

Comparative Political Communication of 2024 Presidential Candidates in Indonesia through Instagram Social Media

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Abstract

This article aims to discuss, study, and compare the strategies used by presidential candidates in the 2024 elections in Indonesia through Instagram social media. The research method used is descriptive qualitative which tries to understand the phenomenon on social media and trying to describe and analyze the data findings. The researcher actively followed their activities to understand how their visual content and messages contributed to image creation and increased support. Data collection uses observation through social media and instagram of presidential candidates. The results of this study show the importance of the role of mass media in shaping public opinion and social media, especially Instagram, has become a tool used to brand themselves, promote mass support, and communicate campaign messages. This research makes a significant contribution to the digital political communication literature in Indonesia, by offering insights into how social media platforms are used strategically in the context of presidential elections.

Keywords: Comparison, Political Communication, Indonesian General Election, Social Media, Instagram

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 presidential election that Indonesia held in April has a different feel from previous elections. The election results have not yet been ratified because there are still many objections and protests against the process of implementing the 2024 election. The elections that carried 3 pairs of presidential and vice presidential candidates with various backgrounds and with different visions and missions have also taught voters, especially novice voters, that it is important to know who and how the visions and missions are offered by the candidates when these candidates campaign. The campaign strategies of the candidate pairs also vary, some use strategies to approach mass organizations that have large masses, and some also use strategies to approach novice voters who are dominated by students and young people. Of the many campaign strategies carried out by the pairs of presidential and vice presidential candidates, it turned out that the debate process aired by one of the television stations received considerable interest and the results of the 5 rounds of debates made voters more familiar with the pairs of candidates and their representatives, both in terms of intelligence in describing the vision and mission of the short, medium and long term. Many voters who initially admired and idolized one of the presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs suddenly changed their choice because they saw the results of the debates during the campaign process. The debate that was held for 5 rounds carried several themes, round I with the theme of Government, law, human rights, eradicating corruption, strengthening democracy, improving

public services and community harmony. Three pairs of presidential and vice presidential candidates from various backgrounds and perspectives participated in this election. This shows how diverse social and political diversity has become during Indonesia's democratization process. Each pair tried to attract voters' attention with their respective marketing strategies, ranging from relying on large mass organizations to targeting novice voters, especially students and young people. One of the political communication strategies used by the 2024 presidential candidates is by utilizing social media, especially Instagram. Social media has developed into an important tool in the growing digital era to influence various aspects of life, including politics. Particularly in terms of elections, candidates use social media as one of their important tools to communicate and reach potential voters. As one of the countries with the highest number of social media users in the world, Indonesia realizes the importance of social media in political campaigns, including in presidential elections. Presidential candidates can utilize social media to promote mass support, enhance their self-image, and communicate their campaign messages in creative and effective ways.

Instagram was chosen as one of the media to campaign because Instagram has a wide reach, Instagram is one of the largest social media platforms in the world, and has millions of active users every day, allowing a presidential candidate to easily reach millions of potential voters from various layers of Indonesian society. Quoting from We Are Social sources, Instagram users in Indonesia reach as many as 85.3% of the population. Instagram also has a targeting feature that allows presidential candidates to target voters who are most likely to support them by targeting their campaign messages on specific demographics, such as age, location, and interests. Engaging visual content, as Instagram is an image and video-based platform, presidential candidates can use engaging visual content to deliver their campaign messages in a way that is more interesting and easily understood by voters.

There is previous research on 'Social Media as a Political Communication Strategy' written by (Alfiyani 2018) In this study, it discusses the political communication strategies used by candidates for Makassar City DPRD members in winning elections. The main focus lies on the use of social media as a tool to attract mass attention and influence public opinion. The results showed that social media played an important role in the political communication strategy of Makassar City DPRD candidates. The utilization of online platforms has helped in reaching potential voters and strengthening political image. Research conducted by (Ramdan et al.' 2023) with the title 'Comparative Analysis of Political Communication Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto in the Video "3 Bacapres Bicara Gagasan" on the Najwa Shihab YouTube Channel' This study aims to analyze the comparison

of political communication of three Indonesian political figures, Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto, through the video '3 Bacapres Bicara Gagasan' broadcast on the Najwa Shihab YouTube Channel.

This research focuses on how Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto's political communication compares in the video '3 Bacapres Bicara Gagasan' broadcast on Najwa Shihab's YouTube Channel. Prabowo Subianto in the video '3 Bacapres Bicara Gagasan' can have an impact on public perception of the three. In addition, this study also tried to find out whether the three figures gave different messages and communication styles. The results of the analysis in this study showed differences in communication style, body language, and message effectiveness between Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto. Anies Baswedan tended to use a descriptive approach that was easy to understand, while Ganjar Pranowo emphasised more formal expressions in communication while Prabowo Subianto seemed to combine elements from Anies Baswedan's and Ganjar Pranowo's communication styles. Subianto used a firm tone to reflect seriousness in his answers. Prabowo's answers tended to be straight to the point to ensure the message was clearly conveyed to the audience.

Based on the explanation above, the researcher tries to comprehensively observe, describe and then compare how political communication strategies between Indonesian presidential candidates in 2024 in branding themselves on social media, especially Instagram.

METHOD

This article uses qualitative research methods with a qualitative descriptive approach that aims to know and understand a phenomenon that is being observed. Data collection uses observation through Instagram social media from the 2024 presidential candidates. Presidential candidates 2024. In this study, researchers were actively involved by becoming followers of the accounts of the 2024 presidential candidates. According to (Zellatifanny et al. 2018) descriptive qualitative type research is a research method that seeks to describe and interpret objects as they are. Researchers do not manipulate variables and also do not control research variables. The data reported is the data obtained by the researcher as it is in accordance with the ongoing events at that time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media users in Indonesia come from various age ranges, including children, teenagers, and adults. According to data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), it was announced that the number of Indonesian internet users in 2024 would reach 221,563,479 out of a total population of 278,696,200 Indonesians in 2023. From

the results of the 2024 Indonesian internet penetration survey released by APJII, the Indonesian internet penetration rate touched 79.5%. While social media platforms that are widely used in Indonesia according to a report from We Are Social:

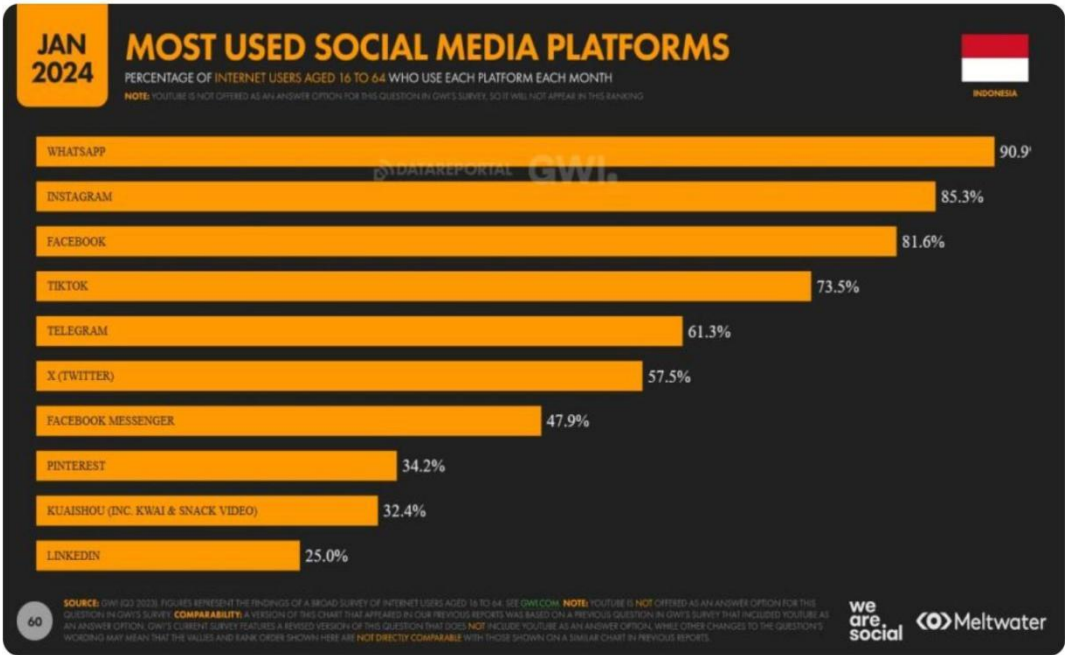


Figure 1. The most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia.

Source: <https://andi.link/hootsuite-we-are-social-data-digital-indonesia-2024/>

According to the report above, Instagram social media users in Indonesia reach 85.3% of the population. This can be taken as an indication that Indonesians rely heavily on social media as their source of information (Azka et al. 2023) This opportunity will be utilised by the 2024 Indonesian Presidential candidates Anies Rasyid Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto and Ganjar Pranowo to carry out strategies to brand themselves through social media, especially on Instagram. Currently, Anies Rasyid Baswedan has 7.4 million followers on his personal Instagram. Prabowo Subianto on his personal Instagram has 12.7 millions followers and Ganjar Pranowo has 6.7 millions followers on his personal Instagram account.

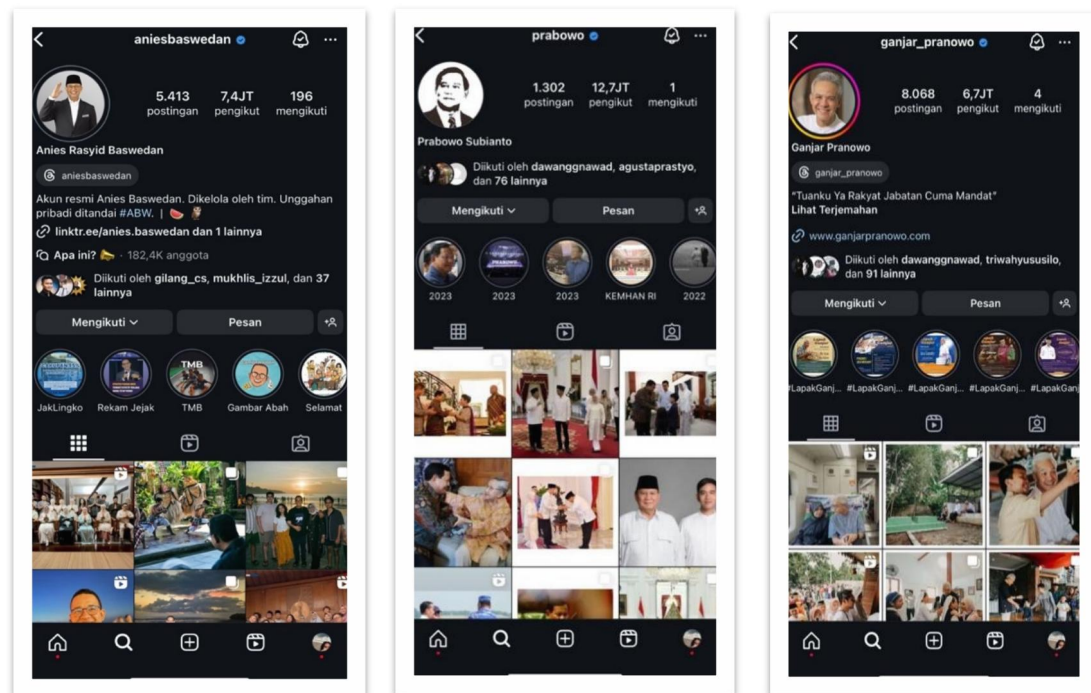


Figure 2. Instagram Screen Shoot of 2024 Presidential Candidates

Source: www.instagram.com

Personal branding as a political communication strategy

Personal branding is a process of building, shaping, and creating a self-image or reputation of a person that is unique and different from others. Branding itself is a concept that was originally used in marketing, then expanded to various disciplines including communication and politics. Political branding highlights the growing phenomenon that parties, politicians, and political leaders can be usefully conceptualized as brands (Hidayati 2021). In this case, it means that personal branding can create a strong and consistent impression of a person, which helps them achieve their personal and professional goals.

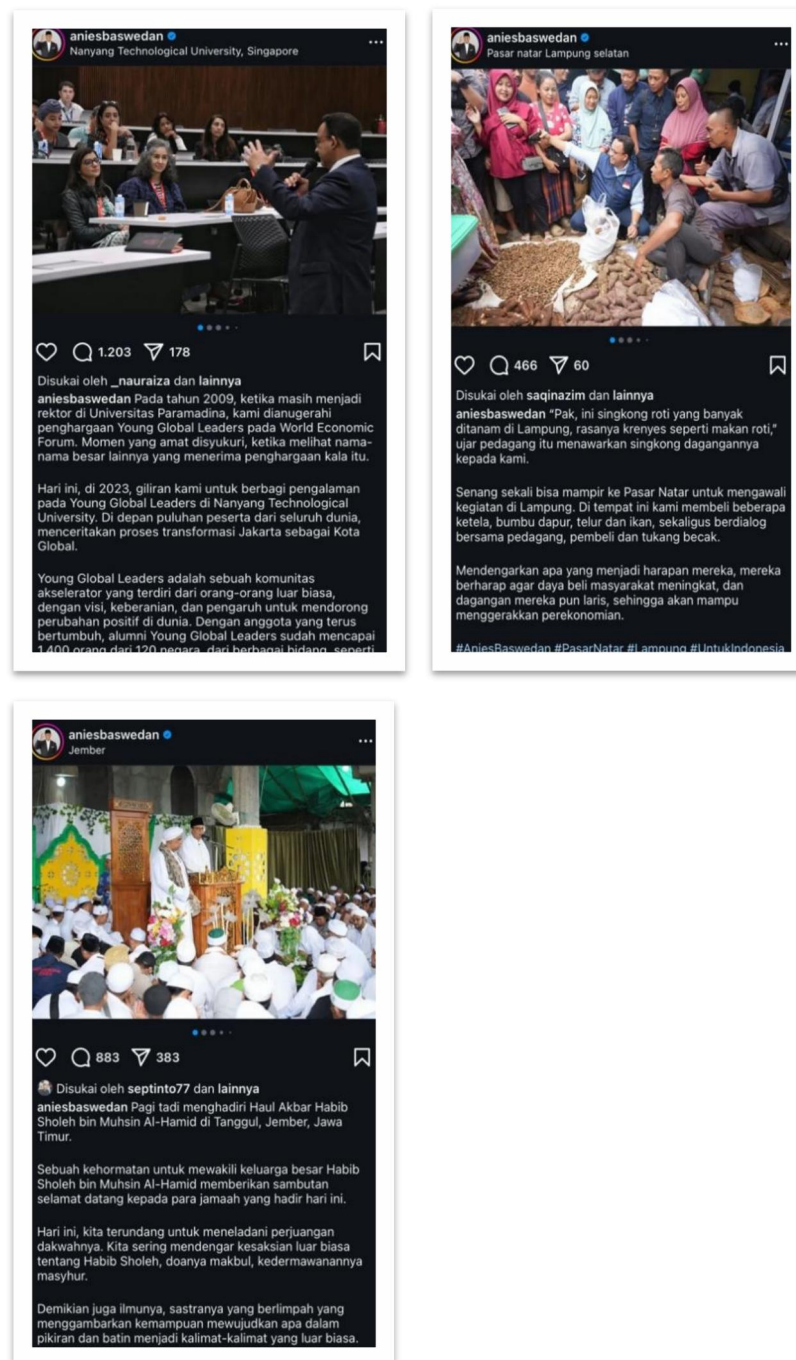


Figure 3. Photo post of Anies Rasyid Baswedan

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CpPOKRyyzx/F/?igsh=Ymxra2Jhczh4Nnlh>

The picture above shows Anies Rasyid Baswedan as an intellectual, whereas many people may already know that Anies Rasyid Baswedan's background is academic. In the photo, Anies Rasuyid Baswedan shows himself delivering material at one of the leading campuses in Singapore. In the context of political communication, this can be related to the message to be conveyed that Anies Rasyid Baswedan is an educated figure so his post can build a much better image or reputation. The second photo shows that Anies Rasyid

Baswedan is a populist figure by visiting the market and meeting and buying merchandise from local people. In this case, the author argues that activities such as market visits can be an effective way for politicians to interact directly with the public, listen to their complaints and problems, and show that they care about people's daily lives. The third photo shows that Anies Rasyid Baswedan is a religious figure. Religious figures usually have higher credibility among voters who also share the same religion. They can more easily build trust because they are considered to have strong morality based on their religious beliefs.

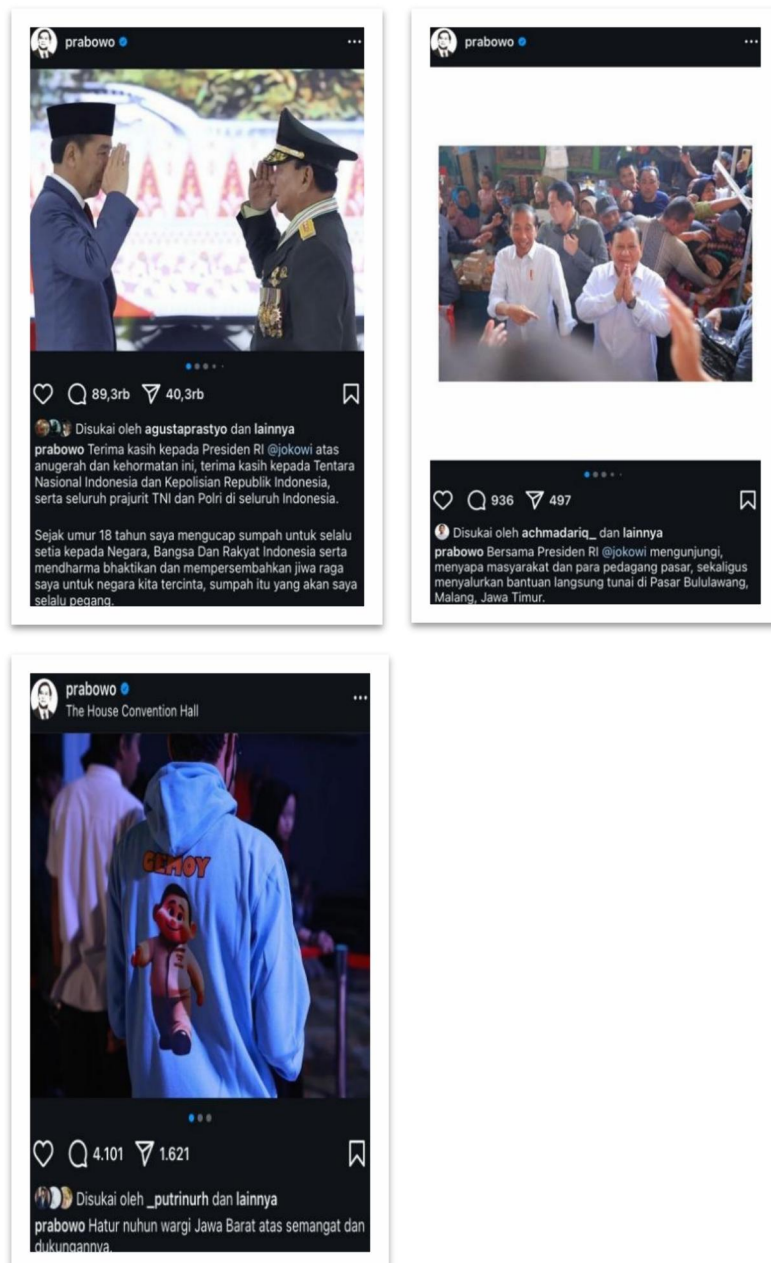


Figure 4. Photo post of Prabowo Subianto

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C34hShIyM2h/?igsh=MTVmNHp5dWRzZXg5dA==>

The photo posts on Instagram @prabowo show that Prabowo Subianto is a figure who

loves the country, with a military background Prabowo Subianto shows that he is always firm and disciplined. In relation to political communication, usually, a leader from a military background has discipline and assertiveness are important characteristics in military leadership, and leaders who come from a military background tend to bring these qualities into their political campaigns. So this becomes a special force among the people who want a leader who is firm and strong. The second photo shows that Prabowo Subianto is a populist figure where the photo shows him together with President Joko Widodo visiting a people's market and distributing aid directly to the market located in Bululawang, Malang, East Java. In the context of political communication strategy, Prabowo Subianto shows a populist figure like President Joko Widodo's, which is highly sought after and desired by the public so that this will be able to garner solid support from the public who feel represented and listened to by their leaders. The third photo shows a difference with the previous elections, which showed a masculine and formal Prabowo at every event. But his image in 2024 changed drastically, as seen in the photo above Prabowo Subianto wants to show that he is a witty, warm figure, and close to the people, especially young people, by using self-branding as a gemoy.

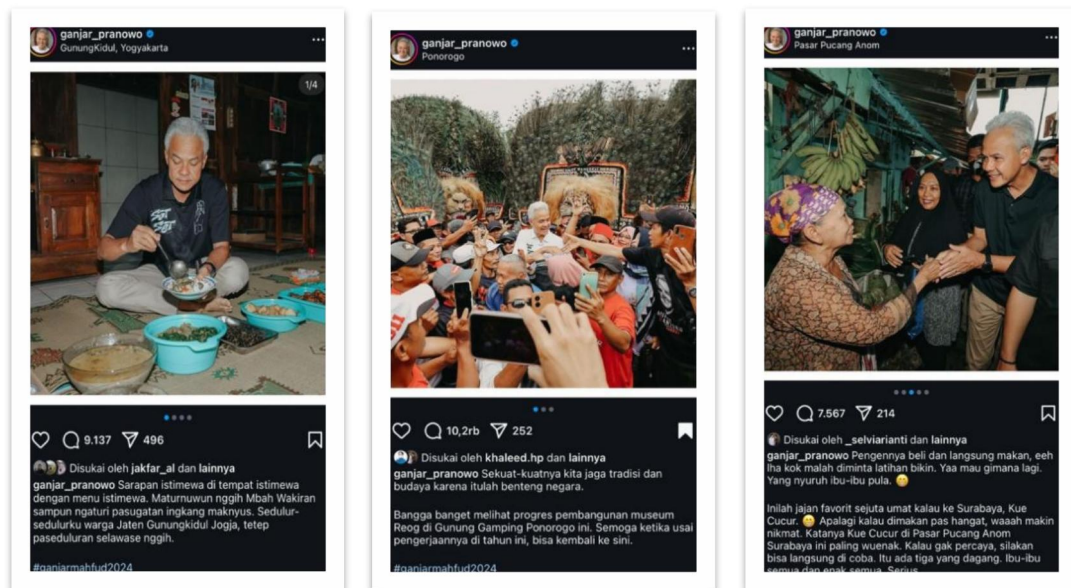


Figure 5. Photo post of Ganjar Pranowo

Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/C2bs-z0rgIB/?igsh=OG0xNDQzYnFtb2My>

The photo above shows that Ganjar Pranowo is a simple figure whereas in the photo Ganjar Pranowo is seen eating breakfast with a simple menu. The author argues that by branding himself as a simple figure, this can be easier to connect with the public because showing simplicity in lifestyle and behavior can make Ganjar Pranowo more accessible and understood by the wider community. The second photo shows that Ganjar Pranowo is someone who cares and appreciates culture in every region, the photo above is taken from

various photos of Ganjar Pranowo involved with other cultural preservation. The author argues that leaders who value culture in each region have the potential to create a more inclusive, harmonious, and equitable political environment. This is a change in strengthening national unity while maintaining the cultural diversity that is the wealth of the nation. The third image above shows Ganjar Pranowo visiting a people's market, this strategy is similar to that of Presidential candidates Anies Rasyid Baswedan and Prabowo Subianto. Overall, this strategy has positive impacts such as increasing visibility and image, visiting people's markets can increase the visibility of Presidential candidates in the eyes of the public and strengthen their image as leaders who are directly involved in people's lives.

The results of the analysis above show the different communication styles of the three presidential candidates through several posts on their Instagram social media, where presidential candidate Anies Rasyid Baswedan during the campaign period often showed a formal attitude and formal language style on his personal Instagram posts. Meanwhile, presidential candidate number two, Prabowo Subianto, was seen during the campaign period often using firm language but also sometimes Prabowo Subianto used light, informal, and to-the-point language in his personal Instagram posts. Meanwhile, presidential candidate Ganjar Pranowo often shows a light, easy-to-understand communication style, rarely seen on his personal Instagram posts using formal communication language.

CONCLUSION

During the campaign period for Indonesian Presidential candidates in 2024, there are at least two conclusions that can be drawn, the first is that the use of social media such as Instagram as a tool for building personal branding and conducting political campaigns has a significant impact in the context of modern politics. Where Instagram provides wide access to political candidates to reach a large and diverse audience. Secondly, the political communication strategies that have been carried out by Anies Rasyid Baswedan, Prabowo Subianto, and Ganjar Pranowo are a form of variation in the political communication strategy itself, their differences in campaigning are commonplace, where each candidate has a different style, and personality, and message, so their political communication strategy will also reflect this. However, it should also be remembered that the key to success in political campaigns lies in the consistency, authenticity, and substance of the messages that candidates want to convey to the public.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the above research, it is hoped that this small research can be a reference material for further research and suggestions for future research to use related theories that are

relevant to the themes of political communication.

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