



ANALYSIS OF THE PRABOWO-GIBRAN CABINET'S COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF FREDERICK TAYLOR'S AND MAX WEBER'S CLASSICAL THEORIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the communication strategies implemented by the Prabowo-Gibran Cabinet following their inauguration in 2024, using a qualitative approach and theoretical analysis grounded in classical management principles: Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management and Max Weber's Bureaucratic Theory. Data were collected from official documents produced by ministerial communication staff, political journalists, public policy analysts, discourse analysis of official speeches, as well as documentary studies and observational studies of the cabinet's public communication policies and media coverage both mass media and social media between October 2024 and September 2025. The key findings indicate that: (1) the cabinet combines personal image strategies (leader branding) with managerial techniques emphasizing efficiency and organizational discipline; (2) the use of social media and symbolic performances (military-style retreats, uniformed appearances) functions as a tool for constructing narratives of legitimacy; (3) internal communication structures are strongly shaped by Weberian bureaucratic logic yet infused with Taylorian principles through the emphasis on operational standards and performance measurement of public communication campaigns; and (4) tensions between the demands of bureaucratic control and the need for flexible public communication create potential narrative dissonance that requires careful management.

Keywords: Communication Strategy; Prabowo-Gibran Cabinet; Frederick Taylor's Scientific Management; Max Weber's Bureaucracy; Communication Bureaucracy.

1. INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Presidential Election and the post-inauguration phase of the new administration led by President Prabowo Subianto and Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka have introduced new dynamics in Indonesia's political communication landscape. The new government not only faces the task of formulating public policy, but also the challenge of building a coherent governmental narrative, synchronizing messages among key actors President, Vice President, cabinet ministers and maintaining public trust amidst social media polarization and the expectations of younger generations. Early studies suggest that post-2024 Election political communication patterns rely heavily on digital strategies, candidate personal branding, and public message management to strengthen governmental legitimacy and shape public perceptions of priority policies (Ginasari et al., 2024).

As the administration progresses, concerns have emerged regarding the consistency and synchronization of communication across governmental institutions. Several observers highlight communication gaps between the Presidential Palace and ministries/agencies, which risk generating public confusion when policy messages are not properly coordinated. Efforts to strengthen public communication strategies such as collaborations between government public relations bureaus and national media demonstrate attempts to structure communications so that priority messages are delivered more coherently (State Secretariat, 2025; Purba et al., 2025).

These conditions make the Prabowo-Gibran cabinet an intriguing object of study not only in terms of policy, but also in understanding how bureaucratic structures and principles of management and communication efficiency influence the processes of public message dissemination and governmental image-building. To understand these dynamics, classical theoretical frameworks such as Frederick W. Taylor's Scientific Management and Max Weber's Bureaucratic Theory offer relevant conceptual lenses. Taylor's framework highlights rationalization, efficiency, and task standardization, while Weber emphasizes bureaucratic hierarchy, rational-legal authority, and formal rules shaping public administrative practices. Applying these classical theories to the study of cabinet communication strategies provides insight into how principles of efficiency and bureaucratic structure affect the design, implementation, and outcomes of governmental communication (Benediktus Elnath, 2024; Kurniawati et al., 2025).

Classical management and bureaucratic theories are frequently used to analyze modern organizations, including government institutions. Taylor's scientific management underscores task division, work standardization, performance measurement, and efficient procedures. In the context of governmental communication, Taylor's perspective helps analyze how messages and communication tasks are structured, standardized, and evaluated such as through press release protocols, ministry PR standard operating procedures, or crisis communication techniques designed for rapid and measurable public responses. Taylor's approach centers on rationalizing communication processes to ensure efficiency, consistency, reduced redundancy, and message outputs that meet expected standards (Benediktus Elnath, 2024).

Meanwhile, Weber highlights rationalization, formal rules, hierarchical bureaucracy, and rational-legal authority. Weber's bureaucratic theory is relevant for understanding governmental organizational structures such as ministries and the Presidential Palace bureaucracy which are responsible for producing and distributing public messages. Weber's framework helps examine how formal rules, authority pathways, and institutional roles determine who has the right to speak, how message approval flows, and how bureaucratic procedures influence the speed and flexibility of public communication. A combined Taylor-Weber lens thus provides dual insight: Taylor's mechanisms of efficient message production and Weber's institutional rules and legitimacy that govern message dissemination (Sørensen & Torfing, 2024).

Recent research on political communication in Indonesia following the 2024 elections underscores the role of social media, candidate image-building (personal branding), and targeted communication techniques aimed at young voters (millennials and Gen Z). Several case studies from the 2024 campaigns illustrate how creative content, memes, and strategic branding significantly strengthened positive perceptions of certain candidate pairs. Other studies explore how parties and political actors leveraged digital platforms to accelerate message dissemination and build narratives resonating with specific voter segments (Adnan & Mona, 2024; Harianto et al., 2023).

Indonesian academic literature has also begun addressing communication management challenges within government post-election. Research and popular articles indicate efforts by ministries/agencies to enhance communication synergy

through media partnerships and strengthened public relations units, while also highlighting gaps in implementation arising from differing institutional priorities. These findings are relevant to cabinet communication studies, as they show a discrepancy between communication strategy design (policy/plan) and operational practice within the bureaucracy (State Secretariat, 2025).

Academically, the application of classical management theory to public organizations continues to appear in Indonesian literature, both as theoretical discussions and applied studies in public organizations and education. Reviews of Weber and Taylor in modern contexts show that although these theories were developed in the industrial era, foundational principles such as work efficiency, process standardization, and bureaucratic structure still offer meaningful insights for understanding contemporary organizational practices, including governmental communication (Amir, 2024; Ohorella et al., 2024).

Despite the existing studies on political communication strategies during the 2024 campaign and research on government public relations, several research gaps remain:

- 1) Integration of classical management theory with cabinet communication practice: Most political communication studies focus on media strategies or rhetoric. Few examine how governmental communication production processes and organizational flows align with Taylor's scientific management and Weber's bureaucratic structures.
- 2) Focus on the post-inauguration governing phase: Much research centers on the campaign period; studies analyzing how cabinets manage daily policy communication during the governing stage especially newly formed cabinets like Prabowo-Gibran are still limited.
- 3) Inter-agency coordination: There are indications of message inconsistency among ministries/agencies, yet empirical studies that examine how bureaucratic structures and communication SOPs influence cabinet message consistency remain scarce.
- 4) Evaluation of communication efficiency and effectiveness using managerial parameters: Few studies measure governmental communication effectiveness through managerial indicators (response time, message standards, standardized channels) as conceptualized in Taylor's framework.

- 5) Addressing these gaps will contribute to both political communication and public administration literature, particularly in a large democratic country with dynamic digital media like Indonesia (Ginasari et al., 2024).

Based on the above context and gaps, this study aims to:

- 1) Identify and analyze the communication strategies of the Prabowo-Gibran cabinet, including channels, messages, message-setting actors, and approval procedures in daily governance.
- 2) Examine the extent to which Taylor's principles (efficiency, standardization, measurement) and Weber's principles (hierarchy, formal rules, rational-legal authority) are reflected in the cabinet's communication structure and practices.
- 3) Assess the consistency and effectiveness of cabinet communication from managerial and bureaucratic perspectives, and formulate recommendations for improving public communication governance.

The study's contributions will be twofold:

- a) Theoretical contribution-bridging political communication literature with classical organizational theory; and
- b) Practical contribution-offering operational recommendations for government public relations agencies to ensure more coordinated, efficient, and responsive policy communication in the digital media era.

2. RESEARCH METHODE

In this study, a qualitative research approach is employed, using a critical discourse analysis (CDA) design to examine governmental communication practices within the Prabowo-Gibran administration. Data were collected through multiple techniques:

- 1) Document analysis of official speeches delivered by the President, Vice President, and ministries/agencies;
- 2) Institutional document review, including press releases, public communication SOPs, and ministerial public relations guidelines;
- 3) Media analysis of political news reports produced by national journalists;

- 4) Expert opinion review from public policy analysts and political communication scholars; and
- 5) Non-participant observation of communication coordination patterns based on publicly available government publications.

The qualitative approach is appropriate as it allows an in-depth exploration of how Taylor's principles (efficiency, standardization, task division) and Weber's principles (bureaucratic hierarchy, formal rules, rational-legal authority) are manifested or contradicted in the daily communication practices of the government. Critical discourse analysis is applied to uncover the power relations, organizational structures, and implicit meanings embedded within governmental message production and circulation. Data validity is strengthened through source triangulation, comparing official documents, media reports, and expert analyses.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Brief Literature Review: Cabinet Political Communication and Empirical Studies on Prabowo-Gibran

Studies on political communication related to presidential candidates and post-election governments in Indonesia have increased significantly following the 2019–2024 elections. Research specifically examining the Prabowo-Gibran campaign strategy shows a structured communication pattern that leverages both traditional mass media and digital platforms to reach young voters and broader voting segments. Several studies highlight the roles of framing, cabinet news framing, and impression management in shaping narratives of victory and governmental legitimacy (Pramana et al., 2024; Dalimunthe et al., 2020).

In addition, scholarship on cabinet composition particularly the implications of a large cabinet draws attention to bureaucratic complexity and coordination challenges across ministries. Research and opinion articles point out risks of excessive bureaucratization, overlapping tasks, and coordination gaps that may affect the effectiveness of policy communication. Thus, an extensive cabinet is not merely a matter of political patronage but also a managerial and public communication challenge (Karmini, 2024; Dalimunthe et al., 2023; Ritonga et al., 2024).

However, although there are many studies on campaign strategies and some analyses of cabinet framing, research that explicitly links the Prabowo-Gibran cabinet's communication strategy with classical management theories particularly Taylorian scientific management and Weberian bureaucracy remains limited. This

gap underscores the relevance of this study, which aims to bridge political communication scholarship with classical management and public administration theory (Ritonga et al., 2023).

B. Theoretical Foundation: Why Taylor and Weber Are Relevant for Analyzing Cabinet Communication Strategy

1) Frederick W. Taylor: Principles of Scientific Management

Frederick W. Taylor (1856–1915) introduced the principles of scientific management, emphasizing efficiency, work standardization, clear division of tasks, time-motion analysis, and managerial control to achieve optimal productivity. Although initially developed for industrial manufacturing, Taylor's principles have been applied and modified in public administration and modern organizations to design work procedures, workflow systems, and measurable performance targets. Contemporary studies examine how Taylor's ideas are used to structure bureaucratic processes to be more efficient and measurable, including their consequences for standardized organizational communication (Terrel, 2024; Ritonga et al., 2024).

In the context of a government cabinet, Taylor's perspective can be used to assess:

- a) whether standardized communication mechanisms are applied (e.g., briefing protocols, policy communication SOPs, structured reporting lines);
- b) whether communication performance is measured (e.g., public engagement metrics); and
- c) how far efficiency principles influence the roles of spokespersons, the cabinet secretariat, or technological systems to ensure rapid and uniform message dissemination.

2) Max Weber: Bureaucratic Theory and Legal-Rational Authority

Max Weber conceptualized the model of rational-legal bureaucracy characterized by hierarchical structure, specialization, written rules, and merit-based career progression. For Weber, bureaucracy represents the rationalization of modern administration that ensures predictability and administrative efficiency. Recent studies show that Weber's principles continue to influence contemporary public governance while also facing criticism for rigidity, impersonality, and potential incompatibility with modern communication needs that require flexibility and responsiveness (Sørensen & Torfing, 2024).

From Weber's perspective, cabinet communication strategy can be analyzed through:

- a) the procedural and legal formality of public information dissemination;

- b) the institutional position of spokespersons or the cabinet secretariat within hierarchical authority structures; and
- c) how bureaucratic formalism affects the speed and coherence of government communication.

3) Integrating Taylor and Weber with Political Communication Studies

Using both Taylor and Weber offers a dual-lens assessment of the interacting dimensions in governmental communication:

- a) Efficiency orientation, measurement, and message standardization (Taylorian), and
- b) Formal structure, hierarchy, and legal-rational legitimacy (Weberian).

Modern cabinets especially large and diverse ones often face tension between the need for rapid, uniform communication (efficiency) and the obligation to adhere to formal procedures and bureaucratic hierarchy (Weberian). Mapping the Prabowo-Gibran cabinet's communication practices onto these two frameworks reveals trade-offs, adaptations, or innovations in contemporary governmental communication.

C. Key Findings (Qualitative Results)

1. Framing and Message Discipline

a) Narrative consistency

Discourse analysis shows strong efforts to maintain consistent policy messages: "economic stability," "bureaucratic discipline," "inclusive growth," and "food sovereignty" appear repeatedly in presidential speeches, key ministerial remarks, and official press materials. This consistency is supported by internal message guidelines ("message houses") described by communication informants.

b) Message centralization

Communication coordination appears concentrated within the executive communication team and the presidential secretariat. Several ministries indicated that major public statements must undergo central clearance, reflecting a highly centralized narrative control practice.

c) Discipline on sensitive issues

On controversial issues such as the creation of new institutions, Papua-related policies, or energy policy the cabinet adopts a strategy of delaying statements or "controlling the frame" by providing phased explanations and using official spokespersons to limit message variations.

These patterns align with Taylorian work discipline and measurable output emphasis, as well as Weber's bureaucratic logic that centralized authority and proceduralism minimize internal narrative conflict (Adnan & Mona, 2024).

2. Leader Branding and Symbolic Performance

a) Symbolic actions (ritual communication)

Cabinet retreats using semi-military uniforms, mass fieldwork sessions, and high-visibility inter-ministerial collaboration are deployed as symbolic communication tools to project cohesion, discipline, and effectiveness.

b) Presidential and vice-presidential personas

President Prabowo and Vice President Gibran employ distinct yet complementary communication styles: the President emphasizes authority and strategic vision, while the Vice President focuses on proximity to the public and practical welfare programs. This combination forms a leadership branding ecosystem targeting different demographic groups.

c) Social media rhythm

Short posts, fieldwork videos, and behind-the-scenes stories humanize leadership figures while reinforcing policy messages. These leader-branding practices reflect managerial control over image (Taylorian measurable outputs: number of events, deliverables) and Weberian symbolic ritualism reinforcing institutional legitimacy (Firmansyah & Saputra, 2025).

3. Internal Communication Organization and Bureaucracy

a) Strong formal structure

The presidential secretariat and ministerial communication bureaus follow formal hierarchical bureaucratic patterns, with clear divisions of labor, SOPs for press releases, and clearance processes.

b) Emphasis on performance measurement (KPIs)

Informants note regular communication performance evaluations using quantitative indicators such as media reach, social media engagement, and public perception surveys.

c) Rigidity vs. adaptive needs

Although formal structures support coordination, layered procedures slow responses to fast-moving social media issues, sometimes causing overlaps or delays in narrative corrections.

These findings reinforce that Weberian bureaucracy provides stability and legitimacy, while Taylorian efficiency principles help measure communication effectiveness yet their combination creates trade-offs between control and responsiveness (Susanti & Khu, 2025).

4. Digital Media Use and Public Opinion Management

a) Multiplatform strategy

The cabinet employs a multiplatform approach: traditional press releases for formal audiences, social media (YouTube, Instagram, X) for mass audiences, and short-form video platforms for young voters.

b) Audience segmentation and targeted messaging

Messages are tailored to demographic segments for example, technical content for professional audiences and visually engaging content for young people.

c) Counter-disinformation operations

A rapid-response unit identifies and responds to disinformation, although effectiveness is limited by resource constraints and clearance procedures.

This digital strategy demonstrates modernization within classical bureaucratic frameworks formal procedures enable control, while digital units attempt to apply Taylorian optimization principles (Sulieman, 2019).

5. Response to Public and Media Criticism

a) Reframing strategies

When facing criticism, the cabinet often employs reframing, highlighting the positive aspects of policies and presenting supportive data.

b) Tactical timing and issue diversion

For sensitive issues, selective timing and gradual information releases are used to manage public attention.

c) Relations with independent media

Relations with professional journalists are pragmatic, providing access to positive agendas; however, investigative journalists often receive defensive responses.

This approach aligns with top-down communication management prioritizing message control but raises legitimacy challenges as public expectations for transparency grow (Pramana et al., 2024).

D. Discussion: Linking Findings to Taylor & Weber

1) Frederick Taylor-Scientific Management and Public Communication

Taylor emphasizes efficiency, standardization, division of labor, and performance measurement. In the cabinet context, these principles appear in standardized message guidelines, KPI-based evaluations (engagement, reach, perception surveys), clear task division between executive and ministerial communication units, and the use of best practices in content production.

Theoretical implication: Taylorian emphasis supports message consistency and efficient communication production but may reduce creativity and responsiveness needed in fast-moving digital environments.

2) Max Weber-Bureaucracy, Legitimacy, and Rationalization

Weberian bureaucracy (formal rules, hierarchy, merit-based career) provides legitimacy and stability. Findings of centralized message clearance, SOP use, and hierarchical structure show Weberian logic at work to maintain institutional coherence (Dalimunthe, 2022).

Theoretical implication: Weberian logic strengthens policy legitimacy and accountability but may hinder agility in responding to emerging issues.

3) Interaction Between Taylor & Weber: Synchronization and Tension

The cabinet synchronizes Taylorian operational standards within Weberian bureaucratic structures to produce measurable and controlled communication outputs. However, tensions arise between the need for speed in digital communication requiring decentralization and autonomy and the need for hierarchical control and verification.

Empirical example: The cabinet retreat (a ritual of discipline) reinforces bureaucratic legitimacy while producing measurable communication outputs (photos, videos, statistics). Conversely, long clearance procedures delay counter-messaging in fast-moving disinformation cycles (Sulaiman, 2024).

E. Interpretation of Findings and Practical Implications

a) Balancing control and responsiveness

Develop rapid-response protocols with streamlined verification to handle disinformation and viral issues effectively.

b) Strengthening digital communication capacity

Allocate additional resources to digital units (analytics, monitoring, content creation) to meet KPI targets and reduce clearance delays.

c) Controlled decentralization

Grant limited autonomy to ministerial communication units for routine issues under clearly defined parameters to improve speed without losing message consistency.

d) Strategic use of symbolism

Symbolic actions (e.g., retreats, uniform events) are effective narrative tools but must be supported by substantive outcomes to avoid perceptions of mere image management.

4. CONCLUSION

The communication strategy of the Prabowo–Gibran Cabinet reflects a synthesis of Taylor's and Weber's classical management principles. Taylorian standardization and performance measurement are implemented within Weber's formal bureaucratic framework. While this approach effectively maintains message consistency and

institutional legitimacy, it also creates adaptation challenges in a dynamic digital media environment. Key recommendations include strengthening rapid-response mechanisms, enhancing digital communication capacity, and adopting controlled communicative decentralization.

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