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Gen Z voter behavior in the 2024 presidential election: A virtual ethnographic study on the *Instagram* accounts of presidential candidates

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Abstract

The 2024 presidential and vice-presidential general election is a topic that is being highlighted by the public, including young voters or what could be called Gen Z. The use of Instagram media by three presidential candidates to launch self-introductions and election campaigns is a reference for Gen Z voters in providing comments and assessment. This research aims to determine the behavior of Gen Z voters in the 2024 presidential election using qualitative ethnographic methods and descriptive analysis. The findings of this study show that Gen Z's behavior in responding to the 2024 presidential election includes two behaviors, namely rational and irrational. The rational behavior of Gen Z is shown by assessing the vision and mission of the presidential candidate pair and their track record of achievements. In contrast, the irrational behavior of Gen Z voters is shown by assessing the presidential candidate pair based on exciting content or popularity, even though it lacks substance. Therefore, these findings contribute to the development of user-based discourse that can deconstruct the dominance of discourse by those in power. This aligns with Islamic communication values in the form of 'freedom of action,' which guarantees each individual to accept or reject a discourse.

Abstrak

Pemilihan umum presiden dan wakil presiden 2024 menjadi topik yang disoroti oleh khalayak, termasuk para pemilih muda atau bisa disebut Gen Z. Penggunaan media instagram oleh tiga kandidat calon presiden untuk melancarkan pengenalan diri dan kampanye pemilu menjadi rujukan pemilih gen Z dalam memberikan komentar dan penilaian. Riset ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui perilaku pemilih Gen Z pada Pilpres 2024, dengan menggunakan metode kualitatif netnografis dan analisis deskriptif. Hasil temuan kajian ini menunjukkan bahwa perilaku Gen Z dalam menyikapi Pilpres 2024 meliputi dua perilaku, yaitu perilaku rasional dan irasional. Perilaku rasional Gen Z ditampilkan dengan menilai visi dan misi pasangan calon presiden serta track record prestasinya., sedangkan perilaku irasional pemilih Gen Z ditunjukkan dengan memberikan penilaian kepada pasangan calon presiden berdasarkan konten yang menarik atau kepopuleran meskipun minim substansi. Oleh karena itu, temuan ini berkontribusi bagi pengembangan wacana berbasis pengguna yang dapat mendekonstruksi dominasi wacana oleh penguasa. Hal ini sejalan dengan nilai-nilai komunikasi Islam berupa 'kebebasan berbuat' yang menjamin setiap individu untuk menerima atau menolak suatu wacana.

Kata kunci
Generasi Z; perilaku pemilih; pemilihan presiden 2024; akun Instagram

INTRODUCTION

Gen Z Indonesia has its criteria for determining its choice as the leader it seeks. The results of a survey conducted by the IDN Research Institute stated that most Gen Z considers vision and mission to be the essential things leaders must have. Apart from that, integrity or not corruption with a proportion of 78 percent and political experience. A leader's background is essential, while the popularity factor is the third lowest in determining the criteria for a leader (Muhammad, 2023). This reality shows that Gen Z will search first when choosing, looking for the candidate pair's vision, mission, integrity, and political experience, as seen in Figure 1. This aligns with the stages of consumer behavior before deciding to vote in the 2024 presidential election. Popularity is the final factor in Gen Z's decision-making.

Interestingly, most voters will be young or beginners in the 2024 General Election *(Pemilu).* Generation Z dominates Indonesia's population. Gen Z is 74.94 million people, or the equivalent of 27.94% of Indonesia's total population. The development of technology and information accompanies the development of Gen Z, making them inseparable from the digital world and technology. Their lives cannot be separated from

social media because of its interactive features and the information they obtain (Jiao et al., 2013).
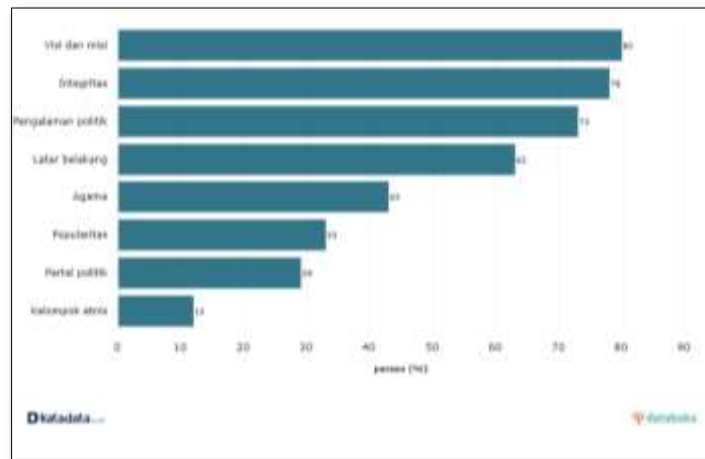
Figure 1. What Gen Z Indonesia looks for in a leader (2022)

Generation Z comprises those aged between 15 and 24 years. Gen Z in Indonesia has unique and different characteristics than their predecessors, namely Gen AdReaction Kantar research results show that Gen Z spends most of their time on smartphones (Hinduan et al., 2020). Gen Z spends more time accessing social media than any other age group. Mc Kinsey survey results show that 58 percent of Gen Z respondents spend more than an hour browsing social media. In detail, 35 percent access social media for more than 2 hours, and 23 percent access 1-2 hours daily (Pratiwi, 2023). Gen Z's intensive use of social media is due to fear of missing out (FOMO) or missing out on information that is trending and being discussed by their friends, which causes anxiety (Roberts & David, 2020).

Effective communication is when there is a similarity in meaning between the communicator and the communicator, so it is essential for a communicator to know the audience in order to achieve effective communication (Mulyana, 2002). In the context of the presidential election, what presidential candidate pairs need to pay attention to so that young voters can choose them is the need to know the behavior of Generation Z consumers. One is using social media and branding carried out by them to convey various information related to their vision, mission, and activities. Candidate pairs via social media and straighten out the many hoaxes that have emerged in the 2024 presidential election.

The results of research conducted by the Study Center for Strategic and International Studies show that the participation rate of young voters is still relatively

high. In the 2014 presidential election, 85.9% of young voters participated. In the 2019 presidential election, the number of young voters participating was 91.3% using their voting rights (Annur, 2019). This political participation shows the enthusiasm of young people that they have the awareness to participate in politics. The increase in political participation among young people cannot be separated from the role of candidates' use of social media in inviting young voters to exercise their right to vote.

The voter list is final for the 2024 Election with 204,807,222 voters. Generation Z and millennials dominate most voters—the millennial generation has 66,882,389 voters or 33.60 percent of voters. Meanwhile, Generation Z has 46,800,161 voters or the equivalent of 22.85% of the total DPT for the 2024 Election. Millennials are those born from 1995 to the 2000s. Even though they are not the most significant number of voters, they need the right communication strategy to target Gen Z.

Presidential candidate pairs need to implement a communication strategy so that young voter participation continues to increase in the 2024 Election. Communication is a process where an idea is transferred from a source to one or more recipients to influence the recipient's behavior (Rogers, 1995). The aim of the communication carried out by the candidates to young voters is to change their behavior from not using their right to vote to using their right to vote. In order to achieve communication goals, public relations are needed.

The Presidential Candidate Pairs in the 2024 Election consist of three pairs of candidates. The results of KPU Decision No. 1644 of 2023 are Candidate Pair No. 1, namely H.Anies Rasyid Baswedan, Ph.D and Dr. (H.C.) A. Muhaimin Iskandar. Candidate Pair No. 2 is H. Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka. Meanwhile, Candidate Pair number 3 is H. Ganjar Pranowo, S.H., M. I. P, and Prof. Dr. H. M. Mahfud MD. This research will look at the behavior of Gen Z consumers in voting by observing the Instagram social media accounts used by candidate pairs to communicate with their potential voters.

Research that discusses Gen Z in the Election and looks at Gen Z's media patterns in searching for political information. This research shows that politics is not the primary preference in using social media. Gen Z continues to look for information about politics, and the source of information comes from social media. Gen Z considers the value of authenticity, reputation, and credibility of candidate pairs important. This research shows the importance of managing social media for presidential candidates.

Another study about Instagram and the political literacy of Gen Z showed that Gen Z was born in the era of digital technology development. So, their characteristic is that they are more technologically literate or accustomed to using gadgets, including accessing social media. Gen Z needs to have political literacy. Political literacy through

Instagram makes Gen Z have good political knowledge. As novice voters, Gen Z can determine political rights well (Beriansyah & Qibtiyah, 2023).

Apart from that, there is another study on the use of Instagram and Gen Z's political communication in the 2019 Presidential election, which has been carried out with the results that there are four characteristics of Gen Z in using Instagram as a source of information and political communication media, namely: unengaged user, exclude user, passive user, and active user which depends on the combination of political orientation and the level of efficacy they have. Even though Gen Z is interested in political developments, they avoid political debates in virtual spaces by not commenting, resharing, or modifying political information. This is done because they do not want to leave digital traces; they tend to discuss it with friends and family (El Qudsi et al., 2020).

Research related to factor analysis of regional election decision-making by the Millennial Generation in Bogor Regency has previously been carried out. The results of this research show that three factors are taken into consideration by the millennial generation in selecting leaders namely personal factors, psychological factors, and cultural factors. The leading indicator is choosing a candidate with a work program that provides new job opportunities for the community (Fernanda & Kartika, 2021).

The novelty of this article is that it discusses consumer behavior for voters in the 2024 election, especially by using a virtual ethnographic study to see the voter behavior shown by Generation Z on the Instagram accounts of each pair of 2024 presidential candidates. Apart from that, this study will discuss the communication strategy used by each presidential candidate using media adapted to Generation Z, who cannot be separated from social media. Based on that, this research aims to see how Gen Z consumers behave in Indonesia, especially regarding voting behavior. This article will use virtual ethnography to examine the communication and cultural patterns that emerge in their interactions on social media, especially Instagram. The presidential and vice-presidential candidate pairs in the 2024 election are aware of this, so this article will also analyze the strategies they use to attract the votes of young people via Instagram.

METHODS

This research is descriptive qualitative research looking at the consumer behavior of prospective voters. Consumer behavior studies are usually used to examine a product. However, this article will discuss it in the form of voter behavior. Qualitative methodology explores and understands the meaning of individuals or groups who perceive social problems (Darmawan et al., 2019). The case study chosen is the voting behavior shown by Gen Z in using social media, especially Instagram.

The approach used is virtual ethnography. In its analysis, case studies look at contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts. The boundaries between phenomena and context are invisible (Robert et al., 2020). The primary data sources in this article are posts on each account of pair number 1, namely @aniesbaswe and @cakiminow, presidential candidate pair number 2, namely @prabowo and @gibran_rakabuming, and presidential candidate pair number 3, namely @ganjar_pranowo and @mohmahfudmd, then analyzed the communication strategy which is used to target Gen Z through Instagram.

The concept used is the AISAS concept. AISAS was first introduced by Dentsu in 2004; this model was developed to see behavior based on the understanding that the internet has become large and consumers have access to an environment for obtaining and sending information. The AISAS model consists of attention when consumers first see the product, followed by interest. Next, consumers will find (search) information and then make a purchase (action), and the information is shared (share) (Sugiyama, 2011; Wisnu & Hapsari, 2016). This AISAS model relies on the role of the Internet for disseminating product and service information (Devi, 2020). AISAS has been proven to have a dominant influence on decision-making (Johar, 2015).

Gen Z gets political information incidentally from social media. However, they have good digital skills, so they look deeper and verify the information or search for the truth on search engines or the internet. The vital role of social media for Gen Z means that Public Relations needs to play an essential role in building the branding of each presidential candidate pair. Public Relations is a strategic communication process that builds mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their public (Heath, 2013; Satma & Putri, 2019; Macnamara et al., 2016). By using the AISAS concept, this article will look at the process of Generation Z's acceptance of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates who appeared on social media.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Gen Z consumer behavior in Indonesian politics

Consumer behavior is defined as actions that occur by directly participating in the stages of obtaining, consuming (using), and spending (using) products and services, including the processes that precede and follow these actions (Mowen, 2002). Consumer behavior is divided into two, namely, rational and irrational consumer behavior. Rational consumer behavior is when consumers choose goods or services whose quality is guaranteed, choose products based on their needs, choose goods and services whose prices are by the consumer's capabilities, and choose goods that provide optimal use and benefits for consumers. Irrational consumer behavior is when consumers choose goods

that are branded and known to the broader community based on prestige and are quickly attracted by advertisements and promotions in electronic or print media (Febriani, 2019).

In the context of selecting potential leaders, there are various behaviors. Some voters are rational by looking for various information from each potential leader, looking at the vision and mission and the programs being offered. In this election, what is interesting is that prospective voters can see their track record because the candidate is a regional leader. So, Gen Z voters who use rationality will look at the track record, vision, and mission being promoted. Candidates for regional leadership understand this need, so they use Instagram to build their branding and communicate their vision and mission. In contrast to irrational potential voters, they choose leaders because of their popularity and interesting content strategies, and their messages are not too severe but use other elaborations.

Kotler makes the purchasing decision flow starting with buyers realizing there is a need problem where they realize there are desired conditions and actual conditions. Then, interest grew and encouraged him to search for information to get a brand collection with its features. Information sources can be obtained from personal, commercial, public, and experience sources. After getting information, consumers will filter the information. After that, evaluate alternatives before buying the product (Nofri & Hafifah, 2018).

This is also applied to the flow of voting decisions, for example, using messages that will later be communicated, one of which is the Anis-Amin pair, which *uses #AminAjaDulu* and *#Change* for rational voters. Meanwhile, one of the irrational strategies was used by the Prabowo-Gibran pair, who used *"Gemoy"* content to get attention and build a persona.

Use of *Instagram* by 2024 presidential candidates

Gen Z cannot be separated from technology and social media use. This includes using social media as a source of information to find out about their political literacy. This phenomenon shows consumer behavior used by voters. Alternatively, we call it consumer behavior in determining their choice in the 2024 presidential election.

Consumer behavior is defined as actions that occur by directly participating in the stages of obtaining, consuming (using), and spending (using) products and services, including the processes that precede and follow these actions (Mowen, 2002). Kotler defines consumer behavior as the study of the units and stages of decision-making

involved in receiving, using, and determining goods, services, and ideas. In this context, voter behavior will determine the factors and stages used to determine a choice.

Consumer behavior is influenced by many factors, such as cultural factors consisting of sub-culture and social class, social factors consisting of reference groups, family, role, and status; the third factor is personal factors consisting of age, occupation, economic situation, personality, and style. Life and the final factor are psychological factors consisting of motivation, perception, learning, and memory (Shree et al., 2018).

Consumer behavior can also be seen in the behavior of voters in Indonesia. Before choosing, voters will examine various factors attached to the presidential candidate. The characteristics of Gen Z voters in Indonesia are also influenced by various factors such as cultural and social class factors, reference groups, and psychological factors.

The research focused on Instagram accounts because a survey conducted by APJII showed that 80 percent of internet users were generally the younger generation aged 25-29 and 15-19 years old, with a percentage of 64%. 89% of Instagram users in Indonesia are the younger generation. The primary users of Instagram are Gen Z, who were born and raised in the digital era with various complete and sophisticated technologies. The use of this technology then impacts the development of behavior and personality, including the use of social networks (APJII, 2020).

The media has a role in a political system that continues to develop. Political leaders use the media to send thousands of messages to the millions of people who follow them on Instagram. Messages through images show how Instagram influences the way political leaders' campaign, govern, and create relationships with their people. Politicians interact with their followers to improve services or share personal opinions. When connected to the internet, political activity will focus on the frequency of respondents accessing political information, the type of media used to access political information, and the various types of political information accessed (Beriansyah & Qibtiyah, 2023). It was also done by the presidential and vice-presidential candidates who knew the importance of using social media to target Gen Z and build their branding.

Figure 2 shows several Instagram accounts for each pair of presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Based on the number of followers, it turns out that the @prabowo account is in first place with the most followers, namely 6.7 million, followed by @ Ganjarpranowo with 6.4 million followers, and @aniesbaswedan with 6.2 million followers. For the vice-presidential candidate, the most followers are @cakiminnow with 2.3 million followers, followed by the @gibran_ rakabuming account with 1.4 million followers, and the @mohmahfudmd account with 1.2 million followers. Each candidate pair uses Instagram to send messages, convey their opinions, and get feedback from their followers. Apart from that, Instagram is a suitable social media to use as branding to attract the voices of young people.
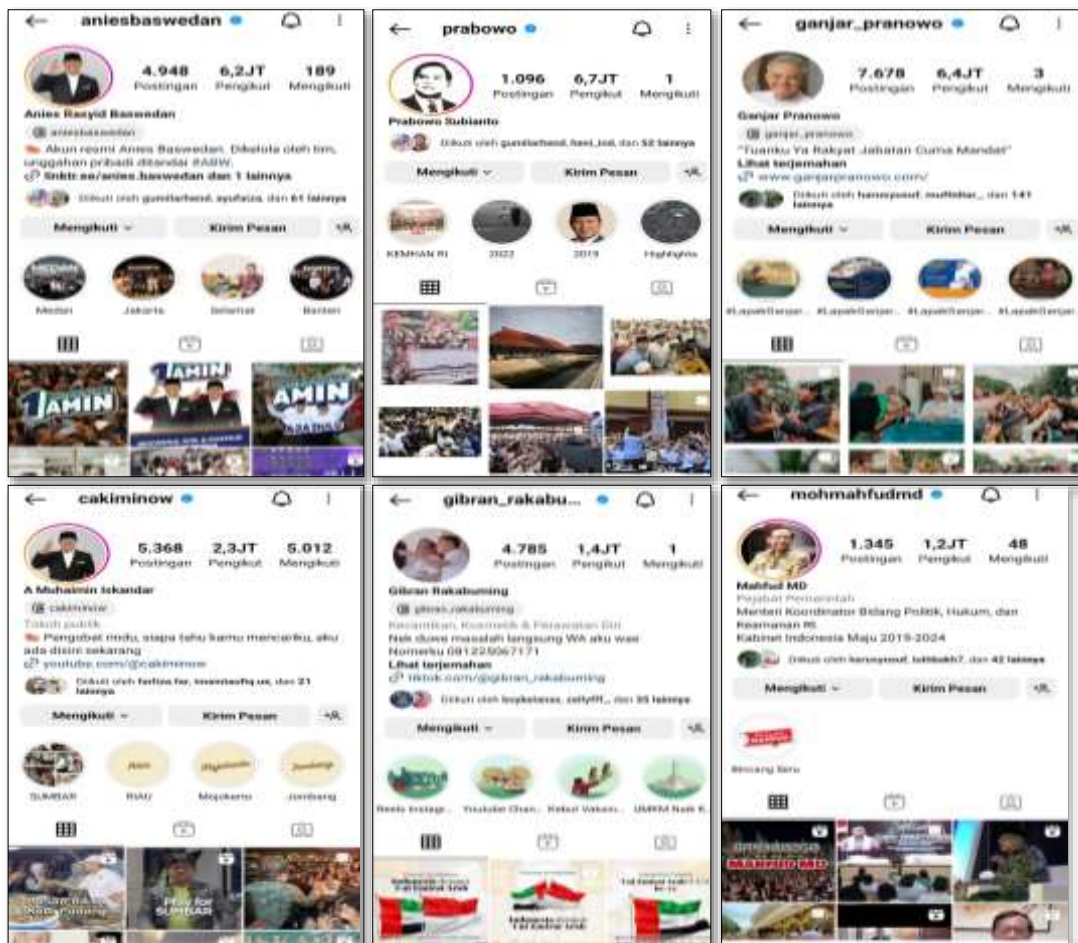
Figure 2. Instagram accounts for each pair of presidential and vice-presidential candidates

Comments on *Instagram* candidate pair number 01

Candidate pair number 1's Instagram, namely @aniesbaswedan and @cakiminnow, use the exact attributes. The AMIN couple uses matching profile photos and the same style to show solidarity. The number of posts also shows that they actively communicate about their activities. Instagram @aniesbaswedan also embedded the post 1AMIN, Indonesia is fair and prosperous for everyone. This couple chose this tagline; the hashtags used were *#AMINAjaDulu #AMINuntukIndonesia #AMIN#.* There were 292.2 thousand likes and 15.6 thousand comments on this post, as seen in Figure 3.

This pair is the first pair to declare as a presidential and vice-presidential candidate. His Instagram highlights contain the cities he has visited. Instagram is used to convey several messages and carry out activities, some specifically for young people, namely *the #Desak* program, which contains discussions with young people in various cities. Most posts are about

good discussions with young people, with the Indonesian Journalists Association, activities with Ulama, family, work achievements in leading the region, vision and mission, and solidarity for Palestine.

Anies' uploads from November to December 2023 received the most likes, and the posts related to Palestinian solidarity received 382 thousand likes and 10.4 thousand comments. Interestingly, even though comments supporting other couples were still found on Anies Baswedan's Instagram, there were also many comments from his supporters. The number of posts with *#AminAjaDulu* is 24,896. Unlike his partner, Instagram @cakiminnow does not have pin posts about *Amin*, but his posts also use *#AMINAjadulu.* His Instagram contains visits to various cities; there is also a segment aimed at Gen Z, namely *SlepetImin,* which contains words for young people about today.

There are comments on Anies' posts that have a negative and satirical narrative, but there are also positive ones that support the activities or programs carried out by Anies Baswedan. In the post about Anies Baswedan riding a motorbike, one of them is a comment from @ilhamaufag who commented regarding his support that "Anies Baswedan is truly popular and straightforward," in line with the comments of @linaespriani, who shared his experience of seeing Anis often when he was governor using a motorbike.

Comments submitted by netizens on the Anis account are feedback and a consumer behavior process by potential voters. Before deciding to vote, Gen Z will go through several stages, namely finding out first or searching for information and sharing their experiences and political support.

Figure 3. Comments on the Instagram account of candidate pair number 1

Comments on *Instagram* candidate pair number 02

The candidate pair for president and vice president number 2 is Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming. Interestingly, even though Prabowo is the oldest presidential candidate, he has the most followers. @prabowo has 6.7 million followers. Prabowo does not post too many posts on his Instagram, namely only 1,098 of his Instagram highlights about the Indonesian Ministry of Defense, 2022, 209, and highlights. The Reels video on Instagram with the most views, likes, and comments is the video of Prabowo Subiyanto's visit to Makasar, with 8.4 million views and 979,957 likes. Meanwhile, the most liked post from November to December was Prabowo and Gibran's on November 14, 2023, with 1.6 million likes and 46.7 comments. The hashtag used is *#2 #PrabowoGibran #BersamaIndonesiaMaju*, as seen in Figure 4.

The posts displayed on Prabowo's Instagram are his activities ranging from meeting with young people, visits to the ulama, watching football, activities to become Minister of Defense, activities with influencers such as Iko Uwais and Nagita Slavina as well as Raffi Ahmad, Fuji, and other influencers, etc. Interestingly, there was a change in Prabowo's brand persona. Initially, the image built was fierce because of Prabowo's role as Minister of Defense and his previous experience as a soldier. However, as a personal branding expert, branding was reversed in the political contestation, from patriotic personal branding to a gentle person who carries the *"Gemoy"* narrative in his character. This is one of the strategies used to target young people; G*emoy* is used to depict something cute. Through *"Gemoy,"* Prabowo gained the perception and personification of a social, fun, youthful, and relevant figure.

Gibran Rakabuming is much more active on Instagram than his partner, Pak Prabowo. There are 4,785 posts on Instagram. The design of the Instagram posts is also more organized, with one of its characteristics being animated designs. However, there are not many posts related to the presidential election campaign; many posts contain activities and agendas for the city of Solo, where Gibran is the mayor of Solo. Instagram also displays information regarding the TikTok account used and the number for excellent service. The highlights on the homepage contain Instagram reels, YouTube channels, vaccines, MSMEs, Mider Praja, *Blusukan,* and The Spot and Report *Mas Wali.*

Some of the comments displayed by Gen Z on Prabowo's account supported other candidate pairs, but many also expressed their support for this candidate pair. Some of them are the @ovacx_Stoner account, which conveyed its comments on Prabowo's post regarding his condolences for General Doni Monardo. The comments conveyed were related to Rohingya refugees, who, according to him, would be a threat to the people of Aceh. This comment was made in the context of Prabowo's role as Minister of Defense. This is a form of rational consumer behavior because it conveys its desires to the desired potential leaders.

In contrast to other comments posted, one of Prabowo's posts on November 30, 2023, was about his activities inviting young Indonesians who are influencers. One of the comments submitted by @gabutpokoknya_ in his comments said, "*Cipung* has intervened, guys. Come on, *Cipung* people, you know who to vote for." @robi_mr also submitted a comment with the comment "*Tombol* Prabowo-*Cipung-Gemoy*." From some of these comments, we can see irrational consumer behavior because they use the popularity of influencers and *Cipung* to vote.
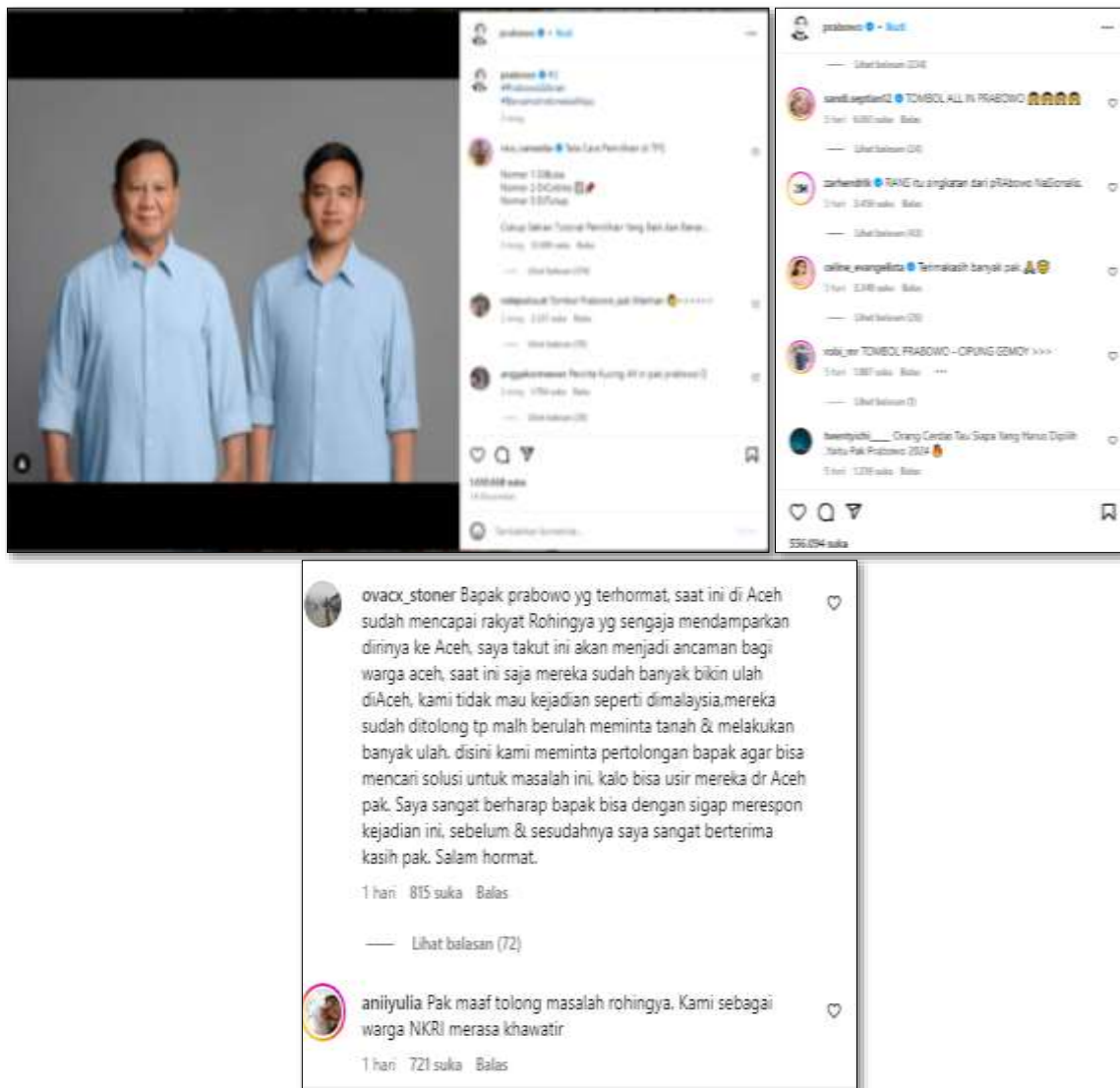

Figure 4. Comments on Instagram candidate pair number 2

Comments on *Instagram* candidate pair number 03

Candidate pair for president and vice president number 3 is Ganjar Pranowo and Mahfud MD. The Instagram account @ganjar_pranowo has 6.4 million followers with 7,682 posts. Ganjar actively posts on his Instagram, as seen in his profile description. Ganjar uses the tagline *"Tuanku Ya Rakyat, Jabatan hanya mandat."* The highlight on his Instagram also contains Lapak Ganjar, a program previously used to introduce MSMEs. Ganjar's Instagram post contains activities during the campaign, such as visits to various regions. Interestingly, when visiting Ganjar, he used attributes appropriate to the existing culture; apart from that, he also posted to Papua. Another post is that Ganjar is in a crowd of supporters and uses a three-finger salute. Apart from the posts containing harmonious families, Alam Ganjar seems to be one of the strategies to attract Gen Z votes. Some posts convey a "people's" message by communicating with other voter segments, such as truck drivers or when walking to greet residents. One of the posts with the most likes is the post of Ganjar chatting with a truck driver in Lampung, which received 1 million likes from Instagram users.

The post displayed by Ganjar about interactions with the community or people from all regions in Indonesia is an implementation of the tagline in his post, *"Tuanku Ya Rakyat Jabatan hanya Mandate."* Ganjar's activities regarding the vision and activities carried out are aimed at rational voters. Meanwhile, rational voters conveyed the message about family, especially the post featuring Alam Ganjar, to attract Gen Z votes with Alam's popularity. Apart from that, in several posts, Ganjar also shows his activities by appearing with young people who are influencers, such as @ayutingting and also enlivening the launch of the film Sherina's Adventure. Apart from that, several posts blend in with the community and the people. One of Ganjar's "characteristics" in his posts is the caption about his activities, and he sometimes uses a "joking" and human-interest approach.

Some of the comments submitted by Gen Z netizens, as seen in Figure 5, were positive and negative, including @ijesan's comment regarding Respect for Alam Ganjar for being intellectual. This differs from the @doolabels account, whose comments compare Alam with Kaesang and Gibran. Another comment related to Ganjar was from the @elkartc account, which commented about Ganjar being a popular leader, as seen in Figure 5. Meanwhile, the @mohmahfudmd account is followed by 1.2 million followers with 1,348 posts. The posts also contain activities such as Mahfud MD going home and several posts in young people's language, such as Mahfud MD graduating again.
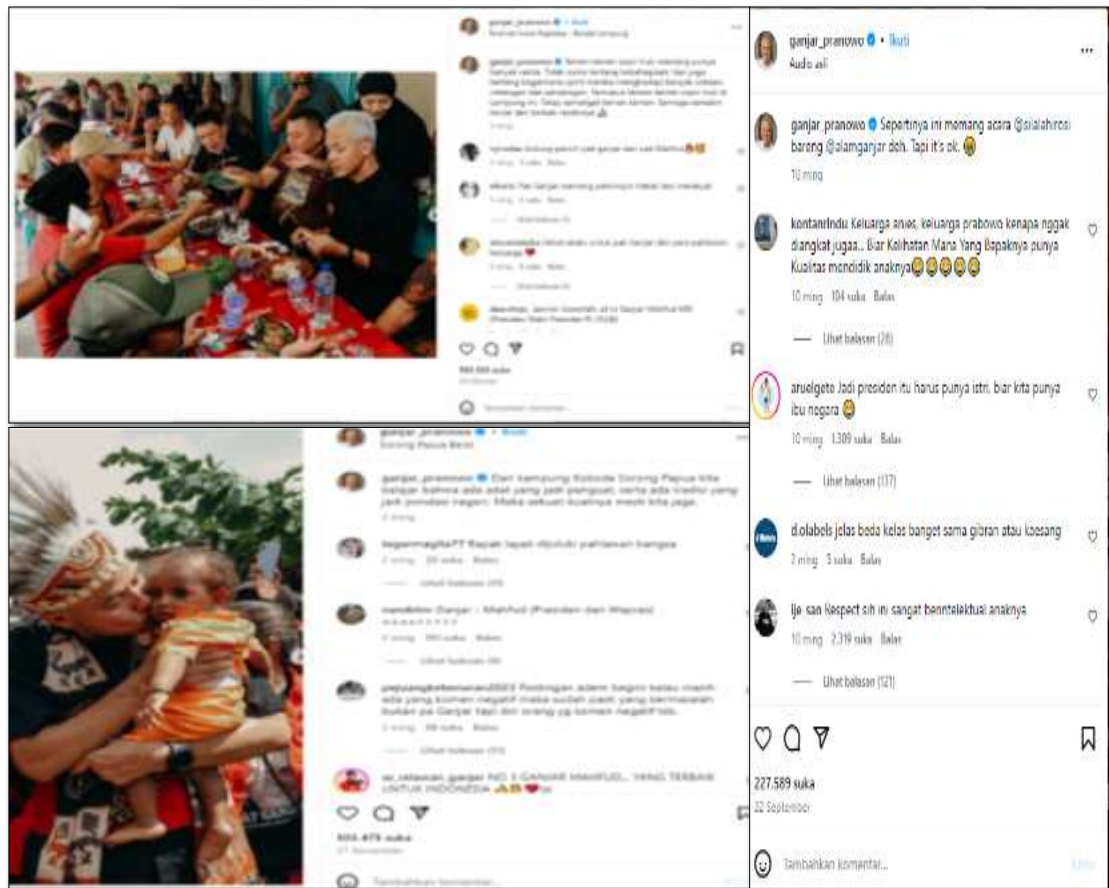
Figure 5. Comments on Instagram candidate pair number 3

Discussion on AISAS in Gen Z decision

The AISAS model is used in decision-making in choosing products and services and in choosing presidential and vice-presidential candidate pairs in the 2024 elections. The Aisas model consists of *Attention* when consumers first see the product and are followed by *Interest.* Next, consumers will find information *(Search)* and then make a purchase *(Action),* and the information is shared *(Share)*(Sugiyama, 2011).

The use of Instagram by candidate pairs is used for attention stages or to introduce candidate pairs to Gen Z, such as vision and mission, campaign messages, and introducing the candidate pair's superior programs. The audience's attention is paid to advertising/marketing communication messages at this stage. This stage introduces candidate pairs to voters through Integrated Marketing Communication and Public Relations activities. IMC activities are carried out by placing billboards and political advertisements in conventional and social media.

The second stage is enjoyable, which is the communication strategy used by the candidate pair so that voters are interested in knowing more about the candidate pair

(Xue et al., 2021). In political contestation, this is applied in forming political messages for candidate pairs, such as *#AminAjaDulu* for candidate pair Anis Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar. The political message *#Gemoy* or the Prabowo-Gibran advertisement uses AI and the Advanced Indonesian Generation program with its free lunch and milk. Meanwhile, the candidate paired Ganjar-Mahfud with their campaign message *"Sat Set, Tas Test."* The communication strategy uses two information channels: a central channel that conveys the vision and mission and a peripheral channel with an attractive *"jingle"* or tagline (Fitri & Muhajarah, 2021).

The next stage is searching for information from voters on their initiative to get to know the candidate pair more deeply. The information search stage is strengthened by new media that facilitates voters to search for information on the internet and social media. It is also due to a shift in media consumption patterns, which now favors choosing messages rather than passively receiving them. One way is through social media because providing exciting information in the form of posts will attract the attention of netizens and influence social media. In response, all candidate pairs used social media to campaign (Abdurrahim et al., 2019).

The next stage is determining the choice or action. After that, voters will also share information to support the candidate pairs who voted for them. In Gen Z, this can be seen from the presence of volunteers from each candidate pair and their activeness in providing reviews and comments on each candidate pair's social media. Besides volunteers, candidate pairs also use influencers and voters to share promotional content and provide comments to increase each candidate pair's followers.

The openness of the digital space allows Generation Z to accept and reject certain potential partners. This aligns with Islamic communication principles, guaranteeing freedom to determine one's attitude. Islamic communication introduces the principle of enlightenment *(al-nahy an al-munkar),* where each person cannot be forced to accept a discourse, but he can interpret a message and then accept or reject it, thereby creating democratization (Syahputra, 2017; Adeni, 2023). With their closeness to digital space, Generation Z can utilize this space as a means of illumination and self-enlightenment so that every vital choice is wise.

CONCLUSION

There are several significant differences between rational and irrational consumer behavior regarding the 2024 election and the choices of Gen Z voters. Rational voter behavior prioritizes information. Before making a choice, they will look for information first and look at the track record, vision, and mission. Apart from that, voters

will see personal branding. Potential leaders use Instagram to build personal branding, highlighting their achievements, activities, vision, and mission. Hashtags such as *#AmenAjaDulu* and *#Perubahan* strengthen the message.

The irrational consumer behavior of Gen Z makes choices based on the influence of prestige and popularity; one is *"Gemoy,"* which Prabowo Subianto uses to create an adorable impression. They will also choose based on exciting content with animation and humorous captions to create an emotional connection with voters. Social media plays a role in influencing views, building relationships with voters, and disseminating campaign messages. Meanwhile, PR's role is to build the branding of each pair of candidates in targeting Gen Z.

In conclusion, Gen Z consumer behavior in choosing leaders tends to be complex, involving rational and irrational factors. Each candidate pair uses different strategies to attract attention and support, reflecting their understanding of Gen Z consumer behavior. Thus, the results of this analysis illustrate how important a holistic and integrated strategy is in achieving Gen Z support, as well as how each candidate pair utilizes Instagram and social media to achieve their goals in the 2024 Election.

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