

UTILIZATION OF INFORMATION MEDIA IN FORMING THE IMAGE OF POLITICIANS/POLITICAL PARTIES

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Abstract

The use of mass media and social media has become one of the main strategies in the image of politicians and political parties in this digital era. The development of information technology, especially the internet and social media, allows political communication to take place faster, more interactively, and more accessible to various groups of society. This article aims to analyze the role of information media in shaping political image through a qualitative approach with a literature review method. This study collects, analyzes, and synthesizes various relevant literature sources, such as books, journal articles, and seminar papers, to understand how politicians and political parties use media as a tool for communication, branding, and political image. The results of the study show that mass media, although still having a significant role, is increasingly being replaced by social media which offers politicians the convenience of building personal branding and interacting directly with voters. Political image building through these two types of media not only functions to shape public perception, but also to manage public opinion and influence political decisions. Social media, in particular, provides an opportunity for politicians to build an image that is more personal and responsive to the needs of the community. This study also discusses various communication theories that explain the influence of mass media on political behavior, such as reinforcement theory, agenda setting, priming, framing, and direct effect theory. Overall, this study underlines the importance of utilizing mass media and social media in political image building and how this contributes to the success of politicians and political parties in gaining public support. Thus, the strategy of using the right and targeted media is the main key in forming an effective political image in the contemporary political world.

Keywords: *New Media; Politician Image; Political Party.*

INTRODUCTION

In the ever-evolving digital era, mass media and social media have become integral components in modern political life. Not only as a means of communication, mass media and social media now play an important role in shaping political image, both for individual politicians and political parties themselves. The process of imaging through media has become

a very effective strategy in managing public perception, conveying political messages, and gaining support in the context of increasingly tight political competition. The development of digital technology and the internet allows politicians to utilize social media as an interactive platform that allows direct and fast communication with voters, creating space for more open and democratic political discourse.

In this context, political imagery becomes very crucial, where the image built by politicians not only influences public perception, but can also determine their success in elections or other political positions. Mass media, including television, radio, and newspapers, still play a big role in conveying political messages widely, but with the emergence of social media, this new media offers a more flexible and dynamic space in communicating with the audience. Social media is a means for politicians to build strong personal branding, interact directly with voters, and manage public opinion in a more creative and effective way.

This study aims to examine the use of mass media and social media in the image of politicians and political parties using a qualitative approach through a literature review method. This method allows researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the concept of political communication and political imagery based on relevant sources such as books, scientific journal articles, seminar papers, and other related literature. By analyzing various findings from these sources, this study is expected to provide broader insights into how politicians and political parties utilize mass media and social media to build their image in the eyes of the public.

In this paper, the role of technology and new media in political communication, the impact of social media on political image, and political image strategies implemented by politicians will be discussed. This study will also explore communication theories that explain the influence of mass media on people's political behavior and how media is used to shape public opinion and influence political perceptions. Overall, this study aims to provide a comprehensive picture of the interaction between the media, politicians, and society in the process of political image, as well as to understand the dynamics that occur in political communication in this multimedia era.

The Concept of Political Communication

Understanding Political Communication

Defining political communication is not enough by simply combining the two definitions of communication and politics. Political communication has its own concept even though it is simply a combination of the two concepts. Political communication in the discourse of human science is two areas of search, each relatively independent. Both have similarities because the material object is the same, namely humans. The similarity of the material object makes the two disciplines unable to avoid the meeting of fields of study. (Roni Tabroni, 2012)

Political communication is communication involving political messages and political actors, or related to power, government, government policy. With this understanding as an applied science, political communication is nothing new. Political communication can also be understood as communication between 'those who govern' and 'those who are governed'. (Nurudin., 2016) Rush and Althof define political communication as a process in which relevant political information is passed from one part of the political system to another and between the social system and the political system. Meanwhile, according to Almond. (Umaimah Wahid, 2018) explains that political communication is one of the functions that always exists in every political system, related to interest in political issues, the creation of political regulations, application rules, and other rules that involve communication processes and actions.

McNair provides limitations or definitions of political communication, including:

- a) All forms of communication used by politicians and other political actors or players to achieve predetermined goals.
- b) Communication delivered by non-political actors or political actors, such as voters and columnists.
- c) Communication about political actors or actors and their activities, such as in news, editorials, and other forms of political media. (Sarihati et al., 2019)

In An Introduction to Political Communication, McNair explains that the study of political communication has three elements, namely:

- a) Political organizations consisting of political parties, public organizations, pressure groups, terrorist organizations, and governments.
- b) Media
- c) Citizens

Political Communication Channels

For any purpose, especially in the world of politics, mass media has a very important role. With its reach and power in conveying messages, mass media communication becomes an inseparable part of political activities. With one job, it can reach a wide audience in a relatively short time. Everyone who has political interests will certainly not distance themselves from the mass media. Even the government has never underestimated the mass media in any of its historical records. Various things related to policies and their socialization can be done more effectively using mass media. (Maulana, 2022) Although not all governments can control it, the position of the media remains important so that many officials treat this media specifically. In addition to being able to create a bad image of a government, the media can also be used as a mouthpiece to overthrow the government by interested parties.

According to McNair, all elements of political communication are used by politicians in carrying out their political activities. The role of communication takes place through the use of various forms and levels of political communication channels. Mass media is the most interesting and influential communication channel and instrument, as well as new political entities and forces whose presence adds to the dynamics of ongoing political events. (Elvinaro, Lukiati, Siti, 2017)

In practice, political communication requires a channel to convey messages, including through:

- a. Mass communication (communication from one to all)
- b. Interpersonal communication (one to one communication)
- c. Organizational communication (combining one-to-one and one-to-many communication)

The most effective mass communication channel is mass media, whether print, electronic, or internet. Many politicians use mass media to convey their messages to influence the public. (Gazali, 2004)

The Purpose of Political Communication

Ardial said that the purpose of political communication is closely related to the political message conveyed by the communicator. In accordance with the purpose of communication, the purpose of political communication is sometimes simply to convey political information, form a

political image, form public opinion, and can also handle opinions or accusations of political opponents. Furthermore, political communication also aims to attract public sympathy to increase political participation according to its interests. (Budyono, 2015)

Political Image

Citra comes from Javanese which means picture. Then, the image was developed into Gambaran as the equivalent of the word image in English. Meanwhile, Ardial explained that the image was formed as a result of the past knowledge of the image owner, and History is part of the image itself. Based on Boulding's explanation, it can be concluded that the image is a series of knowledge, experiences, and feelings or judgments that are organized into a human cognitive system or personal knowledge that is strongly believed to be true. (Silih Agung, Macnamara, 2016)

Therefore, political image can also be formulated as a picture of politics that has meaning even though it does not always correspond to the actual political reality. Political image is composed through beliefs, values and expectations in the form of personal opinions which can then develop into public opinion. Political image is formed based on the information we receive, either directly or through political media, including mass media that work to convey general and actual political messages.

Whoever becomes a political leader, is very interested in political image. This political image is built through a process of political communication in an effort to create social stability by fulfilling the demands of the people. Providing information related to efforts to improve, progress and development of development carried out by the government, for example, is none other than an effort to build a political image. (Safitri, 2019)

Public Opinion

Political communication is closely related to public opinion. This is considered a consequence of an imaging process that is carried out, especially in a context where the imaging uses mass media as one of its supporting instruments. Public opinion will be formed when political communicators convey their ideas or messages to the public. (Indrawan, 2017) The discourse that is built will more or less become part of the public discussion so that a very diverse public opinion is formed.

Political Participation

Political communication, political socialization, political image and public opinion, ultimately lead to the target and goal, namely the creation of political participation and victory of politicians and their political parties in general elections. The participation of the audience or people in voting in general elections is a very important consequence or effect of communication. General elections are only one form of political and people's participation.

In general, political participation is independent. Participation is done on one's own initiative based on a sense of concern for the world of politics. However, in practice, sometimes participation is influenced by other factors such as being asked or driven by other people or other groups. Political participation may even be forced by other parties. Participation in this last form is driven participation or what is known as mobilized political participation.

Political Communication in the Multimedia Era

In the era of globalization and very high interconnectivity like today, the multimedia aspect is a very appropriate medium for carrying out political communication. When almost every activity of modern society is connected to the internet, so are political communication activities. Technology cannot be separated from how political actors in this era carry out processes related to political communication. This technology is manifested through a medium now called new media . The existence of this new media must of course be in line with the implementation of democracy as a political principle for most countries in the world. For this reason, the author will explain further about how technology, new media, and their relationship to democracy are part of the political communication process in the multimedia era like this. (Astari, 2021)

The Development of Technology for Political Communication

The advancement of science and technology, especially digitalization, has given rise to what is called the internet. The internet is an acronym for international networking, or in full international connection networking. It can be understood as an international network that is connected to one another. International means across countries which is also known as globalization. In other words, the internet is a characteristic of the globalization era as a result of advances in information technology. (Muzahid Akbar Hayat et al., 2021)

Rogers in Rahardjo also describes three main characteristics that mark the presence of new communication technology, namely interactivity, de-massification, and asynchronous. Interactivity is the ability of a new communication system to talk back to its users. New media has an interactive nature that is close to the interactive nature of face-to-face interpersonal communication. This interactive communication media allows participants to communicate more accurately, effectively, and satisfactorily. (Efriza, Jerry., 2018)

De'massification or not mass, meaning that a specific message can be exchanged individually among participants involved in large numbers. This characteristic also means that control or control of the mass communication system usually shifts from message producers to media consumers. The last characteristic is asynchronous, which characteristic means that new communication technology has the ability to send and receive messages at times desired by each individual participant. (Suardi, 2016)

Communication technology then becomes the foundation for the development of political communication in this multimedia era. Political communication always runs congruently with democratic freedom, especially freedom of speech. Then political communication that occurs in this era of globalization shows the strengthening of democratic freedom which leads to freedom of speech in the virtual community.

Facts show that initiatives on social media sites such as Facebook have had their own echo in strengthening public pressure. The rapid discussion on social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter x, Instagram, thread, TikTok and others indicate the emergence of a public space (new public sphere). If mass media such as television, radio, newspapers and other print media are limited by the business interests and political motives of their actors, then online media, especially social media sites, have an honorable place as a channel of awareness (shared group consciousness) that is still free from state domination and market intervention. (Astari, 2021)

This is an interesting political communication phenomenon and is a contemporary development. Political actors, such as politicians (both representatives and ideologues), political

figures, bureaucrats, interest group activists, pressure groups, and mass media journalists, are currently increasingly adaptive to the use of the internet, both static and dynamic. Through the internet, various information, socialization of ideas, invitations, demands, to protests and alternative policy proposals can be published and exchanged in a relatively faster time compared to, for example, through print media or television. Interconnection between citizens or relations between infrastructure and superstructure in the political system can run without being limited by space and time. (Umaimah Wahid,. 2018)

New Media and its Various Social Impacts

The presence of social media as new media, makes The internet is the most appropriate medium used to spread the influence and impact of social media. When conventional media does not always need the internet, social media (and other new media in the future) are very dependent on internet services. Social media will not exist without the presence of the internet, considering that its existence does require a balanced collaboration between the two. This condition shows that the development of mass media in the context of information dissemination in the world has been greatly influenced by technology and information, thus creating a political communication climate that is in the multimedia realm. (Alfiyani, 2018)

This new presence is part of three generations and political communication, such as Blumber and Kavanagh, in Haryanto, realizing the emergence of an era called the " third age of political communication " this era shows an interesting fact, where print and broadcast media will lose their place as the main channels of political communication due to the abundance of information. This is because political ideas, information, and news can be disseminated via the internet. (Astari, 2021) They think about the " internet web " and communication technology with a certain capacity to achieve a two-way flow of information that allows users to search for certain types of news. This new media is the three generations of political communication if referring to its dynamics, including the following:

- a) The first generation is political rhetoric. Almost all political communication messages are directed by the art of speech .
- b) The second generation is characterized by the dominant role of mass media, which is often referred to as mainstream media.
- c) The third generation is marked by the development of new media. This is in line with the strengthening of social media, such as social network sites and interactive weblogs.

The Internet has become a revolutionary new media in the world, because it is a 'marriage' between print, audio, and video media that offers two-way communication. The Internet is called revolutionary because of the little control of information and gatekeeping (the existence of a supervisory institution) which are characteristics of traditional print and broadcast media. Thus the Internet becomes a media that cannot be controlled by anyone, including the government in power. (Ramkita & Muslim, 2023)

So with the existence of new media or the Internet, it can be used to build the image of politicians or political parties in campaigning through mass media or social media because with the development of technology and the existence of new media (new media) and its various social impacts, it is very useful for the image of politicians and political parties in democracy through conducting political marketing, and targeting the political 'market' and creating a political brand (candidate personal branding).

Targeting the Political 'Market' and Creating a Political Brand

After discussing new media in political marketing in the context of political campaigns in which political imagery is an integral part, now here we will discuss the analysis related to how political campaigns (imagery) are run using the concept of candidate personal branding. There are quite a lot of mistakes that assume that imagery is only done before the general election campaign. In fact, political imagery is a long imagery that activates every value of the political party as a provider of solutions for the life of the nation for the community. So, just like a product that must always be 'imaged', imagery in politics must also be carried out continuously. (Setianto, 2013)

By using the concept of branding, political imagery must be built in a great synergy between the activation of political values (brands), mass media, field activities, and the behavior of the target audience itself. The activation of political messages is thus not always related to mass media. In the concept of branding, political messages are used as positive topics of conversation among the community and at the same time move the target audience by building their own awareness. The advantage of branding is the ability to formulate the advantages of a political movement into a single perception that is easy to remember and is able to encourage the target audience's decision-making quickly. (Kadar, Khairul., 2012)

A stage of imagery is said to be glittering if it can be played by Star players who have characters that are liked by the audience with a storyline that makes people glued. One of these glittering stages is a media campaign. Here are some things that can be done to make a campaign and imagery take advantage of the media to attract the attention of many people.

- a. Ride on the main issues, or create new, stronger ones
- b. Prepare the anticlimax of the issue with worrying facts
- c. Manage issues by increasing the role of the third person
- d. Develop issue support in non-conventional media ranging from cyber media, seminars, to creating talk of the town in important communities.
- e. Make issues as fuel for the creation of political programs that already have an embryo.

Personalization of Politics and the Role of the Media

Today's political campaigns, especially in the era of massive technological development, really need the role of the media, not only conventional media, but also new media. Several explanations that have been presented previously show that in the context of political communication, marketing and political brands are closely related to the presence of the media. The dissemination of a political actor's political personalization is created through the role of the media, so that the actor succeeds in obtaining public office in the political contestation he participates in. This is because the campaigns he carries out are very dependent on and utilize the role of the media, such as conventional media and new media. (Alam, 2021)

As part of new media, the internet has advantages in terms of reach and ease of access. In political activities, especially political communication, the internet plays a very strategic role in helping political campaigns. As explained in the three types of political campaigns (mass campaigns, interpersonal campaigns, and organizational campaigns), if political actors do it through the internet medium, then the three campaigns are carried out at once. (Silih Agung Wasesa, 2006) This is because the internet offers an effective way for candidates to communicate directly with voters. The use of the internet for direct marketing is a combination of technologies that help integrate politicians' marketing strategies. Candidates have the

opportunity to build direct contact with voters through online debates that can be viewed in real time.

Seeing the success of political campaigns related to internet media, is like the example of Barack Obama's success in the United States which was broadcast throughout the world. With the use of online media, Obama was then elected as the first colored President in Uncle Sam's country. Obama has greatly utilized internet media as a very effective campaign tool. Obama appointed Chris Hughes as an internet- based campaign manager by creating a special site and optimizing the use of social media, such as myspace, twitter, plurk, facebook, Instagram, and others. Through the internet, Obama's team managed to capture 218 million internet users and managed to collect funds of 659.7 million US dollars or equivalent to Rp. 6.9 trillion, three times the campaign funds of his opponent, namely John McCain. (Efriza, Jerry,. 2018)

As a campaign media, www.barrackobama.com designed with a very attractive design appearance with the dominant color blue combined with white. The content or menu on this site is relatively large, so that the public can choose their favorite menus. This site is considered by many to be more interesting than John McCain's site. Obama's team also put their faces or photos on online video games . This team was observant to see that around 70% of voters aged 18-30 years liked online games like that. As a result, Obama succeeded in inviting 24 million voters aged 18-30 years to come to vote. This is the largest number of young people who exercised their right to vote in US History. Obama himself was also very surprised because the impact of the internet was very effective in his efforts to gain public sympathy, such as in financial and organizational matters by using multilevel marketing.

The increasingly advanced era of globalization of information and communication has provided many alternative communication strategies in campaigns. Through the internet, campaigns can be carried out in three segments at once, namely mass, interpersonal, and organizational. Moreover, in Indonesia the number of internet users has reached 132 million people. That is one of the reasons why the internet is the most effective campaign tool today, the channeling of which is through social media. (Amanu & Letikarmila, 2021)

Internet-based campaigns are much more effective when run according to internet norms as an egalitarian media, namely from the people, by the people and for the people and not run in a monopolistic, centralized, and top-down manner. The internet can provide opportunities for constituents to provide their opinions and thoughts to candidates, and candidates can absorb the aspirations and voices of the people, as in developed countries, if it can be utilized properly, the internet can help the campaign process with a wider and more effective reach. The internet can be used to convey visions, missions and work plans to constituents. Constituents can provide criticism and suggestions through the site, for example by creating opinion and response columns on the site. Constituents can participate in determining the priorities of work programs so that the flow of information can be done top-down and bottom-up. The political communication process that is built will be two-way (reciprocal) so as to align candidates with their prospective voters. (Rizha, 2018)

The development of social media in the realm of social life Society will slowly become something inseparable from political activities in Indonesia. Now in every campaign in several developed countries, social media has taken over the function of posters and flyers. If politicians want to succeed they must have a social media account, and send political messages into it. Social media has proven that more and more people are involved in politics and feel they can make a difference. These are all signs of the growing influence of social media in politics as well as the growth of social media users' interest in social media for politics. (Gazali, 2004)

After seeing the role of media from the side of social media, or new media, then of course the next discussion must also explain how the role of conventional media in marketing and political campaigns in Indonesia conventional media in marketing and political campaigns in Indonesia conventional media in this case is print media and television. Politicians have actually used these two mediums for a long time to campaign, especially through political advertisements. In Indonesia, the development of political advertising since the mass media began to gain freedom of expression after the fall of the New Order regime. In addition to conducting direct political campaigns such as parades on the highway or open campaigns, political campaigns are also carried out through political advertisements in print media and television. (Siagian, 2019)

RESEARCH METHOD

This article uses a qualitative method with a literature review approach. In the literature review method, researchers will collect, analyze, and synthesize information from various library sources that are relevant to the research topic without collecting primary data. (Elvinaro Ardianto., 2014) This method is suitable for research that focuses on discussing concepts and views that already exist in related literature. The sources used in this literature review method will include various books, scientific journal articles, seminar papers, and other related literature that discuss political communication and the use of mass media and social media for the image of politicians and political parties. This study will analyze and compile relevant findings from these sources to understand further analysis related to political communication about the use of mass media and social media for the image of politicians and political parties.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Political Communication in the Multimedia Era

The Role of Technology and New Media in Political Communication

The development of technology, especially the internet and digitalization, has significantly changed the landscape of political communication. The internet as a symbol of globalization has enabled cross-border communication, and has become an effective medium for politicians and parties in conveying their political messages. The characteristics of new media such as interactivity, de-massification, and asynchronicity allow politicians to interact directly with voters quickly, personally, and efficiently. Social media creates a new public space that is more democratic and free from full control of the state and the market as in conventional media.

Social Media as New Media and its Impact on Political Image

The presence of social media as a new form of media makes the internet the main means of disseminating political messages. Social media allows political parties and politicians to build strong and sustainable personal branding, not only during the campaign, but continuously. Social media provides greater opportunities to convey party values and ideas, making politicians public figures who are close and responsive to the people. Social media becomes an important tool in carrying out political imaging through a more creative approach and directly touching the target audience.

Political Image and Personal Branding Strategy

Political branding is a long process that must be designed and managed systematically through mass media, social media, and direct activities. In the realm of political marketing, branding is done by riding on major issues, creating new issues, managing public opinion, and building support through various communication channels, including non-conventional media. This strategy is aimed at creating a single and strong perception in the public mind of the image of a candidate or party, which influences people's political choices.

Personalization of Politics and the Role of the Media

The media plays an important role in shaping political personalization, where a politician is packaged as a political product that has a certain image, character, and appeal. The Internet allows three forms of campaigning to occur simultaneously (mass, interpersonal, and organizational), and provides a two-way space between candidates and voters. This strengthens the democratization of communication and makes voters active participants. The case of Barack Obama's successful campaign is a real example of how the internet and social media play a major role in shaping political image and achieving electoral victory.

Integration of Mass Media and Social Media in Political Campaigns in Indonesia

In Indonesia, conventional media such as television and print media are still used, but are increasingly being replaced by the role of social media. Politicians use conventional media primarily to reach groups that are not yet fully connected to the internet, while social media is used to reach young and digitally active voters. The use of both types of media synergistically can expand the reach of the campaign and strengthen the political image being built.

Utilization of Mass/Social Media for the Image of Politicians/Political Parties

Mass Media as a Political Pillar and Image Building Tool

The mass media is not only a channel of information, but also an important actor in the modern political process. As the fourth pillar of democracy, the mass media has the power to influence public opinion, shape political behavior, and control power. This makes the media a strategic arena used by politicians and political parties to build an image, offer programs, and bring down political opponents through negative campaigns or black campaigns. In the context of imaging, media becomes the main tool used by politicians for branding, shaping public perception, and reaching voters widely and quickly. Media not only conveys messages, but also constructs narratives and meanings that can benefit certain parties. (Raditya., 2019)

Power Relations and Media: A Mutually Beneficial Symbiosis

Politicians realize that media support can be the key to success in maintaining or seizing power. Conversely, the media also has an interest in access to power and exclusive information. This relationship creates a symbiosis between the media and political actors, which makes media imagery a key strategy in modern political communication.

The Role of Media in Political Communication Channels

Mass media also serves as a link between the public and the authorities. In many cases, formal channels for conveying aspirations (legislative, executive) are ineffective, and the media becomes an alternative for channeling public voices. Political parties use the media as a space to convey aspirations, form opinions, and get closer to the public.

Theories of the Influence of Mass Media on Politics

Four main theories explain how mass media influences political life:

- a. Reinforcement Theory: Media only reinforces existing opinions in society. This shows that media imagery must be in line with public values and expectations.
- b. Agenda Setting: The media does not determine what the public thinks, but it determines what issues are considered important. Politicians' image can be directed by framing issues in a sustainable manner.
- c. Priming & Framing: Media shapes how people view issues and figures through message selection and packaging. Image building is done by setting the focus of attention and certain points of view on politicians or parties.
- d. Direct Effect Theory: Media can directly influence people's political attitudes and behavior. This explains the effectiveness of media in shaping public image and perception instantly.

Mass Media as Political Actor

The media is no longer just a tool, but also plays an active role as a political actor. In this position, the media can side with a particular candidate, side with a particular issue, and become part of the discourse battle. Therefore, the use of media for image building cannot be separated from the dynamics of interests between the media, the authorities, and other political actors.

CONCLUSION

Mass media plays a central role in modern politics as a tool and actor in shaping public opinion and creating the image of politicians and political parties. In a democratic system, the media is not only a channel of communication between the government and the people, but also a controller of power and a tool for the struggle for democratic values, such as freedom of expression and access to information. This literature shows that mass media and social media have a vital role in the image of politicians and political parties, both as a means of communication, branding, and strategic political interaction. The digital era demands politicians to be adaptive to new technologies and media in order to reach voters widely, quickly, and effectively.

Social media in particular is an important tool in building two-way communication, strengthening democracy, and creating information to form a strong and relevant political image in the eyes of the public. In the context of the use of mass media and social media for the image of politicians and political parties, it is clear that the media plays a dual role: as a communication channel and as an actor with its own interests. Politicians and political parties consciously use the media to build an image, influence public opinion, and strengthen their political position. The success of the image is highly dependent on the strategy of packaging messages and the use of media influence theories that are in accordance with the socio-political conditions of society.

Politicians and political parties strategically utilize mass media and social media to strengthen positive images, convey visions and missions, and bring down political opponents through open and covert campaigns. Various communication theories such as reinforcement theory, agenda setting, priming & framing, and direct effect theory show that media can strengthen opinions, direct public attention to certain issues, and directly influence people's political attitudes and behavior. Ultimately, the media is not only a passive tool, but an active actor in the political process that is able to shape significant narratives and influences.

Therefore, in the effort of political image, strategic and targeted use of media is an important key to the success of politicians and political parties in gaining public sympathy and support.

SUGGESTION

Based on the findings and discussions in this study, several recommendations can be made for researchers, political practitioners, and media strategists:

- a. **Strategic Media Utilization.** Politicians and political parties are encouraged to adopt an integrated media strategy that combines conventional mass media and new media platforms. While traditional media still hold influence, especially among older demographics, social media offers interactive engagement with younger, more digitally active audiences.
- b. **Strengthening Political Branding through Content Personalization.** Political actors should focus on building authentic, relatable, and consistent personal branding. The creation of compelling narratives, visual aesthetics, and emotional messaging on social platforms can significantly influence public perception and voter loyalty.
- c. **Encouraging Two-Way Communication.** Social media should not merely serve as a broadcasting tool. Politicians must actively engage with followers through feedback loops, Q&A sessions, or live discussions to build a sense of community and shared political aspirations.
- d. **Media Literacy and Ethics.** Both political actors and the general public must be equipped with critical media literacy to discern between strategic political imaging and manipulative or misleading information. Ethical standards in political communication should be upheld to preserve democratic values.
- e. **Further Research.** Future studies may explore empirical approaches involving content analysis or public opinion surveys to validate the theoretical models discussed in this article. Comparative studies across countries or electoral systems would also enhance generalizability.

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