

The Battle of Images on Instagram: Comparison Analysis on Impression Management Strategies of Indonesian Presidential Candidates in the 2024 Election

Pertarungan Citra di Instagram: Analisis Perbandingan Strategi Manajemen Kesan Calon Presiden dalam Pemilu 2024

Inri Inggrit Indrayani

Fakultas Humaniora dan Industri Kreatif, Universitas Kristen Petra, Jalan Siwalankerto No. 121-131, Siwalankerto, Wonocolo, Surabaya, Jawa Timur, Indonesia*
Email: inri.inggrit@petra.ac.id

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Abstract

Social media, particularly Instagram, has become a key platform for political candidates to construct public personas and influence voters. In the context of Indonesia's 2024 presidential election, the strategic use of visual communication plays a crucial role in shaping public impressions, especially among Gen Z voters. This research aims to identify the impression management strategies implemented by the three presidential candidates in Indonesia on Instagram during the 2024 presidential election. As one of the social media platforms, Instagram has been utilized to present self-presentation verbally and visually. Message management strategies from the perspective of political public relations are not merely communication practices constructed for political purposes; rather, they are a deliberate planning process designed to achieve the desired image and reach constituents, particularly Generation Z, which currently dominates the number of voters in Indonesia and is also active users of Instagram. This study employs a content analysis of the Instagram posts from the three candidates from the beginning to the end of the campaign, specifically from November 28, 2023, to February 10, 2024. The results of this study indicate that the impression management strategy used by Anies Baswedan is the Self-Image Confirmation Strategy (53.5%), the Affinity-Seeking and Politeness Strategy (25.8%), followed by Credibility (1.6%), and lastly, Influence (19.1%). Prabowo Subianto employs the Affinity-Seeking and Politeness Strategy (47%) as the most frequently used, along with the Self-Image Confirmation Strategy (27.1%). Prabowo also utilizes the Influence Strategy (20.7%) and the Credibility Strategy (5.2%), with a higher percentage compared to his two political opponents. Similarly, Ganjar Pranowo uses the Affinity-Seeking and Politeness Strategy (51.9%), the Self-Image Confirmation Strategy (44.7%), and the Influence Strategy (3.4%).

Keywords: Election 2024, impression management strategies, Indonesian presidential candidates, Instagram, political public relations

Abstrak

Media sosial, terutama Instagram, telah menjadi platform kunci bagi calon politik untuk membangun persona publik dan mempengaruhi pemilih. Dalam konteks pemilihan presiden Indonesia 2024, penggunaan komunikasi visual yang strategis memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk kesan publik, terutama di kalangan pemilih Gen Z. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi strategi pengelolaan kesan yang dilakukan oleh ketiga kandidat presiden Indonesia di Instagram dalam pemilu presiden 2024. Instagram sebagai salah satu platform media sosial telah dimanfaatkan untuk menampilkan presentasi diri baik secara verbal maupun visual. Strategi pengelolaan pesan dalam perspektif PR politik bukan sekedar praktik komunikasi yang dikonstruksi untuk tujuan politik namun merupakan sebuah perencanaan yang sengaja dirancang untuk memperoleh citra yang diharapkan dan menjangkau konstituen, khususnya Z yang saat ini mendominasi jumlah public pemilih di Indonesia sekaligus pengguna aktif Instagram. Penelitian ini menggunakan analisis isi konten Instagram dari ketiga kandidat selama awal hingga akhir kampanye yakni mulai 28 November 2023 hingga 10 Februari 2024. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa strategi pengelolaan kesan yang digunakan oleh Anies Baswedan ialah Strategi Mengonfirmasi Citra Diri (53,5%), Strategi Mencari Afinitas dan Kesopanan (25,8%), ketiga, Kredibilitas (1,6%) dan terakhir, Mempengaruhi (19,1%). Prabowo Subianto menggunakan Strategi Mencari Keterikatan dan Strategi Kesopanan (47%) sebagai yang paling banyak digunakan, serta Strategi Mengonfirmasi Citra (27,1%). Prabowo juga menggunakan Strategi Mempengaruhi (20,7%) dan Strategi Kredibilitas (5,2%), yang persentasenya lebih banyak dibandingkan dengan dua lawan politiknya. Sama seperti kandidat lainnya, Ganjar Pranowo menggunakan strategi Mencari Keterikatan dan Kesopanan (51,9%) Strategi Mengonfirmasi Citra Diri (44,7%), dan Strategi Mempengaruhi (3,4%).

Kata Kunci: calon presiden Indonesia, Instagram, Pemilu 2024, relasi publik politik, strategi manajemen kesan

Introduction

Social media platforms have transformed how political actors reach voters, providing political actors with new opportunities for direct connection with voters (Steffan, 2020). In the backdrop of Indonesia's forthcoming 2024 presidential election, Instagram emerges as a key platform for presidential candidates to construct their public image and deliver their thoughts. This study examines how Indonesian presidential candidates use Instagram to engage with people, express political narratives, and build a distinct online presence. This research aims to identify the impression management strategies employed by the three Indonesian presidential candidates on Instagram during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign. This research contributes to the development of political public relations studies, particularly in the context of image management strategies on social media such as Instagram.

With its visual-centric style and large user base, Instagram offers candidates a unique canvas to build and distribute their political personalities. As the country prepares for a pivotal election, understanding the dynamics of self-presentation on this powerful social media platform becomes crucial (Bossetta & Schmøkel, 2023).

This study intends to untangle the nuances of how presidential candidates use Instagram for political expression and interaction with the voting public by thoroughly examining the content, topics, and engagement tactics used by candidates.

This study is significant not just for shining light on the changing form of how political actors communicate about their selves, but also for contributing to the larger discussion on the intersection of social media, politics, and public perception. By studying presidential candidates' self-representation on Instagram, we hope to get insight into the changing dynamics of political campaigning in the digital era and the potential repercussions for Indonesia's democratic process.

In Indonesia, a country known for its vibrant democracy, the impending 2024 presidential election marks a critical juncture where candidates must navigate the complexities of public perception and political messaging (Susila et al., 2020). Within this evolving landscape, Instagram is a pivotal platform, allowing presidential hopefuls to transcend traditional boundaries and directly engage with a diverse and digitally connected electorate.

Instagram's visual-centric nature, along with its widespread reach, provides candidates with a dynamic platform to rigorously control their public image, reveal behind-the-scenes glances, and communicate their political ideas (Olof Larsson, 2023). As we approach the 2024 election, understanding presidential contenders' Instagram strategy is critical to comprehending the ever-changing dynamics of political public relations in the digital era (Nwachukwu, 2020).

This study thoroughly examines how Indonesian presidential candidates craft their self-representation on Instagram. By evaluating candidates' content, messaging patterns, and interactive approaches, it aims to uncover the intricate ways in which social media is used as a political tool. Beyond the immediate implications of electoral considerations, the findings of this study aim to add to broader discussions about the impact of social media on political discourse, public perception, and the democratic process.

About 28 percent of Generation Z seek information about the presidential candidates for 2024 on social media. Gen Z indeed accesses social media the most compared to previous generations to seek information about candidates. This online realm not only facilitates dynamic discussions but also serves as a platform for exchanging political insights, where the community actively interacts to seek information and assess the character of the candidates. In line with its level of usage, social media has a significant impact on public choices. In general, about one-third of the public claims that the information they receive through social media serves as a reference in making their choices, even changing their decisions. The proportion is much larger compared to outdoor media or other communication mediums such as billboards or banners. (8,1 %). Even other online mediums like news portals have not had a significant impact on influencing the choices of the public (Litbang Kompas, 2024).

Scholars have extensively examined the transformative impact of social media on the political landscape (Bajari et al., 2023). The democratization of information dissemination through platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram has redefined the ways political figures interact with the public. Instagram, with its

visual emphasis, adds a distinctive layer to this communication, enabling politicians to convey messages through images and narratives beyond the constraints of traditional media. The visual nature of Instagram allows political figures to convey authenticity and establish emotional connections with voters, potentially influencing political attitudes.

In the Indonesian context, studies have explored the role of social media in political campaigning. Previous research has shown that social media, particularly Instagram and Twitter, have become the main channels for political figures in Indonesia to shape their image and manage public perception (Mardhiah & Puspasari, 2023; Nasution, Faiz; Saraan & Ramadhan, 2024; Rahmanto et al., 2022). However, an in-depth analysis of Instagram as a self-representation tool for presidential candidates in the upcoming 2024 election is noticeably absent (Hidayati, 2024; Abdurrohman, 2024; Pratama & Efendi, 2024). The transition from conventional campaigning to digital has allowed candidates and political parties to reach voters more effectively and broadly. Digitalization through social media platforms has an impact on achieving a large and segmented voter population. The shift from one-way communication to two-way communication has enhanced the interaction between voters and candidates. Social media is also effective for building engagement and obtaining quick responses to campaign messages (Stocker et al., 2020). Voters can provide feedback, ask questions, and actively participate in political discussions through social media and digital platforms. In this context, candidates can tailor campaign messages to meet the needs and desires of voters to boost their popularity, acceptability, and electability. The shift in the use of media has impacted political activities that are more massive and well-planned, both in terms of message content and candidate visualization (Uluçay & Melek, 2024). Digitalization in political campaigns significantly allows candidates to construct their identities for image building.

Visual signals are essential for political image construction since most people do not engage directly with politicians (Veneti et al., n.d.). These messages give clues about the personality and background of politicians. They can be conveyed by presenting strategies in addition to content, such as nonverbal cues, symbolic objects, or individuals portrayed. Therefore, the integration of many layers of information is what gives pictures their strength (Guo & Ren, 2020). Emphasizing mass appeal through the display of sizable crowds or photos in which the politician shows intimacy with well-known figures (also known as "endorsement posts") is another well-established image management technique on Instagram. Moreover, politicians frequently portray themselves as regular people, for example, when interacting with the general public or participating in sports. The "popular campaigner" frame is associated with mass appeal and ordinariness; nevertheless, research indicates that it is not as popular on Instagram as the "ideal candidate" (Grusell & Nord, 2023).

Research on self-presentation strategies of political figures on social media delves into the deliberate construction of public personas. Politicians strategically utilize images, captions, and engagement tactics to shape public perceptions and garner support (Sanders, 2020). The cultivation of relatability, credibility, and charisma emerges as key components of effective self-representation. *Self-*

presentation, also known as *impression management*, is the use of behaviors to intentionally regulate the impressions that observers have of oneself (Goffman, 1959). Managing the impressions of others is instrumental in regulating social rewards and consequences, maintaining or enhancing self-esteem, and constructing and maintaining the self-concept. Typically, the selves that are presented to others are consistent with the self-concepts that individuals privately hold of themselves or perhaps slightly exaggerated in favorable directions (Lewis & Neighbors, 2005).

Impression management is a process in which people affect their image of others. Impression Management cannot be separated from the study of dramaturgy. Furthermore, dramaturgy is widely known and used as another form of communication in everyday life. Action in dramaturgy would be explained as an unstable identity of humans. Human identity may vary depending on the interaction with other people. In dramaturgy, social interaction is interpreted as a performance in a social life that has undergone migration to online (Wang, 2022). Humans develop behaviors to support the role, and create a good impression on the opponent interaction, and pave the way for achieving the goal.

According to DeVito (DeVito, 2008), there are seven impression management strategies, namely:

1. To be Liked: Affinity-seeking and Politeness Strategies aim to build positive connections and enhance interpersonal relationships. Examples include showing feelings of liking, approval, or empathy, using polite language, and demonstrating interest in others.
2. To Be Believed: Credibility Strategies: Objective: Focus on the establishment and maintenance of an individual's credibility and expertise in a specific domain. Example: Providing evidence of qualifications, demonstrating relevant achievements, or referring to credible sources to enhance the perception of competence.
3. To be Followed: Influencing Strategies: Objective: To persuade or influence the opinions, attitudes, or behaviors of others. Example: Using persuasive communication techniques, such as logical arguments, emotional appeal, or presenting information in line with the audience's values and beliefs.
4. Self-Deprecating Strategies: Purpose: To reduce feelings of superiority and appear more simple or approachable. Examples: Downplaying personal achievements, using self-deprecating humor, or emphasizing mistakes or shortcomings to create a more humble image.
5. To Confirm Self-Image: Image-Confirming Strategies: Purpose: To strengthen and maintain the positive image that others may already have of a person. Example: Engaging in behavior that is consistent with an existing identity or reputation, emphasizing positive actions in the past, or aligning current behavior with positive statements from the past to reinforce a positive image.
6. To Excuse Failure: Self-Handicapping Strategies, Koklitz & Arkin state that when facing a difficult task and worrying about the possibility of failure, a strategy can be known as the self-handicapping strategy. (1982, h.99). This type of strategy is used to create excuses so that we are not blamed for the failures we experience; if this strategy is used too often, it may be seen as an incompetent individual.

7. To Hide Faults: Self-Monitoring Strategies, this strategy involves carefully monitoring what is said and done. In this strategy, it is easy to reveal the advantageous parts of one's experience while concealing the unfavorable aspects.

The 2024 Indonesian presidential election campaign took place from November 28, 2023, to February 10, 2024. Netizens were increasingly interested in the series of hashtags related to the campaign content of the three presidential and vice-presidential candidates, ranging from #AniesMuhaimin2024, #AMINAJaDulu, #SalamAdilMakmur, #PrabowoGemoy, #PrabowoGibranIstimewa, #BersamaIndonesiaMaju, #GanjarPranowo, #SahabatGanjar, and #GanjarMahfud2024. Candidate number one, Anies Baswedan, began his inaugural campaign in Tanah Merah Village, North Jakarta. In East Java, vice-presidential candidate Muhaimin Iskandar is campaigning in Surabaya, Sidoarjo, and Mojokerto. The biography of Anies Baswedan, former Governor of DKI Jakarta, emphasizes change and sustainability. Anies uses his experience as governor of Jakarta to highlight social justice and inclusivity in his campaign.

Prabowo Subianto is the Minister of Defense in the second term of Jokowi's administration. Prabowo Subianto, who previously ran in the 2019 presidential election, is again stepping forward with strong experience and support from the Indonesia Maju Coalition. In the 2024 presidential campaign, Prabowo uses a more traditional approach while still adapting modern techniques. Ganjar Pranowo has begun his campaign in Merauke, South Papua. Ganjar Pranowo, the former Governor of Central Java, demonstrates a more progressive approach, who targets various voter demographics. He demonstrated many social achievements and infrastructure development during his campaign as governor.

The media consumption patterns during the early campaign indicate that the public uses social media to obtain information about the elections (Facal, 2023). A Kompas survey shows that 29.4 percent use social media to view or read election-related content. Additionally, around 11% consume election-related content at least once a day. Compared to other media, such as online media and television, the consumption of election information is higher on social media. Around 23.9 percent of respondents admitted to frequently accessing online media for election information. In contrast, the consumption of election content on television is relatively higher, with 29.6 percent of respondents reporting that they often watch television for election information. More than 45% of survey participants said they never use online news channels to seek information about the elections. This figure is higher than 31.9 percent for social media and 23.6 percent for television.

Methods

This paper builds on previous quantitative research on political candidates' self-presentation on social media, specifically on Instagram (Bast, 2024; Farkas & Bene, 2021). A content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) of their Instagram postings

was conducted, with the empirical operationalization of Goffman's theory (Tseëlon, 1992; Ritzer, 2014) serving as the basis.


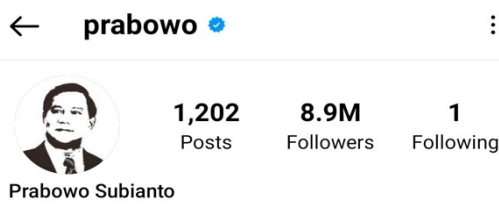
The data in this study consists of the posts made by the three presidential candidates during the presidential campaign, which started on November 28, 2023, and ended on February 10, 2024, spanning a total of 75 days. The total number of Instagram posts by the three presidential candidates is 2,231 posts. Data were analyzed using a quantitative content analysis method based on DeVito's (2008) seven impression management strategies, namely: affinity-seeking and politeness, credibility, influencing, self-deprecating, image-confirming, self-handicapping, and self-monitoring.

Each Instagram post collected from the official accounts of the three candidates during the campaign period (November 28, 2023–February 10, 2024) was manually coded using coding guidelines based on the indicators of each strategy. The analysis was conducted on text or captions, considering the context of political public relations (especially Gen Z). All the data is then recapitulated in a frequency table to see the dominant strategy trends used by each candidate.

Result and Discussion

This research shows that all three candidates have Instagram accounts managed personally or by their campaign teams. This underscores that politicians perceive social media, particularly Instagram, as an integral part of their communication activities with constituents, especially to present themselves online.

Table 1. Instagram profiles of the presidential candidates

Instagram Profile	Position and Party Affiliation
	The Governor of DKI Jakarta is supported by the National Democratic Party (Nasdem).
	The Minister of Defense and Security is the chairman of the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra).

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The Governor of Central Java is a member of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P).

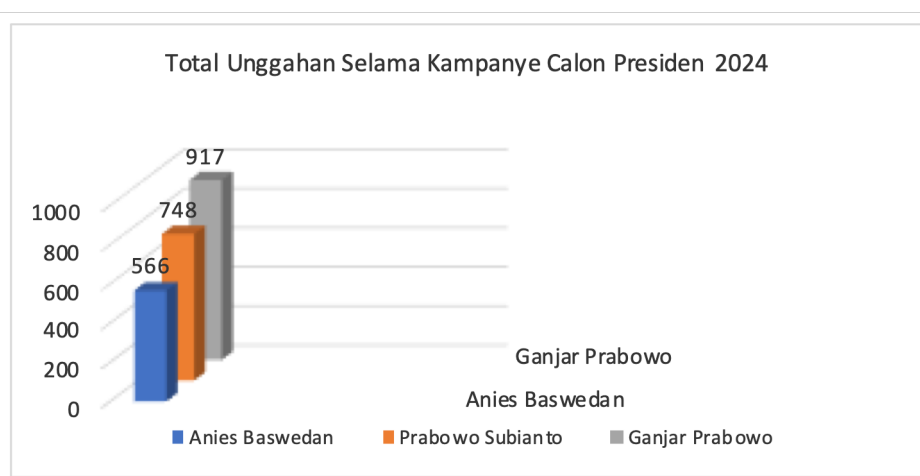
Source: Instagram, Data Pulled in February 2024

The table above shows that each candidate has an official account on Instagram with a blue checkmark, which means they have been verified. The table above also shows that visually and in the bio descriptions, each candidate's account has its distinctive features, particularly in Ganjar Pranowo's account, which explicitly states, "Your Excellency, the People, the Position is Just a Mandate." Prabowo's followers, numbering more than 8 million, are the largest compared to Anies and Ganjar. (data ditarik pada Januari, 2024). According to Influencity data, the majority of the Instagram followers of the candidates are in the millennial and Gen Z age ranges, specifically 18-24 years and 25-34 years. Prabowo has the highest quality of followers at 88.77 percent, followed by Anies at 87.03 percent and Ganjar at 86.47 percent. The quality of followers is determined by the number of nice followers or users with normal activity compared to the number of doubtful followers or suspicious users (fake account).

The Number of Posts and Communication Planning

The diagram below shows that Ganjar Pranowo made the most Instagram posts during the campaign, totaling 917. Prabowo Subianto posted 748 times, while Anies Baswedan posted 566.

Diagram 1. Total Uploads During the 2024 Presidential Candidate Campaign



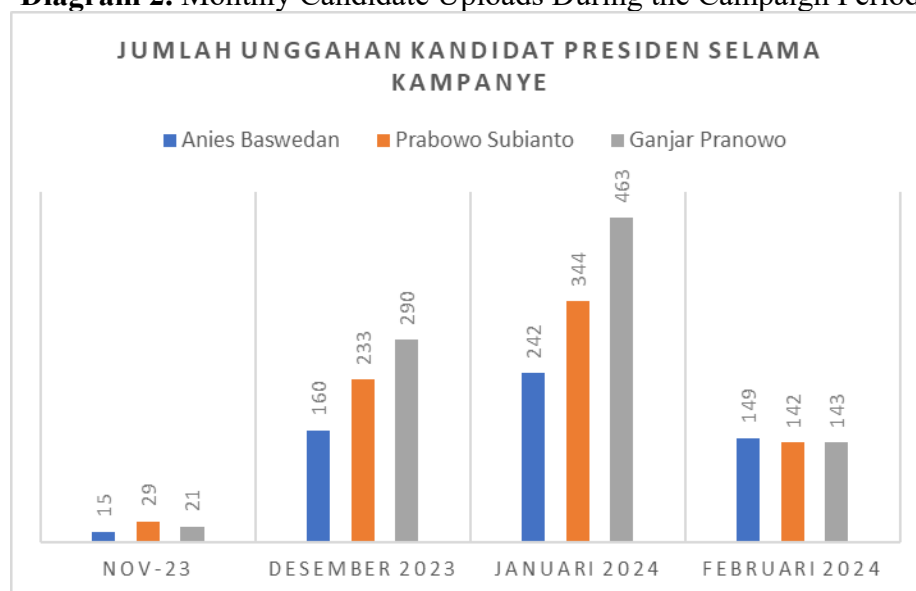
Source: Data Processed by the Researcher, 2024

Based on Ganjar Pranowo's number of posts, it shows that he has an aggressive communication strategy with voters. This is evidenced by the intensity and frequency of Ganjar's posts, which consistently excelled during the campaign period. This data also confirms that Ganjar Pranowo is striving to build high information exposure and engagement with the audience. Ganjar's consistency is part of reinforcing a deep and lasting impression regarding his ideas, activities, ideology, and political policies.

The candidate in second place is Prabowo Subianto with a total of 748 posts. In line with Ganjar Pranowo, Prabowo Subianto frequently shares activities related to his busy schedule as an experienced public official involved in national issues. The high number of posts indicates that Prabowo is striving to build a relationship and intensive engagement with Generation Z, and his digital presence serves as a symbol of Prabowo as a modern presidential candidate.

Anies Baswedan has the fewest posts, totaling 566. The data shows that Anies tends to be selective in sharing content. Selective content is generally designed to build a more focused and directed narrative, prioritizing important issues relevant to voters. Selective content can serve as a strategy to emphasize the differences in messages or ideas specifically championed by political actors. In this context, Anies Baswedan demonstrates more selectivity or focuses more on the effectiveness of the message. The activities of the three candidates show a significant effort to reach voters through social media, particularly Instagram, which is the platform most used by Generation Z.

Diagram 2. Monthly Candidate Uploads During the Campaign Period



Source: Data Processed by the Researcher, 2024

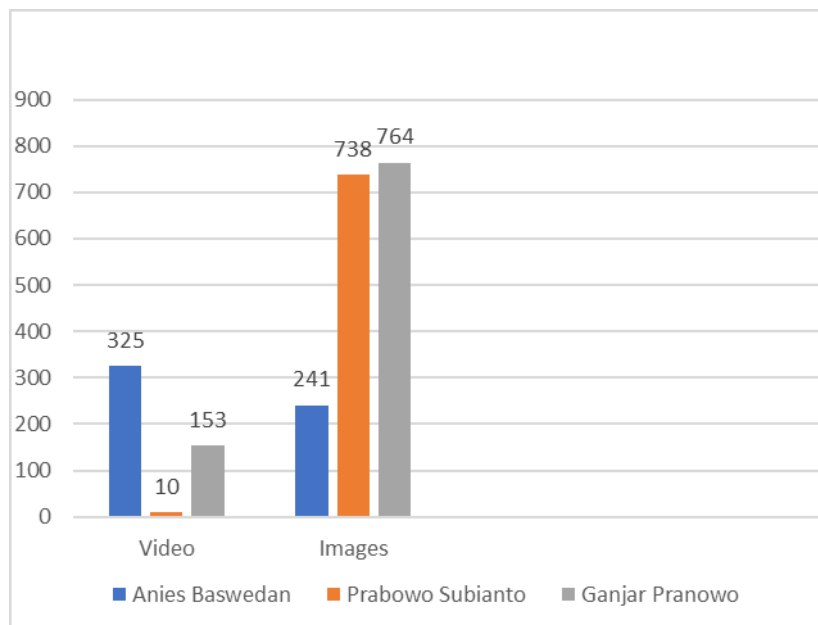
The diagram above shows that during the campaign, Ganjar made the most posts, particularly in December 2023 and January 2024, while Prabowo tended to consistently upload content throughout the campaign period. Even so, in several survey institutions, Prabowo leads in vote acquisition; however, campaign-related

content continues to be uploaded on Prabowo's social media. Anies' fundraising peak occurred in February, just before the campaign was set to end. This is very likely to happen because several polls indicate that the vote counts achieved by these two candidates do not meet expectations. It was different during the early days of the campaign, as both Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo did not engage much with content on Instagram.

Ganjar Pranowo made the most posts in December 2023 and January 2024. Some survey results indicate that the electability of Ganjar-Mahfud is declining. Among the other two pairs of candidates, Ganjar-Mahfud is in third place. According to the Ganjar-Mahfud Regional Winning Team (TPD), their critical attacks on several policies of President Jokowi have caused a decline in the electability of Ganjar-Mahfud. Therefore, after evaluation, the Ganjar-Mahfud campaign is more focused on the Ganjar-Mahfud program, including the expansion of their vision and mission. This also affects Ganjar Pranowo's Instagram content, which increasingly posts about the programs he would implement if he were elected as the 8th president of Indonesia.

Types of Content and Implications of Impact

Diagram 3. Types of Candidate Uploads



Source: Data Processed by the Researcher, 2024

Each social media platform has its characteristics, including the types of content. Data shows that Anies Baswedan uploaded more videos, totaling 325 (57.4%), compared to photos, which amounted to 241 (42.6%) uploads. Video content can provide more comprehensive information and effectively capture the audience's attention. Video uploads can serve as constituents' reference while providing a more dynamic and interactive way to convey messages. In addition, it

shows Anies' approach strategy that focuses more on conveying messages in the form of narratives or storytelling. Video content creates an emotional connection with voters and provides a more comprehensive picture of the candidate's perspective.

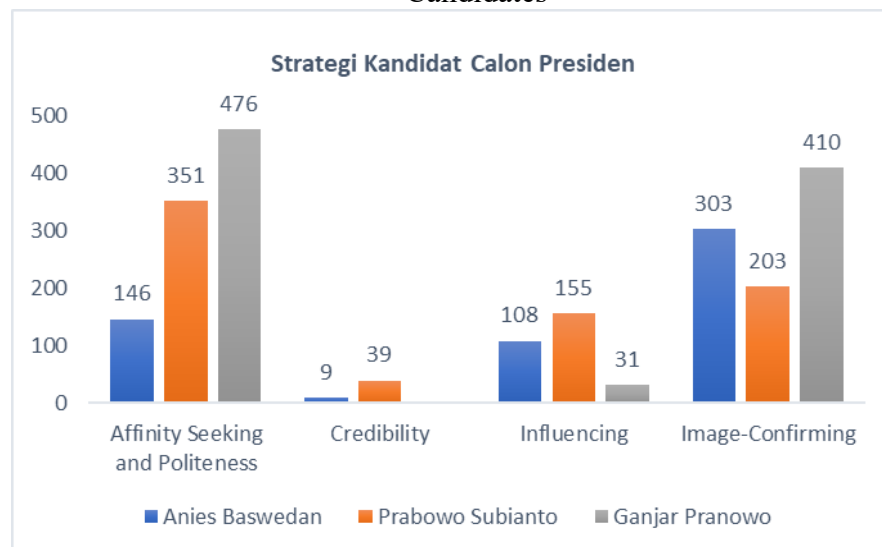
Unlike Anies Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto uploaded more photos, totaling 738 (98.7%), while the remaining 10 posts were videos (1.3%). This indicates that Prabowo focuses more on static visuals like photos of activities or events, demonstrating a more conventional approach to conveying messages. A greater emphasis on photo uploads can indicate an approach focused on the rapid and easily digestible dissemination of visual information. This generally attracts voters who prefer simple and easily understandable visual content. Ganjar Pranowo uploaded content consisting of 766 photos (83.3%) and 151 videos (16.7%). The amount reflects a balanced approach in leveraging the advantages of both formats for various types of campaign content. A high upload rate and a balance between photos and videos on Instagram indicate a comprehensive effort to enhance reach and audience engagement. This is also a strategy to reach various voter groups that have preferences for certain types of content.

The selection of content types in communication planning is a strategic matter to achieve audience engagement. Even though video content requires significant production resources, it is effective for interactivity and narrative communication. Unlike posts in the form of photos, which are more significant for visual brand building. The frequency of candidate postings is important with the aim of increasing exposure or visibility. The selection of content types on social media by candidates has implications for personal branding and public perception (Firdaus et al., 2024) (Bajari et al., 2023). This section emphasizes that the three presidential candidates use Instagram as a campaign tool in different ways. Ganjar Pranowo demonstrates an aggressive and multifunctional strategy through a high volume of balanced posts. In contrast, Prabowo Subianto's posts, which are largely composed of photos, emphasize a more visual message that is quickly understood by the audience. Anies Baswedan focuses more on video as an effort to convey storytelling messages and interactively engage. Even though each candidate has a different approach on Instagram, in principle, there is an effort by the candidates to reach and influence their voters through the platform.

The Impression Management Strategy of The Presidential Candidates

The data below shows that the three candidates use affinity seeking and politeness strategies, image confirming, and influencing strategies, while two of them, Prabowo and Anies, use credibility strategies. In the credibility strategy, candidates strive to present themselves as competent, trustworthy, and capable leaders. For example, they use posts that showcase official activities such as meetings with important figures, state speeches, or policy discussion events. This strategy reinforces the public perception that the candidate is not only popular but also credible as a national leader. The strategies that were not used by the three candidates are Self-Deprecating Strategies, Self-Handicapping Strategies, and Self-Monitoring Strategies.

Diagram 4. Impression Management Strategies for the 2024 Presidential Candidates



Source: Data Processed by the Researcher, 2024

The Impression Management Strategy of Anies Baswedan

Diagram 4 shows that Anies Baswedan used Image Confirming-To Confirm Self Image (53.5%) as the most common strategy for Impression Management during the campaign. Secondly, Affinity Seeking and Politeness Strategies (25.8%), third, Influencing (19.1%), and lastly, Credibility (1.6%). The strategy most commonly used by Anies Baswedan is image confirming, with a total of 303 posts. The use of image-confirming strategies shows that Anies Baswedan focuses on strengthening and solidifying his image as an Islamic leader. Anies' image is constructed intensively through repetition and consistency of messages, as well as showcasing his commitment to the values he advocates for. The high frequency of confirming image uploads is also Anies' effort to maintain the stability of his political image and identity. This is important for building trust and confidence among voters that Anies is a consistent and reliable leader. The image confirms the strengthening of Anies' personal brand by highlighting his characteristics as an Islamic leader, educated, and a catalyst for change. One of the messages as stated below,

Tulungagung was our last campaign outside Jakarta, and we are very grateful for the overwhelming crowd and the figures who supported us.

Every time we visit various regions, we meet people without payment, who bring hope for change to happen in Indonesia. And now it's time for all of us to make that change. Indonesia, which has become a great home for everyone, as outlined by the founders of this republic. Indonesia is for all groups, not just for some.

#AMINAJaDulu #Tulungagung

The next strategy, Affinity Seeking, and Politeness, is an approach where Anies seeks to create closeness and sympathy with the audience while demonstrating a polite and friendly demeanor. This strategy aims to build an emotional connection with voters, particularly through a warm, courteous, and caring image. This could enhance Anies' appeal, especially among voters who are interested in the values of politeness and humanism. In the content, Anies demonstrates direct interaction with the community, speaking in a friendly and polite tone, and showing concern for social issues, which creates the impression that he is a caring and approachable leader. This strategy enhances Anies' appeal, making him appear as an empathetic and approachable leader. It could also increase voter loyalty, as they pay more attention to personal character rather than political policies. One of the messages as stated below,

Thank you, Kendari! Let's continue to embrace everyone to join the momentum of change. #AMINAJaDulu

The third strategy, influencing, is where Anies emphasizes the advantages of the policies he offers, such as improvements in education quality, infrastructure, or climate change. This strategy was employed by Anies using statistical data and facts to support his arguments and demonstrate solutions to address them. One of the messages as stated below,

As an industrial plant spread across several regions of Indonesia, Palm Oil must be managed with attention to environmental sustainability and crop yields so that its farmers prosper.

Here is an excerpt of AMIN's commitment to providing ease of production to marketing for Indonesian palm oil farmers. The complete document can be read at s.id/VMAMIN, or you can also read the points on the aminajadulu.com site.

Lastly, the credibility strategy only accounted for 1.6%, indicating that Anies did not focus much on building credibility during the campaign. The strategy is used merely as a complement that emphasizes Anies' experience as the Governor of DKI Jakarta, as well as his achievements in education and public policy. One of the messages as stated below,

Received an invitation to dialogue with Kadin. We present the One Economy Program. Hopefully, through this program, Indonesia's economy will grow evenly, job opportunities will open up, logistics will be cheap, legal certainty and bureaucracy will be straightforward, and the Human Development Index (HDI) will rise. #AMINAJaDulu

Impression Management Strategy of Prabowo Subianto

The strategies most commonly used by Prabowo are affinity-seeking and Politeness Strategies, which account for 47% of the overall tactics he employs. This strategy is used to build an emotional connection with voters through politeness, friendliness, and a closeness-oriented approach. Prabowo is trying to build a closer and friendlier relationship with voters, creating the impression that he is a warm, approachable leader who cares about the people. In a political context, this can be

very effective in attracting voters who are likely influenced by personal and emotional aspects of elections. This strategy is an effort by Prabowo to build an emotional connection with voters. Especially during the campaign, Prabowo is seen as a candidate with a dark track record and history. This strategy is an effort to counter the messages from the political opponent while giving the impression that Prabowo is a leader who is close to the people and not elitist. As shown below,

At the national consolidation event of the Gerindra party, I also had the opportunity to inaugurate the new deputy chairman and members of the Gerindra party's board of trustees, and on that occasion, Gerindra also awarded the party's best cadres who have excelled beyond their call of duty.

Prabowo also heavily utilizes Image Confirming with 27.1% in his campaign strategy. This strategy focuses on reinforcing the public image that is already well-known. Prabowo employs this strategy to maintain his existing image as a strong, patriotic military leader with experience in national security and political affairs. This strategy is strengthened by using narratives that highlight patriotism and love for the country, which have long been an important part of his self-image. This strategy allows Prabowo to maintain a loyal support base, especially from those who see him as a firm, experienced figure as well as a lovely person. This also helps maintain message consistency throughout the campaign. As shown below,

Bobby Gemoy!

With 20.7% of the total strategy, influencing is an important approach in Prabowo's campaign. This strategy aims to shape voter perceptions so that they follow or support the ideas and policies he offers. Prabowo uses this strategy to convince voters of the vision, policies, and direction he presents. This strategy includes efforts to continue the Indonesia Maju Coalition program, the results of which have already been felt and appreciated by other countries. Prabowo is likely to emphasize strict policies related to national defense, food stability, and the economy. One of the messages as stated below,

After the event in Subang, West Java, I headed straight to the Jakarta Convention Center to greet my friends from Suara Muda Indonesia.

The future of Indonesia is the future of all of you young Indonesians; I am merely a bridge generation to help you take off towards the Golden Indonesia 2045.

Prabowo employs Credibility Strategies at a rate of 5.2%. Although this percentage is relatively small, Prabowo still uses this strategy more than his two political opponents. This strategy is used to strengthen the image that Prabowo has built as a political figure experienced particularly in the field of national defense. Prabowo often emphasizes his experience as a military leader and his positions in various important roles in the national political arena. In his content, Prabowo uploaded testimonials from influential people or showcased support from figures deemed credible to enhance trust in himself. This is to strengthen the image that he is a candidate who is not only assertive but also responsible and reliable. As shown below,

From Aceh, I headed straight to Bandung, West Java. Today, Prabowo-Gibran received extraordinary support from the people of West Java through the Indonesian Muslim Unity Movement for Love of the Homeland. (GEMPITA). Thank you for the trust and enthusiasm given by the PERSIS younger siblings. (Persatuan Islam). #BersamaIndonesiaMaju

The Impression Management Strategy of Ganjar Pranowo

Similar to other candidates, Ganjar Pranowo utilized "To Be Liked" (51.9%) and "Image Confirming - To Confirm Self Image" (44.7%) as the most common strategies for impression management on Instagram, followed lastly by "Influencing Strategies - To Be Followed" (3.4%). Affinity-seeking is an effort to build relationships and connections with the audience, while politeness reflects the character of Eastern societies that are courteous and respectful towards others. In principle, this strategy is used to be favored by constituents. Several of Ganjar's posts depict a friendly image and bring him closer to his constituents. This strategy is also used to demonstrate care for the community, maintain good relations with supporters, and appreciate all forms of constituent support. Ganjar prioritizes building emotional connections and familiarity over presenting himself as an authority figure. This is aligned with the target voters of its supporting party, namely PDI-P, which indeed claims to be the party of the common people. As shown below,

This bench and blackboard bear witness to the story of Bung Hatta and Bung Syahrir on their exile island, Banda Neira. Therefore, visiting here is my way of absorbing their spirit. The spirit of the struggle for human development, providing the widest access to education for all Indonesian people.

And I am grateful to be able to enjoy the natural beauty and the hospitality of my brothers and sisters, the residents of Banda Neira. Including the beauty of Fort Belgica, which we can see on the one-thousand-rupiah bank note.

The next strategy seen in Ganjar's upload is image confirming which is shown by Ganjar through his interaction with *wong cilik*. This strategy is demonstrated by presenting Ganjar as a humble political candidate who has no power distance or egalitarianism with the lower class and has empathy with the people's problems. The closeness to the little people is constructed on Ganjar Pranowo's Instagram to strengthen the narrative about Ganjar's true, caring, and accessible. Confirm self-image strategy is also shown by Ganjar Pranowo's nationalism as a leader who appreciates diversity in Indonesia. As shown below,

Happy Lunar New Year 2024 to my siblings who are celebrating. May this Year of the Wood Dragon be filled with blessings, prosperity, and happiness.

The last strategy is influencing strategies, shown through Ganjar's Instagram content that uses *Sat-set* and *Tas-tes* jargon in his campaign. *Sat-set* and *Tas-tes* are Javanese terminologies that mean Ganjar's ability to work quickly in solving the problems of the Indonesian people, accelerating change and symbolizing that people's prosperity is justice for all Indonesian people.

This research revealed the three candidates used Instagram with different impression management strategies. Ganjar Pranowo adopts an aggressive and multifunctional strategy with a high and diverse number of posts. In contrast, Prabowo Subianto relies more on photo posts to highlight visual messages. Anies Baswedan, on the other hand, emphasizes using video to build storytelling and encourage interaction with the audience. Impression management in the perspective of political PR is a strategic communication aimed at influencing public perception and gaining support. Formulating this impression management aligns with the perception that the candidate wants to build, so there tends to be consistency in the messages and narratives that they wish to instill in the public's mind (Susila et al., 2020). The different approaches taken by the three candidates show that managing images and building relationships with voters on social media platforms like Instagram can be achieved through the frequency of posts, the types of content, and the interactions established. In this context, the perspective of political PR emphasizes the significance of formulating communication strategies to shape public perception on social media platforms like Instagram, which has become a decisive battleground for image. Political public relations communication strategists should consider tailoring content to specific impression management goals, particularly in visual platforms like Instagram. Future studies could incorporate audience reception analysis to understand the effectiveness of each strategy. Digital literacy campaigns should be encouraged to help voters critically assess political content online.

Conclusion

This research describes social media not just as a communication channel for campaigns, but also as an arena for image contestation as well as the modernization of the relationship between political candidates and the public, specifically with Gen Z. In the Indonesian presidential election 2024 campaign, impression management strategies that tend to be liked and to confirm self-image are still perceived as more important than emphasizing achievements and credibility. Although two of the three candidates also used influencing strategies, the number in their posts was relatively small. This means the battle of ideas has not been widely carried out in the campaign. This study demonstrates that from a political PR perspective, the candidates valued perceptions over substance.

To support the substance of political campaigns, practitioners in political public relations in this context can help to maintain democratization in Indonesia by educating voters and strengthening voter rationality regarding presidential candidate campaigns. To ensure that voters' decisions are driven by reason rather than feelings and inclinations, the digital age, which promotes a symmetrical two-way communication relationship between candidates and constituents, requires that voters have the critical ability to respond to messages that politicians provide. Consideration of the platforms, ideologies, and backgrounds of presidential candidates will be stimulated by the reasonableness of the electorate, leading to substantive dialogue. Moreover, social media content catalyzes constituents to

locate resources and knowledge to comprehend the complexities of political decisions.

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