CONTENT DISTRIBUTION ANALYSIS ON GIBRAN RAKABUMING RAKA'S SGIE QUESTIONS IN INDONESIA'S 2024 ELECTION DEBATE

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 general election in Indonesia has seen a significant increase in social media usage, especially in response to the candidates' debates. In this study, Gibran Rakabuming as one of Indonesia's vice-presidential candidates became a hot issue in asking the State of the Global Islamic Economy (SGIE) question at the debate which became an important indicator of public interest and sentiment. This research uses content distribution theory analysis to understand the implications of social media use on political campaigns and how political content is disseminated and responded to by other social media users. The results of this study show that the use of social media in response to SGIE responses strengthens positions and relationships with voters.

KEYWORDS	*Social Media; Political Campaign; SGIE; Content Distribution Theory, Gibran Rakabuming*

INTRODUCTION

Presidential elections are one of the most important political activities in every country, because elections are part of the government process that is very involved with people's lives. In the presidential election, people will also choose a vice-presidential candidate who will become the leader of the country. In the digital era with widespread mediatization, politics has become increasingly integrated with mass media. Elections, as one of the most important political events in a democratic country, take center stage in public debate and analysis. In particular, debates between candidates play a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of candidates and the issues they represent.

Previous studies highlight the evolving role of social media in political contexts across various countries. For instance, Narasimhamurthy (2014) examined

social media's role during India's 2014 general elections, emphasizing motivations like information-seeking and social utility, while Sheetz et al. (2021) explored how information satisfaction is influenced by content and process gratifications in Tunisia's elections. Similarly, Phillips (2013) investigated the role of mass media in shaping voter decisions in Egypt. Meanwhile, Lokman et al. (2024) conducted a structured review on online political participation in Malaysia. This study categorized findings into themes, such as the correlation between digital engagement and political knowledge among youth, and challenges like misinformation and media literacy deficits, which influence civic engagement. These studies collectively underscore the diverse motivations and impacts of media usage on voter engagement, which are instrumental in understanding digital-era elections.

In recent years social media platforms have become an important tool for political campaigns, allowing candidates to reach a wider audience and interact with voters more effectively. The 2024 Indonesian presidential election, in particular, has seen a significant increase in the use of social media by candidates to promote their platforms and respond to public concerns (Sellita, 2022). Among the candidates, Gibran Rakabuming, the son of Indonesian President Joko Widodo who is running for Vice President alongside Prabowo Subianto, has actively used social media to connect with voters and respond to their concerns. During the first Vice Presidential Candidate Debate, Gibran Rakabuming floated a question that became a trend on social media platforms, such as Twitter/X. Whereas, this phenomenon of trending questions on social media platforms has become an important indicator of public interest and sentiment regarding political issues (Rohim & Raf, 2022).

The use of social media in political campaigns is not a new phenomenon, but its impact has grown significantly in recent years. Social media platforms have become an important tool for political communication, allowing candidates to reach a wider audience, interact with voters, and respond directly to public concerns (Hutabarat, 2024). The relationship between the use of social media for politics and increased public sentiment can be explained through the concept of content distribution communication theory. This theory highlights how content is disseminated through various social media platforms and how it influences public perceptions and responses to political issues. By utilizing social media, political candidates have the ability to generate, distribute and control their own political content directly to voters (Chadwick, 2017).

Social media allows candidates to respond to issues that are *trending* or receiving public attention without the intervention or filter of traditional media. This can give the impression that the candidate is responsive to voters' concerns and needs. Thus, the use of social media by political candidates allows them to strengthen their position and relationship with voters, while building a more positive image in the eyes of the public (Vergeer et al., 2013). The concept of content distribution in content distribution communication theory also includes how political content is disseminated and responded to by other social media users. When a candidate's political content goes viral or gets a lot of interaction from other users, this can strengthen the political message that the candidate wants to convey and increase public support and sentiment towards them. Thus, through the use of

social media and the concept of content distribution, political candidates can effectively influence and shape public opinion and sentiment towards themselves and their political parties.

Understanding the concept of content distribution that is able to shape and influence people's views is very important in the digital era, especially with the existence of social media. One of the relevant theories in the concept of One of the relevant theories in the concept of content distribution is the *uses and gratifications* theory developed by Elihu Katz where audiences actively use various kinds of media messages based on certain needs and gratifications and the effects of conveyed messages are not necessarily the same for everyone (Griffin et al., 2019). In the *uses and gratifications* theory, Katz (Littlejohn et al., 2011) explains that there are five assumptions in this theory. First, audiences actively select various media to be heard, watched, and read selectively. Second, audiences also have an orientation to their main individual goals and the media is one of the factors that contribute to these goals. Third, the various media available compete with each other in grabbing the attention of audiences so that there is a variety of content that can attract audiences. Fourth, social and contextual elements can shape audience activities so that media choices affect audiences due to the environment of the audience itself. And finally, the effects and use of media by audiences are interrelated because the media only has an effect on individual audiences who choose the media themselves, the ability gained is to know their needs and how to fulfill these needs.

Furthermore, the use of *uses and gratifications* theory in the political context has been done in four previous studies with different country situations. Narasimhamurthy (2014) explained in the context of social media during the general election in India in 2014 using *uses and gratifications* theory as a motivation where people use it during the campaign and factors that can predict these motivations. It was found that the three main motivations for using social media include information seeking or monitoring of a political nature, convenience or entertainment, and social utility where social media itself causes people to be able to search, evaluate, and make it easier for them to make decisions that contain information and match personal preferences.

Furthermore, Sheetz et al. (2021) used this theory to explain how different sources of political information affect perceptions of information satisfaction related to the 2014 Tunisian elections. There are three findings where first, high perceptions of content gratification such as reliability and accuracy of information are associated with high perceptions of information satisfaction. Second, process gratifications, such as the number of information activities and frequency of activities, predict information satisfaction, which positively impacts the availability of information and how information is received. Third, social gratifications contribute to satisfaction to the same extent as process gratifications although they are partially mediated so that *uses and gratifications* theory can be applied to the use of information sources in political situations whether the information sources come from the internet or traditional sources.

On the other hand, Phillips (2012) explains the role of mass media in shaping voters in the Egyptian general election in 2012 and how voters use mass media in

determining their decisions in the election. In his findings, Phillips explained that there were two assumptions found where first, the general election in Egypt was determined based on information obtained through the mass media shaping their views in voting while audiences who did not follow the mass media did not agree that the mass media had an important role in the general election. Tan Sze Chuan (2020) used *uses and gratification* theory as a motivation for Facebook users in conducting political participation that occurred in Malaysia. As a result, it was found that there was a significant influence between entertainment needs and online political participation although there was no significant influence between information needs, social, recognition of online and offline political participation.

In the context of politics in Indonesia, especially in the vice presidential candidate debate in the 2024 general election in Indonesia, a trending phenomenon emerged after Gibran Rakabuming launched a question about the *State of the Global Islamic Economy* (SGIE) to his vice presidential candidate opponent, Muhaimin Iskandar (Cak Imin). This phenomenon is an interesting focal point in the context of using social media for politics. An analysis of the frequency and types of content that contribute to the trending phenomenon provides a deeper picture of how the issue is understood and perceived by the public. Diverse content, such as short video clips, news articles and memes, are often part of intense online discussions about SGIE and Gibran Rakabuming's position on the issue. As such, this research will examine the forms of content that are shared and developed in relation to the trending phenomenon of Gibran Rakabuming's questions about SGIE on the social media platform Twitter/X. This research has questions in the form of:

1. How are the implications of content distribution theory to the trending phenomenon of Gibran Rakabuming's question about SGIE in the Vice Presidential candidate debate in the 2024 General Election in Indonesia on the X/Twitter platform?
2. What are the dynamics of the trend of spreading political issues, especially around SGIE and Gibran Rakabuming's questions, in the Vice Presidential candidate debate in the 2024 General Election in Indonesia?

RESEARCH METHOD

Content analysis, as a scientific approach, is important in understanding and extracting meaning from various types of materials, not only limited to written texts, but also including other forms such as images, sounds, or symbols. According to Krippendorff (2004), content analysis is a reliable, repeatable, and valid research technique for understanding and interpreting the meaning of other meaningful material. This definition includes not only text in its traditional form, but also other meaningful elements that allow for the analysis of non-verbal content such as images, maps, or even sounds.

However, in conducting this analysis, the researcher not only looks at the text or content itself, but also considers its context. Therefore, it is important to understand the relationship between the various elements in the content, whether it is the relationship between texts or with the wider context. The main goal of content analysis is to extract significant meanings, categorize them into meaningful

categories, and then interpret the categories thoroughly to understand the content of the text data.

One of the commonly used methods in content analysis is the summative qualitative content analysis method. In this context, content analysis allows the researcher to understand the text by grouping words or other elements that have similar meanings into larger categories. The results of this analysis not only provide the gist of the text, but also allow the researcher to understand the overall impact and relevance of the content to its readers or audience.

For example, Jacques and Knox (2016) used summative content analysis methods to explore the content of Twitter users who reject the scientific consensus on climate change. With this approach, they were able to see how these Twitter users gave meaning to their experiences through their narratives, rather than simply summarizing individual meaning-making experiences.

In this study, researchers will determine categories based on a collection of words that discuss the phenomenon of Gibran Rakabuming's trending question about the *State of the Global Islamic Economy* (SGIE) in the Vice Presidential candidate debate in the 2024 General Election in Indonesia on the X/Twitter platform. The data sources in this research will be divided into two, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data sources in this research are contents containing the topic of SGIE statements from Gibran Rakabuming with the keyword 'SGIE Gibran' with a time span of December 22, 2023 - December 7, 2024. Primary data will then be summatively processed into categories with stages according to the diagram below.

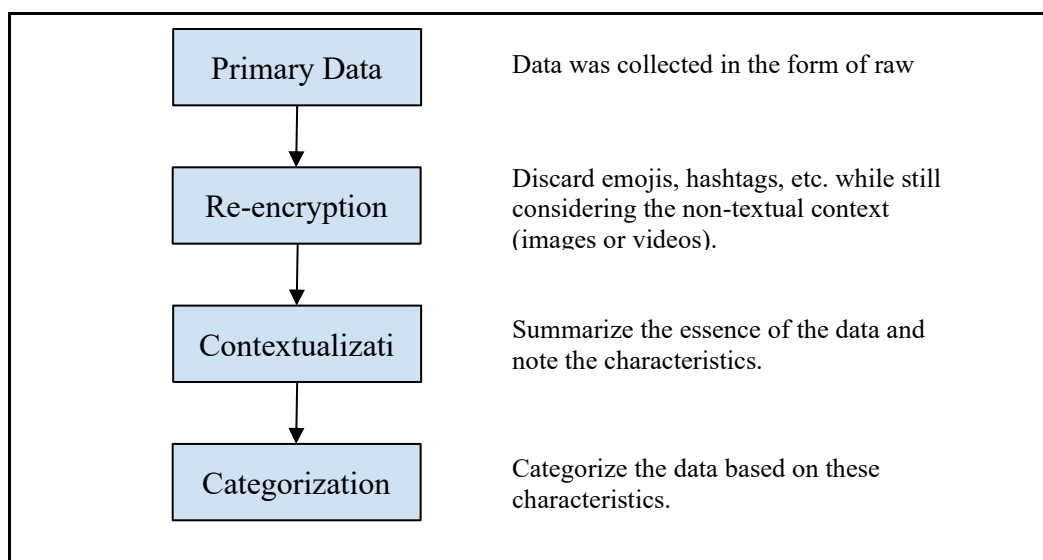| Primary Data | Data was collected in the form of raw |
Re-encryption	Discard emojis, hashtags, etc. while still considering the non-textual context (images or videos).
Contextualizati	Summarize the essence of the data and note the characteristics.
Categorization	Categorize the data based on these characteristics.

Figure 1. Summative data processing.
Data processed by researchers, 2024

On the other hand, secondary data sources in this research are information derived from previous research, such as books, journals, articles, and the internet that are still related to this research. With this method, it will allow researchers to explore in depth the characteristics and meanings of distributed content, as well as

the implications of content distribution theory for the phenomenon. how the implications of content distribution theory on the phenomenon.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Content Distribution Based on Characteristics

At the time of conducting the research, this study simultaneously emphasized the keywords used in the context of the content to be retrieved. However, due to the many occurrences of information about SGIE outside the context of Gibran Rakabuming's statement at the Vice Presidential Candidate debate on December 22, 2023, the researcher decided to focus on one keyword, 'Gibran SGIE'. The keyword search was conducted on social media Twitter/X as the platform where this context is most widely spread, in the time span of December 22, 2023 - January 7, 2024, or before the next Presidential Candidate debate. Some examples of the data obtained are shown in Figure 2 below.
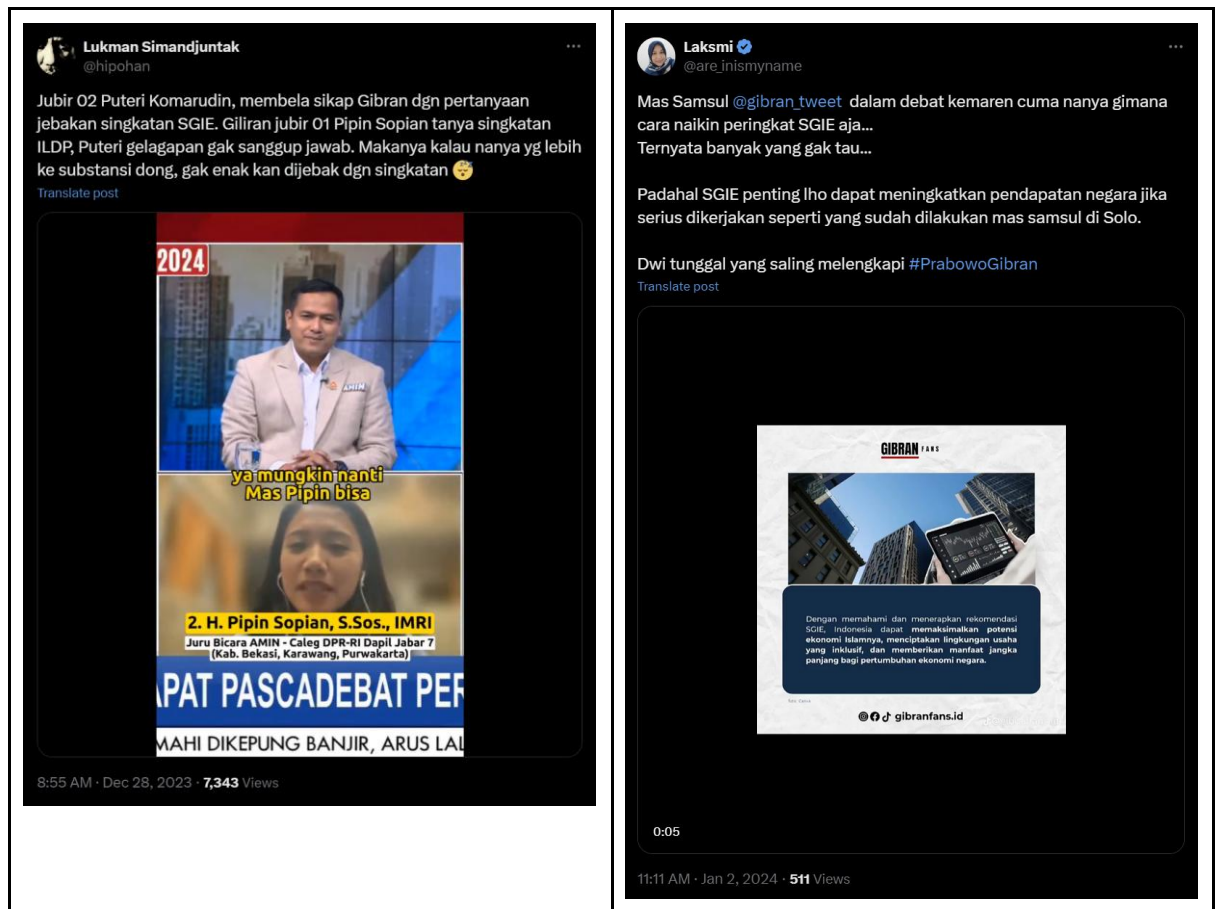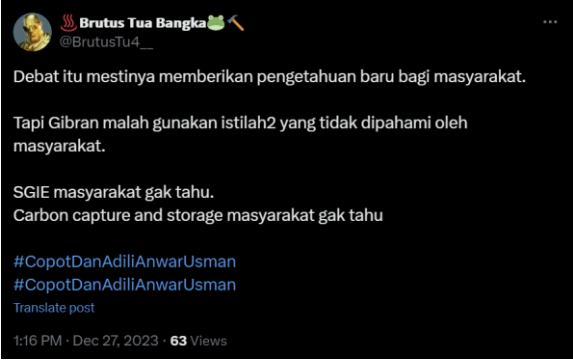
Figure 2. Some primary collection results.
Data from Twitter/X, accessed May 17, 2024

After searching the data, 50 posts were found to be associated with Gibran Rakabuming's question about the *State of the Global Islamic Economy* (SGIE) during the Vice Presidential Candidate debate on December 22, 2023. From the searched data, researchers then reprocessed the content of the existing tweets by grouping words or other elements that have similar meanings to get the context of the existing tweets as they are. An example of this process can be seen in the table below.

Table 1. Example of summative processing of primary data.

Stages	Data
Example Tweets	
Reprocess Result (Data Encryption)	*"The debate should provide new knowledge for the public. But Gibran instead used terms that are not understood by the public. SGIE people don't know. Carbon capture and storage people don't know."*
Summative Contextualization	1. Negative in tone (against) 2. Short form text 3. Contains opinion and/or criticism of Gibran Rakabuming 4. Sentiment tends to focus on the candidate (Gibran) rather than the issue (SGIE).

Data processed by researchers, 2024

After getting the gist of the data summatively, the search results were grouped into larger categories. In this process, researchers mapped them into 6 categories, each of which was further broken down into the following characteristics:

Table 2. Research categorization.

	Category	Characteristics	Description
	Public Response to Gibran Rakabuming's Question about SGIE	Positive	Comments and responses that support or agree with Gibran's questions
		Negative	Comments and responses that reject or criticize Gibran's questions
		Video	Video clips from debates or video reactions

	Types of Content Spread on Social Media	News Article	Links and quotes from news articles about the debate and Gibran's questions
		Memes	Images or memes related to the question or debate
		Comments/Tweets	Text or short posts from users
	Main Themes in Discussion	Islamic Economics	Discussion on the *State of the Global Islamic Economy*
		Candidate Perception	Views and opinions on Gibran Rakabuming and other vice presidential candidates
		Political Campaign	Commentary focusing on campaign strategy and politics
		Public Debate	Discussion on the overall quality and content of the debate
	User Motivation in Using Social Media (based on *uses and gratifications* theory)	Information Search	Users who are looking for information or want to understand more about SGIE
		Entertainment	Users who engage in discussions for entertainment or fun
		Social Utility	Users who use social media to interact with others and share opinions
	Use and Dissemination of Content	Content Virality	How often and how quickly content about Gibran's question spreads
		User Interaction	Number of *retweets, likes,* comments, and other forms of interaction
		Content Source	Origin of content (official media, individual users, *influencers*, etc.)
	Sentiment	Support for Candidates	Level of support or rejection of candidates based on social media interactions
		Critique of the Issue	Criticism or support of the SGIE issue raised

		Political Involvement	Users' level of participation and engagement in related political discussions.

Data processed by researchers, 2024

Based on the data findings, the majority of public responses to Gibran's question were negative, with a proportion of 62% or 31 contents showing criticism of the question. On the other hand, there were 38% or 19 contents that gave positive responses. This shows that Gibran's statement caused more controversy and criticism than support, reflecting public dissatisfaction or disagreement with the issues raised or the way it was delivered.

In terms of the type of content disseminated, most of it came from debate video clips or reaction videos as well as comments or tweets, with 40% or 20 pieces of content each. As the results show, visual media and short texts are the most popular and effective formats for disseminating information and views on social media. Meanwhile, news articles and memes only accounted for 10% each or 5 content uploads overall, indicating that despite their occurrence, they are still relatively less dominant in the public discussion of Gibran Rakabuming's statement regarding SGIE.

Discussions on social media regarding this statement mostly focused on candidate perceptions, with 58% or 29 contents highlighting views and opinions on Gibran Rakabuming and other vice presidential candidates. Only 10% or 5 contents addressed the topic specifically, while the rest were split between political campaigns at 12% and overall public debates at 20%. These results show that Gibran's statements on SGIE seem to influence perceptions of him and his political opponents more than triggering in-depth discussions on the topic of Islamic economics itself.

Furthermore, regarding the motivation of users in participating in this discussion, the majority aims for entertainment, indicated by the appearance of 23 contents or 46% of users who are involved in the discussion for their own enjoyment. Meanwhile, the results of users who seek deeper information about SGIE appear as much as 28% or 14 content uploads, and also 26% or 13 content uploads that use social media to interact and share opinions. Thus, it can be seen that despite the public's desire to seek information, there are still many social media users who engage in discussions on the topic only for entertainment reasons.

Most SGIE-related content focuses on virality, with 29 content posts (58%) showing how quickly and widely the content can spread. However, it is unfortunate that only about 7 content posts (14%) show the level of interaction such as *re-tweets, likes,* and comments. While other sources, such as official media, and *influencers* accounted for more content uploads of 14 uploads or equivalent to 28%, indicating that although the content spread quite quickly, the level of user *engagement* remained low, which may be due to the controversial nature of the statement.

In terms of sentiment, quite a lot of content uploads contain support or rejection of candidates (58% or 29 contents), which shows that many content uploads highlight the political aspects of Gibran Rakabuming's statement rather

than the topic of SGIE itself. Meanwhile, criticism of the SGIE issue and political engagement in this discussion only accounted for 20% or 10 content uploads and 22% or 11 content uploads, respectively. Therefore, it can be concluded that despite the spread of discussion on SGIE, the public's main concern remains focused on political dynamics and perceptions of candidates.

Overall, the findings show that Gibran Rakabuming's statement on SGIE triggered more negative responses and controversy on social media. Discussions tended to focus on candidate perceptions and were driven more by entertainment motivations than in-depth information seeking. Content dissemination shows a high level of virality, although user interaction is relatively low. The dominating sentiment was either support or rejection of the candidate, suggesting that political issues were more prominent than substantive discussions about SGIE.

Discussion

In reviewing the findings, we draw on the first assumption of Katz's *uses and gratifications* theory, that audiences actively select the media they consume, which risks introducing bias in information seeking (Littlejohn et al., 2017). With many individuals seeking gratification without considering the context in more depth, there is also a greater possibility that the viral SGIE issue is based on subjective sentiments that exist in the scope of the audience consuming the content rather than the result of substantive discussions with diverse opinions of both support and opposition. On the other hand, the existence of this subjective sentiment is also a reflection of audiences who tend to use social media for entertainment and social interaction instead of seeking in-depth information. This is in accordance with Katz's second assumption which explains how audiences tend to seek gratification needs; audiences' deliberate choices in using the media are based on the gratification they seek from the media.

In the mass communication process, there are initiatives in linking the fulfillment of needs and media choices depend on audience members, thus providing strong limitations to the theory of straight-line effects of media content on attitudes and behaviors (Griffin et al., 2019). This understanding suggests that social media consumption is more selective and personalized, where individuals are more interested in content that suits their needs and preferences. The results of the study are supported by the argument by Philip Palmgreen that the gratification sought by audiences from the media is determined based on beliefs, as well as attitudes towards media regarding a medium that is able to make audiences accept or evaluate the media material obtained (Littlejohn et al., 2017).

These findings highlight the importance of effective communication strategies in political campaigns to manage public perceptions and steer discussions to more substantive issues. It is important for content providers and media researchers, especially those focusing on political issues, to understand that audiences are not only passive in receiving information, but also active in selecting and interpreting content based on their gratification needs. Therefore, a more effective approach in delivering in-depth information is to understand and meet the audience's gratification needs, so that the content can be better received and processed in a more critical and meaningful way, given that social media can

support audience behavior in the political realm that can shape the polarization issues that occur in social media (Rathnayake & Winter, 2017).

Furthermore, the motivations of users in social media found in this study are in line with what has been classified by McQuail such as Information Search, Entertainment, and Social Utility where there are four basic principles that develop namely social, personal, and contextual which are able to mediate audience activity where one aspect that can be identified is the variable over the environment or context itself.

Similar to the trending phenomenon of Gibran Rakabuming's question about SGIE, also happened in the 2016 US presidential election, where Donald Trump's controversial posts on Twitter at the time were often at the center of public and media attention. These posts, often provocative or controversial in nature, managed to steer public discussion and dominate the political narrative. A study found that individuals are exposed to a wide range of political opinions on social media, perhaps even more than through traditional media channels or personal interactions (Fujiwara et al., 2024), and content that is controversial tends to get more interaction and wide dissemination on social media. In the context of Gibran Rakabuming's question about the SGIE, posts with a negative and critical tone towards the question show a similar pattern, where controversial content has the potential to dominate discussions and significantly influence public opinion.

The distribution of viral content, such as Gibran Rakabuming's question about SGIE, can have a long-term impact on public opinion and election results. Based on research conducted by Allcott and Gentzkow (2017), the distribution of fake news and viral content during the 2016 US presidential election significantly affected voters' perceptions and ultimately the election results. In the Indonesian context, the distribution of viral content related to the SGIE question posed by Gibran Rakabuming can influence public perception of vice presidential candidates, shifting the focus from substantial issues to more sensational issues. This can have an impact on voter decisions that are based more on narratives spread on social media than on the policies or capabilities of candidates.

In the long run, the distribution of viral content can lead to the polarization of public opinion. Sunstein (2018) points out that social media tends to reinforce existing opinions and separate groups with different views, referred to as "*echo chambers*". Thus, the viral phenomenon of Gibran Rakabuming's question about SGIE has the potential to strengthen political polarization in Indonesia, where groups with different views are increasingly separated and difficult to reach consensus.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is that audiences actively choose the media they consume, leading to bias in information seeking and supporting the notion that the gratification audiences seek depends on their beliefs and attitudes towards the media. Then, the importance of effective communication strategies in election campaigns can manage public perceptions and direct discussions on substantive issues. In this context, Gibran Rakabuming's question about SGIE was able to shift

the public focus from substantial to sensational issues. Thus, it is able to influence voters' decisions based on social media narratives.

The limitation of this research is that some external factors such as social media platform policies, content viewing, algorithms, and political intervention are not explained in depth. Thus, the suggestion for future research is to conduct the most in-depth analysis of social media such as social media policies and algorithms that are considered to affect the distribution and consumption of content on social media for audiences, especially voters.

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