



## DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN 2024 INDONESIAN ELECTION CAMPAIGNS: CONTENT ANALYSIS OF CANDIDATE BRANDING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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### ABSTRACT

Indonesia in 2024 is experiencing an era of rapid technological development. This technological progress is referred to as digital transformation. In the 2024 election, digital transformation has created a new atmosphere in political campaigning one that is more adaptive and innovative in shaping candidates' public images. In political campaigns, every party and presidential and vice-presidential candidate competes to build a favorable image in order to gain public attention. This study analyzes the campaign image of the 2024 election by examining the use of digital transformation. A qualitative approach is employed, using content analysis of the social media platforms utilized by the 2024 presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The use of technology in digital transformation within the 2024 election campaign is closely linked to the diffusion of innovation theory. The 2024 election reflects diffusion of innovation through the role of political communication in shaping the campaign image of each candidate. The use of social media, campaign organizing technologies, digital marketing strategies, along with visual and multimedia content, successfully created strong branding and effective political communication that was relevant and responsive in the 2024 election.

**Keywords:** Politics, campaign, branding, digital, public attention.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia in the year 2024 is an era of rapid technological development. This technological advancement is known as digital transformation (Jaya et al., 2024; Utama et al., 2024). Certainly, digital transformation has been in various aspects of life, including in the world of politics and general election campaigns (Hafel, 2023). The 2024 elections in Indonesia are quite different from the previous years. This

democratic party is not just a democratic event for the people to elect leaders but also a showcase to see how political parties and legislative candidates utilize technology to gain sympathy and support from the public (Denton Jr et al., 2023; Zainuddin et al., 2022).

Digital transformation has facilitated real-time communication, bridging geographical distances and sharing information quickly. Of course, this situation fosters a borderless communication environment (Dube et al., 2023). The use of digital transformation has changed the way political parties and legislative candidates interact. In the 2024 elections, digital transformation creates a need for the political campaign process as a way of introducing candidates to the public, to be more adaptive and innovative in reaching a wide range of voters who are becoming increasingly digitally connected (Priambodo, 2023).

In the previous election period, political parties and candidates for President and Vice President during the campaign relied more on conventional media such as television, radio, and newspapers (Denton Jr et al., 2023). However, with the digital transformation, the campaign has now evolved by utilizing the internet and social media to form branding in the community. Digital transformation includes a variety of technologies, including artificial intelligence, data analysis, automation, Internet of Things (IoT), and others (Vermesan & Bacquet, 2022). With the utilization of digital transformation, the internet and the usage of social media in Indonesia have increased. According to Amit-Danhi (2022), this phenomenon has become an arena for competing information and narratives in the virtual world for the election of Presidential candidates and Vice Presidential candidates in the General Election. With the digital transformation, the spread of information is faster, wider and more interactive.

At the momentum of the election campaign, each party and presidential and vice presidential candidates are competing to form branding in the community. According to Kotler and Keller branding is the process of giving identity and strength to products and services related to visual characteristics, perceptions, images, impressions, characters and views obtained from recipients (Suseno & Utami, 2022). Branding in the context of an election campaign is not limited to a logo or slogan that is voiced, but also a strategy for how candidates build their image to form a

strong reputation in the eyes of the public.

Effective branding during a campaign can create an emotional connection with voters, build voter trust, and ultimately influence voter decisions on election day. According to Sinaga et al (2024) the Presidential and Vice Presidential Elections of 2023 in Indonesia is one of the key moments in using social media as a strategic tool to influence voters. The democratic party involves voters from various backgrounds, including different generations and diverse regions. Building branding for each candidate and ensuring campaign messages reach all voter segments is a challenge for each candidate. Thus, each presidential and vice presidential candidate must have their own strategy to form a unique branding so that the public can distinguish the pair from other pairs. Presidential and vice presidential candidates can take advantage of social media to build self-image, implement programs, and interact with voters.

According to Miriam Budiardjo, Political communication is a function of socialization and political culture (Roy et al., 2024). If we relate it to the current nuances, the political communication that takes place provides a different socialization function and political culture. The more candidates who utilize digital technology for campaigns, a socialization campaign with a new political communication culture is formed. By creating new nuances, the competition to attract voters' attention is now not only done directly but also online. Presidential & vice presidential candidates need to have a clear and different strategy to differentiate themselves from other candidates in order to form a branding that will be remembered by the public. The author will discuss Campaign Branding in the 2024 Election by utilizing digital transformation. The goal is that in the future, prospective leaders can utilize digital transformation effectively as a way to introduce themselves to the public.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODE**

This study employs a qualitative research design using content analysis to examine the branding strategies of the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates through digital transformation on social media platforms. Content analysis is a systematic technique used to identify, analyze, and interpret communication messages by classifying patterns, themes, and meanings embedded in

media content. This method enables researchers to generate objective and structured descriptions of communication content, evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of messages, and assess their effectiveness in shaping public perception (Creswell, 2021).

In this research, social media content produced by the presidential and vice-presidential candidates during the 2024 election campaign was treated as the primary unit of analysis. The analysis focused on how candidates constructed political branding through digital tools, including social media engagement, multimedia content, and campaign narratives. Data were collected through documentation of relevant online materials such as posts, videos, visual branding elements, and interactive features published on major platforms including Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok. The collected data were then coded and categorized based on recurring themes related to digital branding, political communication strategies, and the diffusion of innovation in campaign practices. Through this procedure, the study provides an interpretive understanding of how digital transformation facilitates more adaptive, interactive, and persuasive campaign branding in Indonesia's 2024 election context.

### **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

Digital transformation has become a decisive factor in shaping political campaigns in Indonesia's 2024 election. In line with McGrath & Maiye, digital transformation refers to the integration of digital technology into organizational operations that generates fundamental changes in infrastructure and value creation (Alojail & Khan, 2023). Within the electoral context, this transformation functions as a "game changer," as campaign communication is no longer limited to conventional platforms but increasingly relies on digital ecosystems that enable interactive, real-time, and wide-reaching engagement with voters (Kassem & Kifokeris, 2023).

From the perspective of the diffusion of innovation theory, the adoption of digital transformation in campaign branding represents a strategic innovation in political communication. Rogers explains that diffusion of innovation involves the process through which an innovation is communicated through specific channels over time

among members of a social system (Xu et al., 2024). In Indonesia's 2024 election, campaign innovation appears in the form of digital tools and strategies such as social media mobilization, data-driven targeting, and visual-multimedia content (Sihombing, 2024). These instruments transform campaign branding into a more adaptive process, where candidates not only deliver political messages but also manage public impressions and construct identity narratives that are continuously negotiated in online spaces.

A central finding of this study is that social media platforms became the dominant channels for candidate branding, especially through Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok (Suhendar et al., 2023). These platforms enabled candidates to communicate directly, rapidly, and interactively with voters, while simultaneously allowing supporters to participate in the campaign narrative. As a result, campaign branding in 2024 shifted from one-way political promotion into a participatory communication process, where engagement metrics (comments, shares, livestreams, and user-generated content) played a critical role in expanding political visibility and strengthening emotional attachment. Digital campaigns also facilitated the creation of online communities that functioned as "support networks," amplifying campaign reach beyond geographical boundaries (Baulch et al., 2024).

Digital transformation also reinforced the role of political communication as an engine of branding formation, where candidates used curated content to project leadership identity, values, and future-oriented programs (Chavan, 2024). Through the use of visual storytelling, short videos, infographics, livestream sessions, and interactive message features, political figures could build a more personal connection with voters. In addition, the integration of AI-based creative content demonstrated how digital innovation can soften rigid political impressions and make campaign messages more entertaining and relatable to younger audiences. This indicates that digital political branding is not merely about visibility, but also about strategic positioning and the management of audience attention in a competitive communication environment (Uhodnikova et al., 2024).

In relation to personal branding strategies, Welagedara (2024) highlights that effective personal branding on social media requires platform consistency, strong

positioning, visual uniformity, and regular posting activity. This study found that such principles were evident in the campaign strategies of the presidential and vice-presidential candidates, particularly in maintaining recognizable identity markers such as tone, visual style, slogans, and digital attributes. Personal branding strategies were used to ensure that the candidates remained memorable and searchable in digital spaces, while strengthening engagement through continuous content circulation across multiple platforms.

Beyond branding identity, campaign digitalization also expanded toward data analytics and fundraising innovation. Political campaigns increasingly rely on big data and machine learning to understand voter behavior, identify salient issues, and deliver messages more precisely. In addition, crowdfunding and online donation platforms enabled campaigns to mobilize financial support more efficiently, while digital dissemination reduced cost barriers compared to conventional campaign models. These findings reinforce that digital transformation does not only change campaign messaging formats, but also reshapes campaign management as a whole covering communication, organization, and mobilization strategies.

### **Branding Strategy of Candidate Pair 01 (Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar)**

Candidate pair 01 strategically utilized TikTok as a central channel to approach millennials and Generation Z audiences (Marrufo, 2022). Their branding emphasized short, creative, and informative content that showcased achievements, leadership performance, and human-interest narratives through direct interaction with citizens. A key strength of this approach lies in combining informative messaging with emotional and relatable storytelling, which strengthened the impression of openness and responsiveness.

An additional branding outcome was the emergence of supporter-driven participation, where audiences created campaign-related content such as songs, memes, and short videos that circulated organically. The development of the “Humanies” fandom illustrates how digital transformation allows branding to become a community-driven process, rather than solely a candidate-driven effort. The existence of a supporter-created website and fundraising initiatives for videotron

promotions further demonstrates that the diffusion of campaign innovation can occur through grassroots digital participation. In this case, digital platforms served as an arena for collective identity building and mobilization, strengthening candidate visibility through voluntary supporter engagement.

### **Branding Strategy of Candidate Pair 02 (Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming Raka)**

Candidate pair 02 developed a distinctive branding identity through AI-based animation, positioning the campaign as modern, experimental, and youth-oriented. The use of AI avatars and animated content enabled the delivery of political messages in a flexible and visually engaging way, simplifying complex topics into accessible formats (SYTNYK et al., 2024). Their campaign also integrated social media filters on Instagram, allowing supporters to participate interactively and visually in campaign promotion.

A notable branding element was the formation of recognizable cultural markers such as soundtracks, gestures, and a consistent color identity. These features functioned as symbolic signifiers that strengthened memorability and reinforced campaign differentiation. The viral spread of animated content indicates that innovation diffusion in political branding can be accelerated through aesthetic creativity and platform-friendly content formats, particularly when aligned with youth digital culture and entertainment-oriented communication preferences.

### **Branding Strategy of Candidate Pair 03 (Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD)**

Candidate pair 03 relied on digital transformation by optimizing Instagram and YouTube for consistent image-building, emphasizing transparency, responsiveness, and intellectual credibility. Ganjar's frequent livestream sessions and interactive engagement positioned him as a leader who listens and responds directly to public aspirations, reinforcing a participatory political communication model (Daulay, 2024).

Mahfud, in contrast, strengthened branding through informative content and legal-political discourse that projected expertise and integrity. This combination produced a complementary branding dynamic: one figure emphasizing open public

engagement and progressive leadership, while the other reinforced intellectual legitimacy. Their campaign also adopted digital marketing techniques through visually attractive content such as vlogs, short videos, and interactive Instagram features (Stories, Reels, IGTV), indicating a deliberate attempt to align campaign narratives with the consumption habits of online audiences (Pratama, 2023).

Supporter participation also emerged through digital attributes and creative campaign items that could be used on social media (Guess et al., 2020). This strategy demonstrates how digital transformation can generate an “identity toolkit,” enabling users to publicly display affiliation while simultaneously amplifying campaign branding through peer-to-peer dissemination. As a result, candidate pair 03’s branding was reinforced not only through official campaign messaging but also through participatory cultural symbols circulating in digital communities (Bulathwela et al., 2024).

### **Ethical Challenges and Communication Risks in Digital Campaigning**

Despite its effectiveness, digital transformation in political campaigns also introduces ethical challenges and risks, particularly the circulation of hoaxes, misinformation, and manipulative narratives (Pandian & Rawindaran, 2024). These threats can harm candidates’ reputations, distort public debate, and weaken democratic quality (Norris, 2024). Therefore, campaigns must implement proactive monitoring, rapid clarification strategies, and transparency-oriented communication to mitigate misinformation risks.

Overall, the findings confirm that Indonesia’s 2024 election campaign branding reflects an advanced stage of digital transformation, where political communication increasingly depends on platform strategies, interactive engagement, and innovation diffusion mechanisms. Each candidate pair demonstrated distinctive branding models ranging from fandom mobilization, AI-based creative politics, to transparency driven livestream engagement highlighting that digital transformation has become a central determinant of campaign competitiveness in contemporary Indonesian politics.

## **4. CONCLUSION**

Campaign branding for Indonesia's 2024 election through the use of digital transformation has become an inseparable element of modern political processes. This transformation has not only changed how politicians interact with voters, but has also redefined overall campaign strategies. Through the application of digital technology in 2024 election campaign branding, we can observe how political communication strategies have rapidly and dynamically evolved. The branding of each candidate has become more strategic and efficient through social media, enabling them to build their public image with wider reach. The 2024 presidential and vice-presidential candidates have clearly demonstrated how advanced digital technologies can strengthen their political positioning and foster closer relationships with the public. By utilizing social media, campaign organizing technologies, digital marketing strategies, and visual and multimedia content, they have succeeded in creating campaigns that are effective, relevant, and responsive to voter needs.

However, digital technology is not a substitute for core values such as integrity, transparency, and commitment to the public interest. Instead, technology should be used as a tool to reinforce these values and to ensure that political leaders remain connected to the people they serve. The 2024 presidential and vice-presidential candidates have shown that with a focused and innovative approach, technology can be leveraged to achieve campaign objectives and build long-term relationships with the public. Throughout this paper, we have learned that election campaign branding in the digital era requires a holistic and integrated approach. Digital transformation offers remarkable tools and opportunities, but it also demands deep understanding and clear strategies. Indonesia's 2024 election campaign will be remembered as a milestone in the adoption of digital technology in politics. It is hoped that this paper will serve as a useful guide for politicians, campaign teams, academics, and activists interested in the dynamics of political campaign branding in the digital era. In doing so, the future of political campaigns in Indonesia can become more transparent, inclusive, and effective advancing toward a stronger and more sustainable democracy.

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