First-time voters, who are at the early stages of their political participation, are susceptible to the influence of gimmicks that can shape their perceptions of candidates and political issues without any in-depth understanding. This has the potential to make voters make decisions based on impressions or popularity alone rather than a mature and rational assessment of the programs and policies offered by the candidates. Therefore, a systematic effort must be made to increase political literacy among first-time voters.

Political literacy is key to forming a positive and rational voter orientation. Through political literacy, voters can be taught how to critically evaluate political information, recognize bias and propaganda, and understand political processes and public policies more deeply (Heryanto, 2021). Political education provides knowledge about the political system and develops the analytical and critical skills needed to navigate the complex political landscape. With good political literacy, voters can better understand

the implications of their political choices and are better able to participate actively and constructively in the democratic process.

According to the Head of the National and Political Unity Agency (Bakesbangpol) of Central Java, political education has emerged as the main and only solution that can overcome the challenges posed by using political gimmicks. Political education must start early and be carried out continuously, involving various elements of society, such as educational institutions, civil society organizations, and the media. A comprehensive political education program can include open discussions on current political issues, simulations of the election process, and training in critical thinking and media analysis. In addition, it is important to integrate political education into the school curriculum so that the younger generation is accustomed to political concepts from an early age and can develop a deeper understanding over time.

Furthermore, political education also plays a role in shaping the character and democratic attitudes of the younger generation. With a good understanding of the rights and obligations as citizens, they will be better prepared to actively participate in political life and participate in the decision-making process that impacts the wider community. Effective political education can also help reduce political apathy among first-time voters and encourage them to constructively engage in social and political activities.

Implementing good political education must consider various teaching methods to ensure that various groups can receive the material delivered. This includes the use of technology and digital media as learning aids, as well as interactive approaches that can attract students' interest and active participation. Collaboration between the government, academics, and political practitioners is also needed to design relevant and effective educational programs and to ensure the continuity and sustainability of these programs in the long term. In addition, good political education must start early and be carried out continuously, involving various elements of society such as educational institutions, civil society organizations, and the media. A comprehensive political education program can include open discussions on current political issues, simulations of the election process, and training in critical thinking and media analysis. Thus, the younger generation can become more critical, rational, and participatory citizens in the democratic process.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to understand the use of political gimmicks as a method of political communication and its influence on the level of trust of young voters in the Society 5.0 era, especially in Semarang City. In general, this study found that political gimmicks significantly influence the level of trust of young voters. Political gimmicks presented through social media can attract the attention of

young voters, build a positive image, and influence their perceptions of political candidates. This shows that communication strategies that utilize emotional and entertainment aspects effectively shape young voters' political preferences.

Specifically, this study found that political actors use political gimmicks as a strategy to attract the attention and sympathy of new voters. Political gimmicks are proven to positively influence the level of trust of new voters in Semarang City. The analysis results show that an increase in the intensity and quality of political gimmicks is in line with an increase in the trust of new voters in political candidates. This influence is statistically significant, indicating that political gimmick strategies can effectively increase new voters' political participation.

Although political gimmicks effectively attract attention, they also raise concerns about the quality of information first-time voters receive. Gimmicks often obscure the substance of campaign messages that are supposed to be educational and informative. Increasing political literacy among first-time voters is essential to overcome the negative potential of using political gimmicks. Comprehensive political education can help young voters understand and critically evaluate political information. Thus, this study successfully answers its main objective by identifying how political actors use political gimmicks and measuring their influence on first-time voters' beliefs. These findings provide important insights for more

effective and ethical political communication strategies and emphasize the importance of political education in shaping more critical and rational voters.

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