The Influence of Mass Communication Intensity on the Formation of Public Opinion Among Voters in the 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the influence of mass communication intensity on the formation of public opinion among voters in Indonesia's presidential election. In the context of rapid digital media development, political communication no longer relies solely on conventional media but is increasingly shaped by social media platforms that enable fast and widespread information dissemination. This research adopts a quantitative approach to explain the relationship between media exposure and public opinion formation. Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to voters who actively follow political information through mass media. The findings indicate that the intensity of mass communication has a strong and significant influence on how public opinion is formed. Frequent and sustained exposure to political information through media contributes to clearer attitudes, stronger political perceptions, and greater confidence in political choices. These results highlight the strategic role of mass media as a key agent in shaping political awareness and public discourse within a democratic society. The study emphasizes the importance of media literacy to help the public critically evaluate information, reduce the spread of misinformation, and prevent excessive polarization in political opinion.

Introduction

The 2024 presidential election will be one of the biggest political events in the history of Indonesian democracy. Amid rapid advances in information and communication technology, the process of shaping public opinion is no longer limited to physical spaces, but has shifted to virtual spaces dominated by mass media and digital media. This change

marks a new era of political communication in Indonesia, where political information is not only disseminated by conventional media institutions such as television, radio, and newspapers, but also by the public directly through social media platforms (Surbakti, 2023). This phenomenon has made mass communication one of the dominant factors influencing the public's political perceptions and attitudes towards presidential candidates and issues that arise during the campaign period (Gautama & Kusuma, 2023).

In the context of modern democracy, mass communication has a strategic function in shaping public opinion. Through the dissemination of information, the media helps the public understand various political issues, government policies, and candidate programmes. This concept is known as agenda setting, which is the media's ability to determine which issues are considered important by the public (El Qudsi & Syamtar, 2020; Kasrah et al., 2024). Furthermore, through framing techniques, the media can influence the way the public interprets a political event. For example, news coverage of presidential candidate debates can focus on the candidates' performance, gestures, or rhetorical strategies, rather than on the substance of the ideas presented (Fitriani & Fitrianti, 2024). Thus, the media not only conveys facts, but also shapes the political reality accepted by the public.

However, changes in the political communication landscape in the digital era present new and complex dynamics. Whereas in the past political information was largely controlled by mainstream media institutions, information distribution is now more decentralised. Anyone can become an information producer through social media such as X (Twitter), Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube (Murbantoro et al., 2023). This situation creates democratisation of information on the one hand, but also increases the risk of spreading hoaxes, disinformation, and manipulation of public opinion on the other (Astari, 2021). As a result, the public often finds it difficult to distinguish between factual information and opinions that are political propaganda.

This phenomenon becomes even more interesting when linked to voter behaviour in the 2024 Presidential Election. According to various national public opinion surveys, the majority of young voters (aged 17–35) obtain their political information from social media, rather than from television or newspapers (Ilmi et al., 2024). This generation has very dynamic characteristics in consuming information: fast, visual, and often emotional (Mahmudah, Hadi, 2024). This pattern shows that the intensity of exposure to mass communication, especially on social media, can significantly shape public opinion trends. Frequent exposure to certain political messages has the potential to strengthen preferences for certain candidates or, conversely, to generate antipathy towards other candidates.

In addition, mass communication also plays an important role in building political images (Bonar et al., 2024). Presidential candidates utilise the media to present a positive persona, emphasise their closeness to the people, and promote their work programmes persuasively. In this case, the media functions as a channel of political legitimacy, where a consistently built image can increase electability (Arafat & Rahmah, 2019; Firdausi Nazila et al., 2025). However, the impact of mass communication is not always positive. In the context of electoral politics, mass communication can also be an instrument of social polarisation, especially when the media highlights ideological differences, religious identities, or ethnicity as campaign material (Ahlstrand, 2023).

From the perspective of political communication theory, the influence of mass communication on public opinion is explained through several models, including the hypodermic needle theory and cultivation theory (Hasfi, 2019). The hypodermic needle theory assumes that media messages can influence audiences directly and strongly, as if injected into the minds of recipients. Although this view is considered too simplistic, it is still relevant in the context of social media, which is massive and quickly goes viral. Meanwhile, cultivation theory states that repeated exposure to the media will shape perceptions of a particular social reality in the long term. For example, when the public is constantly exposed to positive news about a candidate, they tend to consider that candidate competent and worthy of election.

Previous research shows that the level of exposure to political media correlates with an increase in political knowledge and clarity of voter attitudes (Indrawan et al., 2023). In the Indonesian context, various studies have also found that the intensity of mass communication plays an important role in shaping voting behaviour, particularly through cognitive and affective effects (Asfar et al., 2025; Jamal et al., 2024; Mukti, 2024). However, there has not been much research specifically measuring the influence of mass communication intensity on the 2024 Presidential Election, where social media plays a more dominant role than conventional media. This condition creates an urgency to conduct empirical studies that can explain the relationship between media exposure and the formation of public opinion quantitatively.

Apart from media factors, the formation of public opinion is also influenced by political predisposition (voters' initial orientation towards certain ideologies or parties), demographic factors (age, education, and domicile) (Indrawan et al., 2020), and the level of trust in the media. These factors have the potential to moderate the influence of mass communication on public opinion. For example, individuals with higher education may be more critical of media information, while urban voters have wider access to political information sources than rural communities. Therefore, analysis of the influence of mass communication needs to consider the social context and characteristics of voters more comprehensively.

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative research type, which aims to determine the effect of the independent variable, namely the intensity of mass communication, on the dependent variable, namely the formation of public opinion among voters in the 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia. The quantitative approach was chosen because this study seeks to measure social phenomena objectively through numerical data and statistical analysis.

This research is explanatory research because it not only describes the phenomenon but also explains the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables studied (Bentouhami et al., 2021). The population in this study is all Indonesian citizens aged 17 years and above or who are married and have the right to vote in the 2024 Presidential Election. The research sample was taken using purposive sampling, which is selecting respondents who actively follow political developments through the mass media and social media. The number of samples used was at least 385 respondents, so that the research results had a 95% confidence level with a margin of error of 5%.

Data was obtained through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The research instrument was compiled based on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5). The questionnaire covered two main variables, namely the intensity of mass communication (X) and the formation of public opinion among voters (Y). The variable of mass communication intensity was measured through indicators of media exposure frequency, duration of use, level of attention to political content, and the number of media accessed. Meanwhile, the variable of voter public opinion formation was measured through indicators of clarity of political stance, confidence in choices, and readiness to express opinions in the public sphere.

The collected data were analysed using simple linear regression analysis with the help of SPSS 26 software. Before the analysis was carried out, the data were tested using validity and reliability tests to ensure that each question item was suitable for use. The validity test was carried out using Pearson's product moment correlation, while reliability was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient with a minimum threshold value of 0.70. In addition, classical assumption tests were conducted, including normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests to ensure that the data met the requirements for regression analysis.

Next, a t-test was conducted to determine the partial effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable, as well as an F-test to determine the effect of all variables simultaneously. The magnitude of the contribution of mass communication to public opinion was determined through the coefficient of determination (R^2). If the significance value was < 0.05, the hypothesis was accepted, indicating that the intensity of mass communication had a significant effect on the formation of public opinion among voters.

Findings

This study aims to determine the effect of mass communication intensity on the formation of public opinion among voters in the 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia. The results of the study were obtained through quantitative data analysis using SPSS version 26 software. The following presents the main findings of the study and the results of statistical analysis that describe the relationship between the research variables.

This study involved 412 respondents spread across 12 districts in Lampung province. Most respondents were aged between 17 and 35 years (61%) and were active social media users (74%). A total of 57.5% of respondents were male and 42.5% were female. This data shows that the majority of respondents were young voters who actively accessed political information through digital media.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variabel	N	Minimum	Maksimum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Intensity of Mass Communication (X)	412	2.10	4.95	3.87	0.54
Shaping Public Opinion (Y)	412	2.35	4.92	3.91	0.49

Source: results of data analysis with SPSS 27

The average score for the Mass Communication Intensity variable of 3.87 indicates a high

level of exposure to political media, while the average score for Public Opinion Formation of 3.91 indicates that the respondents' political opinions are relatively well formed.

Table 2. Output analysis Anova

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
ANOVAb					
Regression	21.347	1	21.347	163.54	0.000
Residual	25.067	410	0.061		
Total	46.414	411			

Source: results of data analysis with SPSS 27

Based on the regression analysis results in Table 2, it is known that the calculated F value is 163.54 with a significance level of 0.000. This significance value is much smaller than the error tolerance limit of 0.05, so it can be concluded that the regression model used in this study is simultaneously significant. This means that the variables of mass communication intensity collectively have a significant influence on the formation of public opinion among voters in the 2024 Presidential Election in Indonesia. In other words, mass communication intensity, which consists of exposure frequency, duration of media use, attention to political content, and the number of media accessed, plays an important role in shaping the political perceptions and attitudes of the public. The Mean Square Regression value of 21.347, which is much higher than the Mean Square Residual of 0.061, shows that this model has a good ability to explain the variations that occur in the formation of public opinion. These results indicate that mass communication, both through traditional and digital media, as a whole contributes significantly to the process of shaping public opinion and the direction of people's political choices in the context of elections.

Table 3. Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0.678	0.460	0.458	0.36145

Source: results of data analysis with SPSS 27

The regression results presented in Table 3 demonstrate a substantial explanatory capacity of mass communication intensity in shaping public opinion among voters in the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. The correlation coefficient (R = 0.678) indicates a strong and positive relationship between media exposure and opinion formation, suggesting that increased frequency, duration, and attentiveness to political media content are associated with more clearly articulated and consolidated political opinions. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.460) reveals that nearly half of the variance in public opinion formation is accounted for by mass communication intensity. This magnitude of explanatory power is considerable within social science research, particularly in the context of political communication, where individual attitudes are often shaped by multiple interacting social, psychological, and contextual factors. The findings therefore underscore the central role of mass media both conventional and digital as a dominant structural force in contemporary electoral politics.

The robustness of the regression model is further supported by the Adjusted R^2 value of 0.458, which closely approximates the R^2 value, indicating minimal estimation bias and confirming the stability of the model despite variations in sample characteristics.

Additionally, the relatively low Standard Error of the Estimate (0.36145) suggests that the model demonstrates satisfactory predictive accuracy in explaining public opinion formation based on media intensity. Nevertheless, the unexplained proportion of variance (54%) highlights the influence of additional determinants, such as political predispositions, media trust, interpersonal communication, and levels of media literacy. This finding implies that while mass communication intensity functions as a significant and powerful predictor, its effects are embedded within a broader ecosystem of sociopolitical influences, reinforcing the need for integrative models in future research on electoral opinion formation in digital democracies.

Table 4. Regression Equation Output

			Coefficients^a			
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.214	0.121	-	10.033	0.000
Intensity of Mass Communication (X)	0.695	0.054	0.678	12.787	0.000

Source: results of data analysis with SPSS 27

The constant value (intercept) of 1.214 indicates that if the Mass Communication Intensity variable (X) is zero, then the dependent variable (Y) is predicted to be 1.214. The regression coefficient for the Mass Communication Intensity variable is 0.695, which means that every one-unit increase in mass communication intensity will increase the value of Y by 0.695, assuming other variables remain constant.

The t-value of 12.787 is much greater than the t-table value, and the significance value (Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05) indicates that Mass Communication Intensity (X) has a significant effect on the dependent variable (Y). Thus, it can be concluded that the higher the intensity of mass communication, the greater the increase in the dependent variable being studied. The Beta value of 0.678 also reinforces that the effect is strong and positive.

Discussion

The results of the study shown in Table 3 indicate that the Mass Communication Intensity variable (X) has a significant effect on Public Opinion Formation (Y). The constant value of 1.214 shows that when the intensity of mass communication is zero, public opinion formation still has a base value of 1.214. This means that even without exposure to mass communication, people still have basic views or opinions formed from social, cultural, or personal experience factors. However, when the intensity of mass communication increases, public opinion will develop more strongly and be directed according to the information and messages conveyed through the media.

The regression coefficient of 0.695 indicates that every one-unit increase in the intensity of mass communication will increase the formation of public opinion by 0.695 units. This value confirms that the more often individuals are exposed to the media, whether through television, radio, newspapers, or social media, the stronger their tendency to form opinions on political issues, especially those related to the 2024 Presidential Election. This fact reinforces the theory that the mass media functions not only as a channel of information but also as an agent that shapes the political perceptions of society. The media, through the presentation of information and the attribution of meaning to political events, is able to direct the public's way of thinking and evaluating presidential candidates, political parties,

and specific policy issues.

The calculated t-value of 12.787 with a significance of 0.000 shows a very strong and significant effect. Since the significance value is well below 0.05, the research hypothesis is accepted. This means that there is a positive and significant relationship between the intensity of mass communication and the formation of public opinion. These results show that mass communication plays an important role in mediating the interaction between political messages and message recipients, whereby people who are frequently exposed to the media are quicker to form perceptions about certain candidates or issues. The Beta value of 0.678 indicates that the strength of the influence of mass communication on the formation of public opinion is in the strong category, and the direction of the influence is positive. In other words, the higher the intensity of mass communication, the greater the likelihood that the public will form opinions in line with the messages or information they consume.

This finding is consistent with Agenda Setting and Framing Theory, which states that the media has the ability to determine which issues are considered important by the public and how these issues should be understood (Dalila & Purnama, 2020). When the media continuously highlights an issue, the public will consider that issue to be important. In the context of the 2024 Presidential Election, the media, which presents campaign news, candidate debates, and certain public policy issues, has directly and indirectly shaped public perception of the presidential candidates. Thus, exposure to political media can shape voters' political preferences by reinforcing the image of candidates and influencing public opinion.

In addition, the results of this study also support Gerbner's Cultivation theory, which explains that repeated exposure to the media over a long period of time can shape a person's perception of social reality (Kirana, 2022). When the public is constantly exposed to positive news about a presidential candidate, for example, they will internalise the perception that the candidate is competent, honest, and worthy of leadership. Conversely, repeated negative coverage can shape antipathy towards other candidates. Therefore, the results of this study confirm that the intensity of mass communication not only affects the cognitive level (knowledge) but also the affective aspects (feelings and attitudes) of voters.

Interestingly, in the context of the digital age, the results of this study also confirm the role of social media as an integral part of modern mass communication. Social media such as Instagram, TikTok, and X (Twitter) are the main sources of political information for young voters. Millennial and Gen Z voters, who dominate the 2024 voter population, are active, visual, and responsive to fast information (El Qudsi & Syamtar, 2020). The intensity of exposure to political content on social media, whether in the form of short videos, memes, or infographics, greatly influences their opinions and political choices. This means that the frequency of interaction with digital media is a key indicator in shaping the political opinions of the younger generation.

This study also shows that 46% of the variation in public opinion formation can be explained by the variable of mass communication intensity. This means that almost half of the process of forming public opinion among voters in the context of the 2024 Presidential Election is influenced by how often, how long, and how intensely they access information from the mass media. The remaining 54% is likely influenced by other factors such as personal political experience, social interaction, cultural values, and trust in the media and government. Nevertheless, the 46% proportion shows a substantial influence and confirms

that mass communication has a powerful effect on shaping the political views of Indonesian society.

In the socio-political context of Indonesia, these findings illustrate that the media has a dual role: as a conveyor of information and a shaper of socio-political reality. The media can be an instrument of political education if used wisely and objectively, but it can also be a tool of propaganda if the information conveyed is laden with certain interests. The phenomenon of media bias, for example, can cause polarisation of public opinion. Some media outlets that side with certain candidates will shape narratives that support the image of those candidates, while other media outlets may do the opposite. This condition reinforces the view that mass communication is not only informative but also ideological, as it can strengthen or weaken political legitimacy through selective reporting.

These results also have practical implications for political candidates and election organisers. For candidates, these results emphasise the importance of effective mass communication strategies to build a positive image and expand the reach of political messages. Communication strategies must pay attention to content, frequency, and the channels used in order to reach various segments of voters, especially the younger generation who are more active on digital media (Kusuma et al., 2023). Meanwhile, for election organisers, these results indicate the need for stronger media literacy among the public so that they are able to distinguish between factual information and disinformation. Media literacy is key to ensuring that public opinion is formed based on accurate and rational information, rather than on emotions or misleading issues.

In addition, this study also contributes theoretically to enriching the study of political communication in Indonesia. In a democratic society, the media is not merely a tool for conveying information, but also a discursive space where the public forms collective political awareness. Mass communication enables the public to actively participate in the democratic process through the dissemination and exchange of ideas. However, for this function to work properly, media actors must have an ethical responsibility to maintain the integrity and accuracy of information. The public must also be smart consumers of information, not just passively receiving media messages, but also independently criticising, verifying and interpreting them.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that mass communication, both through traditional and digital media, has a significant and constructive influence on the formation of public opinion among voters in the 2024 Presidential Election. The high intensity of media exposure encourages the public to be more politically aware, although at the same time it can increase the risk of polarisation if not balanced with critical literacy. Thus, this study underlines the importance of balancing the power of the media as an agent of social change with the public's responsibility to filter information. Only with critical awareness and wise use of the media can public opinion be formed in a healthy, objective manner that supports a mature democratic process in Indonesia.

Conclusion

Mass communication plays a very important role in shaping public opinion. Through various media, both traditional such as television, radio, and newspapers, as well as more modern social media, information can be disseminated quickly and widely to the public. The mass media not only disseminates information, but can also influence the public's

perspective on certain issues through framing or emphasising certain aspects of events. This shows that the media has the power to shape public perceptions that can influence actions and policies.

In addition, social media has a significant impact on shaping public opinion and increasing public participation. Platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram allow individuals to share their views and information directly, creating a more inclusive and interactive space for discussion. However, although social media accelerates the process of shaping public opinion, challenges such as polarisation, disinformation, and information fragmentation are also issues that need to be watched out for, as they can disrupt the quality of public participation and exacerbate differences in views.

Overall, the mass media, including social media, plays a central role in shaping public opinion and in encouraging active public participation in various social and political processes. In modern societies characterised by rapid and widespread information flows, the media is not only a provider of information but also acts as an actor capable of influencing public perceptions, attitudes, and even collective actions on certain issues. The media's influence in shaping opinion is enormous, as it is capable of creating dominant narratives that form the basis for the public in assessing social situations, responding to government policies, or determining political choices. In this context, the media has a strategic role in the process of democratisation, community empowerment, and sustainable social change. Therefore, it is important for every element of society, whether individuals, institutions, or the government, to not only be passive consumers of information, but also to be critical, wise, and responsible users of the media. Information disseminated in the media must be managed properly, especially in terms of accuracy, valid sources, and context, so that public participation is not based on misinformation or hoaxes that can mislead opinion and damage the social order. Thus, the media can continue to play its role as a pillar of a healthy democracy and serve as a bridge between the public and policymakers in shaping decisions that are fair, participatory, and oriented towards the common good.

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