

Building Personal Branding to Influencing Voter's Perception (A Case Study of Prabowo Subianto on Instagram @Prabowo as Candidate President Republic of Indonesia 2024)

Sovia Sitta Sari, Zulfa Qurrota A'yun, Suciati*

Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta

*Corresponding Author

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ABSTRACT

Ahead of the 2024 presidential election in the Republic of Indonesia, a number of names have begun to emerge from various political parties as potential presidential or vice presidential candidates. Several surveys have been conducted by various parties. Prabowo Subianto is one of the top three names from a survey of national leaders, he is a figure known to all people in this country. The Minister of Defense who is also the current chairman of the Gerindra Party. This study will photograph how student activists perceive Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a candidate for President of the Republic of Indonesia on his Instagram, namely @prabowo. The source of this research comes from interviews with informants who are student activists as voter and documentation from Instagram @prabowo. This research uses descriptive qualitative research methods and aims to find out what factors determine followers' perceptions and how these perceptions are formed. The theory used in this study is the theory of perception and 8 characteristics of personal branding. The results of this research are the perceptions generated by the four informants who have responses that lead to the figure of Praboowo with firm, wise and nationalist leadership as a candidate for president of the Republic of Indonesia in 2024. They agree that there is potential in the next election with the work displayed by Prabowo, who is currently in office as Minister of Defense and saw that the influence of Prabowo Subianto's background which is a former military general has a power on the perception of informants, where from there one can see a promising attitude as a leader. Perceptions are formed through the interaction of experience, values, and media exposure. Informants assessed Prabowo's personal branding positively, particularly in terms of leadership, nationalism, closeness to the people, and competence.

Keywords: Perception, Personal Branding, Instagram, Presidential Candidate

INTRODUCTION

As the 2024 presidential election approaches, several names have started to appear on online news article pages to be nominated as candidates for president or presidential candidates. Several surveys have been conducted by various parties. Reporting from the kompas.com article, it displays the results of a survey conducted by Poltracking Indonesia using the stratified multistage random sampling method with a sample of 1,220 respondents with a margin of error of around 2.9% at a 95% confidence level. This survey cluster covers 34 provinces throughout Indonesia proportionally based on the latest voter population data. The results obtained were first position Ganjar Pranowo with a classification of 26.6%, then in second place Prabowo Subianto with a classification of 19.7%, and third position Anies Baswedan with a classification of 17.7% (Hardiantoro & Hardiyanto, 2022) The branding influence that has been built to date has made Prabowo's name still warm among the public.

Prabowo Subianto is one of the three names, Prabowo is someone who is known by the people in Indonesia. A Minister of Defense who is also a politician from the Gerindra Party has nominated himself as a presidential candidate 2 times in a row. Prabowo is a tough, strong and firm figure. As a leader who is known by the wider

community, Prabowo was able to build good personal branding directly in various circles of the general public and religious .

Social media is a new media that has emerged with various platforms that have great potential. Instagram is one of the social media platforms currently used by the public. Based on data from dataindonesia.id, there are 97.17 million Instagram social media users, while Twitter has 18.45 million users (Mustajab, 2022) . With the use of Instagram social media that can reach more people, even people with big names participate by always uploading their activities on Instagram.

The power of social media is so great with posts that are uploaded, it is able to attract the attention of the audience by raising different perceptions. With the upload of a photo and a caption, it will form a different perception for each audience who catches it. The perception process that appears in each audience can be formed by looking at uploaded posts and captions uploaded based on different backgrounds.



Figure 1. Activity military Prabowo in several activities. Retrieved 4 May 2023.

Source: instagram @prabowo

With posts that often appear on social media accounts, this has its own characteristics for each personal branding that is displayed. Through personal branding, the main things that can be put together in individuals involving skills, personality, and character are wrapped up as a strong identity compared to other people's self-identities. Montoya in (Afrilia, 2018) . From the personal appeal shown on social media, a politician has an image or image of a character that is formed through personal branding, so that it becomes the criterion for his people to become a Candidate for President of the Republic of Indonesia in 2024. So that the perception that arises as a result of strong personal branding will have a big impact on every person.

By building a good personal branding, now Prabowo's Instagram account has 5.2 million followers with 647 uploads. As a politician, Prabowo certainly wants to build a good personal branding so that he can have a good image of his figure in the world of politics so that people can feel confident to vote for Prabowo. The activities uploaded on Instagram show how big the contribution of Prabowo Subianto's figure is in political activities in Indonesia which has an impact on social society as a 2024 Candidate for President of the Republic of Indonesia.

Reporting from an article said that the display provided by Instagram @prabowo has a classy concept and has quality images and neat feed arrangements (Hasya, 2020). Student activists have their own perception of a leader and politician. A student activist is a student who takes part in student organization activities and is actively involved in making efforts for better social change. Student activists have diverse thoughts supported by their respective organizational environments. The organizations provided to support student activities also vary, the knowledge that will be obtained also tends to be different so that the perceptions of student activists have a perspective with a different understanding. The perception of Prabowo's Instagram followers is shaped by personal branding created by the attractiveness of the Instagram account @prabowo so that currently Prabowo still has such a big name in the world of politics. Even though Prabowo is no longer young, there is no doubt about the extraordinary charm that is known by the public.

When compared with politicians who are relatively young at their current age, such as Erick Tohir and Puan Maharani, Prabowo's figure is able to get more value from the public so that he can still be compared to 3 big names as a 2024 presidential candidate. That way, Prabowo still has a strong character, qualified to be a leader in this country. Therefore, this study entitled "Perceptions of Student Activists on Prabowo Subianto's Personal Branding as a Candidate for President of the Republic of Indonesia 2024" which aims to find out how Prabowo activists perceive Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a Candidate for President of the Republic of Indonesia 2024.

LITERATURE REVIEWS

According to Philip Kotler, personal branding can be understood as an effort to market oneself like a product, where individuals must be able to display uniqueness and added value to be recognized and remembered by the audience (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The relationship between personal branding and perception is very close because personal branding essentially aims to shape public perception. Perception is a cognitive process in which individuals interpret information received through the five senses to then form an understanding or assessment of someone or something. In this context, personal branding functions as a stimulus that influences how audiences interpret an individual's character, competence, and credibility. When personal branding is carried out consistently and in accordance with audience expectations, the resulting perception tends to be positive and stable. Conversely, inconsistencies in conveying self-image can lead to negative perceptions or even distrust. Thus, personal branding and perception have a strong causal relationship: personal branding serves as a tool to direct perception, while perception is the end result that determines the success of the personal branding strategy (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

Studies previously carried out by Deandra Shivana, Soraya Nurida, and Joe Harrianto Setiawan with title research "Analysis Perception of Followers Instagram account @ marioteguh Regarding Personal Branding Mario Teguh Post Case Confession Child Bladder by Kiswinar", studied that the public's perception of Mario's Personal Branding is true to perception the public (Instagram followers @ marioteguh) do not fulfil overall personal branding, because no fulfil element consistency. The perception that exists in the public about Mario Teguh's personal branding post case confession child biological by Kiswinar is No in accordance with personal branding shown by Mario Teguh. Personal branding is said success must own third element is *Clarity*, *Specialization*, and *Consistency*. If one element the No can fulfilled, then personal branding can said No relevant (Shivana et al., 2021). Different with study before, research This will take different object that is with see perception of Instagram followers @ prabowo and uses 8 concepts personal branding characteristics.

An another study conducted by Zella Eprilia Khansha, with title research "Perception Student Against Arief Muhammad's Personal Branding Through Instagram Feed", in study the can concluded that perception student

towards Arief Muhammad's personal branding through a positive Instagram feed perception with a mean of 17.15 and percentage perception positive 78%. this _determined based on eight the personal branding aspect that was coined by Peter Montoya namely specialization, leadership, personality, distinction, visibility, confidence, and unity. Difference with study This is researcher will use different perception and use _method descriptive qualitative (Khansa, 2022) . Different with study before, research this will describe how perception of Instagram followers @ prabowo towards Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as Candidate President Republic of Indonesia 2024, capable give impact big so Prabowo is still can placed on three top a capable politicians to follow as well as in the presidential election in 2024 later.

What is Perception?

Perception is referred to as the core of a communication, this is because if our perception or someone's perception is not accurate, then the resulting communication will not be effective. Perception is also important for an individual in determining something. Because, it is through perception that an individual can determine a decision by ignoring other messages. The higher the similarity and the degree of perception between individuals, and the more frequent and easier individuals communicate, the more likely a person is to form an identity and cultural group through perception (Mulyana, 2016) . Perception process runs from the bottom up (interpreting sensory) and from the top down (trying to relate to past experiences or the outside world) (Suciati, 2019) . In understanding reality, humans need perception. He will give meaning to what he sees, hears, feels, smells, or feels. Perception results will be considered in responding, either in the form of attitudes or behavior. Based on several definitions of perception, a chart can be described that can explain how perception relates to reality.

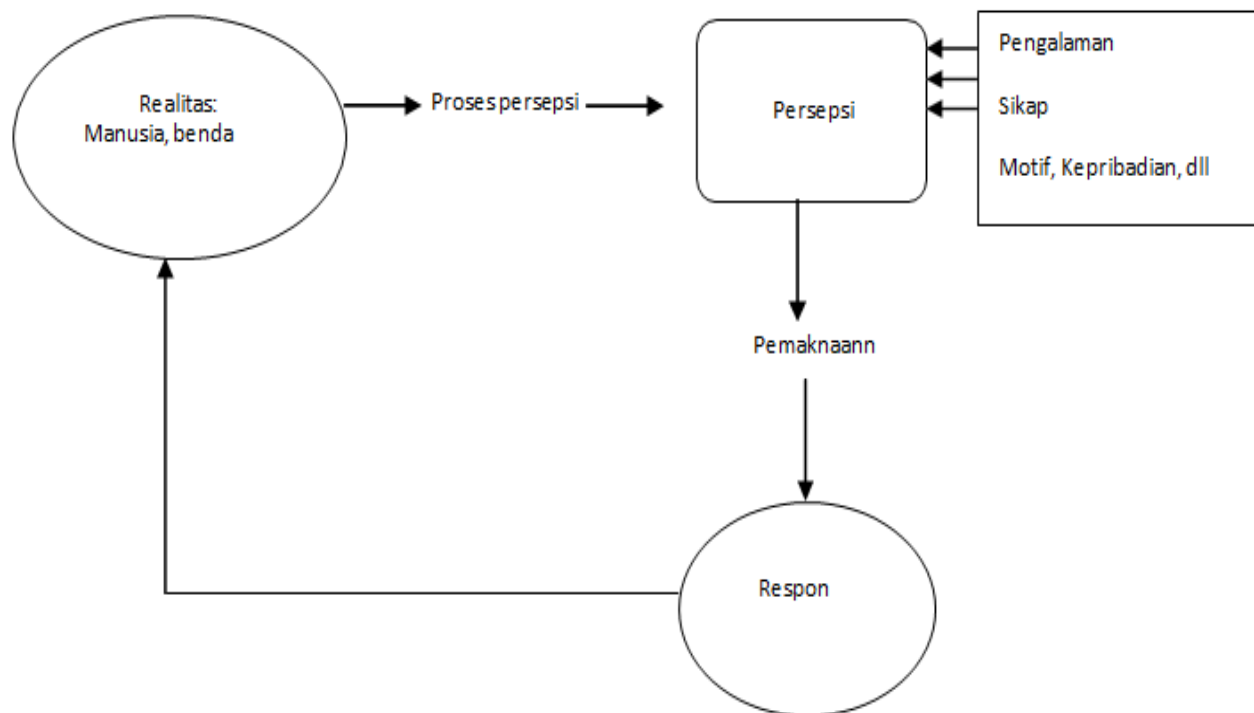


Figure 2. Perception Cycle (Suciati, 2019)

The picture above explains that a perception begins with the presence of reality. Perception will appear when there has been prior sensing (sensation). The stimulus will be given meaning by the individual, by including the individual's experience background, motives, attitudes, personality, habits and so on.

The properties of perception as follows:**Perception can be selective**

Perception of a person can be selective, this can be influenced by factors of attention. It is a person's attention elicited by a stimulus that can determine a person's selectivity towards that stimulus. Attention can be influenced by internal factors such as biological factors, physiological factors, socio-cultural factors, and psychological factors of a person. The greater the difference between the above aspects between individuals, the greater the automatic difference in the perception of each person towards a reality.

Perception based on experience

A person's perception of an object, event, or person cannot be separated from the experience of that person. Experience is also considered as a learner, especially in giving a perception of something.

Perception is conjectural

This step is considered to be one of the important steps in perception. As important as selection, the step of taking an assumption is considered necessary because it is impossible for someone to get detailed information only from sensing. This process allows one to provide an interpretation of an object with a more complete meaning from a point of view. Conjecture is deemed necessary to make inferences, especially if the information captured through sensing is incomplete.

Perception is evaluative

In evaluative perception, sometimes a person thinks that the perception he has is a reality. In fact, it is not uncommon for someone to be fooled by their perception through sensing. No perception is done objectively. Someone interprets something based on the experiences and interests of each individual.

Perception is contextual

Someone has to organize the stimulation they get from outside. Context is one that influences a person's perception, and can be categorized as the influence that can be said to be the strongest. When someone sees an event, a thing, the elements of the cognitive structure, perception, and expectations of a person are greatly influenced by the context of the stimulus itself (Mulyana, 2016) .

In determining a perception, a person is often wrong or mistaken in judging something. This is of course due to the expectations or expectations of an individual in determining their respective perceptions.

Here is a form of one's failure in perception:

Error in attribution

Attribution has a definition, namely, the internal process of an individual in understanding a cause of other people's behavior. Errors in this attribution are caused by misinterpretations from one individual to another regarding the meaning of a message, or the behavioral intention of another individual.

Halo Effect

The halo effect is an effect caused by an individual who creates an impression on other individuals, and the impression generated by this individual will have a strong impact on his assessment of the nature of other individuals. In the halo effect, a thought that the general public would consider normal if said by an ordinary person, could be considered something brilliant if said by an important person.

Stereotypes

Stereotypes can be a barrier to communication, stereotypes themselves have meaning, namely generalizations to an individual based on little tasks (Wahyudi, 2018). Leadership can be built through approach intellectually and morally intelligent and deep wise utilize global dynamics as well region, for interest national nor local accompanied with ability control various skills leadership, among others as following:

Strategic Leadership

Strategic leadership, namely effective and acceptable leadership has "strategic ability" in planning, leading and mobilizing other people or organizations to carry out activities that are or have strategic implications. Strategic leadership can be built on the basis of a combination of character, integrity and commitment.

Character: The character of a leader determines the level of success in applying leadership. Good and strong character give strength for an own courage choose the right things and do them.

Integrity: Integrity is ability for always hold firm moral principles and refuse to change it although situation at hand really hard. A person of integrity tall is the one who plunged themselves in their environment, work and work at a time feel unity himself with nature and society around, always seek and try understanding what to _ deployed for the sake of interest environment.

Commitment: Clear commitment to interest national built through approach intellectually and morally accompanied with business control various required skills in the achievement process purpose. That commitment a leader needed for face movement reforms that are progressing precisely can be one factor potential push happening disintegration nation and there trying group utilize reform for changing the unitary state become federation as well as more extreme want separate something area to be a separate country, that is independent or free from the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Wahyudi, 2018) .

Building National Leadership

Building strong leadership, competent and credible national need will skilled leader in knitting plurality inclined politics lulled by enthusiasm reform excessive, loud frenetic multiparty politics will generate a power map spreading politics without exists majority single. Competent national leadership is very needed in order to meet and process diverse interest political until produce pattern each other strong support. Without exists skills manage and accommodate diversity party politics, then leadership national can bullied lots problem, when matter the happen so task together for finish crisis become abandoned (Wahyudi, 2018). Research conducted by Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting (SMRC) shows that the people's criteria for a politician to lead Indonesia are 37% close to the people, 26% clean of corruption, 16% religious, and smart 14% the rest choose not to know 6%. SMRC conducted a survey of 1,220 respondents in November 2022. The survey was conducted using the multiple random sampling method. The margin of error in this survey is $\pm 3.1\%$ with a 95% confidence level (Widi, 2022) .Then in an article Saiful mujabi explains that several criteria describe the public's desire for a leader with the 4 criteria above, namely having empathy and care who has closeness to the people, the integrity of political figures can be seen by how clean politicians are from corruption, obey religion which is still an important factor in influencing voters and competence which means broad-minded, able to solve problems, have various experiences and so on (Ananda, 2022) .

METHODS

This study used qualitative research methods. Qualitative research methods are research procedures that produce descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and observable behavior (Moleong,2013). This research describe the perceptions of student activists towards Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as the 2024 Presidential Candidate of the Republic of Indonesia. The object of this study is the perception of student activists about Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a candidate for President of the Republic of Indonesia in 2024. The posting period is from January 2022 – April 2023.

Data collection techniques in this study are divided into 3, namely:

Interview

In-depth interviews are data collection techniques that are carried out in a flexible and open manner, not in a strict structure, and not in a formal setting. The main purpose of in-depth interviews is to be able to present current constructions in a context regarding persons, events, activities, feelings, motivations, responses or perceptions, levels and forms of involvement, and so on. Therefore, in in-depth interviews, informants can express their opinions, and these opinions can be used as a basis for further research (Olsson, 2008) .

Documentation

Documentation is an additional source of data in qualitative research if other sources are available, such as informants, events or activities, and places. The documentation collected can come from informants, or government officials (Olsson, 2008) . Documentation in this study is in the form of photos or videos that have been uploaded from the @prabowo Instagram account.

Informant

The analysis unit selection technique used in this study was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling according to Sugiyono (2018) is a way of taking samples using certain considerations according to the desired criteria to be able to determine the number of samples to be studied. The criteria for informants in this study were a student activist and Instagram social media follower @Prabowo (Miles & Huberman, AM, & Saldana, 2013) stated that data analysis techniques in qualitative research include:

1. Data collection processes and prepares data for analysis. This step involves interview transcripts, scanning material, typing up field data or sorting and organizing the data into different types depending on the source of the information.
2. Data reduction. Data reduction is a form of analysis that classifies, directs, discards unnecessary and organizes reduced data to provide a sharper picture of the observations into themes.
3. Data Display (Data Display). Presentation of data is an analysis in the form of a matrix, network, cart, or graphic. In qualitative research, data presentation is done in the form of brief descriptions, tables, charts and relationships between categories. Through the presentation of these data, the data is organized and structured so that it will be easier to understand.
4. Conclusion Drawing/Verivication. The initial conclusions put forward are still temporary, and will change if strong evidence is not found to support the next stage of collection. Conclusions in qualitative research can answer the formulation of the problem that was formulated from the start.

The validity test of the data used triangulation. This study uses the source triangulation method, which means testing data from various informant sources from which the data will be collected. Source triangulation can sharpen the data obtained if it is done by checking the data obtained during research through several sources or informants (Alfansyur & Mariyani, 2020).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the results of research regarding the perceptions of student activists towards Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a 2024 Presidential Candidate for the Republic of Indonesia will interpret Prabowo Subianto's personal branding with the perceptions of each informant who has a different background.

In this section the author will present the results of presenting the data obtained by interviewing 4 informants. Based on the results of the data presentation obtained, researchers can see differences in the perceptions of each informant because everyone does not always have the same opinion (Mulyana 2016). Then the perception of an object can be interpreted differently based on experience background, psychological atmosphere, and

culture. The results of the interviews conducted by 4 informants produced similarities with one another, regarding how student activists interpreted the personal branding of Prabowo Subianto by looking at posts on @Prabowo's Instagram. The informants' perceptions were based on different backgrounds from one another. The informants also had different organizational experiences. In the 2024 presidential election, of course the people have better wishes in the future by expecting good leadership.

Perception in this study is defined as a process within a person in viewing or interpreting Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a candidate for president of the Republic of Indonesia 2024 on social media Instagram @Prabowo. The selected informant is a student activist who has followed the @Prabowo Instagram account in the past 1 year. Thus the informant has a meaning of how the image is displayed by the @prabowo Instagram account, but of course there are different perceptions of each informant.

On Instagram social media, uploading posts has no restrictions, as well as captions or messages conveyed. Instagram management will bring up different perceptions. Strong personal branding as a politician will have an impact on society. Majority of informants interpret the personal branding of a politician as necessary because an image created through social media will later be seen by the public, then this image becomes a consideration for being elected during the general election. The meaning of informants with Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a 2024 presidential candidate has positive results. The four informants agreed that Prabowo still had the ability to engage in political activities in Indonesia. With a background from a military general and currently Prabowo serving as minister of defense, this is the reason the informant believes that Prabowo has power in the presidential election in 2024.

Perceptions of Ideal Presidential Branding

The results of the research conducted through interviews with 4 informants gave different responses from one another. The four informants have the nature of perception that is based on experience. Where a person's perception of an object is certainly inseparable from the experience that has been carried out and can be considered as a lesson in giving perception of an object. The experience of organizing informants is one of the factors which can provide a broader picture in viewing a political issue, especially in the meaning related to the ideal presidential figure. With sufficient experience then supported by an appropriate environment can provide more understanding of an object. The following data is about the perceptions of the 4 informants studied:

Informant 1

Informant 1 views Prabowo Subianto's personal branding on social media as representing a firm and authoritative leader. This perception is shaped by content depicting state activities, such as official meetings and working visits, which demonstrate strong leadership capacity. Furthermore, the informant believes that Prabowo's military background adds value to building an image as a disciplined leader with decisive decision-making. For this informant, the personal branding displayed on social media is consistent enough in depicting ideal leadership characteristics.

Informant 2

Informant 2 focused more on the emotional closeness built through social media. According to him, content featuring direct interactions with the public and a relaxed communication style makes Prabowo appear more humane and approachable. The "gemoy" image that appears in several posts is considered an effective strategy to attract the attention of the younger generation, especially students. This informant believes that this approach successfully shifts the formal impression into a more flexible one without losing his identity as a political figure.

Informant 3

Informant 3 interpreted Prabowo's personal branding in terms of competence and experience. He considered the documentation of his activities as Minister of Defense to be concrete evidence of Prabowo's ability to carry out his duties as a state minister. He considered the content displayed not only to promote image but also to

demonstrate real performance. Furthermore, this informant observed a strong element of nationalism in each post, reflected in the use of state symbols and national narratives. This strengthened his belief that Prabowo was committed to national interests.

Informant 4

Informant 4 assessed Prabowo's personal branding more holistically, emphasizing the consistency of his message and the power of visuals on social media. He believed that the content presented had a clear and repetitive pattern, making it easier for audiences to understand the image he was trying to build. Furthermore, the use of visuals, such as photos and videos, was considered very effective in conveying messages quickly and engagingly. This informant also noted that support from various parties, such as digital volunteers and public figures, helped strengthen the spread of his message and increase Prabowo's visibility on social media.

The decision to take a perception can be based on one's internal and external factors. This factor can be a step in taking attention to an object. It is also explained in the picture chart in theory about the perception cycle, that in the meaning of a perception it is certainly accompanied by several triggers such as motives, personality, one's experience, and so on. In taking an opinion, it is certainly not far from having family or environmental factors as a support, but one's internal factors become a step in making decisions on an object. This is consistent with the four informants who did not use external factors as a benchmark for making a decision.



Figure 3: Prabowo in social media “Gemoy”

Source: instagram @prabowo

Each informant has different views about the ideal President. The spirit of nationalism in every Indonesian citizen is an important thing to have because a nationalist himself is a figure who loves the motherland where he will have a sense of belonging to his nation. This was agreed by informants about the meaning of a nationalism that must be owned by every individual. Based on this, it becomes one of the characteristics of an ideal leader. Informants argue that having a spirit of nationalism is one of the things that must be owned by prospective Indonesian leaders who will be able to influence every policy made.

The meaning of nationalism itself for the informants is to prove their pride in the country based on a firm attitude and soul and then being able to dedicate themselves to the country in small or big matters. However, it is not only based on the spirit of nationalism that makes the ideal figure of a leader, a figure who is firm and not easily intervened, becomes the capital to lead the nation then is supported by courage in realizing the ideals of the nation so that it will be better in the future based on the 1945 Constitution and Pancasila is the guiding principle in leadership.

The figure of Prabowo Subianto as a candidate for President of the Republic of Indonesia 2024

Prabowo Subianto's use of social media as a presidential candidate demonstrates several strategic advantages over his competitors, such as Anies Baswedan and Ganjar Pranowo, particularly in terms of engagement, personal image building, and the effectiveness of digital-based political communication. One of Prabowo's key strengths lies in his ability to craft content with high emotional appeal, significantly driving public interaction in the form of likes, comments, and shares. In the context of digital communication, high engagement is a key indicator of successful political message communication because it represents active audience involvement (Susilo & Putra, 2024).

The communication strategy implemented also demonstrates a more adaptive and populist approach, one example of which is the construction of a "gemoy" image that went viral on various platforms. This approach differs from other candidates who tend to emphasize policy-based narratives or substantive issues. Lighthearted, emotional, and entertaining content has proven to be more engaging and expand distribution reach on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. This provides Prabowo with a competitive advantage in reaching young voters, including university students, who are dominant social media users (Kurniawan, 2024).

Another advantage is seen in the efficiency of content production and distribution. While the frequency of posts isn't always higher than other candidates, each published piece of content tends to generate a higher level of interaction. This indicates that the communication strategy employed places greater emphasis on message quality than quantity. Furthermore, optimization of social media algorithms plays a crucial role, as content with high engagement is more likely to appear repeatedly on users' timelines, thus broadening the exposure of political messages (Susilo & Putra, 2024).

From a distribution perspective, Prabowo's digital campaign is supported by an extensive network, including digital volunteers, influencers, and a community of advocates actively disseminating content. This pattern creates a significant amplification effect, allowing campaign messages to spread more quickly and massively than other candidates. Thus, the success of Prabowo's social media strategy depends not only on content production but also on the strength of the distribution network capable of effectively replicating and expanding the reach of messages (Kurniawan, 2024).

Furthermore, Prabowo's communication style on social media demonstrates a high level of adaptation to the dynamics of popular digital culture. The use of memes, visual trends, and emerging communication formats makes political messages more contextual and easily accepted by audiences. This approach differs from the relatively formal and rigid communication styles of other candidates. Adapting to digital culture contributes to building an emotional connection between the candidate and the public, which ultimately influences public perceptions and political preferences (Lim, 2017).

Overall, Prabowo's social media can be seen in three main presence dimensions: high levels of engagement, success in building an emotionally-based personal brand, and a strong digital distribution network. The synergy between these three aspects makes Prabowo's digital communication strategy more effective in creating visibility and resonance among social media users, particularly the younger generation. Therefore, social media serves not only as a means of communication but also as a strategic instrument in building a competitive and influential political image.

Prabowo Subianto is a politician who has been involved in politics for a long time. With Prabowo's active activities in the world of politics, he is no stranger to the community, especially with Prabowo's candidacy as a presidential candidate in the previous period. And currently Prabowo is assigned to become the Minister of Defense of the Republic of Indonesia in the Indonesia Onward II Cabinet led by President Joko Widodo. Based on research results Prabowo still has a big role in the world of politics in Indonesia. Personal branding formed through Prabowo's Instagram social media can provide a good view of his followers. Personal branding has 8 characteristic aspects, where each aspect has its own meaning in a particular field. Majority of informants gave positive meanings to each aspect of the personal branding character, especially in these 8 aspects one could see as a whole how the informants viewed the figure of Prabowo Subianto through posts on Instagram.

Based on the findings of the researchers, Prabowo is a figure who has a strong leadership spirit and wants to show that Prabowo is a figure who has a high spirit of nationalism, seen from Prabowo's background which is a former TNI soldier. The experience you have when you become a military man can give a positive response to the community. With Prabowo's experience as a military general, it is able to illustrate that Prabowo has a figure who is firm in leading, authoritative, has principles that are firmly held, a clear vision and mission, and who proves his ability in his field by becoming the Minister of Defense who can do his job well and according to ability. The visuals displayed in posts on Prabowo's Instagram are also one of the influences in informants' meanings about the image that is built. By showing the activities carried out while in politics, proving Prabowo's ability in his work without the need to make specific statements about how his work program is carried out. Having visual elements makes it easier for the audience to understand what you want to convey (Firmansyah et al., 2017).

Political activities related to the community directly become one of the criteria desired by the people, as evidenced by the research conducted by Saiful Mujani which has a percentage of 37% where the people want leaders who are close to the community (Widi, 2022), in connection with this the researchers found compatibility on the personal branding carried out by Prabowo through his Instagram posts. According to the informants in this study, the good intentions conveyed through Prabowo's Instagram were quite clear without exaggeration and showed hospitality to the public.

Based on the research findings presented, it can be seen that Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a 2024 presidential candidate through Instagram has a significant influence on the perceptions of student activists. This indicates that social media, particularly Instagram, serves not only as a means of communication but also as a strategic tool in building an effective political image in the digital age.

In the context of modern political communication, personal branding has become a crucial element that is inseparable from campaign strategy. Personal branding allows a political figure to control the narrative about themselves, thus providing the public with a consistent and focused image. Based on interviews, the majority of informants assessed that the branding displayed by Prabowo through his Instagram account demonstrates strong leadership character, nationalism, and experience. This aligns with personal branding theory, which states that a consistently built image will strengthen one's position in the public eye (Montoya & Vandehey, 2008).

Furthermore, the positive perceptions formed are inseparable from Prabowo's background as a former military officer and Minister of Defense. This background provides strong symbolic legitimacy in the context of national leadership. In perception theory, prior experience and knowledge play a crucial role in shaping a person's interpretation of an object (Mulyana, 2016). Therefore, the informants' experiences as politically informed student activists influenced their interpretation of Prabowo's image.

Furthermore, the visual aspects of Instagram posts are also a crucial factor in shaping perceptions. Visualizations of political activities, interactions with the public, and symbolic representations such as state attributes can reinforce the intended message without relying on lengthy verbal narratives. This aligns with the concept of visual communication, which states that messages conveyed through images tend to be more quickly understood and more memorable than text (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006).

Research findings also indicate that informants perceive Prabowo as a figure who is close to the people. This is reflected in content depicting direct interactions with the people. This closeness is an important indicator of ideal leadership, according to public perception. Previous research has also shown that voters tend to prefer leaders who are perceived as "close" and understanding of the people's situation (Mujani & Liddle, 2010). Thus, a personal branding strategy that emphasizes social closeness can increase a candidate's electability.

However, it is important to note that perceptions formed through social media do not always fully reflect reality. Social media allows for selective image construction, where only certain aspects are presented to the public. From the perspective of social media construction theory, the reality presented in the media is the result of a selection and framing process (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Therefore, even though informants provided

positive assessments, a critical approach is still required when evaluating information obtained from social media.

The differences in the informants' backgrounds were also an interesting factor in this study. Despite having different organizational experiences, the four informants demonstrated similarities in assessing key aspects of Prabowo's personal branding. This indicates a strong and consistent dominant message in communications conducted via Instagram. This consistency is one of the keys to success in building an effective personal brand.

Furthermore, the concept of ideal leadership expressed by the informants emphasized the importance of values such as nationalism, decisiveness, and integrity. These values were then used as a framework for assessing Prabowo's character. In other words, there is a matching process between the informant's ideal values and the candidate's image. If there is a match, the resulting perception tends to be positive. This aligns with congruence theory in social psychology, which states that individuals tend to favor objects that align with their values and beliefs (Festinger, 1957).

Framing and narratives constructed from social media

Prabowo Subianto's use of social media as an Indonesian presidential candidate is inextricably linked to framing strategies and political narratives systematically constructed to shape public perception. In the context of digital political communication, framing refers to the process of selecting and highlighting certain aspects of reality to shape audience interpretations, while narrative is the storyline that connects various messages to form a coherent meaning (Entman, 1993). These two elements are key to understanding how Prabowo's personal branding is constructed through social media, particularly Instagram and TikTok.

One dominant form of framing in Prabowo's social media is the emphasis on a strong and nationalistic leadership image. Posted content consistently depicts activities related to state duties, interactions with military personnel, and national symbols such as flags and official state activities. This framing reinforces the association between Prabowo and a decisive, authoritative leader with the capacity to maintain national stability. From the perspective of framing theory, the repeated highlighting of certain aspects will shape "problem definitions" and "character attributions" in the minds of audiences (Entman, 1993). Thus, the public is led to view Prabowo as a competent figure in the context of national leadership.

Furthermore, a newer and more adaptive framing is employed, namely the construction of a "gemoy" image, characterized by a more relaxed, emotional, and humanistic nature. This narrative serves as a significant differentiation strategy compared to Prabowo's image in the previous period, which tended to be rigid and militaristic. Through content featuring lighthearted expressions, humor, and informal interactions with the public, Prabowo's social media constructs a narrative that he is not only assertive but also close and relatable to the younger generation. This approach demonstrates a transformation in framing from "strong leader" to "approachable leader," without completely abandoning his previous identity.

The narrative constructed through Prabowo's social media also demonstrates a storytelling pattern based on experience and legitimacy. His background as a former general and his position as Minister of Defense are used as narrative elements that strengthen credibility. In much of the content, these experiences are not always explicitly explained but are visualized through activities and symbols. This aligns with the concept of political narrative, which emphasizes the importance of "show, don't tell," where visuals are the primary medium for conveying messages (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2006). Thus, audiences not only receive information but also construct meaning through visual interpretation.

In terms of distribution, this framing and narrative are reinforced by social media algorithms, which tend to prioritize content with high engagement levels. Content that is emotional, entertaining, and easy to understand has a greater chance of receiving likes, comments, and shares, thus expanding the reach of the message. In this regard, Prabowo's framing strategy aligns closely with the algorithmic logic of digital platforms, ultimately increasing the visibility and repetition of messages in the digital public sphere (Lim, 2017).

Furthermore, the framing also fosters social proximity. Much of the content features direct interactions with the public, such as visits to local areas, dialogues with residents, or spontaneous moments that showcase a personal side. The narrative that emerges is that Prabowo is a leader who is close to the people. In political communication theory, this closeness is a crucial factor in increasing public trust, as voters tend to favor candidates who are perceived as understanding their plight (Mujani & Liddle, 2010).

However, it is important to note that framing and narratives on social media are not neutral. According to Nick Couldry and Andreas Hepp, the reality depicted in the media is constructed through a process of selection and representation (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). In this context, Prabowo's social media only displays certain aspects that support the image he seeks to construct, while other, less favorable, aspects may be omitted. Therefore, framing analysis must also consider omissions as part of the communication strategy.

Furthermore, the constructed narrative also serves to create message consistency. This consistency is important in personal branding because it helps the audience form a stable perception. In Prabowo's case, despite variations in content, the primary messages conveyed remain centered around leadership, nationalism, and closeness to the people. This consistency strengthens the audience's memory of the constructed image and increases the overall effectiveness of communication.

Informant Perspective

Based on interviews with four informants who are student activists, it can be analyzed that the perceptions formed regarding Prabowo Subianto's personal branding are not simply the result of social media exposure, but also the result of a complex cognitive process involving each individual's experiences, values, and social background. The informants' perspectives in this study demonstrate the interaction between internal and external factors in forming assessments of political figures.

From the informants' perspective, the personal branding displayed through the Instagram account @prabowo tends to give the impression of being structured and strategic. Informants observed that the uploaded content is not random, but rather follows a specific pattern that consistently displays leadership, closeness to the community, and nationalistic values. This indicates that the informants possess fairly good media literacy skills, where they do not simply receive messages passively but also attempt to understand the meaning behind them.

From a cognitive perspective, the perception process begins with the information selection stage, where informants select certain content deemed relevant or interesting. Next, in the interpretation stage, informants assign meaning to the content based on their experience and knowledge. For example, Prabowo's background as a former military man was interpreted as an indicator of decisiveness and discipline. This interpretation suggests that the symbols displayed in his personal branding hold strong meaning for the informants, especially when they align with the values they consider important in leadership.

Interestingly, although the four informants had different organizational backgrounds, they shared similarities in how they assessed key aspects of Prabowo's personal branding. This suggests that the messages conveyed through Instagram displayed a high degree of consistency, thus creating a relatively uniform perception. In this context, consistency is key to building a strong image in the eyes of the audience.

However, the informants did not completely accept all messages without criticism. Several informants demonstrated a reflective attitude, questioning the extent to which the images presented reflected reality. This demonstrates an awareness that social media can be a space for image construction that is not always objective. This critical perspective is important because it demonstrates that student activists act not only as consumers of information but also as active evaluators.

Emotionally, content depicting Prabowo's interactions with the public had a significant impact on the informants' perceptions. Visualizing closeness to the people creates an impression of empathy and concern, which then reinforces a positive image. In this case, emotional elements play a significant role in shaping perceptions, as emotions can influence how a person assesses an object as a whole.

Furthermore, informants' perspectives are also influenced by their ideal concepts of leadership. Informants tend to use certain standards to assess whether a candidate is worthy of leadership. These standards include nationalism, decisiveness, integrity, and decision-making ability. When Prabowo's image aligns with these standards, the resulting perception is positive. Conversely, if there is a discrepancy, informants tend to be skeptical.

In this context, it can be seen that the perception process is not linear, but rather dynamic and influenced by various factors. Informants judge not only based on what they see but also on what they believe. This demonstrates that effective personal branding must be able to bridge the gap between the image presented and the values held by the audience.

Organizational experience also contributes to shaping informants' perspectives. Student activists with experience in organizations tend to have a deeper understanding of the dynamics of leadership and politics. This experience made them more critical in assessing political figures, including understanding the communication strategies used. They not only looked at the end result, but also the process behind the image formation.

Furthermore, independence of thought was a prominent characteristic of the informants. They were not directly influenced by family or environmental opinions, but instead relied more on personal analysis. This indicates that student activists have a high degree of autonomy in forming their perceptions. However, this does not mean they are completely free from external influences.

CONCLUSION

Based on research findings obtained through interviews with four informants who are student activists, it can be concluded that perceptions of Prabowo Subianto's personal branding as a presidential candidate for the Republic of Indonesia in 2024 tend to be positive. This perception did not emerge instantly, but rather resulted from a complex interpretation process involving each informant's background, experiences, values, and political understanding. In this context, personal branding built through Instagram has become an effective medium for shaping political imagery in the digital age.

The informants agreed that Prabowo Subianto has strong potential in the upcoming political contest. This is based on his track record as Minister of Defense, which is considered to have demonstrated tangible performance and consistency in carrying out state duties. Furthermore, Prabowo's background as a former military general was a significant factor influencing the informants' perceptions. This background conveys the impression of decisiveness, discipline, and strong leadership, considered ideal characteristics for a national leader.

From the informants' perspective, Prabowo's military experience is not merely seen as a part of the past but also as a foundation that shapes his current leadership character. Informants assessed that this experience provided strong symbolic legitimacy, particularly in the context of leadership that requires decisive decision-making. This demonstrates that the symbols attached to a political figure have a significant influence in shaping public perception.

Furthermore, the research results show that informants interpret Prabowo's personal branding as representing a firm, wise, nationalistic, and friendly leader. This image is formed through content uploaded to the Instagram account @prabowo, which showcases various activities, both in his capacity as a state official and as an individual interacting with the public. The visualization of these activities provides informants with a concrete picture of how Prabowo carries out his role as a leader.

From a visual communication perspective, content presented on Instagram has the power to convey messages quickly and effectively. Informants assessed that posts showcasing Prabowo's activities in the military and social spheres are able to strengthen the leadership image he seeks to build. This demonstrates that visual elements play a strategic role in shaping perceptions, especially among the younger generation, who tend to be more responsive to visual content than text.

Further analysis showed that although the four informants had different organizational backgrounds and experiences, they shared similarities in how they interpreted Prabowo's personal branding. This similarity indicates that the messages conveyed through Instagram possess a high degree of consistency, thus creating a relatively uniform perception. Consistency in messaging is a key factor in successful personal branding, as it can strengthen the desired image in the minds of the audience.

However, the informants' perspectives were not entirely homogeneous. Differences in backgrounds still influenced the interpretation process. Some informants demonstrated a more critical attitude, questioning the extent to which the displayed image reflected reality. They recognized that social media can be a tool for constructing a selective image, highlighting only certain aspects. This demonstrates a relatively high level of media literacy among the informants.

Psychologically, the informants' perceptions were influenced by the values they considered important in leadership. Values such as nationalism, decisiveness, courage, and integrity are key indicators in assessing a potential leader. When Prabowo's projected image aligns with these values, the resulting perception tends to be positive. Conversely, if there is a discrepancy, the informant will exhibit skepticism.

It is interesting to note that the informants in this study demonstrated a fairly high level of independence in forming their perceptions. They were not directly influenced by the opinions of their family or community, but rather relied on personal analysis based on the information they obtained. This reflects the character of student activists who tend to be critical and possess strong analytical thinking skills.

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