

***Social Media Dynamics in Indonesian Politics:
Social Media Political Marketing and Branding in the 2024 Presidential Elections***

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Abstract

Following the conclusion of Indonesia's 2024 presidential election, social media's role as a crucial tool in political marketing has become even clearer. With Indonesia's vast online population, particularly Millennials and Gen Z, who comprised over half of the electorate, social media platform especially Instagram served as essential channel for candidate engagement and voter influence. This study investigates how presidential and vice-presidential candidates utilized this platform to shape political branding and connect with diverse demographics. Applying a framework focused on emotional, experiential, and personal branding, this research examines the effectiveness of each candidate's digital strategies in cultivating voter loyalty and engagement. Analysis of post-engagement metrics reveals that candidates who leveraged emotional appeal, interactive experiences, and relatable storytelling saw the highest levels of engagement, which likely contributed to their influence on younger, digitally-active voters. The findings offer insights into the role of social media in the final outcomes of the 2024 election, demonstrating how digital communication strategies shaped voter perceptions and reinforced political identities. This study contributes to the field of political social media marketing by highlighting social media's expanded role in electoral influence within Indonesia's digital era.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Political Branding, Elections

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Introduction

In recent years, social media has become a transformative force in the political arena, providing an influential platform for political marketing and branding. Indonesia, with its vast and active social media user base, exemplifies this shift. Approximately 185.3 million Indonesians are connected to the internet, with nearly 139 million actively engaging on social media platforms. This expansive online audience has spurred political candidates to adopt social media as a primary campaign tool, especially as the nation approaches the pivotal 2024 presidential election.

The 2024 Indonesian presidential race represents a strategic shift in campaign approaches, as candidates increasingly depend on digital platforms to engage a diverse electorate, especially Millennials and Gen Z, who make up over half of the voter base. These platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok, enable political figures to directly communicate with potential supporters, shape public opinion, and foster a politically active online community. Scholars have noted that political social media marketing, also described as political marketing on social media, involves the strategic use of digital platforms to create, convey, and deliver advantages for stakeholders (Tuten & Solomon, 2014). This approach aligns with previous studies by Bolde and Dalrymple (2016) and Hultman et al. (2019), who emphasize the influence of political social media marketing on shaping voters' attitudes and behaviors through targeted messaging and brand-building strategies.

Through effective political social media marketing, candidates can go beyond traditional campaign methods, as social media offers not only a space for sharing information but also for constructing compelling political identities and brand images. According to Tuten & Solomon's framework, political social media marketing enables candidates to create brand resonance and emotional connections, which are critical to cultivating voter loyalty. Building on these insights and the theoretical foundation provided by Tafesse & Wien (2017), this study investigates the content and engagement strategies employed by Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates. By analyzing categories such as emotional, experiential, and personal branding, this research explores how these strategies shape public perceptions and align with the values and aspirations of Indonesia's younger electorate.

The objective of this study is to examine the digital branding techniques of each presidential candidate, with a focus on engagement metrics and the effectiveness of specific content types in influencing public opinion. This research aims to illuminate the broader role of social media in contemporary political marketing, particularly its influence on voter behavior and electoral outcomes in Indonesia.

Method

This paper seeks to demonstrate how all candidates utilize social media as tools for political marketing, with a particular emphasis on platform usage, user engagement, and a content analysis categorized by brand post types. Social media activity from the accounts of all three presidential and three vice-presidential candidates was monitored and collected using Fanpage Karma, a web-based social media analytics tool that identifies key topics and trends across industries by analyzing social media data. The data collection period began from the official announcement of each candidate's run until the end of the campaign on February 13, 2024.

This study utilizes a social media content analysis approach, guided by the branding framework developed by Tafesse and Wien (2017), to assess the digital strategies employed by the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Tafesse and Wien's framework categorizes social media content into 12 brand post categories: emotional brand posts, functional brand posts, educational brand posts, brand resonance, experiential brand posts, current events, personal brand posts, employee brand posts, brand community, customer relationship, cause-related brand posts, and sales promotions. Each category offers insight into distinct aspects of political branding that candidates use to shape their public image and connect with voters.

The analysis specifically targets posts with the highest Engagement Rate (ER) across major social media platforms, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube. Engagement Rate, a metric capturing total interactions (likes, shares, comments) in relation to audience size, serves as a vital indicator of the effectiveness of each branding strategy in engaging voters and building loyalty. From a dataset of 11,886 posts across all platforms, the top 10 posts from each platform, ranked by Engagement Rate, were selected for detailed analysis. This approach enables a focused examination of the content that generated the strongest voter response, providing insights into the strategies most effective in driving engagement and resonance.

Each selected post is analyzed and coded according to the branding category it most closely aligns with, providing a comprehensive view of the strategies that drive high engagement. By categorizing posts based on Engagement Rate (ER) and branding type, the study assesses the impact of each strategy on voter engagement and brand loyalty. This categorization provides insights into the specific types of messages and approaches that resonate most effectively with the Indonesian electorate, especially among the digitally active Millennial and Gen Z demographics.

This framework enables a nuanced understanding of how candidates utilize social media not only as a communication platform but also as a tool for building a distinct and engaging political brand. By examining the strategic deployment of each branding type and its impact on engagement, this study contributes valuable insights into the role of social media in modern political campaigns.

Findings

1. Engagement Rate Data Analysis

Millennials and Generation Z represent a significant portion of the electorate for the 2024 election, collectively constituting 56.45% of the total voter population. Specifically, Millennials account for 33.60% (approximately 66.8 million individuals), while Generation Z comprises 22.85% (around 46.8 million individuals). Consequently, this study will primarily examine the engagement and feedback of social media users, particularly those from the Millennial and Gen Z cohorts, regarding the content disseminated by the three pairs of presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The analysis of the feedback will aim to identify the types of content that are most favored by voters during the political contestation associated with the presidential election and its candidates.

To achieve this, researchers conducted an analysis of the social media presence of presidential and vice presidential candidates. The findings revealed that each candidate

maintains a minimum of five social media platforms, specifically Instagram, Facebook, X, YouTube, and TikTok. Furthermore, it was observed that all candidates not only possess social media accounts but also actively generate content and utilize these platforms as a means of campaigning. The following is the social media account data owned by each candidate:

Table 1: Social Media Account of the Candidates

No.	Candidates	Instagram	Facebook	X	Youtube	TikTok
1	Anies & Muhaimin	@aniesbaswedan & @cakimininow	Anies Baswedan A Muhaimin Iskandar	@aniesbaswedan @MuhaiminIskandar	Anies baswedan Muhaimin iskandar	@aniesbaswedan @MuhaiminIskandar
2	Prabowo & Gibran	@prabowo & @gibran_rakabuming	Prabowo Subianto Gibran Rakabuming	@prabowo @gibran_tweet	Prabowo subianto gibran rakabuming	@prabowosubianto08 @gibran_rakabuming
3	Ganjar & Mahfud	@ganjar_pranowo & @mohmahfudmd	Ganjar Pranowo Mahfud MD	@ganjarpranowo @mohmahfud	Ganjar pranowo MahfudMDofficial	@ganjarpranowo @mohmahfudofficial

Table 2 (a): Engagement Rate Data of All Candidate Social Media Accounts

Social Media	Instagram					X					Tiktok				
	F	R	N	R/F	R/N	F	R	N	R/F	R/N	F	R	N	R/F	R/N
Anies Baswedan	7.336.109	53.872.936	566	7,34	9518	5.189.910	8.703.892	787	1.6	110	2.400.000	32.155.981	457	13	70363.2
M. Mubaimin Iskandar	2.761.171	19.854.179	856	7,19049	2319	450.238	6.216.116	1.4	1.3	431	407.900	5.201.639	385	13	13510.8
Prabowo Subianto	0	0	0	0	0	4.770.617	169.237	31	0.0	545	0	114.123	3	0	38041.0
Gibran Rakabuming	3.726.171	36.884.536	236	9,90	1562	1.397.315	1.950.698	189	1.4	103	2.900.000	32.202.600	72	11	447258
Ganjar Pranowo	6.733.082	104.302.139	468	15,4909	2228	3.589.404	4.809.529	1.1	1.3	431	7.800.000	19.699.862	308	3	63960.6
Mahfud MD	1.449.070	20.945.049	340	14,45	6160	4.478.277	884.627	45	0.2	196	274.600	3.249.093	133	12	24429.3
Total	22.005.603	235.858.839	2.466	54	559.137	19.875.761	22.734.099	3.609	18	55.122	13.782.500	92.623.298	1.358	52	657.563
Average	3.667.601	39.309.807	411	9	93.190	3.312.627	3.789.017	602	3	9.187	2.297.083	15.437.216	226	9	109.594
Minimum	0	0	0	0	0	450.238	169.237	31	0	4.310	0	114.123	3	0	13.511
Maximum	7.336.109	104.302.139	856	15	222.868	5.189.910	8.703.892	1.441	14	19.658	7.800.000	32.202.600	457	13	447.258
Std. Deviation	2.900.115	36.614.250	293	6	84.123	1.946.636	3.346.818	602	5	5.931	2.952.702	14.607.395	183	6	166.879

F=follower/subscriber, R= total reactions (likes, comments, shares)
 N=total number of posts, R/F= Reaction per followers, R/N= Reaction per posts

Table 2 (b): Engagement Rate Data of All Candidate Social Media Accounts

Social Media	Facebook					Youtube				
	F	R	N	R/F	R/N	F	R	N	R/F	R/N
Anies Baswedan	2.096.434	5.368.822	1.250	3	4295	928.000	3.809.908	993	4,11	3837
M. Muhaimin Iskandar	1.126.649	1.334.214	680	1	1962,079412	99.500	236.015	73	2,37	3233
Prabowo Subianto	10.878.768	13.724.881	248	1	55342	47.500	216.745	36	4,56	6021
Gibran Rakabuming	202.598	62.520	25	0	2501	62.300	69.477	8	1,12	8685
Ganjar Pranowo	2.382.246	4.227.544	454	2	9312	2.490.000	1.574.721	287,00	0,63	5487
Mahfud MD	117.486	935.367	285	8	3282	5.780	12.587	114	2,18	110
Total	16.804.181	25.653.348	2.942	15	76.694	3.633.080	5.919.453	1.511	15	27.372
Average	2.800.697	4.275.558	490	3	12.782	605.513	986.576	252	2	4.562
Minimum	117.486	62.520	25	0	1.962	5.780	12.587	8	1	110
Maximum	10.878.768	13.724.881	1.250	8	55.342	2.490.000	3.809.908	993	5	8.685
Std Deviation	4.066.411	5.060.540	432	3	21.017	987.672	1.500.855	376	2	2901

F=follower/subscriber, R= total reactions (likes, comments, shares)

N=total number of posts, R/F= Reaction per followers, R/N= Reaction per posts

Table 2 indicates that all presidential and vice-presidential candidates actively manage their social media presence. The researchers examined five key platforms: Instagram, Facebook, X, YouTube, and TikTok. Across a total of 10 accounts, 11,886 posts were identified as the data population for analysis. The data was subsequently categorized, and the 10 posts with the highest engagement rate from each account on each platform were selected as the sample. This sample was then analyzed using a brand post framework to examine the strategies of political branding and marketing employed by each candidate pair on social media. However, the data collection faced certain limitations; specifically, data from Prabowo's Instagram and TikTok accounts could not be retrieved, likely due to account privacy restrictions.

The available data reveals that each candidate commands a substantial follower base across social media platforms. Among the candidates, Ganjar and Mahfud have the most popular accounts, boasting the highest number of followers or subscribers on YouTube, TikTok, and X. Anies and Muhaimin lead in follower numbers on Instagram, while Prabowo and Gibran hold the highest follower count on Facebook. Despite follower counts exceeding one million on average, this does not consistently translate to high engagement levels. For instance, while Ganjar and Mahfud lead in followers on YouTube, TikTok, and X, they do not receive the

highest total engagement. This suggests a significant relationship between engagement and post frequency. The data shows a linear trend: higher reaction counts—likes, comments, saves, and shares—are correlated with a higher volume of content posted. Thus, while a large follower base is advantageous, active and consistent posting is crucial for achieving strong engagement rates. As this study aims to examine the influence of millennials and Gen Z, who will constitute the majority of voters in the 2024 election, the researcher will concentrate on Instagram for content analysis and brand post categorization. This focus is based on Instagram’s popularity as the primary social media platform among the target demographic.

2. Content Analysis and Category Brand Posts Each Candidates

a) Anies Baswedan & M. Muhaimin Iskandar on Instagram

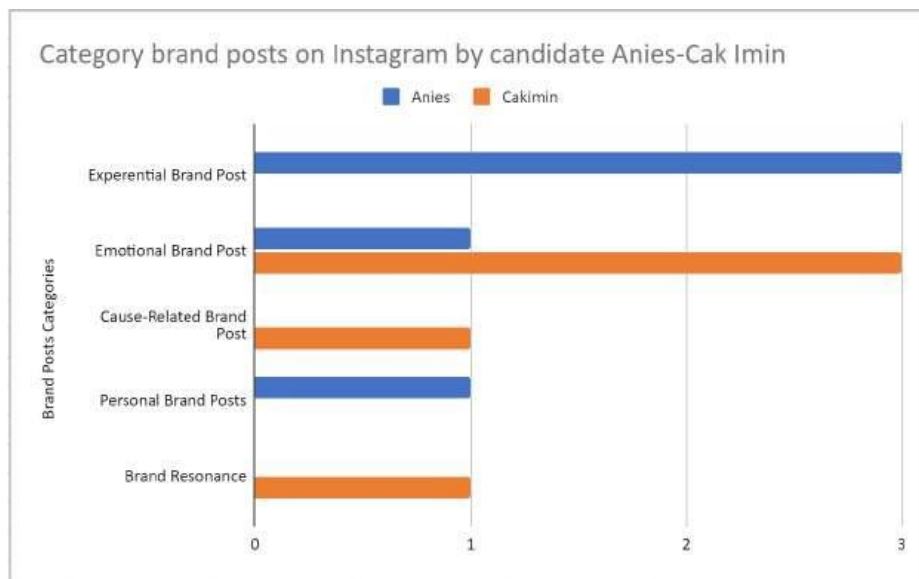


Chart 1: Category Brand Posts on Instagram by Candidate Anies & M. Muhaimin Iskandar

In analyzing the brand posts classification data from presidential and vice presidential candidates Anies Baswedan and Muhaimin Iskandar (Cak Imin) in the 2024 Indonesian election on the Instagram platform, we can see a variety of strategies implemented through a carefully structured communication approach. Using a framework from Tafesse & Wien (2017), the content uploaded by both partners is divided into categories that reflect various branding elements.



Figure 1: Instagram Posts by Anies Baswedan With the Highest Engagement Rate

In the Experiential Brand category, Anies Baswedan used video reels to show the crowd and enthusiasm of supporters at various campaign events, creating a positive association between the direct experience experienced by the masses and his image as a potential leader. For example, a video showing supporters gathered at The Jakarta International Stadium (JIS) gives the impression of high community involvement, creating an energetic feel that invites further participation. Through this strategy, Anies seeks to instill the idea that his presence in the midst of society reflects a responsive leadership and closeness to the people. The use of hashtags such as #AMINAJaDulu and #KumpulAkbarJIS01 reinforces the message, establishing a collective identity among its supporters.

Meanwhile, in the Personal Brand Post category, Anies uses a personal narrative to connect herself with the audience. For example, a video showing a moment of preparation with the family before voting not only serves to show the humanist side of a presidential candidate, but also awakens a sense of emotional connection with his followers. By emphasizing the values of togetherness and spirituality in her captions, Anies creates a deeper connection with voters, who often value relevant personal stories.

On the other hand, Cak Imin also shows the diversity of strategies in branding, especially with the approach of Emotional Brand Post and Brand Resonance. The content that features his interactions with supporters, as well as emotional moments when meeting other public figures, shows the warm and friendly side of his personality. This is important in building an image of a leader that can be accepted by the wider community. In the context of brand resonance theory, it is closely related to how audiences connect emotionally and cognitively with a brand, in this case a political candidate as a brand.



Figure 2: Instagram Posts by Muhaimin With the Highest Engagement Rate

One of the uploads that attracted attention was when Cak Imin received a LEGO gift from the fans, which was filled with humor and joy, reinforcing the emotional storytelling element and showing the good relationship between them. Cak Imin also adopted the Cause- Related Brand Post, which invites supporters to oversee the election process in a fair and honest manner. This approach not only shows concern for the integrity of democracy, but also encourages active participation from the public. By emphasizing the importance of monitoring the popular vote, Cak Imin succeeded in instilling a sense of social responsibility among his supporters, making them an integral part of the electoral process.

Overall, both aspiring couples successfully leveraged a variety of experience-and emotion-oriented branding strategies, creating a strong bond with their audience through relatable and evocative content. They not only focus on delivering information, but also invite followers to get emotionally involved, making them not just voters, but part of a larger community in an electoral context. Through this analysis, it can be concluded that the utilization of appropriate communication strategies can have a significant impact on public involvement and support for candidates in upcoming elections.

b) Prabowo Subianto & Gibran Rakabuming on Instagram

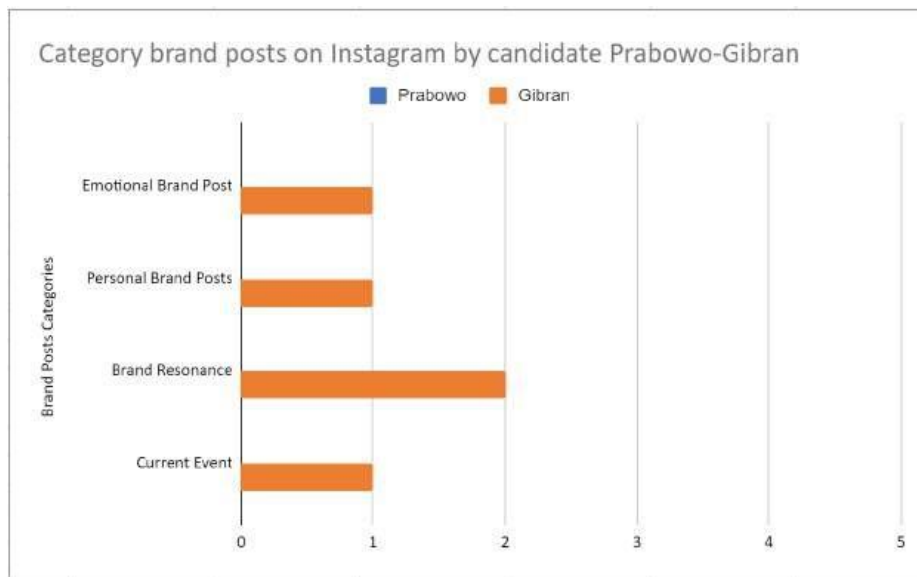


Chart 2: Category Brand Posts on Instagram by Candidate Prabowo Subianto & Gibran Rakabuming

Analysis of brand posts classification data on Prabowo-Gibran candidate pairs on the Instagram platform shows a diverse approach in utilizing content to reach audiences through Gibran's account.



Figure 3: Instagram Posts by Gibran With the Highest Engagement Rate

The first post was an Emotional Brand Post which showed Gibran being carried by one of his teams. Captions that include elements of humor and emoji aim to trigger an emotional response from the audience. It shows an attempt to create closeness with voters through an entertaining approach, utilizing humor as a tool to attract attention and trigger interaction. This is in line with Tafesse & Wien's explanation that emotions can be an important factor in influencing consumer attitudes and behavior towards brands.

Furthermore, Personal Branding is shown through Gibran's posts interacting with Prabowo. The act of shaking hands and hugging creates an image of a strong and respectful relationship. This content has a deep meaning in the context of leadership, where emotional closeness and interpersonal connections are important. According to Tafesse & Wien, creating a strong relationship between leaders and voters can increase positive perceptions of political brands.



Figure 4: Instagram Posts by Gibran With the Highest Engagement Rate

In the Brand Resonance category, there are two posts featuring Gibran and Prabowo with the theme of patriotism. This post highlights their political brand identity with national symbols, such as the red and white flag and Garuda Pancasila, as well as the slogan "Indonesia Maju." The use of this visual element reinforces their message of vision and commitment to the progress of the nation. This reflects how brand resonance can be achieved by emphasizing common values and aspirations between leaders and voters, as outlined in the theory.

Posts related to the Current Event show Gibran and his wife about to vote, indicating active involvement in the election. Captions that invite interaction about voter participation demonstrate the relevance of the content to the current social context, which is an important element in political marketing. This content creates a space for dialogue and participation, inviting audiences to engage directly in the election process, in line with the idea that content relevance can increase engagement with voters.

Finally, this analysis indicates that Gibran utilizes a variety of communication strategies, ranging from emotions, personal branding, to involvement in current issues, to build a positive image and get closer to voters. In the context of limited data on Prabowo, the focus on Gibran's content still provides a clear picture of how the use of effective marketing strategies can impact the strengthening of political brands in the 2024 elections in Indonesia.

c) Ganjar Pranowo & Mahfud MD on Instagram

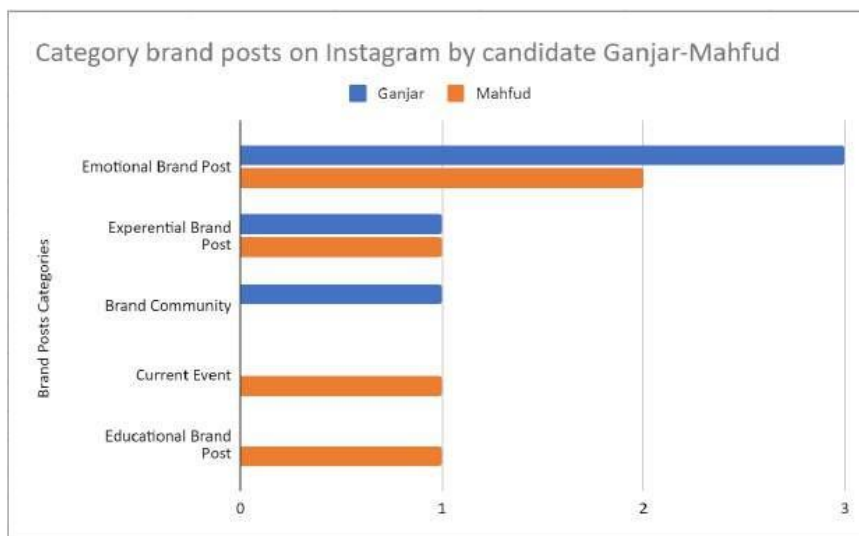


Chart 3: Category Brand Posts on Instagram by Candidate Ganjar Pranowo & Mahfud MD

Analysis of data on brand posts classification on Ganjar-Mahfud's Instagram partner shows a variety of communication strategies that are effective in reaching audiences and creating emotional attachment. Referring to the theory of Tafesse & Wien (2017), we can see that the posts uploaded include the categories Emotional Brand, Community Brand, and Experiential Brand. In this context, posts featuring interactions with influencers, fans and the community serve to strengthen emotional ties as well as create a solid community around the Ganjar-Mahfud brand.



Figure 5: Instagram Posts by Ganjar With the Highest Engagement Rate

One striking example is Ganjar's first post that received the highest engagement, which is a reels video that shows humorous interactions with influencers. This content not only conveys the message of the campaign in an entertaining way, but also creates an intimate and friendly atmosphere. With the use of upbeat dangdut music, this post managed to attract the attention of the audience and evoke positive emotions, in accordance with the brand's Emotional approach.



Figure 6: Instagram Posts by Ganjar With the Highest Engagement Rate

Something similar can be seen in the content that shows Ganjar's relaxing moments with the legendary band, Slank, where a warm and cheerful atmosphere is presented to increase engagement from music fans. Ganjar's interactions with the Slank Music Group in other content demonstrate his success in establishing deep emotional connections, with an emphasis on friendliness and togetherness, which can lead to admiration and affiliation among fans of the band. In this context, captions that emphasize the atmosphere of a "rock and roll lunch" add a relaxed feel, thus inviting more audience engagement.

The use of the Community Brand is also seen in Ganjar's content which focuses on listening to people's aspirations. Through these efforts, Ganjar managed to present himself as a leader who cares about the needs of the community, fostering a sense of ownership and solidarity among his supporters. The use of influencers as messengers is also an effective strategy to strengthen the community around the brand that is built, where social interaction becomes the core of building the brand community itself.

On the other hand, Mahfud MD took the Current Event approach by utilizing the moment of his resignation from the position of Menkopolkam. The content highlights a significant political transition and communicates its commitment to neutral action, a strategic move to build public confidence ahead of the election. In this case, the communication strategy adopted not only revolves around the emotional message, but also provides relevant and important information for the audience, which indicates consistency and transparency in the campaign.

In another analysis of Mahfud's content, we see Educational Brand Posts that convey wise messages in arguing, arouse the interest of the audience to understand how to communicate well. This shows Mahfud's commitment to not only being a politician, but also as an educator among the public. This approach reinforces Mahfud's image as a figure who emphasizes the values of education and manners in interacting, which can attract voters who value wisdom and Ethics in politics.

Overall, the combination of emotional, informative, and educative political marketing strategies by the Ganjar-Mahfud couple creates a strong foundation for building a positive image in the eyes of the public. By promoting warm interactions, humor, and closeness to the community, they managed to create high engagement and strengthen connections with various segments of voters. This is in line with Tafesse & Wien's theory which emphasizes that emotional attachment in branding can encourage loyalty and support from the audience, which is very important in the context of elections.

Discussion

Analysis of Brand Posts Categories on Instagram

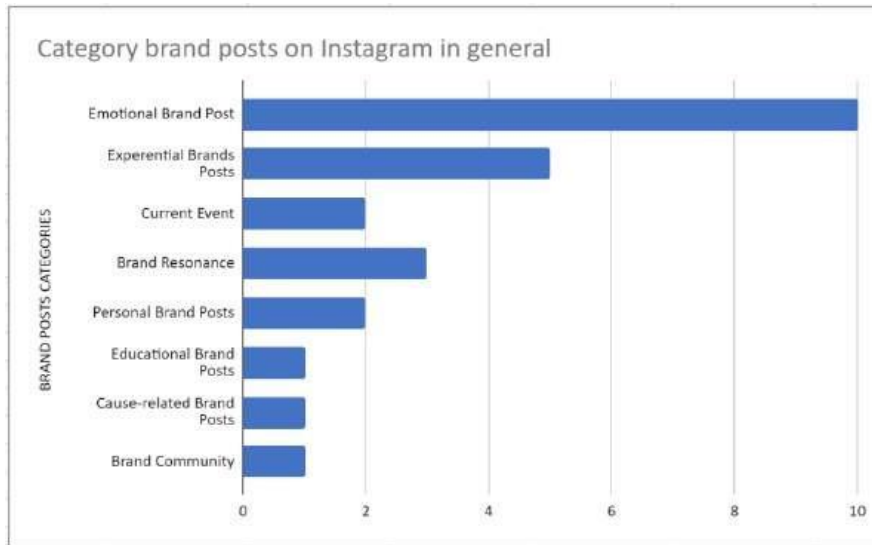


Chart 4: Category Brand Posts on Instagram by All Candidates

Based on the analysis of available data, the social media content of each Indonesian presidential and vice presidential candidate showed different usage patterns in various post categories, according to the concept classification from Tafesse & Wien (2017). The content is taken from each candidate's personal Instagram post, except for Prabowo, whose data cannot be accessed due to limitations of tools and account privacy policies.

In the Emotional Brand Post category, the majority of candidates focus on building emotional connectedness with their audience, highlighting aspects of feelings such as pride, love and hope. A total of 10 of the 25 Posts analyzed fall into this category, where candidates such as Ganjar, Cak Imin, Gibran, and Mahfud use content that emphasizes emotions to strengthen relationships with supporters.

Meanwhile, the Experiential Brand Post category provides direct experience to followers through powerful visuals. Anies and Ganjar utilize these categories to create interactive experiences, such as sharing moments of meeting with a particular group. Candidates also use the Brand Resonance category, which emphasizes the identity relationship between the brand and the audience. Cak Imin and Gibran often display identity symbols to build long-term trust with the audience.

On the other hand, the category Personal Brand Post shows the personal side of the candidate, such as daily life and personal experiences, which Anies and Gibran use to show that they are individuals with experiences that voters can relate to. Mahfud tends to stand out in the Current Event and Educational Brand Post categories, using an informative approach to educate audiences and respond to actual issues, which adds to his credibility.

From the results of this classification, it can be concluded that most candidates rely on Emotional Brand Post as a way to build emotional closeness, but each candidate has a varied additional focus: Anies and Ganjar on Experiential Brand Post, Cak Imin and Gibran on Brand Resonance, and Mahfud on more educational and informative content. Uniquely, although the majority of candidates use Emotional Brand Post as the main strategy, variations in the use of

other categories indicate the uniqueness of each candidate. For example, all of Anies ' top uploads are reels, indicating a focus on dynamic video content, while Gibran's top uploads are dominated by more static photos. Ganjar, Cak Imin, and Mahfud have a mix of video reels and photos, reflecting a balanced strategy in the use of various media formats. Overall, this classification shows that despite the similarities in basic strategy, each candidate has a unique approach to utilizing content categories to strengthen political image and audience engagement.

Further analysis in terms of post types, video reels dominated as the most popular format among all candidates, including Anies, Ganjar, Cak Imin, and Gibran. Video formats, especially those that include emotional moments or are related to important events in a campaign, tend to generate higher engagement. For example, Anies ' campaign reels with captions on the theme of experience (experiential brand) achieved 13% engagement, while Ganjar's slide photos depicting moments of togetherness with the people had slightly lower engagement, at 15.7%. Entertaining short Reels, such as rewarding collaborations with celebrities, can generate up to 23.12% engagement. This indicates that dynamic and memorable content is more attractive to Instagram users. Second, the use of captions also affects engagement. Captions that are narrative and personal tend to increase closeness with the audience, as seen in Anies ' post about preparing for the vote with her family, which achieved 10% engagement. On the other hand, although short captions like Gibran's (only with emojis) seem simple, the combination with strong images, such as a photo of him shaking hands with Prabowo, was able to generate high engagement (50.75%).

The use of hashtags plays a role in building brand awareness. Consistent hashtags such as #AMINAjaDulu and #indonesiamaju are quite effective in increasing engagement, although the number of hashtags does not always determine success. In Anies ' post about the campaign on JIS, despite the many hashtags used, engagement remained high due to the strong main message and quality of the content. The use of catchy or provocative video titles, such as "Wakanda no more, Indonesia forever "by Anies or" rock and roll lunch " by Ganjar, managed to attract the attention of the audience, thereby increasing engagement. Conversely, more formal titles, such as the one Mahfud used for his resignation, tend to generate lower engagement, even if the content is relevant. Furthermore, the strategies that each candidate uses can be differentiated. Anies prioritizes an emotional approach and direct experience with the public. Ganjar often uses collaborations with celebrities to create entertaining content. Cak Imin relied on religious messages, while Gibran maximized the use of strong symbolic and visual images. Overall, a combination of strong visual content, personal narratives, and emotional or entertaining moments proved to be key in increasing engagement in candidates ' social media campaigns on the instagram platform.

Conclusion

This study reveals the pivotal role of emotional branding in the social media strategies of Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates during the 2024 election. Among the analyzed posts, the Emotional Brand Post category emerged as a dominant approach, with the majority of candidates, including Ganjar, Muhaimin, Gibran, and Mahfud, focusing on fostering emotional connections with their audiences. By leveraging themes of pride, love, and hope, candidates successfully built a sense of closeness and loyalty, demonstrating the effectiveness of emotionally resonant content in political branding. This emphasis on emotional appeal underscores the value that candidates place on connecting with voters on a personal level, reinforcing shared values and aspirations.

Further analysis of content types revealed that video reels were the most popular and engaging format across all candidates. Candidates such as Anies, Ganjar, Muhaimin, and Gibran frequently used video reels, particularly those featuring emotionally charged moments or significant campaign events, to capture the attention of their audiences. This preference for dynamic video content highlights the format's ability to generate higher engagement, likely due to its capacity to convey emotions vividly and provide an immersive experience for viewers. Such insights underscore the importance of video content in digital political campaigns, especially as candidates seek to stand out in a crowded social media landscape.

However, this study faced several limitations. Data access restrictions posed by the tools used and the account privacy settings limited the scope of data collection, impacting the comprehensiveness of the analysis. Additionally, the study was confined to a specific time frame, which may not fully capture the evolution of branding strategies throughout the entire campaign period. These limitations suggest that the findings may only reflect a snapshot of the candidates' social media strategies.

Recommendations for future research include expanding the scope of analysis to cover not only the personal accounts of candidates but also the accounts of campaign teams and affiliated influencers. Analyzing these additional accounts would provide a more holistic view of the political branding ecosystem and reveal the broader network of digital actors involved in campaign efforts. Such an approach could offer deeper insights into the collaborative dynamics between candidates, their teams, and third-party supporters in shaping public perception and voter engagement.

In sum, this study highlights the strategic use of emotional content and video formats in digital political marketing, underscoring the potential of social media to enhance voter engagement and build enduring political brands. As social media continues to shape the political landscape, understanding these branding techniques becomes essential for comprehending modern electoral campaigns and the evolving relationship between candidates and the electorate.

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