

## The Effect Of Television Debate On Electoral Political Perception And Attitude To Local Leader Election: A Case Study In Surakarta City, Central Java, Indonesia

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### Article Info

#### Article History

Received:  
May 07, 2021

Accepted:  
December 09, 2021

#### Keywords :

Debate, Local Leader Election, Politics, Surakarta City

#### DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.5771234

### Abstract

*Local Leader Direct Election by people always presents debate program. In Local Leader Election (Pilkada) of Surakarta City in 2020, debate program is shown live on national television station in Indonesia. This research aims to study the effect of television debate on people's political perception and attitude. The research method used was survey method. The sample size was 1008 distributed in 126 survey location points in Surakarta City, Central Java, Indonesia. The result and conclusion of research are: (1) debate affects more the (positive/negative) perception of debate participants; and (2) debate affects slightly the change of political attitude in voting and not voting for the candidate couple.*

### Introduction

Political debate began to be introduced in Indonesia when the regime of direct general election by people was applied. 2004 was the first year when political debate colored Presidential Election event directly. Furthermore, the state government did so in the organization of local leader election in 2005. Political debate in open space colored vision, mission, and platform of general election's contestants.

Official agenda of candidate debate was held by General Election Commission (KPU) at either central or local levels in cooperation with electronic media, particularly television. Inevitably, this ala-KPU public debate becomes the most important event to president-vice president, governor-deputy governor, and mayor-deputy mayor, as well as regent – deputy regent candidate couples throughout archipelago.

Official political debate broadcasted in television media becomes a distinctive prestige to the contestants of general election (Chaffee, Ward, & Tipton, 1970; Conway, Wyckoff, Feldbaum, & Ahern, 1981; Eveland, McLeod, & Horowitz, 1998). Launched in Kompas daily, edition of April 21, 2004, this debate was held for the first time in Presidential Election of 2014 (<https://jateng.tribunnews.com/2019/01/17/ini-situasi-debat-pertama-dalam-sejarah-demokrasi-di-indonesia-pilpres-2004-masih-ada>). There were three president and vice president candidate couples: Wiranto-Salahuddin Wahid, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono-Jusuf Kalla, and Hamzah Haz-Agum Gumelar. This presidential election debate was held in Borobudur Hotel, Jakarta on Thursday (1/7). The debate at that time was governed based on Law Number 23 of 2003. President-vice president candidate couple introduces vision, mission, and program to the public, in either written or spoken manner.

Mass media view that the first debate is still awkward, from either the organization by debate committee or the participants of debate constituting president and vice president candidate couples. Nevertheless, this historical political debate broadcasted by nearly all national television stations becomes the reference for the organization of political debate in our homeland including the debate of local leader election in the local political event in the next year.

A year after the organization of direct presidential election, in 2005, the local general election was held to elect the local leader couple at provincial and regency/municipal levels. The election of local leaders directly by people is also colored with political debate event broadcasted live by national television. The direct election of Local Leader and Deputy Local Leader (*Pilkadalingung*) is governed in Article 56 jo Article 119 of Law No.32/2004 about Local Government and Government Regulation (PP) No.6/2005 about the Procedure of Electing, Legalizing, Assigning, and Dismissing Local Leader and Deputy Local Leader. Article 57 clause (7) of PP No.6 of 2005 governs the debate of local leader election, "Campaign in the form of public/open debate between candidates as mentioned in Article 56 letter h, is held by KPUD (Local General Election Commission)

with the material delivering vision, mission, and platform of respective candidate couples and the implementation done at the same day between one participant and another”.

*Pilkada Surakarta* of 2005 presents 4 (four) mayor – deputy mayor couples. The four mayor candidate couples participated in *Pilkada* of Surakarta city: JokoWidodo-HadiRudyatmo (candidate from PDI-P), AchmadPurnomo-IstarYuliadi (candidate from PAN),Hardono-Dipokusumo (supported by Democrat Party and Golkar Party, and former mayor SlametSuryanto. The debate of *Pilkada* of Surakarta City in 2005 has not broadcasted live by television media.

Local Leader Elections (*Pilkada*) of Surakarta City in 2010, 2015, and 2020 were preceded with debate program broadcasted in television media. The debates were equally lively to the debate held for presidential election. 2020 was a moment when *Pilkada* of Surakarta City attracted the public’s attention widely. It is because of the participation ofGibran RakabumingRaka, the son of President JokoWidodo, in the election of Surakarta City mayor for the period of 2021-2025. *Pilkada* Surakarta of 2020 was attended by two candidate couples: Gibran RakabumingRaka-TeguhPrakosa (Gibran – Teguh) andBagyoWahyono – SupardjoFranciskusSaverius (Bajo).

Political debate during campaign period of *Pilkada* Surakarta was broadcasted live by television media in two rounds. The first round was held by KPU of Surakarta City on November 6, 2020, broadcasted by Metro TV national television station. The second round was held on December 6, 2020 broadcasted by TATV local television station. Actually not only television broadcasted the debate either in live or recorded manner. But also social media such as YouTube, facebook, twitter, and other private social media review and cover the news about the debate of *pilkada* Surakarta in 2020. The breadth of news coverage concerning debate of *pilkada* is expected to inform the electorates about the competency, appearance, vision, mission, and platform of *Pilkada* contestants (Baum; 2003; Moy & Pfau, 2000; Prior, 2003).

Around the organization of debate program, individual candidate couples of *Pilkada* Surakarta 2020 prepared themselves well for the debate. As reported by Kompas news, the candidate couple of Solo City mayor, Gibran RakabumingRaka suggested his preparedness for the debate. He established an ad hoc team to prepare the organization of debate and to do simulation.BAJO couple also prepared themselves to deal with the debate long before the day when the debate was held as cited in a media (<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/12/03/10154321/jelang-debat-putaran-kedua-pilkada-solo-gibran-sudah-simulasi-bagyo-tanpa?page=all>).

The resource is allocated specifically to enable individual political candidates to appear as perfectly as possible, not only winning or losing the electoral support but also the high or the low electability rate. Political debate is prestige. Public is expected to respond positively to the debate stage. Positive or negative respond of electorates is a valuation. Value is related to individual’s perception on good or bad, right or wrong, compatible or incompatible. Understanding value system adhered to by the community is important in the process of building positive valuation. Value system underlies the understanding on attitude, motivation, and perception. Muller (1996) explains that perception theory assumes that individual behavior relates to something expected. An individual’s response is determined by means of interpreting and valuing the environment, either physical or social environment.

Siagian (1989) explains three factors affecting the formation of an individual’s perception on an event. The first is internal factor of the corresponding self. Perception on event is dependent on individual’s characteristics, including attitude, motive, importance, interest, experience, and hope. The second is external factor, the event itself as the target of perception. Individual perception on an event, object, or person is compared and grouped by the same characteristics. The third is situational factor. Perception should be understood in its situational context. The same event, object, or person likely has different perception in different situation.

Imawan (1994) explains the relationship between perception and behavior, when an event as a social phenomenon of a condition is a stimulus stimulating the appearance of perception. Selection process occurs inside individual, that is, an organization to value the message capture coming in through five senses. Furthermore, there is an attempt of interpreting the perceived stimulus, thereby resulting in certain behavior as a respond to stimulus. Sastroatmojo (1995) argues that respond to stimulus arises as a reaction. Attitude is an individual’s evaluative statement over certain person, object, or event. It means that attitude can be defined as the reflection of an individual’s feeling to something. This attitude has not become an action or activity, but from this the action or activity done by an individual can be predicted.

Melvin L. Defleur, and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1989) explain Simultaneous Transactions Model. There are three factors affecting political debate: (1) physical surroundings, the environment in which communication occurs by emphasizing on aspects of what and how the communicative messages can be exchanged, (2) socio-cultural situational factor, that political debate is a part of social situation containing certain cultural meaning and is an identity of debate’ participants all at once; and (3) social relationship, that the status of relation between communicative actors highly affects both content of message and the process or how the message is sent and received.

Political debate, as a part of campaign, is intended to yield positive perception, attitude, and action. It is in line with a thought that one of strategies very desirable in political campaign is an effective communicating strategy concerning: (1) how to change the attitude, (2) to change the opinion, and (3) to change behavior.

Wahid (2016) argues that political campaign is an attempt to improve popularity and electability of political actor. Political campaign needs public participation as much as possible. The campaign is the political actors' attempt of building harmonious and interdependent relationship between political contestants and audience. Audience is the public expected to have positive perception, attitude, and behavior to political actors. In the context of audience politics, the electorate is a constituent. The position of constituents is more important because it is not limited to the target to achieve political power. Constituents are public audience the interest of which is fought for in the government. Therefore, the message delivered in debate should contain truth. Constituents will value the consistency of campaign promises in the debate with the policy taken in reigning. Moreover, in sophisticated digital media era, political promises can be traced easily later to be compared with the fact of policy.

R. Wayne Pace, Brent D. Peterson, and M. Dallas Burnett, in the book entitled *Techniques for Effective Communication*, in Effendi (2009) explain political communicating strategy, including political debate. There are four strategies in political debate: (1) *To secure understanding*; (2) *To establish acceptance*; (3) *To motivate action*; and (4) *The goals which the communicator sought to achieve*.

Furthermore, Effendi (2009) explains that the messages delivered by participants of political debate are expected to create same understanding between message sender and audiences. The shared understanding will arise when there is mutual trust between the parties. The issue discussed is the factual one that indeed should be exchanged openly between one and another. Political message through debate communicated broadly should be guarded and maintained in order to be established, or otherwise, new messages will come in continuously. Those new messages will likely change positive into negative condition or even be declined by the audiences. The next process is a serious attempt of motivating in order to keep the spirit of electorate supporting the political actor and maintaining good relationship. The last one is related to the achievement of the end goal of political communication process, i.e. to grow mutually benefiting shared belief, rather than merely the activity of exploiting each other. The audience's belief should be grown and maintained on the same track. Considering the scholars' argument on campaign and political debate as aforementioned, this research poses a question: What is the effect of debate on television on the electorate's political perception and attitude in Pilkada of Surakarta City in 2020?

## Method

Data collection was conducted one day following the organization of first-round debate of Pilkada Surakarta (November 6, 2020). This research involved 1008 respondents distributed in 126 survey location points (thereafter called TLS) based on polling stations (thereafter called TPS). TLS is distributed considering the even distribution of area. Sample was selected using random sampling technique. Eight (8) respondents were selected randomly from a number of voter lists in each of TPS. The sample of research has margin error level of 3.5% at significance level of 95% with tight density level.

The debate of Pilkada of Surakarta City in 2020 as the object of research is the first-round debate on November 6, 2020. Data collection was conducted by a counting team with face-to-face interview technique. The activity of collecting data was conducted one day following the organization of debate broadcasted in national television station (TA – TV). Data collection took five days.

Before conducting data collection, briefing activity was carried out through: explaining content and survey question; interview simulation; distributing survey instrument and briefing. Interview with respondents was conducted in order manner (main respondent – supporting respondent). It was conducted by considering the norm of visiting one's home (being a guest) to avoid biased response from the respondents. In this activity of collecting data done by counting team, there was a small team conducting spot check to ensure that the counting team undertook its task correctly.

## Discussion

*Pilkada* of 2020 in Indonesia is the continuation of the policy of organizing simultaneous local leader elections in 2015 and 2017. Before 2015, the organization of local government leader election was held partially. Each of regions has its own schedule. The event of *pilkada* was held almost annually in different province, regency or city. Political event was recorded in the organization of *pilkada* in different places. Generally, it indeed ran well and safely. People as electorate can channel their aspiration healthily and democratically. However, the organization of *pilkada* was also often colored with tight competition between candidate couples and their proponents. In some cases, the competition can lead to hazardous violence. For that reason, the policy of simultaneously local leader election (*pilkadaserentak*) has been issued since 2015.

In the future, general election policy in Indonesia recognizes two elections only in five-year period: *pemiluraya* (great election) and *pemilulokal* (local election). *Pemiluraya* is intended to elect president - vice

president couple, members of Legislative Assembly (*DPR RI*), Provincial Legislative Assembly (*DPRD Provinsi*), Regency/Municipal Legislative Assembly (*DPRD Kabupaten/Kota*), and local leaders including governor – deputy governor, Regent – Deputy Regent, and Mayor – Deputy Mayor couples. Meanwhile, local election in the middle year of five-year period is held to elect local leaders (*Pilkada*) including governor – deputy governor, Regent – Deputy Regent, and Mayor – Deputy Mayor couples.

*Pilkada* of Surakarta City in 2020 participated in the second organization of simultaneous local election after 2015. The fourth participation in *pilkada* is conducted directly. The three local elections held were attended by two candidate couples involving two political party groups that support the couples. It is slightly different in 2020. Although the local leader election involves two candidate couples, polarization of local political power is relatively not found. A couple is supported by the coalition of almost all political parties, while another one set out from non political party (independent) track.

Gibran – Teguh couple is supported by *Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan (PDI – P)* and endorsed by more parliament and non-parliament political parties of Surakarta City, such as *Partai Gerakan Indonesia Raya (Gerindra)*, *Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN)*, *Partai Solidaritas Indonesia (PSI)*, *Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB)*, and *Partai Golongan Karya (Golkar)*. Meanwhile, non-parliament political parties consist of *Partai Demokrat* and *Partai Persatuan Pembangunan*. *Partai Keadilan Sejahtera (PKS)* abstains from this event. As cited in [liputan6.com](https://www.liputan6.com), *Partai Keadilan Sosial (PKS)* is so far the only political party to gain seat in *DPRD Solo* but not to state its support to Gibran and Teguh in *Pilkada*, <https://www.liputan6.com/pilkada/read/4321728/5-partai-besar-ini-nyatakan-dukung-gibran-dan-teguh-di-pilkada-solo>.

2020 is pandemic year. All states in the world, including Indonesia, were affected by corona virus disease (Covid-19) pandemic. In the same year, based on the mandate of Law Number 1 of 2015 about the government regulation substituting for the Law Number 1 of 2014 about the election of governor, regent, and mayor was established to be the Law. 2020 is the year when *pilkada serentak* (simultaneous local leader election was held). This pandemic situation requires the government to reschedule the stages of *Pilkada* organization. *Pilkada* was devised to be held on September 2020, but it was then postponed until December 2020, or delayed for three months from the original plan. That is why some people call *pilkada serentak 2020* the *pilkada* in pandemic time.

General Election Commission of Surakarta City conducts a series of policies related to the organization of *pilkada* to be adjusted with situation and condition. A series of stages having been done before the rescheduling are considered as legitimate to be implemented. Meanwhile, the stages not included yet into the schedule should be adjusted with the changing time of implementation. The reschedule involves, among others, candidate registration implementation, campaign period, open debate implementation, quiet period, and voting time.

Open political debate of *Pilkada* Surakarta was held in two rounds. The first round was held on November 6, 2020, and the second debate on December 9, 2020. The regulation of first and second debate implementation by KPU of Surakarta City is relatively not different. The difference lies only on the theme of debate and television media being the partner to broadcast the event live. In the first debate, KPU of Surakarta city collaborated with Metro-TV national television station, while the second debate was broadcasted by local television station, TA-TV. Generally, the debate was held in 2 (two) hours with economic development, public service, and covid-19 pandemic management being the theme. Debates 1 and 2 present the same panelists, consisting of five figures with varying background. The five figures are: (1) Ahmad Rifai (a social activist); (2) Gunawan Setiawan (a batik business performer); (3) Prof. Dr. Ismi Dwi Astuti, M.Si (Dean of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta - UNS); (4) Sri Hastjarjo, Ph.D (Chairperson of Communication Science Department of UNS); and (5) Pamikatsih (a disability activist). The first debate was held on November 6, 2020 at 07.00 – 09.00 p.m., presenting Eva Wondo and Wahyu Wiwoho (presenter of Metro-TV) as the moderator. The theme of debate was specified by KPUD Surakarta, “*Developing Surakarta City as Cultural City in a Just and Even Sustainable Development in Digital Era*”. The debate was held in Ballroom of the Sunan Hotel Surakarta, A. Yani Street No.40, Kerten, Laweyan, Surakarta City.

The debate program series consisted of nine segments: (1) opening; (2) introduction of candidate couple, profile, and rule of debate game; (3) presentation of candidates’ vision, mission, and excellent programs; (4) debate 1: the question posed by material arranging team to the candidates through moderator takes the theme related to local problems; (5) debate 2: the question posed by material arranging team to the candidates through moderator takes the theme related to public service, and some rebuttal began to arise; (6) debate 3: question posed by the public to the candidate in the form of video; (7) debate 4: debriefing between candidate couples concerning the sharpening of their own vision, mission, and excellent program; (8) debate 5: debriefing between candidate couples with policy and strategy to manage and to control Covid-19 being the theme; and the last (9) closing statement from individual candidate couples.

A day following the debate, the observer valued the debate process. Teguh Yuwono, a political observer from Universitas Diponegoro (UNDI) Semarang, Central Java, viewed the premier debate between Solo City

mayor and deputy mayor candidate couples like earth and sky. Teguh explained that, viewed from political communication aspect, the two candidate couples expressed their idea and thought using different characters. The number 1 couple, Gibran Rakabuming Raka-Teguh Prakoso couple was seen expressing their idea using typical millennial style. Meanwhile, the number 2 couple, Bagyo Wahono – Supardjo Franciskus Saverius delivered their program conventionally. Gibran-Teguh candidate couple seemed to present their idea more enthusiastically and typically with youth spirit. Meanwhile, Bajo couple seemed to be calmer and quieter. Viewed from material aspect, according to Teguh Yuwono, the two couples still have limited mastery of area, because both of them are new contestants in *pilkada*, rather than incumbent (<https://regional.kompas.com/read/2020/11/07/18125231/pengamat-debat-pilkada-solo-bagai-bumi-dan-langit?page=all>). In contrast to Teguh Yuwono, Didik Gunawan Suharto (a lecturer of Faculty of Social and Political Sciences of UNS) values the process of debate of *Pilkada* Surakarta differently. He argued that finally debate functions only as the candidates' means of socializing and campaigning. Their answers seem to be normative and far from concrete solution. The less tense debate is associated with technical factors such as limited debating time. However, the basic problem is related to the inadequate concrete program offered by candidates triggered with the limited experience as government administrator. (<https://tirto.id/debat-pilkada-solo-bajo-vs-gibran-miskin-solusi-konkret-f6Jm>).

This research develops four questions in studying the effect of debate on the electorates' political perception and attitude. **The first question** concerns the intensity and duration of respondents seeing the debate show in television. This question is intended to find out how intense the electorates access the organization of debate. The question is written as follows: "Friday, December 6, 2020, *The Surakarta mayoral election debate night was broadcasted live by television station (Metro TV); how intense did you watch the debate on television at that time?*" Respondents' responses are divided into five groups: (1) watching debate  $\leq$  90 minutes; (2) watching debate for 50-90 minutes; (3) watching debates for 10-50 minutes; (4) watching debate for less than 10 minutes; and the last (5) not watching debate.

Table 1 Distribution of time duration of watching debate show on television

Duration of watching debate show on television	Sum	
	n	%
Watching debate $\leq$ 90 minutes	141	14
50 - 90 minutes	143	14.2
10 - 50 minutes	210	20.8
$\geq$ 10 minutes	82	8.1
Not watching debate	432	42.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: primary data, 2020

The result of current research with survey method shows that in fact the distribution of proportion of people not watching debate is, in fact, substantial, 432 or 42.9% out of 1008 respondents. This group not watching debate plus the one watching debate (less than 10% or exactly 8.1% or 82 respondents) will reach 514 or 50.99%. This figure is more than a half of respondents. Those not watching debate show at all and those watching debate for less than ten minutes are the electorates not caring about the debate show on television. This finding is sufficiently shocking. It indicates that the debate show on television attracts no more than fifty percents or 50.99% of electorates.

Considering the data shown in Table 4, respondents stating to watch debate on television have the largest distribution found in the third electorate group "watching debate for 40%-75% time", with score of 20.8%. Meanwhile, the numbers in the first and second electorate groups are relatively the same. The first respondent group replied that they watch the debate for 75% time, belonging to the electorates paying substantial attention to the debate on television. The proportion of this electorate group is 14%. It is not big percentage. The second group watching debate on television for 40%-75% time has proportion of 14.2%.

**The second question** in this survey concerns the performance of couples in answering the question posed by debate moderator. The question posed is "If you watch the debate, what couple did have more convincing performance in answering the moderator/panelist' question?" The respondents' respond to this question was shocking. In fact, the Gibran-Teguh couple appeared to answer the moderator's questions more convincingly. Otherwise, Bajo couple did not give their best performance in answering the moderator's questions. Table 2 shows respondents' valuation after they watched the debate on television. Gibran-Teguh is considered as more convincing (80%), while Bajo (4%). Other respondents answer that both couples are convincing equally (10%) and not convincing equally (6%).

Table 2 Performance of mayor and deputy mayor candidate couple in answering the moderator's question

Mayor-Deputy Candidate Couple	Mayor	Sum	
		N	%
Gibran-Teguh couple is more convincing	is more	430	80%
Bajo couple is more convincing		22	4%
Convincing equally		55	10%
Not convincing equally		33	6%
<b>Total</b>		<b>540</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: primary data, 2020

**The third question** is related to the effect of debate performance on the changing perceived valuation on individual debate participants. The question is as follows: *"Having watched debate on November 6, 2020, does the debate affect positive or negative valuation on individual contestants of Pilkada in Surakarta City?"*

The debate performance of Gibran-Teguh couple was appreciated more by the people. Mayor candidate Gibran got highest valuation or appreciation. His performance on the debate was responded to more positively (46%) than negatively (2.5%). Similarly, deputy mayor candidate Teguh was appreciated positively (37%) and negatively (6%). The ratio of response to debate valuation on Gibran is better than that on Teguh. The appreciation to Bajo couple is not as high as that to Gibran-Teguh couple. Event, the deputy mayor candidate BagyoWahyono got negative valuation response (22.3%) higher than positive one (12%). Bajo's debate performance is considered as not maximal. It is slightly different from the performance of deputy mayor candidate Supardjo. Despite getting smallest response, at least the positive response to him (9.6%) is higher than the negative one (6%).

Table 3 Respondents' positive and negative valuation on individual mayor-deputy mayor candidates after watching debate on television

Performance Debate	in	Affecting	
		Positively	Negatively
Gibran		46%	2.5%
Teguh		37%	6%
Bagyo		12%	22,3%
Supardjo		9.6%	6%

Source: primary data, 2020

Considering the data of respondents' positive and negative response to individual mayor and deputy mayor candidates after watching debate on television as shown in Table 3, the author delivers a thesis about the appreciation or valuation on Gibran and Teguh. Gibran is appreciated more than Teguh, according to the author, not limited to his position as the mayor candidate. Generally, the mayor candidate indeed becomes the focus of attention more than the deputy mayor candidate. The mayor candidate has more time portion to answer question and to express idea or thought. But the more time given instead creates more potential error or blunder, doesn't it? The author assumes that the positive response to Gibran is due to public opinion putting him on underestimate position previously. Gibran is perceived as newcomer in political world, with no experience, not mastering the problems as the candidate of city leader, and so on.

There is a different opinion on Gibran's partner. TeguhPrakosa is a senior figure in PDI-Perjuangan. He has long experience in politics and government. He is a successful cadre of party, and has occupied the seat of DPRD members for fifteen years (three periods). Teguh's last public position is the Chairperson of DPRD. The position of public opinion on Teguh potentially makes him the focus of attention more than Gibran's. However, the fact shows the opposite after the debate performance of this two figure couple. Teguh's performance is lower than the expectation of public opinion existing. It is in line with Parasuraman, Zaitamland Berry's (1988) argument about quality. Service assessment is created from the presence of expectation

compared with perception. The perceived valuation on Gibran's performance in the debate is beyond the expectation. Meanwhile, that on Teguh's performance is less than the expectation.

**The fourth question** concerns the effect of debate performance on the electorates' changing vote or the electability of individual candidates. The question is "*Having watched debate on November 6, 2020, Does the debate affect your vote, so that you change or do not change your vote for the mayor-deputy mayor candidate couples of Surakarta City in 2020?*"

Table 4 The Effect of Debate on vote for mayor-deputy mayor candidate couple

Respondents' Response	Sum	
	n	%
Debate does not affect the vote	928	92.1
The vote changes after watching debate	26	2.6
TT-TJ	54	5.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1008</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary Data, 2020

There are three political preferences in Pilkada Surakarta 2020: (1) vote for number one couple, Gibran-Teguh; (2) vote for number 2 couple, Bajo; and (3) not voting for both of them or abstain. These three electoral political preferences are, of course, affected by the electorates' reference to the implementation of Pilkada. Debate is expected to convince the electorates and to change their vote. Table 4 shows that debate cannot change political preference. Only few electorates do not change their vote after watching the debate. Political debate in Surakarta City affects slightly the change of vote. Some electorates said that they did not change their vote after debate (92.1%). Some others said that they were affected by debate and their vote changed after watching debate (2.6%). The rest was not willing to answer this question or said that they don't know/do not answer (TT-TJ) (5.4%). From the data, it can be concluded that debate affects insignificantly the change of electorates' vote or the electability of mayor-deputy mayor candidate couples in Surakarta City.

## Conclusion

Television media is still considered as mainstream media. It is more accessible to the people than other type of media. Debate of Pilkada Surakarta 2020 broadcasted live on television was intended to be the most accurate reference to the public to determine their political preference. Debate show on television presents the original ability, idea, and performance of mayor-deputy mayor candidate contestants live, without distortion. People can respond to, value, and build perception and then determine their best political attitude.

The conclusions of research are as follows. (1) Debate show on television did not attract more people/electorates' attention. The proportion of electorates not watching debate and watching debate for less than 10 minutes is 50.99%. (2) The electorates watch debate show on television for 45 minutes or 37.7% of debate duration (120 minutes) on average. (3) Debate has more impact on (positive/negative) perception on individual debate participants. (4) Debate contributes slightly to the changing political preference in voting for or not voting for the candidate couples. (5) Gibran couple is appreciated more positively by the electorates than Bajo couple.

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