THE OPTICS OF LEADERSHIP
Visual Representation in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Campaign

IRWAN ABDULLAH[1], DEDY AFRIADI[2], MIRNA YUSUF[1], MIKKE SUSANTO[3], ACHMAD FAWAID[3]
[1] Universitas Gadjah Mada, Indonesia
[2] Institut Seni Budaya Indonesia (ISBI) Aceh, Indonesia
[3] Universitas Nurul Jadid, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

This research explores the significant role played by visual representation in Indonesian presidential election campaigns. By addressing a gap in existing literature that has largely overlooked the importance of visual representation in shaping voter preferences, this study contributes to a deeper comprehension of the underlying dynamics. Through the analysis of visual data, it becomes apparent that effective visual representation has the potential to enhance a candidate's image, sway voter emotions, and ultimately impact electability. Key findings highlight variations in communication strategies employed by presidential candidates, emphasizing the crucial role of visual representation in political campaigns and the complex array of factors influencing public decision-making. The dominance of visual communication emerges as a critical factor in shaping public opinion and determining voter preferences. This study provides scholarly insights into the mechanisms involved in visual communication within political processes, particularly within the context of leadership campaigns.

1. Introduction

The visual representation of presidential candidates in election campaigns wields significant influence over public perceptions during electoral processes. In the contemporary digital era, characterized by the pervasive impact of social media, conveyed images and depictions play a crucial role in shaping candidates' electability and popularity (Geise et al., 2024). Media platforms serve as vital channels for disseminating information, molding sensory perceptions, emotions, and belief systems, thereby prompting political candidates to capitalize on these platforms as digital canvases to shape their public image (Cerdán-Martínez et al., 2020). Examining the visual representation of presidential candidates amidst the 2024 election campaign in Indonesia reveals the strategic utilization of visual elements to construct narratives, influence perceptions, and enhance candidate appeal. Furthermore, this investigation underscores the influential role of visual communication through social media platforms as a potent tool for political persuasion, shaping public opinions and electoral preferences (Aguilar, 2023). The significance of this exploration extends beyond mere observation, facilitating a deeper understanding of the intricate dynamics of presidential elections and contributing to the discourse on societal progress within Indonesia's political landscape.

Existing studies have thus far overlooked the pivotal role of visual representation in presidential election campaigns and its broader implications for the democratic process. Four prominent trends emerge in elucidating the utilization of visual media in campaign processes. Firstly, there are studies that examine how visual imagery of presidential candidates influences public perceptions (Aguilar, 2023; Jude, 2024). Within this analysis, researchers scrutinize the impact of visual design, color schemes, and symbolic representations employed in campaigns on voter perceptions (Scheufele, 2000). Secondly, there is research focused on dissecting the influence of social media and digital platforms on the visualization of presidential candidates. These studies delve into how candidates harness social media platforms to disseminate their image and engage with voters (Boulianne, 2019; Tufekci, 2018). Thirdly, there are studies that explore the intersection of popular culture and the visualization of presidential candidates (Shim & Nabers, 2013). This involves analyzing the incorporation of popular cultural references, such as films, music, or trends, into candidate political campaigns (Lull, 2009). Lastly, there are studies that investigate visual strategies within a political context. These studies delve into the relationship between political context and the visual strategies employed by presidential candidates, with particular emphasis on how political factors such as ideology, polarization, and public policy influence visual choices in campaigns (Norris, 2001).

Drawing from these trends, this study undertakes a comparative analysis of how the candidates in Indonesia's 2024 presidential election employ visual representation strategies within their election campaigns across diverse contexts. The comparison of visual representations of presidential candidates across diverse contexts aims to discern differences and commonalities in the employed visual strategies. To achieve a comprehensive understanding, a thorough content analysis of campaign materials is conducted to decipher the conveyed messages and their reception by the public. Consequently, this paper encompasses various cases, heterogeneous event contexts, and considers the diverse manifestations of visualizations across various formats and settings.

Central to this paper is the assertion that the adoption of cohesive, consistent, and engaging visualizations in presidential campaigns can significantly augment candidate electability. It posits that robust visual elements can sculpt a favorable candidate image and sway voter perceptions. Methodical and contextually appropriate visualization techniques and attributes can foster increased support and yield favorable election outcomes. In essence, the visualization of presidential candidates assumes a pivotal role in shaping their public image and cultivating voter backing. Through a thorough investigation of the relationship between candidate visualization and electability, this study seeks to evaluate the efficacy of such visualizations in influencing voter perceptions and support, as well as their implications for electoral victories in Indonesian presidential elections.

1.1. Visual Representation

Visual representation plays an indispensable role in the political domain, possessing the capability to mold perceptions and influence behavior. It encapsulates the process through which political ideologies are communicated visually, thereby bearing the potency to construct an individual's digital persona (Matas & Gil, 2024). These visual techniques are strategically employed by political entities or parties and their candidates to disseminate political messages, foster civic engagement, and facilitate governmental communication with society (Khosronejad, 2011; Qadir, 2023; Sazan et al., 2024). The study by Griffin and Kagan (1996) delves into how visual representation in political advertisements, centered on cultural imagery, can encapsulate national, regional, ethnic, religious, subcultural, or class traits to evoke self-image. This underscores the significance of comprehending cultural imagery in political campaign messaging and its impact on shaping public perceptions of candidates and political agendas. Visual representation engenders a distinctive lexicon in orchestrating public discourse online (Sanina, 2019).

The process of visual representation explores the intricate functions of emotions, gender dynamics, and the influence of popular culture in shaping public perceptions (Jude, 2024). Within the political sphere, visual representation molds specific viewpoints, thereby constructing reality in line with employed political strategies (Panda & Roy, 2021). This is classified as aesthetic insights utilized for news delivery, thus exerting substantial influence on the human political milieu (Shim & Nabers, 2013). Visual representation behaviors pervade political campaigns globally. For instance, in the 2016 presidential election campaign of Alexander van der Bellen, strategic utilization of Instagram played a pivotal role. Through digital storytelling on Instagram, the candidate's identity was effectively portrayed, influencing voter sentiments (Liebhart & Bernhardt, 2017). Beyond digital storytelling, visual representation in presidential campaigns extends to political cartoons, offering distinct and potent messages (Conners, 2005). This phenomenon bears implications for election outcomes, as compelling images and messages from candidates can sway public perceptions, thus mobilizing support for specific candidates.

1.2. Presidential Election Campaigns

Presidential election campaigns are integral components of the democratic framework, providing a crucial platform for societal engagement in the political process (Pospíšilová, 2023). These campaigns involve individuals, groups, or organizations seeking to influence political decision-making, particularly during general elections, with the overarching objective of securing public support for political candidates or the parties they represent (Sahlan, 2023). Among the various mediums employed, digital media stands out as a potent tool capable of reaching a wide audience. Indeed, the campaign process has become inextricably intertwined with the evolution and utilization of the internet and social networks (Jayawardena, 2017). The significance of social media in campaigns stems from the global proliferation of internet usage. The utilization of the internet for political campaigns has opened novel avenues for citizens to delve deeper into politics and campaign activities (Satria et al., 2014). These digital spaces not only serve as platforms for candidates to cultivate their personal image but also as mediums for disseminating misinformation and fueling hatred and negative sentiments against opposing candidates (Aguilar, 2023; Firdaus et al., 2024; Yulfa et al., 2023). Notably, reliance on social media platforms, particularly Facebook, has exerted evident cognitive, emotional, and behavioral impacts, as observed during the 2020 US presidential election (Soliman & Osama, 2022) and the 2019 presidential election campaign in Indonesia, where such platforms captured public interest in presidential candidates (Arifiyanti et al., 2020).

The strength of candidates and their visual representation significantly influence the public's inclination to voice support. A well-crafted image can lead to political polarization in society due to strong affiliations with individual presidential candidates, potentially resulting in societal fragmentation (Herawati & Sukma, 2019). Consequently, there is a pressing need for robust digital literacy and the cultivation of a positive self-image by candidates in implementing digital campaigns through internet media. As such, the conduct of presidential election campaigns necessitates a delicate balance between leveraging digital platforms for public engagement while mitigating the risks of misinformation and societal divisiveness.

2. Research Objectives

Developing a conceptual understanding of the visualization strategies employed by presidential candidates is crucial, as visual techniques wield the power to influence voters' perceptions and emotions, ultimately impacting a candidate's electability. In societies where literacy rates are relatively low and average education levels remain modest, visual communication is more easily grasped and digested. Audiovisual messages can be more effectively understood in political communication compared to written messages. Correspondingly, the utilization of digital strategies in presidential and vice-presidential campaigns can more adeptly influence voters' perceptions and emotions, thereby enhancing a candidate's electability. Practically, comprehending effective visualization patterns within the Indonesian cultural and political context can aid candidates and campaign teams in devising more effective communication strategies to enhance their electability prospects. In alignment with this premise, the overarching aim of this paper is to elucidate the relationship between the visualization of presidential candidates and their electability in Indonesian presidential elections, and to understand how visualization impacts voter preferences and determines election outcomes.

Specifically, this paper aims to: (1) analyze the influence of visual images of presidential candidates on public perceptions and voter preferences in Indonesia; (2) map effective visual strategies demonstrated to augment the electability of presidential candidates within the context of Indonesian political culture; (3) analyze cultural, social, and political factors influencing the visualization patterns of presidential candidates and their electability in Indonesia; and (4) formulate recommendations for candidates and campaign teams in designing effective visualizations to support presidential election campaigns in Indonesia.

These four objectives serve to elucidate the significance of effective visual patterns within the Indonesian cultural and political context for designing more impactful communication strategies. Visual patterns are more accessible to the public and thus hold a strategic position in communicating the relationship between visual representation, voter preferences, and election outcomes. Emphasizing the practical implications of this research helps campaign teams develop more effective visual presentation tactics to shape public perceptions and enhance a candidate's electoral success. Consequently, the paper is expected to provide profound insights into the importance of visualizing presidential candidates and its relationship with electability in the Indonesian political context, as well as contribute to the development of more effective and impactful political communication strategies targeting voters in Indonesia.

This study underscores the importance of highlighting and analyzing the relationship between visual representation, voter preferences, and election outcomes to provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of visual communication in political campaigns. Practically, understanding this relationship can enhance candidates' success in elections.

3. Methodology

Various methods ware employed to investigate the relationship between visual representation and electability, including public surveys, social media sentiment analysis, campaign content analysis, and opinion polls. Public survey data encompasses questions pertaining to perceptions of candidate visual representation and the level of candidate electability. By analyzing survey results, it is possible to ascertain whether a correlation exists between the visual image projected by candidates and the degree of support garnered from voters. Social media sentiment analysis is conducted by collecting public responses to candidate visual representation. This data can provide insights into how candidate visual images are perceived and received by the public. This aligns with the analysis of campaign visual material sourced from various mediums, such as television advertisements, campaign posters, and campaign videos. This data can be utilized to analyze dominant visual elements and understand how these visual elements can influence candidate electability.

Data pertaining to candidate electability is also procured from various opinion polls and election outcomes, which are examined in conjunction with the shifts in visual representation conveyed throughout the campaigns. This data facilitates quantitative analyses to investigate the relationship between candidate visual representation and electability, as well as factors that may moderate this relationship. Multiple case studies derived from field observations serve as the foundation to explicate how the visual representation of Indonesia's three 2024 presidential candidates is perceived. Firstly, an

examination of how candidate visual images are presented across campaign advertisements, posters, and social media platforms is conducted. Secondly, an analysis of the divergent visual strategies employed by each candidate to construct their political image and brand through visualized symbols is undertaken. Thirdly, an exploration of the visual representation of the three presidential candidates through their campaign visual material is carried out, with a focus on how these visual images shape public perception and their electability. Through this approach, pertinent information regarding the visual representation of the three presidential candidates across various campaign contexts is elucidated, providing rich insights into visual strategies within the political domain and their ramifications for electoral outcomes.

Three presidential candidates serve as the focal point for this study: the first pair, Anies Baswedan-Muhaimin; the second pair, Prabowo-Gibran; and the third pair, Ganjar-Mahfud. These candidates, comprising presidential and vice-presidential hopefuls, have successfully navigated various selection stages involving political parties. Consequently, the three candidates are endorsed by a coalition of parties with religious, nationalist, and democratic affiliations. The visual representation in this paper is analyzed through two distinct patterns. Firstly, the presidential candidates are visualized separately from their vice-presidential counterparts to highlight individual communication through their visual representations, thereby revealing the unique character of each presidential candidate. Secondly, the candidates are shown as pairs to illustrate how collective values are manifested in their visual representation. Additionally, the visual analysis extends to their joint public appearances, demonstrating how they portray themselves amidst the electorate. This approach provides a comprehensive examination of the visual strategies employed by each candidate, offering insights into their political branding and the potential impact on their electability.

The analysis of research data pertains to patterns of visual representation manifested through the utilization of colors and symbols, candidate image formation, campaign messages, policy and achievement communication, and the employment of social media or digital platforms. Presidential candidates frequently incorporate distinctive and easily recognizable colors and symbols in their campaign visualizations. These colors and symbols can serve as robust identities for candidates and their respective political parties. Visual representation that accentuates the candidate as a strong, authoritative, and relatable leadership figure is commonly employed. This image can be constructed through poses, facial expressions, and the judicious use of appropriate backgrounds. Presidential candidate visualizations also often incorporate specific and prominent campaign messages. These messages can take the form of slogans, campaign visions and missions, or political promises intended to resonate with voters. Furthermore, some presidential candidate visualizations highlight achievements and policies they have implemented, in an effort to cultivate a positive image in the eyes of voters.

The analysis of data employs both visual interpretation and descriptive text, which complement each other. This interpretative method helps researchers understand complex and contextual material. Interpretation helps explain how the visualizations and actions of presidential candidates respond to the social and cultural contexts in which they are situated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Re-presentation, description, and interpretation are parts of the analytical process. First is re-presentation, where visual and descriptive data are organized to ensure accessibility and comprehensibility without losing context (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The second step is description, which involves identifying broad themes and patterns in visual and narrative data to organize them into meaningful categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Third is interpreting the data. This analysis focuses on understanding how visual forms elucidate the prevailing structural and cultural contexts.

4. Results

4.1. Media Presentation of the Three Presidential Candidates

The three presidential candidates, identified by ballot numbers 01, 02, and 03, are distinct figures highlighted according to the perception of their mass mobilization strength. Their differences can be observed from their religious orientations, personalities, campaign themes, and approaches.

Figure 1. Public Appearances of the Three Presidential Candidates

Sources: Online news portals, 2024

Candidate 01, Anies Baswedan, is an activist and scholar renowned for his intellectual prowess and diligent work ethic, embodying a calm, intelligent, and visionary persona. In his campaign, Anies places emphasis on education infrastructure development and community empowerment initiatives. Anies's religious orientation is evidenced by his commitment to upholding the values of social justice and humanity while fostering harmony among religious communities. Social justice emerges as a central theme, campaigned as a conduit for building and ensuring prosperity in Indonesia. Anies is known for his open approach, directly engaging with the public to listen to their aspirations and comprehend their needs.

Candidate 02, Prabowo, possesses a strong military and political background, highlighting a tough, decisive, and authoritative personality. In his campaign, Prabowo underscores the importance of national sovereignty, social justice, and the welfare of the people. Prabowo's religious orientation is reflected in the spirit of nationalism and patriotism that he cultivates in his political vision. His family resides in a multicultural environment, practicing Islam and Christianity. Prabowo frequently voices the need for strength and courage to maintain national integrity, affirming his commitment to protecting the interests of the people. This candidate presents with high spirits and is often associated with his fiery temperament. Visually, it is suggested that this presidential candidate is more inclined to invite the people to relax and contemplate joy rather than grapple with complex conflicts and political issues.

Candidate 03, Ganjar Pranowo, hails from the government and currently holds the position of Governor of Central Java. Ganjar Pranowo is known as a leader who maintains close ties with the people, embodying a polite, persuasive, and inclusive personality. In his campaign, Ganjar places special emphasis on strengthening regional economies, rural infrastructure development, and improving social welfare. Ganjar's religious orientation is manifested in his concern for religious tolerance and inclusive social progress. Ganjar is known for his humanistic and progressive approach in building relationships with the community and advocating for common interests for the nation's progress. This candidate possesses outstanding communication skills with the people and is consistently present amidst the community.

The three presidential aspirants, Anies Baswedan, Prabowo, and Ganjar Pranowo, collectively demonstrate a commitment to Indonesia's advancement through diverse developmental endeavors and the promotion of public welfare. Each candidate, according to their unique approach, aims to address the nation's enduring welfare challenges: Anies Baswedan advocates for a transparent system and good governance; Prabowo prioritizes national sovereignty and food security; and Ganjar focuses on bureaucratic reforms. Despite their shared objectives, noticeable distinctions arise in their personalities and leadership styles. Anies Baswedan is characterized by intellectuality and foresight, Prabowo exudes

a determined and authoritative demeanor shaped by his military background, while Ganjar Pranowo is acknowledged for his congenial, persuasive, and inclusive approach. Concerning religious orientation, Anies is associated with a commitment to social justice principles, Prabowo emphasizes nationalist and patriotic ideals, whereas Ganjar emphasizes interfaith tolerance and social harmony as fundamental principles of his political vision.

4.2. Media Representation of the Three Presidential Candidates

The depiction of the three presidential candidates varies significantly, elucidating distinct approaches aimed at mobilizing voters and enhancing their electoral prospects. These discrepancies in self-presentation underscore differences in candidates' perceptions of voter demographics and the symbolic communication required to establish rapport between the electorate and the candidate.

Figure 2. Representation of Presidential Candidate Number One

Sources: Online news portals, 2024

Anies Baswedan positions himself as a government critic, emphasizing its deficiencies and transgressions. Remarkably, among the trio of contenders, Anies stands apart as unaffiliated with the current administration. In contrast, Prabowo and Ganjar both hold positions in the ruling government: Prabowo serves as the Minister of Defense, while Ganjar occupies the role of Governor of Central Java. Both function within the framework of President Jokowi's administration, which retains power. Through presenting himself as a champion dedicated to eradicating corruption and detrimental practices that adversely impact the populace, Anies has garnered considerable voter support, notwithstanding his inability to surpass candidate number 2. He remains resolute in his commitment to oppositional pursuits, striving to ensure justice for citizens by combating corruption and abuses of authority.

Figure 3. Representation of Presidential Candidate Number Two

Sources: Online news portals, 2024

Prabowo, the victor of the presidential election, projected himself with two salient attributes. Firstly, he assumed the role of a resolute figure, prioritizing the dignity of the populace by staunchly defending national sovereignty. Drawing from his military background, Prabowo esteems the values of perseverance, allegiance, and a willingness to act in the interests of the people. Secondly, Prabowo has been depicted as a purveyor of jubilation, confronting weighty issues with dance and laughter. His campaign appearances were consistently characterized by communal singing and dancing, encouraging the populace to confront challenges with optimism. This approach fostered a relaxed ambiance around

Prabowo and facilitated the public's transcendence from political turmoil and economic distress through collective joy. The term "*gemoy*" (slang, meaning "adorable") that was ascribed to him, emerged as a symbol denoting something humorous, endearing, and detached from the complexities of real-life circumstances.

Figure 4. Representation of Presidential Candidate Number Three

Sources: Online news portals, 2024

Candidate number 3, Ganjar Pranowo, is portrayed to the public as an approachable figure, intimately connected with the populace. Demonstrating open body language and employing accessible language, Ganjar distinguishes himself from his counterparts. Through diverse social media platforms, Ganjar presents himself as a principled and compassionate figure dedicated to the welfare of ordinary citizens. As a seasoned politician and the incumbent Governor of Central Java, Ganjar is depicted as possessing charisma, experience, and a robust political network. His leadership in Central Java, marked by policies lauded for their efficacy in regional development and public service, often garners acclaim. Nonetheless, alongside the social media portrayal as a credible presidential contender, Ganjar faces scrutiny and controversy regarding certain policies or actions. Critiques argue that Ganjar has not succeeded in transforming the socio-economic landscape of impoverished Central Java.

4.3. Netizens' Reasoning Behind Presidential Candidate Choices

The electorate selects among the three pairs of presidential and vice-presidential candidates based on a multitude of factors. Each voter possesses specific reasons for their selection, whether influenced by personal preferences or collective deliberations, particularly within familial or communal spheres. Moreover, individuals within the public sphere, characterized by diverse social statuses and professional backgrounds, frequently maintain affiliations or connections with one of the candidates.

Table 1 demonstrates that supporters perceive their chosen candidates as the most persuasive, a sentiment consistent across all three pairs. Each candidate garners recognition as the most deserving and capable among their respective supporters. Furthermore, all three candidates are esteemed as resolute, bold, and authoritative figures by their supporters, in addition to being regarded as astute and broad-minded individuals. Likewise, they are deemed honest and trustworthy. Advocates of each candidate often exhibit biases towards the strengths of their preferred candidate, particularly as portrayed in public discourse, reflecting the evolving political narrative prevalent in social media.

Distinct patterns of reasoning also emerge, unveiling the unique attributes associated with the portrayal of each candidate. Anies Baswedan is frequently associated with devout religious adherents and is perceived as more Islamic compared to the other candidates. Anies is further distinguished as "not a part" of the New Order regime and is recognized for his openness to criticism. Prabowo, in contrast to his counterparts, possesses a military background, embodying a patriotic ethos aimed at safeguarding national sovereignty. Ganjar's supporters provide less specific rationales, with Ganjar's conspicuous presence in social media discourse, particularly his adeptness in public communication, serving as the primary distinguishing factor. He is depicted as a public servant, deeply connected with the populace, tolerant, and responsive to citizens' needs (refer to Table 1). Despite disparities in portrayal, all three candidates draw inspiration from one another in their public appearances, resulting in the adoption of similar foundational symbols for communication with the public.

Table 1. Public Reasons for Choosing Presidential Candidates

No.	Reasons for Public Choosing Presidential Candidates		
	Anies-Muhaimin	**Probowo-Gibran**	**Ganjar-Mahfud**
1	Desire for change	Firm/brave/authoritative	Most convincing
2	Intelligent/broad-minded	Leadership mentality	Empowering fishermen
3	Enjoys visiting the people	Most capable of leading	Evidence of work results
4	Honest/trustworthy/dependable	Continuing Jokowi	Enjoys visiting the people
5	Most capable of leading	Military background	Honest/trustworthy/dependable
6	Firm/brave/authoritative	Most convincing	Most capable of leading
7	Most convincing	Honest/trustworthy/dependable	Firm/brave/authoritative
8	Evidence of work results	Desire for change	Experienced
9	Experienced	Evidence of work results	Intelligent/broad-minded
10	Knows the needs of the people	Supported by Jokowi	Knows the needs of citizens
11	More Islamic	Intelligent/broad-minded	A Javanese
12	A religious figure	Idealistic	Personality
13	Religiously devout	Consistency	Integrity
14	Calm demeanor	Strong corps morale	Anti-corruption practices
15	Not part of the New Order	A brave figure	An ordinary person
16	Social justice aspects	Rational thinking	Anti-corruption, fair
17	Youthful yet authoritative	Patriotic spirit	Religious nationalist
18	Inclusive and unifying	Downstreaming programs	A public servant
19	Tolerance of diversity	Free lunch & free milk programs	Close to the people
20	Not anti-criticism	Involving youth	Tolerance

Source: Online news portals, 2024

5. Discussion

The mode of presentation and visual representation can significantly influence the electability of candidates in Indonesia, as visuals possess the power to capture attention, influence emotions, and shape voter perceptions, thereby leaving impressions on individuals (Conners, 2005; Matas & Gil, 2024). Engaging and informative visual presentations can strengthen the positive image of candidates and enhance their appeal as potential leaders. Moreover, cohesive and consistent visualization in conveying campaign messages can facilitate voters' better understanding and positive response to the messages from the three presidential candidates.

The three presidential candidates in the 2024 Indonesian campaign employ diverse visual representation strategies to shape public perceptions and influence electability. All candidates use similar engaging and informative visual presentations to bolster their positive image and appeal as potential leaders. These visuals aim to evoke strong emotional responses from voters, reinforce campaign messages, and distinguish themselves from competitors. Nonetheless, differences can be observed in their use of visual communication. Varied color schemes, symbolic representations, and visual design choices are noted among the candidates, each aiming to influence voter perceptions. Each candidate strategically employs distinct visual elements to construct narratives and enhance their appeal, showcasing unique approaches to visual communication. Although the three candidates have different target audiences influencing their visual communication designs, the chosen visual design and communication strategies undeniably structure voter groups.

Effective visual presentations can influence candidates' electability through several mechanisms. Firstly, visuals possess the potential to evoke strong emotional responses from voters, such as sympathy, trust, or pride towards the candidate. These emotional responses can reinforce the bond between voters and candidates, thereby influencing voters' decisions at the polls. Secondly, clear and persuasive visuals can serve to reinforce candidates' campaign messages and differentiate them from

competitors. Voters tend to favor candidates capable of conveying messages effectively and convincingly through engaging and communicative visual communication (Aguilar, 2023). In other words, effective visual presentations can aid in enhancing candidates' electability by creating positive impressions, reinforcing campaign messages, and attracting attention and trust from voters. This strength ultimately proved decisive in the victory of candidate number two in Indonesia's 2024 presidential election.

In the context of visual presentations that may have influenced Prabowo's election as President of Indonesia, several crucial factors warrant consideration. Firstly, Prabowo and his campaign team could design visualizations that reinforce his image as a firm, authoritative, and patriotic leader, traits that have become his hallmark. By presenting visual imagery emphasizing strength, courage, and self-confidence, Prabowo could reinforce his political message and increase his appeal to voters seeking a strong leader. Additionally, visual presentations focusing on national security, people's welfare, and sovereignty issues could be key to winning voter support for Prabowo. By utilizing visuals highlighting his accomplishments and political vision in advocating for national and people's interests, Prabowo could cultivate an image as a caring leader ready to protect the nation's interests.

The use of effective visual presentations in conveying political messages and reinforcing Prabowo's leadership image as a strong and authoritative figure, coupled with a focus on issues relevant to voters' needs and desires, could prove decisive factors in achieving victory in the presidential election. Thus, the appropriate visual presentation strategy can significantly contribute to Prabowo's election as President of Indonesia. A candidate's communicative approach and their ability to provide answers that address public psychological concerns play a crucial role in determining the public's choice of presidential candidates. A candidate's ability to communicate effectively with the public, address their emotional and psychological needs, and provide solutions to the issues they face, have been influential factors in influencing public choices.

A prominent example of the power of visual communication is evident in the 2008 United States presidential election, where Barack Obama won the election with a highly communicative campaign that articulated public hopes and concerns effectively. Obama was able to convey inspirational and optimistic messages that appealed to voters' emotions while providing a clear vision and solutions to issues of concern to the public at that time (Coe & Reitzes, 2010). As a result, Obama successfully gained widespread public support and won the election. Additionally, the 2017 French presidential election also demonstrated the importance of social media communication approaches in garnering public support. Emmanuel Macron presented himself as a candidate who communicates clearly and energetically, capable of responding to the French society's needs and concerns about change and stability (Gaumont et al., 2018). By effectively communicating his moderate and inclusive vision, Macron succeeded in gaining broad support from various segments of society and eventually won the presidency.

Overall, a candidate's communicative approach and responsiveness to public psychological needs have a significant impact on determining the public's choice of presidential candidates (Aguilar, 2023). By effectively communicating, addressing societal concerns and hopes, and providing solutions to issues facing society, candidates have a greater chance of winning public support and achieving victory in the political arena.

6. Conclusion

This study underscores the importance of visual elements in enhancing a candidate's image, eliciting voter emotions, and ultimately influencing electability. Effective visual representation plays a crucial role in shaping voter preferences and impacting candidate selection in Indonesian presidential campaigns. The diverse communication strategies employed by presidential candidates highlight the significance of visual representation in political campaigns and its influence on public decision-making. Visual communication is a vital factor in shaping public opinion and determining voter preferences, emphasizing the critical role of visual representation in leadership campaigns. Consequently, this research underscores the strategic utilization of visual elements to build narratives, influence perceptions, and enhance candidate appeal.

Research into the visual representation of presidential candidates holds pivotal significance in understanding how visual strategies can shape voter perceptions and support, playing a crucial role in contemporary political communication. Theoretically, such inquiries offer profound insights into how visual elements like graphic design, color schemes, composition, and visual messaging contribute to

bolstering a candidate's image, impacting voter emotions, and ultimately influencing their electability. This scholarly endeavor can foster the development of novel theories within the realms of political communication, political psychology, and broader political science, where the communicative power of visuals exerts considerable influence in electoral outcomes. Practically, investigations into the visual representation of presidential candidates make a noteworthy contribution by enhancing the efficacy of political campaign strategies. Armed with a deeper comprehension of how visual stimuli can sway voter preferences, campaign teams can devise more efficacious visual presentation tactics to reinforce candidates' political narratives, shape public perceptions, and heighten candidates' prospects of electoral success. Hence, this scholarly pursuit not only enriches the academic understanding of political communication but also offers pragmatic insights applicable to real-world political campaign settings.

However, one limitation of such studies is their tendency to narrowly focus on specific political contexts or individual candidates. This constraint can result in restricted generalizations and hinder the applicability of research findings to broader political landscapes. Consequently, future research endeavors should endeavor to broaden the scope of analyzed political contexts, examining the visual presentations of presidential candidates across diverse countries or on a more global scale to achieve a comprehensive understanding. Moreover, another limitation lies in the methodological approaches employed, including visual analysis methods that may be deemed insufficient or data collection methods that lack comprehensiveness. Subsequent research should aim to overcome these constraints by developing sophisticated and comprehensive visual analysis methodologies, leveraging digital technologies and advanced visual analysis tools. Furthermore, embracing interdisciplinary approaches drawing from fields such as communication, psychology, anthropology, and graphic design can enrich and expand our understanding of the impact of visual presentation on the electability of presidential candidates.

References

Aguilar, H. G. (2023). The political hate speech in the last Peruvian presidential election. *VISUAL REVIEW. International Visual Culture Review / Revista Internacional de Cultura Visual*, *13*(2), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.37467/revvisual.v10.456

Arifiyanti, A. A., Wahyuni, E. D., & Kurniawan, A. (2020). Emotion Mining of Indonesia Presidential Political Campaign 2019 using Twitter Data. *Journal of Physics: Conference Series, 1569*(2), 022035. https://doi.org/10.1088/1742-6596/1569/2/022035

Boulianne, S. (2019). Revolution in the making? Social media effects across the globe. *Information, Communication & Society, 22*(1), 39–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1353641

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in psychology*, *3*(2), 77-101.

Coe, K., & Reitzes, M. (2010). Obama on the Stump: Features and Determinants of a Rhetorical Approach. *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 40*(3), 391–413. doi: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-5705.2010.03777.x

Cerdán-Martínez, V., Bárcena, S., & Villa-Gracia, D. (2020). The Popularity of Biden and Trump in the United States and Latin America during the 2020 Campaign: A study through Google Trends. *Visual Review, 16*(2), 181–92. https://doi.org/10.62161/revvisual.v16.5211

Conners, J. L. (2005). Visual Representations of the 2004 Presidential Campaign: Political Cartoos and Popular Culture References. *American Behavioral Scientist, 49*(3), 479–87. https://doi.org/10.1177/0002764205280920

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. sage.

Firdaus, A. A., Yudhana, A., Riadi, I., & Mahsun, M. (2024). Indonesian presidential election sentiment: Dataset of response public before 2024. *Data in Brief, 19*(52), 109993. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dib.2023.109993

Gaumont, N., Panahi, M., & Chavalarias, D. (2018). Reconstruction of the socio-semantic dynamics of political activist Twitter networks—Method and application to the 2017 French presidential election. *PLOS ONE, 13*(9), https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0201879

Geise, S., Maubach, K., & Eli, A. B. (2024). Picture me in person: Personalization and emotionalization as political campaign strategies on social media in the German federal election period 2021. *New Media & Society*. https://doi.org/10.1177/14614448231224031

Griffin, M., & Kagan, S. (1996). Picturing culture in political spots: 1992 Campaigns in Israel and the United States. *Political Communication, 13*(1), 43–61. https://doi.org/10.1080/10584609.1996.9963094

Herawati, R., & Sukma, N. M. (2019). Negative Campaign Presidential Election 2019 on Indonesia National Integration. *International Journal of Scientific and Technology Research, 8*(11), 1994–1997.

Jayawardena, L. (2017). Impact of internet and social networks on the final result of 2016 presidential election of the United States. *2017 National Information Technology Conference (NITC),* 80–85. http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/NITC.2017.8285651

Jude, S. (2024). Fauda and the Israeli occupation of Palestine: Gender, emotions, and visual representations of complicity in international politics. *Review of International Studies, 50*(1), 107–26. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210522000651

Khosronejad, P. (2011). Some Observations on Visual Representations of the 2009 Iranian Presidential Election Crisis. *Iranian Studies, 44*(3), 395–408. https://doi.org/10.1080/00210862.2011.556391

Liebhart, K., & Bernhardt, P. (2017). Political Storytelling on Instagram: Key Aspects of Alexander Van der Bellen's Successful 2016 Presidential Election Campaign. *Media and Communication, 5*(4), 15–25. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v5i4.1062

Lull, J. (2009). *Media, Communication, Culture: A Global Approach*. Columbia: Columbia University Press.

Matas, P. M., & Gil, Í. (2024). Comunicación visual y discurso narrativo en redes sociales. *VISUAL REVIEW. International Visual Culture Review / Revista Internacional de Cultura Visual*, *16*(1), 211–224. https://doi.org/10.62161/revvisual.v16.5204

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*. sage.

Norris, P. (2001). A Virtuous Circle? The Impact of Political Communications in Post-Industrial Democracies. In Dowding, K., Hughes, J., Margetts, H. (Eds), *Challenges to Democracy* (pp. 100–117). London: Palgrave Macmillan UK. https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230502185_7

Panda, S., & Roy, S, T. (2021). Comparing Voter Electoral Preferences Using Visualizations. *The International Journal of Visual Design, 15*(2), 57–66. https://doi.org/10.18848/2325-1581/CGP/v15i02/57-66

Pospíšilová, J. (2023). Who is mobilized by the presidential election? *Acta Politologica, 15*(3), 31–46. https://doi.org/10.14712/1803-8220/17_2023

Qadir, E. M. (2023). Visual Rhetoric in Election Posters. A Multimodal Critical Discourse Analysis Approach. *Koya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 6*(1), 136–59. https://doi.org/10.14500/kujhss.v6n1y2023.pp136-159

Sahlan, M. (2023). Digital Theocracy Strategy in the 2024 Presidential Election Campaign: Its Influence on Public Opinion and Voter Choice. *Eduvest - Journal of Universal Studies, 3*(10), 1883–1891. https://doi.org/10.59188/eduvest.v3i10.936

Sanina, A. (2019). "Who Are You Kidding?": Visual Political Irony in Contemporary Russia. *Qualitative Inquiry, 25*(4), 432–444. https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800418790292

Satria, I., Kurnia, A., & Nurhadryani, Y. (2014). Influence of presidential candidates e-campaign towards voters in 2014 presidential election in Bogor City. *2014 International Conference on Advanced Computer Science and Information System,* 90–95. http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/ICACSIS.2014.7065874

Sazan, D, Al-Smadi, O. A., & Rahman, N. A. (2024). Visual Representation of Malaysian Candidates in General Election in Selected Coalition Parties: A Visual Survey on Social Media. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies, 14*(2), 365–75. https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1402.07

Scheufele, D. A. (2000). Agenda-Setting, Priming, and Framing Revisited: Another Look at Cognitive Effects of Political Communication. *Mass Communication and Society, 3*(2–3), 297–316. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0323_07

Shim, D., & Nabers, D. (2013). Imaging North Korea: Exploring its Visual Representations in International Politics. *International Studies Perspectives, 14*(3), 289–306. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1528-3585.2012.00493.x

Soliman, N. E., & Osama, A. M. (2022). US Presidential Elections on Social Media: Uses and Dependency Model. *International Journal of Sociotechnology and Knowledge Development, 14*(1), 1–15. https://doi.org/10.4018/IJSKD.297977

Tufekci, Z. (2018). How social media took us from Tahrir Square to Donald Trump. *MIT Technology Review.* https://www.technologyreview.com/2018/08/14/240325/how-social-media-took-us-from-tahrir-square-to-donald-trump/

Yulfa, R. I., Setiawan, B. H., Lourensius, G. G., & Purwandari, K. (2023). Enhancing Hate Speech Detection in Social Media Using IndoBERT Model: A Study of Sentiment Analysis during the 2024 Indonesia Presidential Election. *ICCA 2023 - 2023 5th International Conference on Computer and Applications.* http://dx.doi.org/10.1109/ICCA59364.2023.10401700