

# Candidate Image and Voting Intention in First Time Voters: Meta-Analysis Study

Maizar Saputra<sup>a</sup>, Asmadi Alsa<sup>b</sup>, Nilam Widyarini<sup>c</sup>, Ratna Wulan<sup>d</sup>

Faculty of Psychology, Gunadarma University  
Jl. Margonda Raya No 100, Pondok Cina, Depok, Indonesia  
maizar.sp@gmail.com

---

## Abstract

One of the factors that can influence voting intention in previous studies is candidate image. This can be seen from the findings of previous studies which show a correlation between candidate image and voting intention. However, there is no research that reveals how true the  $r$  and the effect size of the candidate image correlation and voting intention are, especially for first time voters. This meta-analysis study aims to measure the true correlation between candidate image and voting intention in first-time voters by considering the effect size. The study consisted of 10 studies that were considered to have met the requirements with a total sample of 7,198 voters. The results of the studies found in this study indicate that candidate image has a significant positive correlation with strong voting intention in voters with a CI of 95% (0.42, 0.89). This study also found good heterogeneity test results and no publication bias.

Keywords: Voting Intention; Candidate Image; First Time Voters

---

## 1. Introduction

General election (election) is a democratic party which is part of the sovereignty of the people in selecting the desired candidate for the leader. General elections are held regularly, every citizen who is old enough and meets the criteria has the right to vote and be elected and has the freedom to exercise his rights according to his conscience. This freedom is to determine which party or candidate is supported, without any fear or coercion from any party (Gaffar, 2000).

One factor that often gets attention is the presence of first-time voters (who have never participated in an election). The existence of first-time voters is often associated with the success of a party because if a party gets a large number of first-time voters, it will get superior votes in elections. With a large enough number, namely 1/3 of the total vote, the votes of first-time voters are the main target of several political parties participating in elections in Indonesia. First time voters are characterized as individuals whose political orientation is not yet stable, and are very easy to influence. This is because first time voters are considered to have no experience and ability to make their political choices (Youniss, McLellan & Yates, 1997).

However, before voters choose a political party or politician who represents their voice in the form of behavior (choosing to be affiliated with a political party, participating in the election process, participating in promoting a political party or politician), they must first go through an initial process called intention. Intention according to Fishbein and Ajzen (2010) is a person's subjective view which is the beginning of the formation of behavior.

The intention or intention to vote which is manifested in the form of real participation is to use the right to vote (electability) in general elections. So that the intention to vote can be defined as an individual's desire to exercise their right to vote in the future (Lam & Hsu, 2006).

Intention to vote can be considered as the willingness or reluctance of potential voters to participate in the electoral process in the future (Tobias - Manina, 2017). This opinion is supported by the opinion of Hasyim (2010) which states that the intention to vote is an individual's conscious desire in his plans or decisions to elect candidates for political party candidates.

Hoopes (2001) who conducted a survey of 2000 respondents found that the quality of the candidate to be selected is one of 8 factors that can influence individuals to choose. King (2002) states that in the modern democratic era, figures who have interesting personalities and have unique characteristics are able to influence votes in elections.

The description above illustrates how perceptions of a candidate's image are able to influence individuals and then use their choices in general elections. Stephen, Harrison, Husson, and Albert (2004) stated that the image of the candidate is a picture of the candidate based on the personality and special characteristics attached to him.

Schoen and Schumann (2005) stated that personality plays quite a role in shaping the attitudes of voters and their voting behavior. This opinion is reinforced by Haryadi's research (2014) which measured the influence of the presidential candidate's image on the intention to vote for first-time voters in Jakarta. The results of the study show that there is a significant influence of the candidate's image on the voter's intention in choosing the candidate

The results of Linda's research (2010) which measured the effect of candidate image on the decision to choose a pair of presidential candidates also strengthened previous opinions by stating that how prospective voters evaluate, interpret candidates which then influences them to choose the candidate or not.

Frank (2012) and Kniffin (2009) concluded that candidate image is still the most important variable that can influence voter behavior. Strength, leadership, competence, intelligence, credibility and morality are key attributes of a political candidate to succeed (Benoit & McHale, 2004; Farrag & Shamma, 2014). Research conducted by Hapsari (2010) on voter behavior in the Indonesian presidential election in 2009 found that social image and candidate image factors were factors that significantly influenced voter behavior in the Greater Jakarta area.

The purpose of this meta-analysis study is to measure the actual correlation between candidate image and voting intention in first-time voters, and to see how the correlation is after considering effect size, heterogeneity, whether score distribution is symmetrical or not, and publication bias.

## 2. Methodology

### 2.1 Study plan procedure

This meta-analysis study was conducted with the aim of measuring the actual  $r$  and effect size from the results of previous studies regarding the correlation of candidate image with voting intention in first-time voters. The steps taken in this study started with identifying, screening and eligibility using PRISMA or Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review 2020 in selecting studies (Page et al, 2021).

## 2.2 Study search strategy

The researcher conducted a search for relevant studies using the keywords "candidate image", "voting intention", and "first time voters" in two main sources, namely the Google Scholar Register and Database which includes Emerald, Elsevier, Taylor and Francis. A search for previous studies discussing the relationship between candidate image and voting intention for first-time voters was carried out from the latest articles in 2023, but based on the literature found, there are studies that are relevant only from 2014 to 2021.

## 2.3 Inclusion criteria

This meta-analysis study has the basic criteria used in selecting literature, namely (1) a quantitative study, (2) examining the relationship between voting intention as the dependent variable and candidate image as the independent variable, and (3) examining novice voters.

## 2.4 Exclusion criteria

The study criteria that were not used in this meta-analysis study were (1) undergraduate thesis and master's thesis studies, (2) studies using statistical results with Chi-Square, did not show statistical results of correlation scores  $r$ ,  $R^2$ , results of  $t$  scores

## 2.5 Data collection and analysis

Data collection began with a literature search according to predetermined inclusion criteria. Then, the studies were selected by the researchers by taking into account the statistical results as well as the language, so that relevant literature was found for this meta-analysis study.

## 2.6 Data Extraction

Extraction of data from this meta-analysis study was carried out independently based on criteria predetermined by the researcher.

## 2.7 Statistic analysis

This meta-analytic study used JASP (Jeffrey's Amazing Statistics Program) in statistical analysis. Based on the studies that have been found, studies that meet the inclusion criteria are subject to a selection process first. After finding 10 selected studies, the researcher conducted an analysis by looking for correlation coefficients and seeing how many elderly respondents were in these studies. Next, proceed with looking for statistical results in the study found, namely the correlation value of the variable  $r$ . After that, the researcher calculated the effect size ( $z$ ), variance ( $Vz$ ), and standard error ( $Sez$ ) using JASP. Through JASP this meta-analysis study found heterogeneity, effect size, forest plot, funnel plot, Egger's test and fail-safe  $N$  test results.

## 3. Result and Discussion

The initial step carried out by researchers in this meta-analysis study is to conduct a literature search that discusses the relationship between candidate image variables and voting intention in first-time voters. The initial stage of the literature search found 20 studies, but after the researcher deleted the same research, considering the inclusion and exclusion criteria that had been determined by the researcher, 5 literature was

found with a total of 10 studies that were included in the study requirements of this meta-analysis. The following literature search with PRISMA can be seen in Figure 1 below.

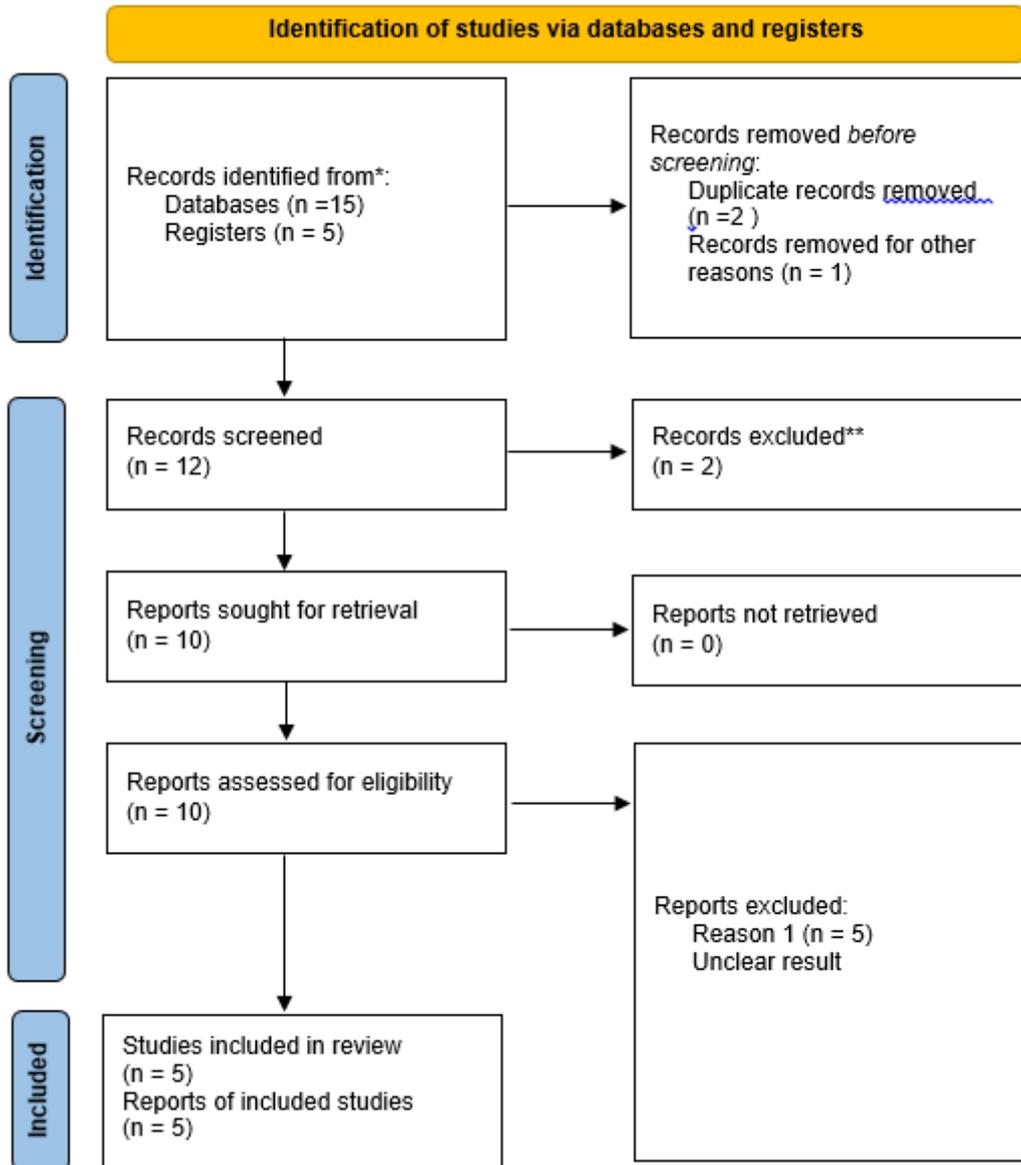


Fig 1. PRISMA for Depicting the Screening Process

Based on the results of 10 studies that met the criteria, it is known that the total number of elderly respondents is 7,198 voters. Almost all studies use the same variable scale source, namely the Psychological Well-being Scale from Ryff (2010) and the short form 12 item Self-Compassion Scale version from Raes, Pommier, Neff, & Van Gucht (2011). This shows that for elderly respondents it would be better to use a short version of the scale with a smaller number of items.

The demographic data of this study can be seen in table 1 of the study characteristics used in this meta-analysis, below

Table 1. Characteristics of the Study used in the Meta-Analysis

| Study  | sample | Age mean | Respondents | Candidate Image Scale                | Voting Intention Scale                                      |
|--|--------|----------|-------------|--------------------------------------|---|
| Farrag & Shamma (2014) - Studi 1                     | 430    | 40.3     | Citizens    | Newman & Sheth, 1985                 | Farrag & Shamma (2014)                                      |
| Farrag & Shamma (2014) - Studi 2                     | 401    | 40.1     | Citizens    | Newman & Sheth, 1985                 | Farrag & Shamma (2014)                                      |
| Hati, Gayatri, Lupiyoadi & Safira (2017)             | 422    | 35.4     | Citizens    | Lafferty, Goldsmith, & Newell (2002) | Hati, Gayatri, Lupiyoadi & Safira (2017)                    |
| Moslehpour, Lewi, Kurniawati, Ismail & Negash (2021) | 396    | 25       | Citizens    | Newman & Sheth, (1985)               | Cwalina, Wojciech, Falkowski, Andrzej & Newman, Bruce, 2010 |
| Steenburg & Guzman (2019) - Studi 1                  | 1032   | 51.54    | Citizens    | Guzman & Sierra, (2009)              | Baker & Churchill 1977; Chen & Barnes 2007)                 |
| Steenburg & Guzman (2019) - Studi 2                  | 1032   | 51.40    | Citizens    | Guzman & Sierra, (2009)              | Baker & Churchill 1977; Chen & Barnes 2007)                 |
| Steenburg & Guzman (2019) - Studi 3                  | 603    | 42.25    | Citizens    | Guzman & Sierra, (2009)              | Baker & Churchill 1977; Chen & Barnes 2007)                 |
| Steenburg & Guzman (2019) - Studi 4                  | 603    | 42.30    | Citizens    | Guzman & Sierra, (2009)              | Baker & Churchill 1977; Chen & Barnes 2007)                 |
| Warner (2016) - Studi 1                              | 1710   | 20.6     | Citizens    | Kaid & Hirsch (1973)                 | Warner (2016)   |
| Warner (2016) - Studi 2                              | 569    | 48.69    | Citizens    | Kaid & Hirsch (1973)                 | Warner (2016)   |

Based on the results of the Q statistic for the heterogeneity test, it shows that the effect size of the 10 studies in this meta-analysis study is heterogeneous, that is, seen in the score ( $Q = 116.273$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). The following Table 2 describes the results of the heterogeneity test below.

Table 2. Fixed and Random Effect

| Fixed and Random Effects           |         |    |        |
|------------------------------------|---------|----|--------|
|                                    | Q       | df | p      |
| Omnibus test of Model Coefficients | 76.371  | 1  | < .001 |
| Test of Residual Heterogeneity     | 116.273 | 9  | < .001 |

Note. p -values are approximate.  
Note. The model was estimated using Restricted ML method.

The random effect results show a significant correlation between the candidate image scale and voting intention ( $z = 8.973$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ; 95% CI [0.335; 0.528]. According to Cohen (1988) the relationship between candidate image and voting intention is in the moderate category ( $r = 0.432$ ) The results can be seen in table 3 below.

Table 3. Coefficient Score

|           | Estimate | Standard Error | z     | p      | 95% Confidence Interval |       |
|-----------|----------|----------------|-------|--------|-------------------------|-------|
|           |          |                |       |        | Lower                   | Upper |
| intercept | 0.432    | 0.049          | 8.739 | < .001 | 0.335                   | 0.528 |

Note. Wald test.

The effect sizes in this meta-analysis study show varying magnitudes. The effect size has a strong significance with scores ranging from  $z = 0.22$  with 95% CI (0.12; 0.31) to  $z = 0.66$  with 95% CI (0.57; 0.76). The strongest effect size was found in study 1. Farrag & Shamma (2014) with  $z = 0.59$  and 95% CI (0.54; 0.64) while the weakest effect size was found in study 1 Steenburg & Guzman (2019) with  $z = 0.034$  and 95% CI (0.000; 0.068).

CI (0.22; 0.45). In addition, the Forest Plot shows that the average effect size calculation in this meta-analysis study is  $z = 0.43$ . The results can be seen in Figure 2.

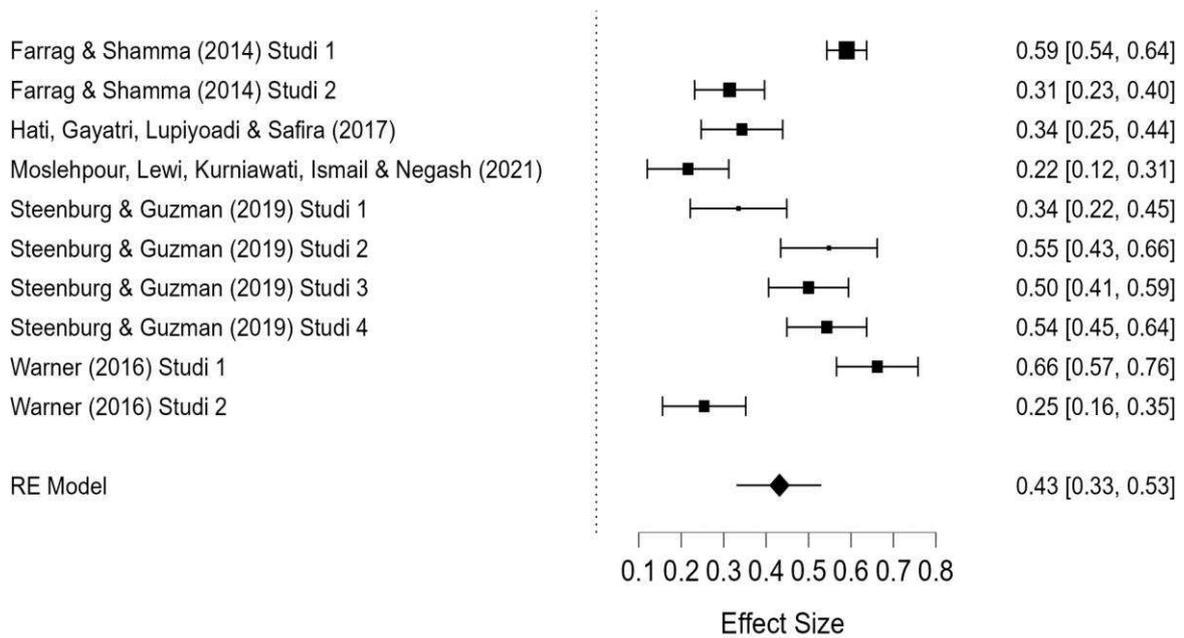


Fig 2. Forest Plot

This meta-analytic study also identified whether the studies analyzed had publication bias. This can be seen from Figure 3 which shows a symmetrical or asymmetrical distribution of scores. But this needs another technique to see publication bias. Figure 3 shows the distribution of scores is asymmetric.

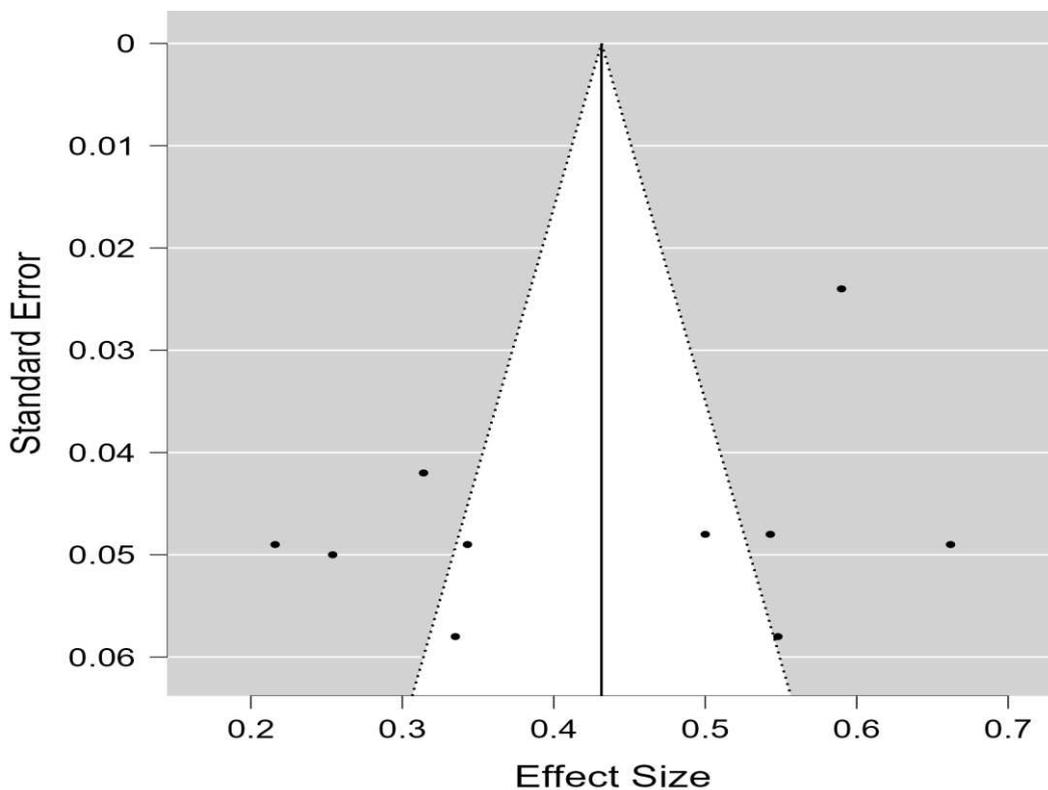


Fig 3. Funnel Plot

In addition to the Funnel Plot, the Egger test results show  $z = -0.774$  ( $p > 0.05$ ), which means that the distribution of scores in this meta-analysis study is symmetrical, so it can be assumed that there is no publication bias in this study. The results can be seen in table 4 below.

Table 4. Regression Test for Funnel Plot Asymmetry ("Egger's Test")

| Regression test for Funnel plot asymmetry ("Egger's test") |          |          |
|--|----------|----------|
|  | <b>Z</b> | <b>P</b> |
| Sei  | -0.774   | 0.439    |

Another way to see publication bias is through Fail-safe N. The scores can be seen in table 5 of the File Drawer Analysis for Rosenthal's Formula which shows ( $p < 0.001$ ) greater than  $5K + 10 = 80$ . This means that in this meta-analysis no bias was found publications on candidate image research and voting intention of voters. The following results can be seen in table 5 below.

Table 5. File Drawer Analysis for Rosenthal's Formula

| File Drawer Analysis |             |                     |                       |
|----------------------|-------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
|                      | Fail-safe N | Target Significance | Observed Significance |
| Rosenthal            | 3614.000    | 0.050               | < .001                |

The results of this meta-analysis study show that the actual  $r$  values of candidate image and voting intention are in the medium category. In the context of general elections, voters tend to evaluate the attributes of potential candidates as a political brand and will use their own assessment criteria. If voters believe that the candidate is credible and trustworthy, this positive attitude is likely to influence their intention to vote in elections where the preferred candidate participates (Smith & French, 2011). The average age of participants in this meta-analysis is in the early adult range, has a fairly good education, resides in a country with a good democratic system (United States) and has previous experience related to politics enabling participants to carry out further analysis related to candidates political candidate to be elected.

#### 4. Conclusion and Suggestion

The results of this meta-analysis can provide input for future researchers to consider candidate image as a factor that plays a very important role in determining whether first-time voters will exercise their right to vote or not in general elections. When in a state of doubt, voters tend to use shortcuts to make an analogy with their prospective candidates who are close to their self-image and use that analogy to exercise their right to vote.

#### Reference

- Abdel Rahman Farrag, D., & Shamma, H. (2014). Factors influencing voting intentions for Egyptian parliament elections 2011. *Journal of Islamic Marketing*, 5(1), 49–70. doi:10.1108/jima-01-2013-0003
- Benoit, W.L. and McHale, J.P. (2004), "Presidential candidates' personal qualities: computer content analysis", in Hacker, K. (Ed.), *Presidential Candidate Images*, Rowman & Littlefield, New York, NY, pp. 49-63.
- Fishbein, M., & Ajzen, I. (2010). *Predicting and changing behavior: The reasoned action approach*. New York, NY: Psychology Press.
- Frank, R. H. (2012). *The Darwin economy: Liberty, competition, and the common good*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gaffar, A. (2000). *Politik Indonesia: Transisi menuju Demokrasi*, Yogyakarta; Pustaka Pelajar.
- Hasyim, A. (2010). "Dampak Faktor Personal dan Tekanan Sosial pada Niat Perempuan untuk Memilih (Vote)." *Penamas: Penelitian dan Pengabdian Masyarakat*, vol. 2, 18 Apr. 2010.

- Hati, S. R. H., Gayatri, G., Lupiyoadi, R., & Safira, A. (2017). Which is the Stronger Influence of Voting Intention: Candidate Credibility or Party Credibility?. In International Conference on Business and Management Research (ICBMR 2017) (pp. 595-608). Atlantis Press.
- Hoopes, S. (2001). The credibility factor in elections: Evidence from Britain's nationwide building society's vote against conversion. *Public Choice*, 107(1-2), 115-133.
- King, A. (Ed.). (2002). *Leaders' personalities and the outcomes of democratic elections*. OUP Oxford.
- Kniffin, K. M. (2009). Evolutionary perspectives on salary dispersion within firms. *Journal of Bioeconomics*, 11(1), 23–42. doi:10.1007/s10818-009-9056-y
- Lam, T., & Hsu, C. H. (2006). Predicting behavioral intention of choosing a travel destination. *Tourism management*, 27(4), 589-599. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tourman.2005.02.003>
- Moslehpour, M., Lewi, S., Kurniawati, D., Ismail, T., & T. Negash, Y. (2021). *The Influence of Social Media Marketing on Voter's Intention in Indonesia*. 2021 7th International Conference on E-Business and Applications. doi:10.1145/3457640.3457660
- Page, M. J., McKenzie, J. E., Bossuyt, P. M., Boutron, I., Hoffmann, T. C., Mulrow, C. D., Shamseer, L., Tetzlaff, J. M., ... & Moher, D. (2021). The PRISMA 2020 statement: An updated guideline for reporting systematic reviews. *BMJ*, 372, n71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/bmj.n71>
- Schoen, H., & Schumann, S. (2007). Personality Traits, Partisan Attitudes, and Voting Behavior. Evidence from Germany. *Political Psychology*, 28(4), 471–498. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2007.00582.x
- Stephen, T., Harrison, T. M., Hussion, W., & Albert, D. (2004). Interpersonal communication styles of political candidates: Predicting winning and losing candidates in three US presidential elections. *Presidential candidate images*, 177-196.
- Suriany, L. (2010) Pengaruh citra kandidat terhadap keputusan memilih pasangan nomor satu pada pemilihan presiden 2009 (citra prabowo subianto sebagai kandidat cawapres di kalangan peserta pemilu kota yogyakarta). S1 thesis, UAJY.
- Tobias-Mamina, R. J. (2017). Digital media exposure, political attitudes and perceptions as antecedents of voting intentions: a Zimbabwean perspective (Doctoral dissertation).
- Van Steenburg, E., & Guzmán, F. (2019). The influence of political candidate brands during the 2012 and 2016 US presidential elections. *European Journal of Marketing*, 53(12), 2629-2656.
- Warner, B. R., & Banwart, M. C. (2016). A Multifactor Approach to Candidate Image. *Communication Studies*, 67(3), 259–279. doi:10.1080/10510974.2016.1156005
- Youniss, J., McLellan, J. A., & Yates, M. (1997). What we know about engendering civic identity. *American Behavioral Scientist*, 40(5), 620-631. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000276429704000500>