

# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTRIBUTION AS A POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TOOL IN FORMING THE POLITICAL IMAGE OF PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES IN THE 2019 PILPRES IN INDONESIA

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## ABSTRACT

The utilization of the use of communication media at this time has grown so rapidly along with advances in communication technology that is faced with many choices to be able to convey/access information. The use of these media can be used for very high mobility of advertising creativity and information with all the attributes and supporting instruments. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of social media as a political communication strategy to shape the image of politicians. This research is descriptive qualitative, data collection techniques through interviews with politicians in the Jakarta area and documentation including reference books, journals, the internet, and other sources related to this research. The data analysis technique in this study used 3 stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results of this study on the role of social media can be used to attract attention to build public trust. The way of political communication through social media can be packaged interestingly and creatively so that it influences the public to vote for it. In addition, the role of social media can be used as a mapping of public responses to political images. In the formation of a political image, politicians try to create social stability and meet public demands and strive to create and maintain political actions that can generate a satisfactory image, so that public opinion support can be obtained from the people as political communication audiences.

**Keywords:** *Social Media, Political Communication, and Politician Image*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The utilization of the use of means of communication media at this time has grown so rapidly along with advances in communication technology, where we are faced with many choices to be able to convey/access information through social media. The communication process is the delivery of messages from the source of the message through certain channels/media to the recipient of the message. Social media can also be used as a communication tool which is increasing every day.

The use of these media can be used for very high mobility of advertising creativity and information

with all the attributes and supporting instruments that are so sensational, not infrequently redeeming the limits of rationality, psychological allure, and consumptive sentiments are the main targets [1]. With the increasing development of technology, social media is a digital platform that facilitates users to present themselves and interact with other users and form virtual social bonds [2]. The influence of social media on social change occurs in the ease of obtaining and conveying information so that it has an impact on social and economic benefits [3].

According to politicians, the use of social media can be used to build a community of support for politicians who are campaigning as well as a medium

for conveying a broader vision and mission. The role of social media for politicians can be to build relationships with constituents, have direct dialogue with the community and form political discussions, create a space for dialogue between politicians and the public, and attract the interest of novice voters/young voters. So social media is becoming increasingly important and ogled for politicians to form a positive image in society. However, the negative impact of social media is a scourge that is greatly feared by politicians because of a bad digital track record that can be spread easily and it is difficult to erase the track record. So that the role of social media and the use of its use must be done wisely for its users.

One example of success in the effort to use social media as a political communication strategy was in the United States presidential election in 2008. In that election, the former president of the United States, Barack Obama, integrated social media into his political campaign strategy and carried it out effectively, intending to support the campaign. it's an offline election. As a result, Obama won the election and took office in 2009 [4].

Since then, following Obama's success with social media, there has been an increase in the use of social media for political communication such as in presidential and legislative election campaigns in many countries around the world. When compared Indonesia, nowadays almost all aspects of communication in politics are supported by social media such as political parties in Indonesia. Where many already have Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter account in addition to the official website of political parties [5]. Political communication strategy is an effort to communicate the vision, mission, and goals of politicians in involving political interests, politicians related to the interests and needs of power [6].

## 2. OBJECTIVES

The role of social media as a political communication strategy places the media as a positive framing medium for politicians. The use of social media is because users continue to increase and it is easier to reach broad targets. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the contribution of social media as a tool for political communication strategies to form a political image. The research will

discuss about how the image of presidential candidate build by contents which is posted by the presidential supporters. It's will include the content which rise the presidential candidates value up. It's focused on the content which redound the probability of the presidential candidates to win the competition on Indonesia democracy parties 2019. The research will not involve the problems about netizen war and debate about the candidates, especially it's will not involve about the intended content that had purpose to bring the candidates down.

## 3. HEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1. Social Media

Social media is an online media that is used to connect with its users by communicating, participating in sharing, and creating content through the shared media. Social media is the right place to conduct a political campaign. This is because social media is a means of communication that is cheaper than broadcast and print media. [1]. The use of social media can be used for very high mobility of advertising creativity and information with all the attributes and supporting instruments that are so sensational, not infrequently breaking the boundaries of rationality, psychological allure, and consumptive sentiments are the main targets [2].

With the increasing development of technology, social media is a digital platform that facilitates users to present themselves and interact with other users and form virtual social bonds [3]. This can be reflected in memes with more interaction. The memes that get the most reactions are those that capture how to perceive a fragment of the user's reality, something they identify with. Digitization shares the space of social relations with physical interactions, and this allows the factors that shape identity in individuals to have a part of origin in the virtual space [4].

So that it will have an impact on the influence of social media on social changes in society that occur in the ease of obtaining and conveying information so that it has an impact on social and economic benefits [5]. According to research by Ismawati, La Mani, and Aras, they found the relationship between general election results and the popularity, participation, and activeness of legislative candidates in using social media not only in the

number of their interactions but in the quality of the content or content of political campaigns [6]. Social media users not only see the interactions that exist between candidates and users but the quality of content that contains the vision, mission, and future goals to realize increased national development is an assessment for voters.

The use of social media effectively, efficiently, and flexibly will attract candidates to conduct political campaigns. But, the communication strategy to social media harms the wider community in fact, Asp and Esaias son. This is because on social media the political world will look like a scene full of drama. The public as a media consumer of the political world is seen and displayed in the media. For example, when various cases are posted as black campaigns for opposing candidates which will have a negative impact on the decline in voter turnout, according to McChesney [7] states it can cause the depoliticization process to be slow in the public. This indication of depoliticization resulted in a drop-in in the number of election participation in the election, this is a public apathy regarding political issues. Of course, it is very important to consider the constituent conditions when using political campaigns through social media, because the internet and social media literacy in Indonesia has not been fully distributed.

### 3.2. Political Communication

The reason that other people can share stories, news, and information is that it contains useful information, which can increase user interaction. In addition, the emotional aspect of content can also affect a person through their emotional experiences with other people, with the right communication strategy a person can share emotional content to understand their experiences, reduce dissonance, or deepen social relationships to achieve a certain goal [8].

Political communication is a dynamic element that determines political socialization and partisanship, this becomes a pattern of behavior of political people themselves. Political communication is the delivery of messages that are directed at achieving and influencing so that all problems caused by these communication activities can bind all elements of the group [9]. According to Wahid, political communication is communication that involves political messages and political actors or is related to power, government, and government

policies. With this understanding, as applied science, political communication is not new [10]. Political communication can also be understood as communication between the "ruling" and the "ruled" [11] [12]. Political parties can also be used as political public relations to achieve political goals through communication in their efforts to influence and build the reputation of politicians [13].

In modern organizations, PR practitioners assist their clients in achieving their goals of target audience in a positive way and often take advantage of the media to provide third party support for the organization's products and services. Public relations can improve as a dynamic profession and a means of developing relationships between companies and various publics. It is inevitable to build and maintain ongoing relationships for better organizational management and business promotion efforts [14].

### 3.3. New Perspective Political Message

Getting support from voters online is essential in political communication. Citizens are at the core of democracy and social media is a bridge to the democratic process. Social media is access that offers closeness and direct reach in an interactive way that makes anyone involved. Contemporary media provides an opportunity for the audience to take part in the media representation space. Selective perception makes people interpret content according to what they believe. For the function of democracy to run according to its function, citizens need information about politics [15]. Citizens can interpret and have opinions when they know political actors, the state of social society, and the rules of the political game. The key to looking at the implications of changes in the relationship between media, politics, and citizens lies in the sphere of political information. Social media is a mixture of media and social interaction. Its main feature is user-generated content in the form of recordings, photos, or video uploads [16].

### 3.4. Presidential Public Relation

The power of a presidency is the ability to persuade, just as public relations is geared towards persuasion. Although the presidential public relation itself is the direct face of the president, it is not necessarily the individual president himself who promotes his position and mission. But it is the actions and support of the organization that belongs to the president himself. The interaction between the

individual president and the institution is important to explain the performance and behavior of the individual. Strömbäck and Kiouisis, point out that press conferences and keynote addresses are positively correlated with the president's overall job approval ratings and public approval of his handling of foreign policy. Theoretically, presidential speeches increase public access to political information, which tends to be free of charge. Because the presidency has the organizational resources and means to reach out to the public and because the most accessible public source of political information is often the president, it is only natural for the president to be effective in cultivating public opinion until the end of the administration [17].

### 3.5. Politician Image

According to Nasution in Azhar [18], Efforts by political parties to get closer to the community require special handling, considering that the competition between political parties is very high. One of the special treatments is to manage good political communication. The sub-element of political communication is political imagery. If the image is defined as an image, then the image is defined as a depiction received by the communicant or audience as an effect of exposure to the information it receives, either directly or through media intermediaries. Image is also a way for someone to connect someone with other people, so that imagery in political activities can be successful in winning political targets, such as winning political parties and politicians in general elections. The general election cannot be avoided from the influence of political images, especially pure publicity, free ride publicity, tie-in publicity, and paid publicity [19].

## 4. METHODOLOGY

This research is descriptive and qualitative with a case study approach. Qualitative descriptive, namely analyzing, describing, and summarizing various conditions, and situations from various data collected in the form of interviews or observations studied in the field [20]. Whereas case studies are empirical investigations that investigate contemporary phenomena in real-life contexts and researchers have little opportunity to control the investigated phenomena [21], [22]. Furthermore, to obtain objective data, primary data is required which

is conducted through interviews with politicians in the Jakarta area. Meanwhile, to support primary data, secondary data is needed which is obtained through documentation including reference books, journals, the internet, and other sources related to this research. Yin explained that the typical style of this case study method can relate to various forms of data including interviews, observations, documents, and equipment. Case studies are divided into three types, namely explanatory, exploratory and descriptive case studies. The data analysis technique in this study uses 3 stages, namely data reduction (data reduction), data presentation (data display), and concluding (verification).

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Through the use of the internet, many things can be done in a relatively short time, such as getting information, socializing ideas, invitations, demands, to protests and publication of alternative policy proposals. Everything feels more efficient and faster than having to go through print or broadcast media. Social media plays a key role in the political marketing system in Indonesia, both for legislative elections, presidential elections, and regional head elections (pilkada) and presidential elections (pilpres) in promoting political candidates. Political campaigns are no longer just using television, newspapers, magazines, tabloids, or brochures, pamphlets, banners, but are now also using new media, namely the internet.

The shift in political communication from conventional to social media is influenced by the development of information communication technology. The role of social media as a political communication strategy to form a positive image of politicians is very necessary for the current technological era. Because one of the goals of political communication is to form a positive image in the public. The meaning of the image cannot be measured systematically because it is abstract, but positive and negative acceptance and responses can be felt among the public. Even the mapping of public responses to the image of politicians can be done by utilizing social media, both seen through likes, comments, and social media followers. However, social media users not only see the interactions that exist between candidates and users but the quality of content that contains the vision, mission, and future goals to realize increased national development is an

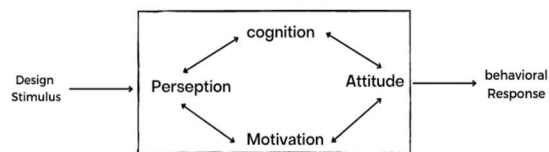
assessment for voters [23]. One of the advantages of campaigning through social media is that campaign costs are much lower. Social media also excels in allowing potential voters to have a two-way dialogue with candidates, as opposed to traditional campaign models, which tend to be one-way. The nature of political communication between candidates and potential voters can be multi-directional: B. Candidate to Voter, Voter to Candidate, or Between Voters. A social media presence can play an important role in significantly enhancing voice and opinion-forming

Hayat et al mentioned that social media campaign strategic increased the efficiency and effectiveness of candidate's electability and closer the distance between the presidential candidates and the voter also it will reach the wider political communications mediation [24]. Besides, it has a superpower to preserve the candidate's reputation indirectly it will affect to the candidates providing on social problem solving on political parties [25]. Siedharta, Indrayani, and Monica described that there are some strategic used by campaign team on social media campaigns it is consist of ingratiating strategic, intimidation strategic, self-promotion strategic, exemplification strategic, and supplication strategic which that the ingratiating strategic is the best strategic to get public attention [26]. The highest platform used as the social media campaign on Jakarta Governor election are facebook, twitter, and instagram. Basuki Tjahaya Purnama has the highest electability on facebook whereas Anies Baswedan has the highest electability on twitter and instagram[27].

The social media Facebook generates and maintains interest in potential candidates for campaigns. Users use this interactive website to collect information and opinions and as a forum for ongoing communication between voters and politicians. There, information flows directly from parliamentary candidates to their Facebook pages. On the Facebook page, candidates can upload videos, photos, events, messages, status updates and political programs that they have to get new supporters or retain existing supporters so that the candidate's popularity is higher. Supporters can choose to like posts as a form of support, comment to interact with other candidates or followers and share posts with their friends, this will increase the popularity of political candidates to the public

However, on political parties 2019 shows that the impact of using facebook campaign is very small. This means that there are other factors that influence a candidate's eligibility. Given that many hashtags related to the 2019 election are trending topics prior to the 2019 election, other social media such as Twitter may impact eligibility. on Twitter social media. In addition, a candidate's political party affiliation or background may be another factor affecting election eligibility.

Based on interviews with several politicians and leaders stated that in forming a political image he tried to create social stability and meet public demands and tried hard to create and maintain political actions that could generate a satisfactory image so that public opinion support could be obtained from the people as political communication audiences. Therefore, the actions taken by politicians are very careful because they can affect their image. The process of image formation in the cognitive structure by the understanding of the communication system is described by Nimpoeno as quoted [28].



Gambar 1. Image Formation Model

The figure above shows the strong relationship between input and output in the image formation process. The stimulus given is the input in influencing the image in the individual's mind, and the output is a response or responses that arise, namely in the form of certain behaviors. The image itself is processed through perception - cognition - motivation - attitude. Thus, the political image always changes according to the changing political knowledge and political experience of a person. Political image is manifested as indirect communication that can influence certain opinions or behaviors in the public. Therefore, the political image will be formed basically by public opinion [29].

For the example, Basuki Tjahaya Purnama well-known as Ahok has a great electability at the first time, by some day he mentioned a sensitive word enough which consider as an allude word for

some class, his electability then suddenly falls. Build the image is hard but maintain it is harder. That is why much of politic actor always take care to post their activities so they need some content creator and social media manager to manage their platform so the content they posted will get more public sympathy and maintain their reputation. More on political parties' moment.

The general election cannot be avoided from the influence of political image, especially pure publicity, free ride publicity, tie-in publicity, and paid publicity [30]. Based on interviews with politicians, image formation can be done in various ways, such as 1) Pure Publicity, a politician must have a sensitivity to the involvement of various community activities as a form of social and cultural interaction such as the candidate pair greeting, conversing with a friendly attitude. 2) Free Ride Publicity a politician takes part in various opportunities for certain party activities, which are carried out freely without high costs, and activities are published through his social media accounts when he is a speaker at formal and non-formal events such as community social activities and sports activities and religious activities. 3) Tie in Publicity where the selected candidate takes advantage of extraordinary events to attract public sympathizers such as reviewing and providing assistance to disaster victims. 4) Paid Publicity, providing information on the partner's vision and mission, intensely reporting through advertisements, and displaying pictures of candidates and their programs, this program is carried out in local media. Politicians in the formation of political images try to do with political communication to the public. The strategy of activities carried out in shaping the political image can be wrapped and socialized through the use of social media. The steps of the political communication strategy can be done such as getting to know the audience, compiling messages, determining message delivery techniques, and choosing media [31].

Pure publicity is one of the most attractive content to get the public sympathy because it can define the intellectual ability of the candidates. Indonesian society like a candidate whose has a smart and humble image. It caused the affection of the gathering, conference, convention with associate and others will increase the candidate electability. Free ride publicity had shown by one of the

presidential candidates of politic parties 2019. Jokowi shown his intimacy with her family, especially with her grandson and granddaughter which rise his electability up as the impact of the grandson and granddaughter attitude. Society considers that the attitude of both was so fun and cute. It is seemed like a paltry moment, but it can create a huge effect to catch the public affection. Tie in publicity which shown by visit or coming the disaster, help the victims, taking the time to participate and hear the victim's lamentation will form a positive image for the candidates. It can encourage the electability and the positive vibe of the candidates so can rise the possibility for the candidates to take more voter. Paid publicity will reach the elite class. Some of Indonesian have intellectual ability better than other. For that class, the campaign without presents a certain program or without a vision and mission it is just a blank campaign. They need a real statement, a clear pronouncement, and a fact data for developing their campaign. At this condition, the paid publicity needs to be allocated.

One of the advantages of campaigning through social media is that the cost of campaigning is much lower. Social media is also notable for allowing potential voters to have a two-way dialogue with candidates, unlike traditional campaign models, which tend to be one-sided. The nature of political communication between candidates and potential voters can be multi-directional. For example, from candidate to voter, from voter to candidate, or between voters. A social media presence can play a key role in significantly increasing participation and opinion formation. By the public, social media is used as a new medium for expressing political participation, while for politicians themselves social media is a new means of establishing communication, building interactions, and disseminating political information to the public. Additionally, social media can impact voter turnover in the last second before a candidate's election. For example, what social media volunteers did for Jokowi and Kara, and the formation of teams to monitor election results and protect ballots. Jokowi-Kalla couple volunteers make the most of social media to monitor and monitor vote counts to ensure it is objective.

So that there is an influence between the mass media and the image of political parties. The

influence published through the mass media can change voters to follow the image of the political party, where the media is a source of knowledge for the community so that it can influence people's thinking in receiving any information from any media must pay attention to any information published by the mass media, and do not be easily influenced and follow the news that is not clear the truth [32] Communication is the foundation of a culture. Communication and culture are inseparable partners. Change on one side will change the other side. Communication with social media will have an impact on:

1. Beliefs, values, and attitudes
2. Worldview
3. Social organization
4. Human nature
5. Activity orientation
6. Perception of self and others

Social media has a positive effect on digital transformation, this technology allows for open communication and feedback from the public/as well as from social media users to understand needs and respond proactively [33]. Social media is used as a promotional tool because it has a direct response to its users [34]. Social media also increase the chance for everyone to get an access for political participation. The form of a person's political participation appears in his political activities. The most known form of political participation is voting, either to elect candidates for representatives of the people or to elect the Head of State. Identify the forms of political participation, namely: (a) occupying political or administrative positions; (b) seeking political or administrative office; (c) be an active member in a political organization; (d) being a passive member in a political organization; (e) being a passive member in a semi-political organization; (f) be an active member in a semi-political organization; (g) participation in rallies, demonstrations, etc.; (h) participation in internal political discussions; and (i) participation in voting.

The campaign material to rise the value of candidate in public perception by using social media can listed as contents of interesting campaign messages. 73.5% of the public said that the content

of the campaign message was very unattractive, and 26.7% said it was less attractive. This means that the content of campaign messages distributed on social media does not get a positive response. This is because the contents of the campaign messages are not in accordance with the characteristics of voters who like interesting things. Second, contents of campaign messages made with short and concise sentences. As 86.7% want the content of the campaign message to be short and concise on social media, and only 13.3% say it does not need to be short and concise. Last, campaign messages content created using slogan and animated images. 94% of the voters like the content of the election campaign message made in the form of a slogan and given an animated picture, and 5% do not like it, and only 1% do not like it. From this fact, the majority of voters prefer the contents of campaign messages on social media to be packaged in addition to slogans but also animated images to make them more attractive.

With the existence of social media, it can be used to attract people's attention, so that in the future people will choose themselves to be politicians. Therefore, building public trust is very important and not an easy thing for politicians coupled with the intense competition between politicians. The way of political communication through social media that is packaged attractively and creatively will be able to influence the public to vote for it. Unfortunately, the attractiveness of using social media as a political participation tool still low. This is manifested by the high intensity of the use of social media for relations compared to information, even for political expression which has a near low intensity. The use of social media which tends to be for entertainment will affect the level of online politics which will tend to be low [35]. Humans who take online political participation actions are in a heterogeneous network with social media as an intermediary. People, social media, and online political participation cannot be understood in isolation from the networks in which they exist. Social interactions carried out on social media also have a role in political expression and political participation on social media. To understand how an impact on political activities a relationship can have online is to place yourself in a wide network. People's conceptions of themselves in the networked world are useful for making connections between general social media use and political self-expression. This concept is called technological of social saturation, this concept

explains that a person can have many types in him not just one personality.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The utilization of the use of communication media at this time has grown so rapidly along with advances in communication technology that is faced with many choices to be able to convey/access information. The use of these media can be used for very high mobility of advertising creativity and information with all the attributes and supporting instruments. The purpose of this study is to examine the role of social media as a political communication strategy to shape the image of politicians.

The results of this study on the role of social media can be used to attract public attention to build public trust. As we know, the social media campaign is one of the most influence media to impact the voters' decision in political parties. The indication of this condition can be interpreted on how impact of Ahok fault on social media can bring his electability down and rise the Anies' electability rise. Also, the effect of free rider publicity of Jokowi and the impact of positive image build by him and his team. Politicians in the formation of political images try to do with political communication to the public. The strategy of activities carried out in shaping the political image can be wrapped and socialized through the use of social media. In addition, the role of social media can be used as a mapping of public responses to political images. In the formation of a political image, politicians try to create social stability and meet public demands and strive to create and maintain political actions that can generate a satisfactory image, so that public opinion support can be obtained from the people as political communication audiences.

By the theme on this research, the social media is one of the media which form the image of Jokowi as the presidential candidate in 2019 political parties and president of Indonesia nowadays. The positive vibes and the intimacy with his family, also the many activities posted on his social media attract society to give more concern about him. It is one of the reasons why the 2019 political parties win by him. Instagram is one of the platforms who often used to share about kind of publicity. The instagram appearance is more attractive than others. So that the reason instagram is one of the most effective media to reach as many as society attention is. The research

find that kind of publicity can rise the eligibility of presidential candidates. More, if the content consists of attractive and weight contain and appearance. But, this research ignore the effects of negative content which is post by political opponent to degrade the candidates electability. So, the research focuses on the chance of candidates to build their electability and reputation but can not reach the real condition that in fact, sometimes the reputation, image, and electability can destroyed a night because of assault by political opponent.

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