



## THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL FIGURES ON GOLKAR PARTY'S VICTORY IN THE 2024 LEGISLATIVE ELECTIONS IN NORTH SUMATRA PROVINCE

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### ABSTRACT

*This study aims to analyze the influence of political figures on the victory of the Golongan Karya (Golkar) Party in the 2024 Legislative Election in North Sumatra Province. The study focuses on the role of Musa Rajekshah (Bang Ijeck) as the Chairperson of the Regional Leadership Council (DPD) of Golkar North Sumatra, who is considered successful in mobilizing public support through social capital, a positive public image, and effective political communication strategies. This research employs a quantitative method using a multiple linear regression approach, involving 400 respondents selected through a stratified purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed through validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests, followed by hypothesis testing. The results show that political figures have a positive and significant effect on voters' decisions, with a coefficient value of 0.414, a t-value of 8.861, a significance level of 0.000, and a contribution of 61% ( $R^2 = 0.610$ ). These findings confirm that local political figures can be a key factor in winning elections, even without support from national figures or the dominance of money politics practices. The practical implication of this study highlights the importance for political parties to maintain and develop the image of political figures who possess integrity, strong capacity, and emotional closeness to the community, supported by adaptive communication strategies tailored to different voter segments.*

**Keywords:** Political figures, Electoral victory, Golkar party, Political communication, North sumatra

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Legislative elections are one of the main instruments of democracy in Indonesia, providing a means for the people to elect their representatives in parliament and to measure the quality of political representation in the regions (Hermanto et al., 2024; Sistyawan, 2024). Political parties serve as a channel for public aspirations, a recruitment platform, and a platform for healthy political competition (Klinger et al., 2023; Rambe et al., 2023). In the context of increasingly complex competition, political figures often emerge as strategic factors in winning, leveraging social capital, personal image, and extensive political networks to influence voter choices. This phenomenon is evident in various regions, where the involvement of political figures in campaigns can strengthen a party's electability through emotional closeness and the reputation they build within the community (Dalimunthe, Ritonga, Dalimunthe, et al., 2025; Masruroh, 2021). With the development of information technology, the support of mass media and social media has expanded the reach of political messages, making the role of figures increasingly crucial in garnering votes (Dharta et al., 2025). However, dependence on certain figures also raises questions about the sustainability of party support if they are no longer active.

The Functional Groups Party (Golkar) has a long history on the national political stage, from the New Order era to the reform era, and remains a major political force in Indonesia (Razuni et al., 2023). In North Sumatra, Golkar has a strong base, reflected in its consistent electoral performance, which even increased in the 2024 Legislative Elections (Simandjuntak, 2023). In those elections, Golkar recorded a surge in seats in the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) across eight electoral districts, won 22 seats in the Provincial DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council), and secured the DPRD Speakership in 13 districts/cities. This success occurred despite the absence of any national figures exerting significant coattails, leading attention to local figures leading the campaign (Carson et al., 2024). One of the Golkar Party's central political figures is Musa Rajekshah, Deputy Governor of North Sumatra and Chairman of the Golkar North Sumatra Regional Leadership Council (DPD). He strengthened the party's position in the region through his social networks, organizational leadership, and personal relationships (Masood et al., 2023; Shin et al., 2022). This phenomenon demonstrates that the influence of local political figures

can be crucial for victory at the provincial level.

The role of political figures like Musa Rajekshah in winning elections is not based solely on popularity, but also on their ability to build social capital, mobilize networks, and articulate relevant local issues. Mastery of political communication strategies is a key asset, from face-to-face campaigns and social activities to optimizing mass media and social media (Widjayanto et al., 2022). A strong personal brand, a positive public image, and a proven reputation for leadership are crucial assets that foster public trust in the party they represent (Dalimunthe, Ritonga, & Ananda, 2025; Yamin & Nurfadilah, 2024). In North Sumatra, Musa Rajekshah's influence was evident in his ability to mobilize the party's machinery, motivate cadres, and build solid internal consolidation. This strategy aligns with the two-step flow theory, which emphasizes the role of opinion leaders in influencing people's political choices (Hunt & Gruszczynski, 2024). This success also demonstrates that local political figures can match, or even replace, national figures in providing significant electoral impact for a party.

Support for popular local figures does not always align with support for national figures from the same party. In the case of Golkar North Sumatra in 2024, the surge in votes occurred without massive social media involvement or strong indications of money politics, which are generally important variables in political contests (Habibah et al., 2025).

This research is crucial for academic contributions to political communication studies, particularly in understanding the influence of local political figures on legislative election outcomes. Practically, the results can serve as a reference for political parties in designing effective campaign strategies, prioritizing figures with integrity, capacity, and emotional closeness to the public. In the context of a healthy democracy, the presence of credible figures is expected not only to increase vote share but also to strengthen political participation and the quality of representation in parliament. This research is expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the mechanisms of political victory based on local figures.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODE**

This study employed a quantitative method with a multiple linear regression approach to examine the influence of political figures on the Golkar Party's legislative election victory in North Sumatra Province. The quantitative method was chosen because it provides a measurable analysis of the relationships between variables, while multiple linear regression was used to simultaneously examine the relative contribution of independent variables to the dependent variable (Creswell, 2021). The study population comprised all Golkar Party voters in the 2024 legislative election in 33 regencies/cities in North Sumatra, totaling 1,282,574 people. The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula with a 10% margin of error, resulting in 400 respondents selected through a multistage stratified purposive sampling technique. This technique ensures a proportional sample distribution according to the number of voters in each region, ensuring that the analysis accurately represents population characteristics (Bani Salameh & Aldabbas, 2024).

The data used were primary and secondary. Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a Likert scale, containing indicators related to political figures, and non-participatory observation to strengthen the context of the findings. Secondary data were obtained from official documents, media publications, and relevant literature sources. Data analysis was conducted through validity, reliability, and classical assumption testing, followed by hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression to measure the significance of political figures' influence on party victory. The analysis results were interpreted quantitatively, while still considering the regional social and political context. This approach enabled researchers to empirically identify the influence of political figures while also presenting relevant findings for strengthening the Golkar Party's future political communication strategy.

## **3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The characteristics of respondents in this study indicate that the majority were female (67.75%), aged 17–30 years (80.75%), had a high school education or equivalent (49.25%), were students (49.25%), had an income below the minimum

wage (UMR) in North Sumatra Province (39.5%), and were single (77.75%). This composition reflects the dominance of the younger generation with secondary education and high involvement in political activities, which is in line with the findings (Cervi et al., 2023). That social media is the primary channel for political communication for young voters. This group tends to be responsive to visual and interactive communication strategies, making it a primary target of the Golkar Party's political campaign in North Sumatra. The distribution of these characteristics also indicates that demographic background has the potential to influence patterns of acceptance of political messages, including the role of political figures in shaping voting decisions.

**Table 1.** Description Table of Decision Variables for Choosing (Y)

VARIABLE	Question (Likert Scale)				
	SS	S	B	TS	STS
The Decision To Choose (Y)	454	2167	2132	1261	386
Presentation	7,09%	33,86%	33,31%	19,70%	6,03%

**Source:** Author Own (2025)

The respondents' voting decisions showed that 33.86% were in the "Agree" category and 7.09% were in the "Strongly Agree" category with the political decisions they made, while only 6.03% were "Strongly Disagree." This finding indicates a fairly high level of confidence among the majority of voters in their political choices, although there are still groups who are doubtful or regretful. In the context of legislative elections, this level of confidence can reflect the effectiveness of the campaign and the consistency of the political messages received by voters. Research confirms that a consistent political image and appropriate campaign media can strengthen voter confidence. However, the presence of skeptical respondents indicates the need for a different approach to reach critical groups who have not been influenced by party communication strategies.

**Table 2.** Description Table of Political Figure Variables (X)

VARIABLE	Question (Likert Scale)				
	SS	S	B	TS	STS
Political Actor (X)	753	3121	2547	2535	644
Presentation	7,84%	32,51%	26,53%	26,41%	6,71%

**Source:** Author Own (2025)

The descriptive variable for political figures shows that 32.51% of respondents "Agree" and 7.84% "Strongly Agree" that political figures influence voting decisions, while 26.41% "Disagree" and 6.71% "Strongly Disagree." These data demonstrate the significant role of political figures in shaping voter preferences, but also the influence of skeptical segments. Support for political figures is characterized by positive imagery and emotional closeness built through campaigns, as emphasized, where a candidate's personal character is often more influential than platform policies (Karman et al., 2024). Conversely, skepticism can be associated with low public trust due to money politics or disappointing performance (Nisa Nabila et al., 2020). This situation demands a more adaptive communication strategy, relying not only on image but also on policy substance.

After conducting validity and reliability tests, all questionnaire items were proven valid because the calculated  $r$  value was greater than the  $r$  table of 0.098, with a significance below 0.05, and reliable with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.865 which exceeded the minimum limit of 0.60. Furthermore, the classical assumption test showed that the data was normally distributed based on the P-P Plot results, there was no multicollinearity with a VIF value of the political figure variable of 1.946 ( $<10$ ) and a Tolerance of 0.514 ( $>0.1$ ), there was no heteroscedasticity seen from the distribution of random points on the scatterplot, and there was no autocorrelation with a Durbin-Watson value of 1.948 which was close to the ideal number of 2. These results ensure that the regression model used is feasible and can be interpreted validly. Fulfillment of all these tests is important because it provides assurance that the causal relationships analyzed, especially the political figure variables, are free from technical biases that usually interfere with model estimation. This means that when the analysis results show a significant influence, this influence is not the result of a violation of assumptions, but rather truly reflects the real relationship in the field (Meuleman et al., 2023).

**Table 3.** Regression Test Results Table

<b>VARIABLE</b>	<b>Coefisien</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig</b>	<b>R<sup>2</sup></b>
Political Actor (X)	0,414	8,861	0,000	0,610

**Source:** Author Own (2025)

The results of the multiple linear regression test show that the political figure variable has a positive and significant effect on voting decisions, with a coefficient of 0.414, a t-value of 8.861, and a significance level of 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold. The contribution of political figures to voting decisions is reflected in the  $R^2$  value of 0.610 or 61%, meaning that more than half of the variation in voting decisions can be explained by voters' perceptions of political figures. As explained in the previous political figure variable, the majority of respondents place political figures in an important position in determining their choices, with 32.51% of respondents agreeing and 7.84% strongly agreeing that political figures influence choices. Meanwhile, the group that disagreed (26.41%) or strongly disagreed (6.71%) generally related to negative experiences or distrust of the figures in question, as explained (Nabila et al., 2020).

These findings reinforce Falah view (2023) that successful political image building, whether through mass media or direct communication, can enhance a figure's appeal and legitimacy in the public eye (Falah, 2023). Popularity, charisma, track record, political communication skills, policy vision, and leadership qualities are key determinants of how the figure is perceived by voters (Metz & Plesz, 2023). In this context, political figures are not merely conveyors of messages but also symbols of the values and identity of the party they represent. In fact, for some voters, the figure of the figure is the primary benchmark in determining their choice, surpassing the assessment of the party's programs or policy issues.

However, the existence of skeptical groups demonstrates that political communication strategies cannot be uniform across all voter segments. For supporters, strengthening the image and consistency of public messages are effective strategies, while for those with doubts or distrust, a data-driven and analytical approach is needed to rebuild trust (Słomski, 2023). Therefore, parties need to adapt their narratives and communication channels, ensuring that their messages are relevant to the social, economic, and cultural contexts of voters. This research confirms that political figures are a strategic element in Golkar Party's victory in the 2024 North Sumatra Legislative Election, wielding strong and

significant influence. Therefore, success in maintaining or expanding support depends heavily on the party's ability to effectively manage its public figures.

Political figures played a strategic role in Golkar Party's victory in the 2024 Legislative Elections in North Sumatra, with Musa Rajeckshah (Bang Ijeck) as a central figure. As Chairman of the Golkar Party's North Sumatra Regional Leadership Council (DPD), Bang Ijeck served not only as a party symbol but also as a driving force behind effective political communication. Golkar leveraged his high popularity to build emotional connection with the community through direct involvement in social activities such as home renovation programs, disaster relief, and other community activities. This strategy strengthened Golkar's image as a party that cares about the people and helped maintain its dominance in strategic electoral districts. Furthermore, Golkar leveraged networks of local figures, such as former regional heads and families of officials, to expand support in their respective regions.

Social media became a crucial tool in optimizing the influence of political figures. Bang Ijeck's personal account was consistently used to share human interest content that built an authentic image and garnered public sympathy. This content was frequently picked up by the mass media, broadening the reach of Golkar's political message. The campaign strategy also took into account the national context, maintaining a neutral stance in the presidential election to attract swing voters and avoid political polarization. This flexible approach allows Golkar to focus on winning legislative elections without being affected by national political conflicts.

The use of technology and data analysis also strengthens the effectiveness of Golkar's campaign. Voter behavior data is analyzed to tailor political messages to specific community needs, while information is distributed quickly through social media and digital communication groups like WhatsApp. This data-driven approach enables systematic and precise voter targeting (Dommett et al., 2024). The synergy between personality, social media, and data analytics creates a consistent and convincing political narrative, making figures like Bang Ijeck not merely symbols but key drivers of voter loyalty.

The quantitative research results indicate that political figures have a significant influence on voting decisions, with a t-value of 8.861 and a 61%

contribution to the variability in voting decisions for the Golkar Party. The majority of respondents indicated approval of the role of political figures, although there were also skeptical groups. This variation in support levels indicates that while political image building and communication by figures is effective, adaptive strategies are needed to reach critical or distrustful voters. While a strategy based on political figures has proven effective, there are potential risks if the party relies too heavily on a particular figure. The loss of the active role of figures like Bang Ijeck could diminish the party's appeal if not balanced with institutional strengthening and cadre development. Therefore, in addition to maximizing popular figures, Golkar needs to build a strong and diverse leadership base to maintain its winning momentum in the future. The success of the 2024 Legislative Elections demonstrates that a combination of prominent figures, technological innovation, political neutrality, and effective data management are key to Golkar's political appeal in North Sumatra.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study indicate that political figures had a significant influence on Golkar Party's victory in the 2024 North Sumatra Provincial Legislative Election. The presence of political figures who are popular, credible, and closely connected to constituents was proven to substantially increase the party's electability. This influence is reflected not only in their ability to attract public support through a strong track record, effective political communication skills, and extensive social networks, but also in their capacity to mobilize the party's political machinery at both regional and grassroots levels. Quantitatively, the study found that the influence of political figures on Golkar Party's victory reached 61%, meaning that more than half of the factors contributing to the party's success were driven by the political figures it endorsed.

This figure confirms that strong political figures are among the key determinants of Golkar's campaign effectiveness and victory strategy, while the remaining factors are shaped by other elements such as party organizational strength, campaign strategy, political issues, and voter dynamics. These findings reinforce the view that political

personalization continues to play an important role in Indonesia's electoral democracy, particularly in regions where certain figures possess strong socio-political bases. Therefore, Golkar Party and other political parties need to maintain and optimize the role of political figures as strategic assets, while balancing this approach with institutional strengthening to ensure that electoral victories are sustainable and not solely dependent on individual personalities. Based on these findings, it is recommended that Golkar's political figures continue to strengthen their positive image and emotional connection with the public through effective, consistent, and relevant political communication tailored to community needs. This effort should be supported by the strategic use of mass media and social media to build trust, broaden message reach, and safeguard integrity and credibility, so that their influence on voter decisions can be maintained and further enhanced.

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