

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Branding in Prabowo-Gibran's Campaign: Insights and Strategies from the Indonesia Presidential Election 2024

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election marked a significant shift in political campaigning, with Generation Z and millennials comprising 56.45% of the electorate. This study examines how the Prabowo-Gibran campaign used AI as an instrument for political branding. Employing a qualitative approach integrating bibliometric analysis, multimodal discourse analysis, and expert interviews, the research reveals three key amplification mechanisms: precision segmentation through digital platforms, cultural adaptation by leveraging viral trends including the "Gemoy" avatar and "OK Gas" song, and visual affection production that reshaped Prabowo's public image. Bibliometric findings position "AI branding" and "visual politics" as emerging themes, with "authenticity" as a niche concern. This study finds that Prabowo-Gibran used AI for public engagement and data infrastructure within their political campaign. This study extends Aaker's brand equity framework by demonstrating how the integration of frontstage immersive technology, backstage data infrastructure, and collaboration with influencers provide new insights into how brand equity is configured in political campaigns during the digital era. However, the authenticity issue points to the post-election risks of the identity-image gap, where algorithmically constructed personas confront governance realities, potentially triggering political brand transgression. This research bridges political science, media studies, and communication technology while highlighting the challenges of AI-driven political branding beyond campaign periods.

Keywords: *Political branding, artificial intelligence, segmentation, augmented reality, digital native.*

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 Indonesian presidential election illustrates a significant intersection between intergenerational approaches and the strategic deployment of technology in political campaigning. Youth voters, comprising Millennials and Generation Z, dominated the electoral demographics. Collectively, these two generations accounted for 56.45% of the electorate, totalling 113,622,550 individuals out of 204,807,222 registered voters. This figure significantly outweighs that of older age groups, including Generation X (28.07% or 57,486,482), Baby Boomers (13.73% or 28,127,340), and Pre-Boomers (1.74% or 3,570,850) (Mantalean & Prabowo, 2023). As digital natives who matured alongside the rapid evolution of ICTs, Millennials and Generation Z share common characteristics. This demographic composition compelled competing candidates to adapt their campaign strategies to align with the unique digital traits and preferences of these two generations.

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The pairing of Prabowo Subianto (74) and Gibran Rakabuming Raka (36) serves as an empirical case of the successful use of artificial intelligence (AI) to foster intergenerational proximity with Millennials and Generation Z. The duo employed AI to reconfigure Prabowo Subianto's political persona, an elite military figure from the New Order era with a controversial human rights record surrounding the 1998 Reformation. Prabowo and Gibran were personified into 2D and 3D animations across various campaign media through AI. Prabowo's stout physique, or 'gemoy', was capitalized upon as a political branding icon, projecting a sense of visual humour across social media and on-the-ground campaigning. The use of AI to create visual markers that resonate with the digital lives of young people represents a core implementation of the "Politik Riang Gembira" (Cheerful Politics) strategy. Through this approach, the pair offered a political image that was lighter, more flexible, and entertaining—aligning with the characteristics of Millennials and Gen Z—while standing in stark contrast to the ceremonial rigidity typically associated with the political style of older generations (Ubaidillah et al., 2025).

Over the past decade, political branding research has captured a distinct trend toward political digitalization and campaign personalization. This shift is strategically aimed at reaching digital native youth voters. The synthesis of leadership persona construction and technology has emerged as a primary mechanism for political brand differentiation (An, 2025; Jain et al., 2025). Evidence suggests that a continuous virtual presence, coupled with the articulation of performance, can render a "leader-brand" image more positive in the eyes of young voters than a "party-brand" image (Banerjee & Chaudhuri, 2016; Jain et al., 2017). The integration of digital technologies, including AI, offers an innovative appeal to the public. However, a misalignment between voter expectations and core values or actual performance can trigger "political brand transgression" due to an identity-image gap. Such gaps weaken political brands, particularly in the post-election phase, when constructed personas confront the realities of policy-making (Au, 2025; Garland, 2026; Pich et al., 2019). Consequently, political brand differentiation in the digital era is both interactive and contingent, requiring the articulation of leadership personas to constantly align with young voters' evolving expectations.

A profound understanding of the characteristics of youth voters as 'digital natives'—who are deeply engaged across digital platforms—is crucial for aligning campaign strategies with their specific expectations (Haenschen, 2016). These characteristics significantly shape their political attitudes and participation, necessitating a precisely calibrated approach (Anom et al., 2024; Ohme, 2019). Campaigns that leverage AI and strategic branding can cultivate deeper relationships with younger electorates (Reisach, 2021). Functionally, AI is implemented for content personalization (Engawi et al., 2022; Swaminathan et al., 2021), creation of visual personas for politicians (Grusell & Nord, 2023; Steffan, 2021), and analysis of social media, sentiment, and audience demographics (Ducange et al., 2019), and brand detection through deep learning (Sahel et al., 2021). Consequently, AI has emerged as a critical instrument for understanding and responding to the political dynamics of the younger generation, which are predominantly forged within digital spaces.

Building upon the aforementioned background, this study aims to bridge existing gaps in the literature by examining the Prabowo-Gibran campaign during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. This study is guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the prevailing research trends regarding the use of AI in political campaigns in a general context?
2. How was AI implemented for audience segmentation and visual content personalization within the Prabowo-Gibran campaign?
3. What branding strategies were constructed and communicated throughout the campaign?

Consequently, this article synthesizes academic developments through a contextualized and empirical case study.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Aaker (1991), a brand is a strategic asset that generates economic and psychological value through names and symbols, which can either enhance or diminish the value of a product or service. Brand equity comprises five dimensions: brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and proprietary assets. These dimensions constitute intangible competitive advantages that emerge from the interaction between the corporation and its consumers and are difficult to replicate. The relevance of this brand equity concept has subsequently expanded to become a modern political instrument. This application can be observed from the perspectives of both political actors and voters. For political actors, this phenomenon represents a paradigm shift where politics is understood as a “service product” (Lloyd, 2005), positioning candidates as strategic assets defined by awareness, associations, and loyalty. Conversely, the public or electorate faces cognitive limitations in processing complex political information, thus requiring “heuristics” or shortcuts for decision-making (Newman & Sheth, 1985). Political branding strategies reduce ideological complexity into easily digestible imagery to enhance character perception and emotional resonance.

The evolution of political branding is increasingly facilitated by digital technologies that enable the practice of “political privatization,” showcasing a candidate’s human side to construct a visualization of “new public intimacy” (Farkas & Bene, 2020; Wood et al., 2016). Social media logic further accelerates this reliance on visual strategies, where a candidate’s visibility and lifestyle have become a form of “political currency” (Luhtakallio & Meriluoto, 2024). AI integration renders the distribution of campaign content highly personalized (Lilleker & Pack, 2016). Advancements in artificial intelligence and machine learning reinforce this mechanism by enabling real-time, cross-platform mapping of public sentiment (Alnsour et al., 2025). Distinguishable from broad, traditional demographic targeting, AI facilitates precise psychometric segmentation to directly resonate with the emotional preferences of individual voters (Duberry, 2022). Consequently, AI has transcended its function as a mere distribution tool and transformed into a meaning-production instrument that aligns a candidate’s “face” with the personal expectations of the electorate.

The transformation of AI and information technology provides a new expansion and contextualization of the key dimensions within Aaker’s (1991, 1996) branding theory, such as brand awareness, brand associations, and brand personality, which have long been adapted to interpret campaign personalization and the emergence of the “leader-brand” (Banerjee & Chaudhuri, 2016; Jain et al., 2017). Aaker’s framework’s relevance persists during political

digitalization and social media mediation, albeit with a conceptual expansion toward “agentic” technologies. These technologies actively participate in the production of political meaning and affect through visual, algorithmic, and platform-culture practices (An, 2025; Jain et al., 2025; Lucarelli et al., 2020). Within this context, the literature also highlights the temporality of political brand value, specifically the correction of meaning and legitimacy during the post-election phase.

Within this temporal framework, the election cycle, comprising the campaign phase, polling day, and the post-election period, must be understood as a behavioural cycle perceived and internalized by voters (Bruter & Harrison, 2020). The electoral atmosphere, affect, and memory formed throughout this cycle determine the construction, storage, and revision of political brand images and values. In response to these fluctuations in brand value, Aaker (2010) proposed the strategies of “branded energizers” and “spanning silos,” both of which are highly relevant to political branding. Branded energizers may manifest as social programs or activities designed to generate energy while fostering public engagement. Meanwhile, spanning silos involves aligning messaging across organizational units, creating new categories as points of differentiation, and adapting the brand experience from a centralized core to local contexts. These measures are implemented to maintain brand equity and serve as a renewal mechanism when temporal events pressure equity.

However, these strategies do not operate in isolation; a comprehensive understanding of brand equity necessitates careful consideration of temporality and authenticity. These elements serve as the core pillars sustaining brand equity within an ecosystem where political actors, institutions, media, influencers, digital platforms, and voters interact (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2022). Authenticity itself is forged from the alignment between the communicated brand identity and the public’s perceived image. A pertinent example is found in the case of former Indonesian President Joko Widodo, who experienced ‘brand transgression’ when he was perceived as betraying his anti-corruption promises following the 2019 revision of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) Law, which was widely seen as weakening the institution (Setiawan & Taufik, 2022). This breach of promise marked a pivotal moment in his loss of perceived authenticity. Maintaining coherence and integrity across this multi-actor network is the primary challenge in sustaining political brand value.

The intersection of temporality and the multi-actor ecosystem in assessing brand equity serves as the conceptual foundation for this article’s analysis of AI’s role in political campaigning. This study argues that AI can function as an amplification instrument that strengthens brand equity through high-precision segmentation, cultural adaptation, and visual affect, thereby enhancing political participation particularly among youth demographics. In contrast, AI can also engineer political preferences by creating an identity–image gap generated by algorithmic processes.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach that integrates micro- and macro-level analysis to examine political branding and the use of AI in the 2024 Prabowo-Gibran presidential campaign. The research design is structured into three phases. The first phase involves bibliometric analysis for macro-field mapping, which aims to map extant literature, identify emerging topics, and pinpoint knowledge gaps concerning AI in political campaigns, thereby establishing the novelty

of the study. The results from this initial stage guide the subsequent analysis, specifically in situating emerging themes, such as AI, influencers, and digital-virtual dimensions, within the data sorting process. In the second phase, a multimodal analysis was conducted, focusing on both textual and visual campaign elements (Norris, 2019) to elucidate how AI utilization provided a strategic positioning advantage for Prabowo-Gibran within an electoral political culture shaped by generational and geographical segmentation. Finally, the third phase comprises an in-depth case study of the campaign strategies implemented by the Prabowo-Gibran pairing, synthesizing macro-level trends and multimodal micro-level data into a comprehensive analytical narrative.

Academic publication metadata were extracted from the Dimensions database covering the period from 2022 to 2024. The search strategy employed a comprehensive query using the keywords “political branding AND visual and” within the full data scope. The inclusion criteria were further refined by year of publication (2024, 2023, and 2022) and specific Fields of Research (ANZSRC 2020), namely 4701 Communication and Media Studies and 4408 Political Science. The types of publications were limited to articles, proceedings, chapters, monographs, and edited books. Subsequently, the retrieved data from Dimensions were selected and processed using the BIBLIOMETRIX Biblioshiny software (bibliometrix.org) to facilitate the bibliometric analysis.

This study employs a case study design to dissect the campaign strategies of the Prabowo-Gibran pairing, using six expert informants as the primary data sources. These informants were purposively selected to provide a multidisciplinary perspective, encompassing academics in political communication, computer science experts who also serve as campaign strategy practitioners, and media and cultural studies scholars. Furthermore, the research data is enriched by the perspectives of a senior practitioner with a track record as a politician and former cabinet minister, a representative from the Prabowo-Gibran National Campaign Team (TKN), and an academic specializing in social movements. The integration of data from these experts aims to validate findings at the micro-level while providing a comprehensive understanding of the strategic architecture of the campaign at the macro-level.

RESULT

a. Research Trends Related to AI in Political Campaigns (RQ1)

This study employs bibliometric analysis map the existing academic landscape. This analysis aims to identify developments, gaps, and research directions concerning the use of AI in political campaigns. By understanding these trends, the study can accurately position its contribution and identify the correlations between the existing academic literature and actual campaign practices, specifically the 2024 Prabowo-Gibran presidential campaign. The analysis results are presented through five visualizations: a co-occurrence network, relevant words, trend topics, a three-field plot, and a thematic map.

The co-occurrence network analysis identified three primary clusters in the research on AI and politics (Figure 1). The first cluster (red) is the most dominant and focuses on media studies. Key terms within this cluster include media, communication, social media, and digital. This cluster’s dominance indicates that academic discourse regarding AI in politics remains heavily focused on the role of media as the primary campaign channel. The second cluster (blue) focuses on international relations and reflects how global political dynamics influence local campaign studies, including the adoption of strategies from international campaign practices.

The third cluster (gray) encompasses more specialized topics, such as political branding and political marketing, albeit with a lower frequency of occurrence.

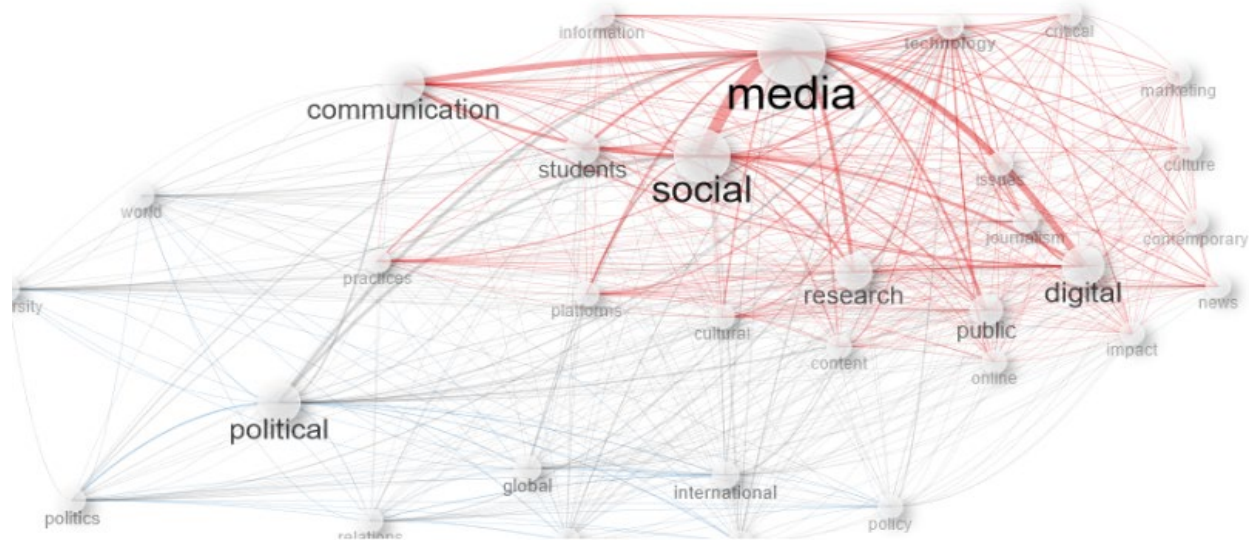


Figure 1: Image co-occurrence network analysis of AI and politics research

Keyword frequency analysis (Figure 2) reinforces the aforementioned findings while providing a more specific overview of the research trends in AI-driven campaigning. The keyword “media” appears with the highest frequency, followed by “social,” “digital,” “political,” and “communication.” In contrast, keywords specifically referring to “AI” or “AI” appear with a relatively lower frequency (94 occurrences).

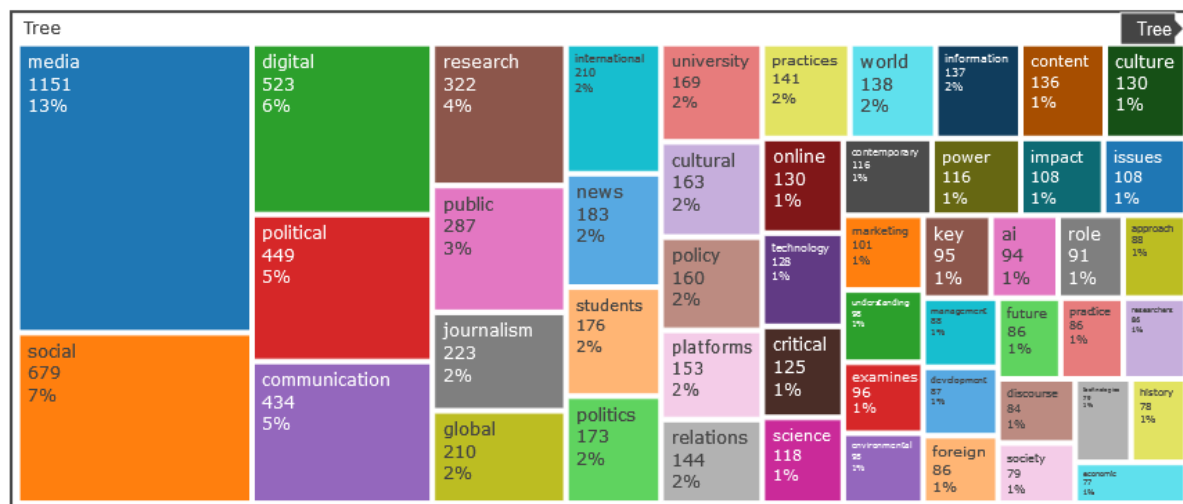


Figure 2: Most relevant words

These findings indicate that research concerning AI in political campaigns is still in its nascent stages, particularly within studies that specifically examine its role in political communication and branding. Consequently, this article aims to bridge this identified research gap.

The trend topic analysis based on publication year (Figure 3) confirms that academic interest in the use of AI within political communication has escalated recently. This trend presents opportunities for multidisciplinary studies that integrate AI with established concepts, such as media, social platforms, and digital marketing. In other words, this research arrives at an opportune time—at a time when academic attention is shifting toward the transformative potential of AI in campaign practices, yet substantial room for exploration remains, particularly concerning branding and visual content personalization.



Figure 3: Trend topics

The three-field plot (Figure 4) visualizes the correlations among keywords, publication sources, and author affiliations. The results demonstrate that the most relevant keywords such as media, social communication, and digital strategy are predominantly published in political communication and political science journals. These findings indicate that research on AI in political campaigns resides at a multidisciplinary intersection of political science, media studies, and communication technology. This mapping confirms that a study on the Prabowo-Gibran strategy can serve as a bridge connecting these three distinct disciplines.

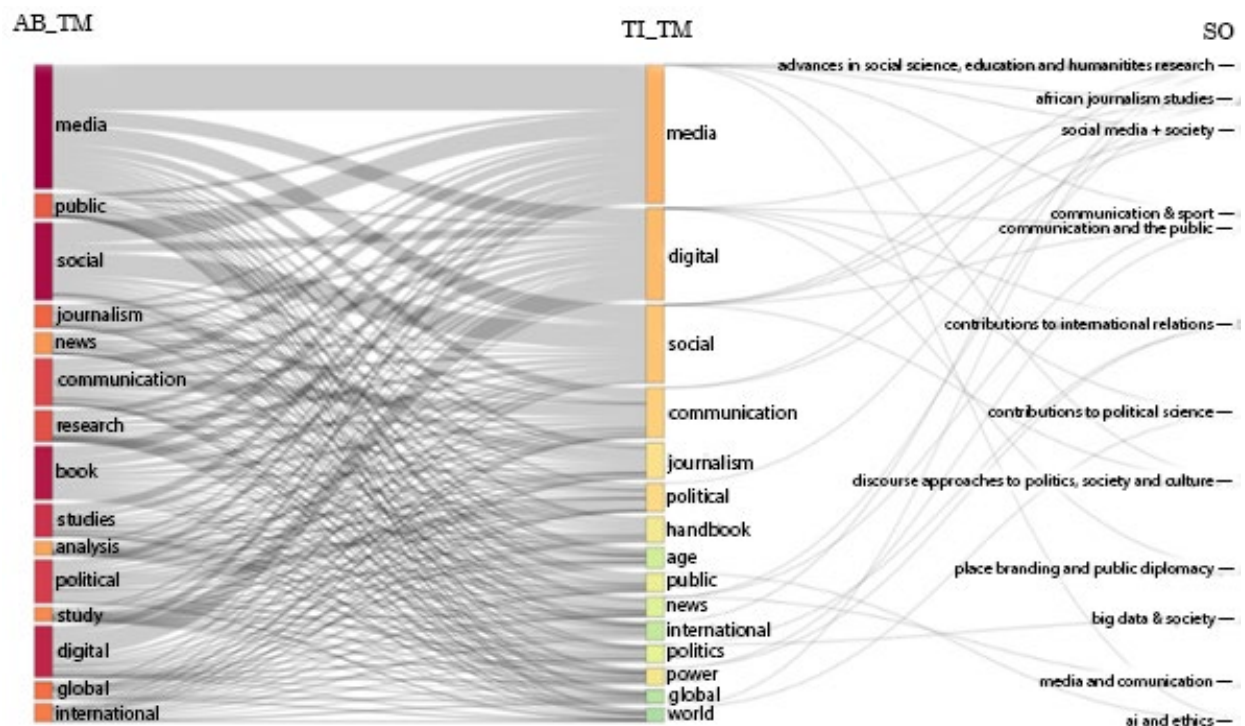


Figure 4: Three-field plot

The thematic map (Figure 5) provides the most comprehensive overview of the literature by mapping various topics into four quadrants. The upper-right quadrant (Motor Themes) displays the core topics driving current research: AI, influencers, algorithms, and social media strategies. This mapping indicates that research on AI in political campaigns has begun to focus on the use of algorithms in social media strategies and collaborations with influencers. The lower-right quadrant (Basic Themes) contains fundamental topics such as media, digitality, and social power. These topics serve as the bedrock for understanding the role of AI in shaping political discourse.

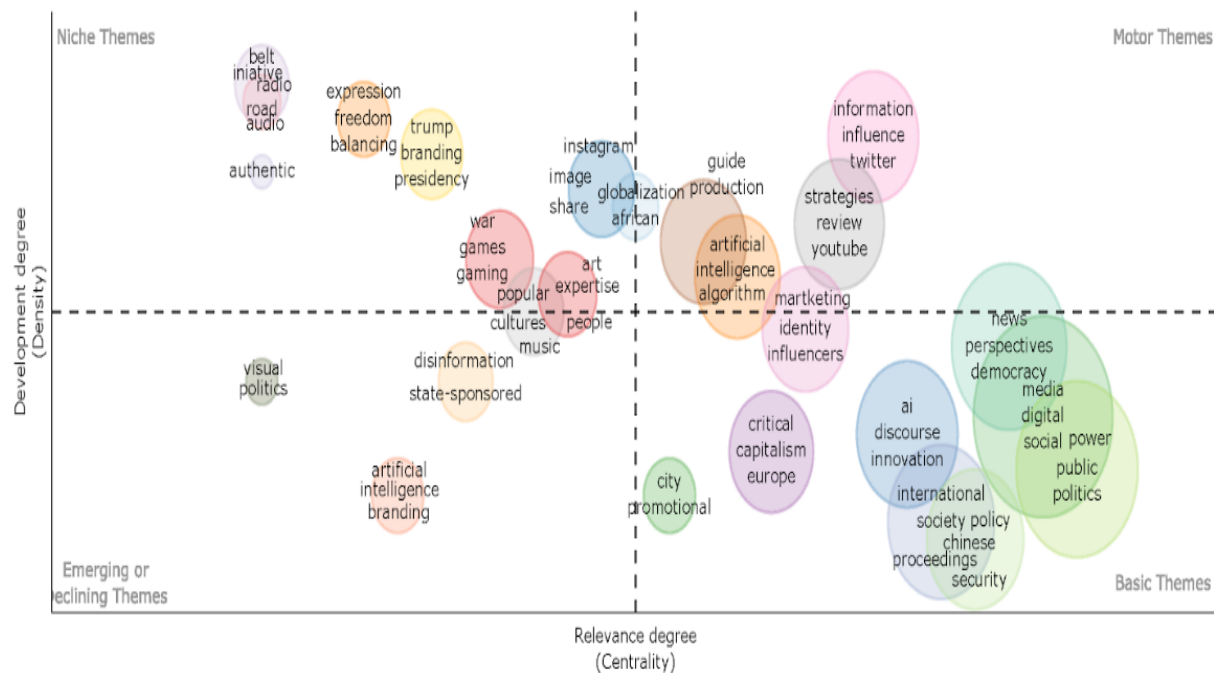


Figure 5: Thematic map

The upper-left quadrant (Niche Themes) hosts specialized topics, such as authenticity in AI content, highlighting the importance of maintaining authentic voter relationships within branding practices. Meanwhile, the lower-left quadrant (Emerging or Declining Themes) identified AI branding and visual politics as emerging topics. The classification of visual politics as an emerging theme aligns with the argument that social media logic has positioned candidate visibility as a primary political commodity (Luhtakallio & Meriluoto, 2024). The Prabowo-Gibran campaign, through its use of AI, serves as an ideal laboratory for testing how technology can produce and distribute this “new public intimacy” (Farkas & Bene, 2020; Wood et al., 2016).

Overall, this bibliometric analysis addresses the first research question by providing a comprehensive overview of research trends regarding the use of AI in political campaigns. First, media and communication studies still dominate research in this field, with AI remaining a peripheral topic that has only recently begun to gain traction. Second, the low frequency of AI-related keywords confirms the limited number of studies focusing on the use of AI in political branding and visual communication. Third, the temporal analysis indicates that this topic is currently in a phase of burgeoning academic interest. The most crucial finding from this mapping is the positioning of “AI branding” and “visual politics” within the quadrant of emerging themes. This explicitly demonstrates that research specifically examining how AI transforms political branding practices through visual content is still highly scarce, representing a significant research gap.

b. AI for Audience Segmentation and Visual Content Personalization in Political Campaigns (RQ2)

The bibliometric findings, which categorize AI branding and visual politics as emerging themes, directly respond to the conceptual evolution of political branding—a field that has advanced from

the foundational application of Aaker's (1991) brand equity theory toward more complex dimensions. Digital technology has transformed into a tool for meaning production, tailoring candidate personas to align with voter expectations (Duberry, 2022; Lilleker & Pack, 2016). This theoretical integration of political branding and AI-driven trends provides a conceptual basis for examining the strategic segmentation of the Prabowo-Gibran campaign in the 2024 Presidential Election. This framework uncovers the social practices underlying campaign content production in its application. Simultaneously, at the level of multimodal discourse analysis, the construction of political meaning derived from the visual, textual, and auditory elements of said content is revealed.

Recommendations for Audience Segmentation for Targeted Content

The end of 2023 marked the generative AI explosion's momentum within Indonesian society. During this period, the public surged to participate in the "Me as a Pixar Character" trend, creating illustrations that mimicked Disney film posters through prompts on various platforms, such as TikTok and Bing Image Creator (Tempo.com, 2023). This momentum familiarized the Indonesian public with the distinct visual characteristics of AI-generated imagery (Figure 6).



Figure 6: Illustrations showcasing the "Pixar-style" esthetic prevalent in late 2023 (Prasasti, 2023)

In 2023, the virality of the "Me as a Pixar Character" trend coincided with political actors' strategic preparations for the simultaneous presidential, vice-presidential, and legislative elections scheduled for 2024. The convergence of these two moments resulted in the visualization of Prabowo and Gibran as Pixar-style characters, as shown in Figure 7. The distinct visual attributes of this AI-generated trend subsequently functioned as a symbolic language in intergenerational dialogue—a pivotal strategy designed to engage and resonate with younger voters.

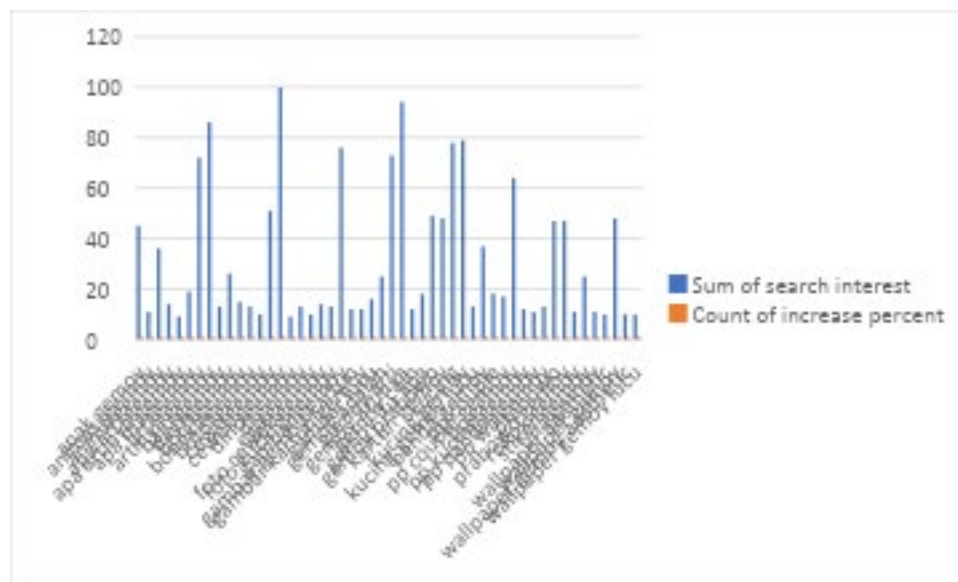


Figure 7: Screenshot of Prabowo and Gibran as children in the drink milk and lunch advertisement (Hakumi Chan, 2023)

Consequently, such visualizations served to bridge the generational gap between Prabowo and Gibran while simultaneously reinforcing youth representation and solidarity throughout the campaign period. Furthermore, the creation of the visual personas of Prabowo and Gibran as Pixar-style characters resonated deeply with the aesthetic preferences of the younger generation, which have been significantly influenced by the proliferation of artificial intelligence-generated visual works (Grusell & Nord, 2023; Steffan, 2021).

...AI enables the identification of relevant themes, particularly in attracting undecided young voters. Unifying disparate generations—bridging Prabowo’s “colonial” generation with Gibran’s millennial demographic—into a cohesive societal segment is a significant challenge. Visualization becomes paramount in this context, as the Indonesian public exhibits a higher preference for visual consumption over reading. This trend is increasingly evident in the digital era, where younger generations prioritize visual content via social media. Social media, particularly through audiovisual formats, exerts a profound and rapid psychological impact on users (Informant, Professor of Computer Science and Campaign Strategist).

As a social ecosystem, social media enable various phenomena to emerge independently. Political process trends manifest on social media through personal posts and mass media news. Conversely, entertainment trends operate within distinct channels. One trend that emerged concurrently with the political election process was the ‘Gemoy’ phenomenon, particularly on TikTok. Various hashtags containing the component “gemoy” can be found there, such as #gemoy, #kucinggemoy (cute cat), #cewekgemoy (cute girl), and #bayigemoy (cute baby). Google Trends data (Graph 1) confirms the presence of elements such as cats, girls, or babies—including Prabowo—within search queries throughout the 2021–2026 period.



Graph 1: Query Google Trends Gemoy 2021-2026 (Google Trends, n.d.)

These hashtags circulate the effects of cuteness, adorability, and sensuality on plump body performances. The term “Gemoy” subsequently became a textual label synonymous with the visuals of “Prabowo as Pixar Character.” Hashtags such as #gemoy function as floating signifiers, characterized by their fluid meanings that can be easily refilled by different actors and contexts (Farkas & Schou, 2018). In practice, hashtags accommodate both affectivity and the potential for political or entertainment commodification. Consequently, hashtags serve as a site of struggle for meaning that can be temporarily stabilized by a campaign or remain buoyant as a space for cultural negotiation. The capitalization of “gemoy” as a digital culture was not solely a planned and structured effort by the Prabowo campaign team; the entertainment industry also leveraged the term to garner attention, as evidenced by its use as a film title in Figure 8.

...The Bravo Team conducted extensive research and campaigning, including studying campaign patterns from other countries. The “Gemoy” concept originated as a cartoon designed to brand Prabowo. Then, the campaign team viralized this concept through social media. “Gemoy” gained popularity among the youth as it was socialized across various platforms (Informant, Prabowo-Gibran National Campaign Team).



Figure 8: Tangkapan layar Film yang menggunakan kata Gemoy (Vidio.com, 2023)

As explained above, young voters dominate. Therefore, visual messages are considered appropriate to voters' character. With the help of AI, an avatar was created that visualizes the adorable character (Gemoy) of Prabowo. Gemoy has become popular among young people because it is socialized through various platforms. Interviews with the National Campaign Team revealed that Prabowo was happy with the Gemoy visualization and considered it to can bring him closer to society. Gemoy is the main strategy that effectively attracts the attention of young people in difficult-to-win areas, such as West Sumatra Province. Many young voters who felt previously unassociated with politics were interested in supporting Prabowo. Gemoy is Prabowo's rebranding. This visualization is different from the militaristic nationalist impression that was presented when nominating a presidential candidate in 2014 and 2019 (Susila et al., 2020). Gemoy is designed to show a more relaxed and close side to society, reflected in its policies and initiatives, as a candidate known for his firm and confrontational communication style. Recent times have shown a more inclusive and populist approach. These changes make it more acceptable for many voters, including those who may have previously felt isolated. This softer, more empathetic communication could help Prabowo reach a wider range of voters, including those who previously did not support him.

The visualization of the 'Gemoy' campaign emerged from a systematic process orchestrated by political consultants. During the design phase, online surveys were conducted to monitor public sentiment toward the imagery constructed through these visualizations. The political consultants behind the "Gemoy" branding of Prabowo possess a portfolio of rebranding political figures with historical burdens to electoral victory, as seen in the 2022 Philippine Presidential Election (Dongoran, 2026). Similar to the Prabowo-Gibran strategy, which relied heavily on social media, Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. optimized TikTok campaigns to secure his victory in the Philippines (Mendoza, 2022).

Dynamic Content Adaptation

The 'Gemoy' phenomenon represents a visual manifestation of how AI enabled Prabowo-Gibran to “ride the wave” of social media algorithms. As illustrated in Figure 9, the pair did not generate campaign trends organically to deliver their messages. Instead, they capitalized on pre-existing trends by constructing “Gemoy” visualizations and rearranging their campaign anthem from a song that was already viral on social media, namely “Ok Gas.”



Figure 9: Prabowo, as a Pixar character, promotes the program (Hakumi Chan, 2023)

The song “Ok Gas” is a rap track popularized by a newcomer, Richard Jersey. Its emergence sparked renewed enthusiasm for youth-led campaigning, particularly as it was used to accompany Prabowo’s signature dance moves. Recognizing its potential, the Prabowo-Gibran National Campaign Team (TKN) sought out the singer from Talaud, North Sulawesi, and subsequently designated “Ok Gas” as their official campaign anthem. While the original version was released on Richard Jersey’s YouTube channel in 2020 with a modest 271,684 views, its popularity surged exponentially on TikTok between October and November 2023, becoming a ubiquitous background track for short-form videos. The adapted campaign version was officially uploaded on January 15, 2024, aligning with the official schedule of the General Election Commission (KPU). The several-month interval between the viral peak of the original song and its political adaptation is a crucial window for analysing the voting behaviour of Indonesia’s youth, especially TikTok users. This digital cultural appropriation strategy serves as an entry point for engaging young voters through humorous and light-hearted content, allowing campaigns to craft visuals and narratives that foster a sense of connectedness and build stronger relationships with this demographic.

...Both components—field operations and social media—play critical roles. The field campaign team distributes logistics, such as T-shirts, banners, and jingles. Meanwhile, the social media team amplifies campaign activities and extends message reach across various platforms, including podcasts and TikTok. All these components must operate concurrently and complement one another. Social media now plays an increasingly significant role, particularly with the emergence of TikTok (Informant, Prabowo-Gibran National Campaign Team).

The role of AI in deciphering the TikTok algorithm to determine song adaptations and adorable Prabowo-Gibran visualizations significantly enhances the enjoyment of political content consumption. This enjoyment encourages young people to voluntarily reproduce political content favourable to the candidates, driven by the prosumer nature of social media. The resonance of the song “Oke Gass” with youth tastes penetrates deeply as a signifier representing Prabowo-Gibran. Consequently, the campaign team received an enthusiastic reception from young people during the distribution of campaign collateral, such as T-shirts. Interestingly, young voters—typically antipathetic toward political party merchandise due to poor fabric quality or “tacky” aesthetics—actively sought out the campaign team’s “Ok Gas T-shirts.”

Through AI, campaigns can dynamically adapt content based on real-time feedback and engagement metrics. If specific visual elements or themes perform well within certain audience segments, AI algorithms can suggest scaling those elements across multiple platforms. A prime example of this content dynamism in the Prabowo-Gibran campaign was the strategic shift from the song “Prabowo-Gibran Istimewa” to “Ok Gas.” The former was an adaptation of “Koyo Jogja Istimewa” by Ndarboy Genk, in which the original Javanese lyrics were modified to “Prabowo-Gibran Istimewa.”

Table 1: Adaptation of “Special Prabowo-Gibran” Song lyrics

Special Yogyakarta Feeling Song Lyrics by Ndarboy Genk	Special Prabowo-Gibran Song Lyrics by Tim Kampanye Nasional Prabowo Gibran
<i>Kowe siji sijine</i> (You are my one and only) <i>Aku bangga karo kowe</i> (I am so proud of you) <i>Gelem nampo apa anane</i> (Accepting me just the way I am) <i>Tresno ku ra bakal mletre</i> (My love will flow)	<i>Yo Mung Prabowo-Gibran</i> (Only Prabowo – Gibran) <i>Aku tresno panjenengan</i> (I love you) <i>Gelem nampo opo anane</i> (Accepting me just the way I am) <i>Tresno ku ra bakal mletre</i> (My love will flow)
<i>Kowe ojo sumelang</i> (Don't worry) <i>Tresno ku ra bakal ilang</i> (My love will disappear) <i>Ibarat koyok kutoku Yogya</i> (Just like my city, Yogya) <i>Kowe cen istimewa</i> (You are special)	<i>Yo Mung Prabowo-Gibran</i> (Only Prabowo – Gibran) <i>Tresnaku ra bakal ilang</i> (My love will disappear) <i>Ibarat koyok kutoku Yogya</i> (Just like my city, Yogya) <i>Prabowo-Gibran Istimewa</i> (Prabowo - Gibran is special)

The 'Gemoy' avatars were subsequently integrated into the music video for 'Prabowo-Gibran Istimewa.' In the broadcast featured on Gerindra TV’s YouTube channel, Prabowo’s avatar is depicted singing and dancing alongside various societal components (Figure 8). Digital objects in the form of avatars are synthesized with real-world subjects. The real-world elements include urban youth, ride-hailing (Gojek) drivers, traditional market traders, religious figures, student farmers, and homemakers.



Figure 10: The jingle "Prabowo Gibran Memang Istimewa" (The jingle "Prabowo Gibran Is Truly Special") (GerindraTV, 2023)

The songs "Oke Gas" and "Prabowo Gibran Istimewa" do not replace but complement each other as a comprehensive strategy for navigating voters' ethnic and intergenerational approaches. Both songs were sung during offline campaigns. As the most populous region in Indonesia, the island of Java is the key to electoral victory, so it is not surprising that the symbolisation of political communication in the article by Susila et al. (2020) Javanese as a vital element. Maintaining cultural connectivity with Javanese songs is a strategy to highlight the Javanese elements in Prabowo-Gibran, apart from the genealogical factor that Gibran comes from the Javanese tribe, and Prabowo has Chinese-Manadonese blood from his mother's line. In contrast, the blood of a Javanese aristocrat flows from his father's line.

Ethnicity still has an influential contribution to electoral choices in Indonesia (Hadiz, 2020). Relying on political communication using the song Prabowo Gibran Istimewa can produce the opposite effect because it can give rise to Javanese-centric sentiments from voters on other Indonesian islands. This ethnicity complexity is resolved with the solution of the song Oke Gass. The singer of this song comes from the eastern region of Indonesia, so it can represent the multicultural spirit of Prabowo-Gibran. The syntactic structure of "tabrak-tabrak masuk" (breakthrough and go in) or the diction "torang" (we) in this song reflects the characteristics of the Malay language, which developed in the eastern region of Indonesia. This combination of songs in Javanese and East Malay shows the expertise of a campaign strategy that can provide exclusivity to Javanese voters and offer multi-ethnic inclusivity.

These findings extend beyond merely confirming that AI can be used in political campaigns for audience segmentation and content personalization. Rather, this study enriches the brand equity framework developed by Aaker (1991) by demonstrating how dimensions such as brand personality and brand associations are operationalized differently within an interactive digital ecosystem. In the case of Prabowo-Gibran, brand personality is no longer governed solely by a centralized campaign team; instead, it is negotiated through interactions with algorithms, viral trends, and voters' active participation as content prosumers.

c. Branding Strategies Adopted by Political Campaigns (RQ3)

The Prabowo-Gibran National Campaign Team for the 2024 presidential election comprised a diverse array of stakeholders, including political party leaders, religious figures, retired military and police elites, entrepreneurs, artists, and influencers. Individuals were organized into advisory and technical boards. Three specific teams were established to manage segmented voter bases within the technical board: Team Alpha for territorial-based voters, Team Fanta for youth voters, and Team Golf for volunteers. These teams were responsible for consolidating the regional campaign structures. A spanning silos strategy by Aaker (2010) is evident in this division, which allowed campaign messages to be vertically aligned from the national to the regional level while simultaneously creating differentiation through specialized approaches for territorial, youth, and volunteer segments. Furthermore, the songs “Prabowo-Gibran Istimewa,” with its Javanese nuances, and “OK Gas,” reflecting an Eastern Indonesian style, served as branded energizers. These instruments fostered cultural engagement and cross-segmentation among voters based on territory, ethnicity, and generation.

The implementation of AI within the Prabowo-Gibran campaign falls under the operational domain of Team Fanta and Team Golf. Team Fanta launched an AR platform via Fotober2.ai (Figure 11) to enhance community engagement. Through the Fotober2.ai digital platform, it is hoped that the wider community will have the opportunity to take photos with the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Moreover, the launch of this platform shows that the Campaign Team values creativity (Antaranews.com, 2024). Community engagement with brands (candidates) is increasing through the photo platform. Subsequently, the Fotober2.ai platform was amplified through the official Instagram account (Figure 12) to enhance the interactive and appreciative value for users. This was achieved by reposting user-generated photographs onto the official account, thereby acknowledging and validating the platform’s participation.



Figure 11: Screenshot of the fotober2.ai application (fotober2.ai, 2024)

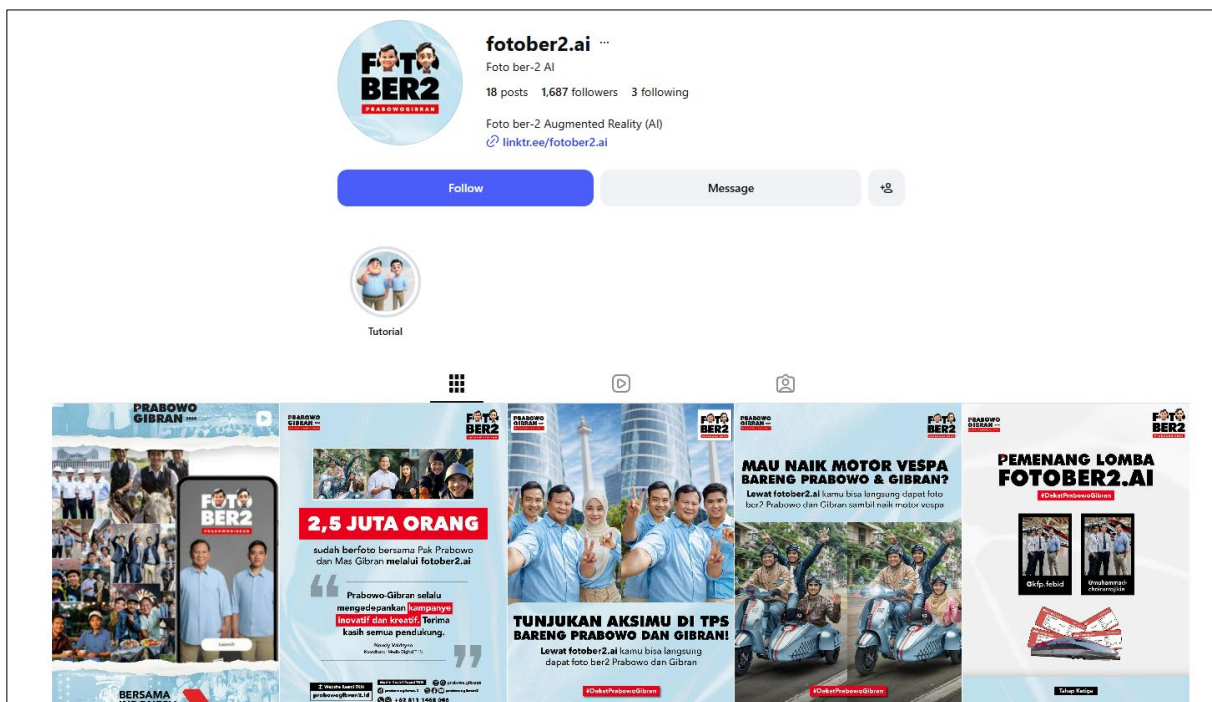


Figure 12: Screenshot of fotober2.ai Instagram page (fotober2.ai, 2024)

Prabowo-Gibran.ai is another digital platform developed by the Prabowo-Gibran campaign team. This platform was initiated by Prabowo-Gibran Digital Volunteers (PRIDE) to serve as a robust data infrastructure. This volunteer community operates under Team Golf's

coordination. During the launch of the platform, Prabowo appeared as a hologram, symbolizing the campaign's technological orientation. The platform assists 15,000 "cyber troop" volunteers in tracking online sentiment, disseminating campaign materials regarding core programs (such as nutrition and healthcare), and generating AI-driven content.



Figure 13: Flyer peluncuran prabowogibran.ai (relawanpride, 2023)

In the digital era, the role of influencers in decision-making is quite large. Prabowo-Gibran took advantage of this opportunity. The National Campaign Team said many influencers supported Prabowo-Gibran, including Raffi Ahmad, Nagita Slavina, Rachel Venya, Salim Nauderer, Ria Ricis, Deddy Corbuzier, Azka Corbuzier, Atta Halilintar, and Bonbon Santoso (Hardiantoro & Nugroho, 2024). Arief Muhammad, a well-known influencer, is a member of the National Campaign Team. In this case, the influencer's role is to create visual content for their account. This strategy aims to quickly spread the post's reach to each influencer's followers. These influencers greatly contributed to the production and circulation of Gemoy and OK Gas discourse on social media during the 2024 presidential election campaign. The role of influencers in the digital era is that of opinion leaders in the pre-digital era. Influencer posts are considered credible by their followers. The National Campaign Team held a grand People's Party for the Advanced Indonesia campaign to reach a wider audience. Top influencers were present at this event (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Prabowo's campaign advertisement involving influencers
(This post is from a suspended account: <https://t.co/y61bOXVJ6t>)

DISCUSSION

Voting is a profoundly positive and exhilarating experience. According to Bruter and Harrison (2020), citizens' emotions during an election align with this general outlook, as they are often overwhelmed by feelings of happiness, excitement, and pride when casting their ballots. The electoral period should be viewed as a hiatus from the broader political context that frequently causes frustration. Conversely, the moment within the voting booth serves as an empowering exception, offering a sense of hope that supersedes negative sentiments such as anger or despair. This suggests a clear bifurcation between long-term evaluations of the political system and the short-term emotional experience of the democratic ritual itself. Bruter and Harrison (2020) argued that emotional positivity is an integral part of the psychological function of elections. Voting enables individuals to engage with their electoral identity. Whether as an objective evaluator or a supporter of competing politicians, this role provides a sense of purpose and responsibility that transcends personal preferences. Thus, the joy of voting is not merely about who wins, but rather the intrinsic satisfaction derived from participating in a sacred collective process and being part of something larger than oneself.

The findings of Bruter and Harrison (2020) provide a vital conceptual foundation for analysing the Prabowo-Gibran campaign strategy in the 2024 presidential election. If the act of voting is inherently a positive emotional experience, then the crucial question arises: how can a political campaign amplify this positivity, particularly among the youth who dominate the demographic landscape? In the context of this campaign, the answer lies in the strategic use of AI as an instrument for amplifying brand equity through three primary mechanisms: precision segmentation, cultural adaptation, and visual affection production.

"First, AI-driven segmentation enables the campaign to resonate with voters' individual emotional preferences." Within the Prabowo-Gibran National Campaign Team structure, Team Fanta and Team Golf operationalized this through two digital platforms: *fotober2.ai*, which utilizes AR technology to create simulated direct interactions with the candidates, and *prabowogibran.ai*, which serves as the coordination hub for thousands of "cyber troop" volunteers. The *prabowogibran.ai* platform further facilitates the distribution of targeted campaign materials and the generation of AI-based content that reinforces positive messaging while mitigating negative sentiment. In this capacity, AI functions as the infrastructure that personalizes the electoral experience. These findings enrich Aaker's (1991) brand equity framework by demonstrating how continuous and personalized algorithmic interactions can construct the dimensions of brand associations and brand loyalty.

Second, AI-facilitated cultural adaptation is reflected in the strategic decision to "ride the waves" of social media algorithms rather than attempting to generate trends organically. Capitalization on the "Me as a Pixar Character" trend, which went viral in late 2023, birthed the "Gemoy" avatar, while TikTok algorithmic mapping led to the adoption of the "OK Gas" song as the official campaign jingle. The brilliance of this strategy lies in its ability to bridge the ethnic and geographical complexities of Indonesia. On the one hand, the Javanese-inflected song "Prabowo-Gibran Istimewa" maintained cultural connectivity with voters in Java, the pivotal region for electoral victory. On the other hand, "OK Gas," with its distinct Eastern Indonesian Malay characteristics, offered a sense of multi-ethnic inclusivity that mitigated potential "Java-centric" sentiments. This strategy demonstrates that AI has transformed into a tool for meaning production, capable of aligning candidates with diverse cultural expectations. Such cultural adaptations function as branded energizers (Aaker, 2010), successfully galvanizing public energy and engagement across territorial, ethnic, and generational segments.

Third, the production of visual affection through the "Gemoy" avatar became the most significant instrument in constructing a new brand personality for Prabowo Subianto. The re-figuration of Prabowo—transitioning from a former military general with a controversial history to a plump, cute, and adorable ("gemoy") animated character, exemplifies how AI can be used to re-engineer public perception. The #gemoy hashtag circulating on TikTok functioned as a floating signifier, encapsulating the affectivity of "cuteness" and political substance. The campaign team executed the capitalization of "gemoy" as a digital culture, including the involvement of celebrities and influencers to amplify the campaign message. This phenomenon illustrates a multi-actor ecosystem configuration comprising campaign teams, digital platforms, algorithms, influencers, and voters as prosumers who collectively shape brand associations in the public mind (Pich & Armannsdottir, 2022).

Prabowo-Gibran strategically used AI for public engagement and data infrastructure within their political campaign. The pair integrated the full spectrum of the functional potential of AI, enabling precise public sentiment mapping (Alnsour et al., 2025), granular psychometric segmentation (Duberry, 2022), and personalized content delivery alongside social media analytics (Ducange et al., 2019). The integration of frontstage immersive technologies, backstage robust data infrastructure, and strategic collaboration with influencers provides new insights into how brand equity is configured in the digital era of political campaigning.

The preceding discussion indicates a significant paradigm shift in political branding. The findings of this research demonstrate that the strategic use of AI in the Prabowo-Gibran branding during the 2024 Presidential Election extends Aaker's (1991) Brand Equity theory. In this contemporary context, brand personality, brand association, and brand loyalty are no longer exclusively constructed by the candidate's campaign team. Instead, they emerge as co-creative outputs generated through the dynamic interaction between algorithms, influencers, and users acting as prosumers.

CONCLUSION

Bibliometric findings confirm that research on AI in political campaigning is still in its nascent stages. This study of the Prabowo-Gibran campaign serves as a bridge connecting political science, media studies, and communication technology by empirically demonstrating how AI transformed into an instrument for amplifying brand equity during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. This AI-driven strategy successfully created a positive electoral experience that empowered youth voters while simultaneously proving that political branding in the digital era relies on cultivating atmosphere and affection throughout the entire campaign cycle.

The fundamental issue identified from the bibliometric mapping is the question of authenticity in AI-generated content, which has emerged as a niche theme. This directly points to the risk of an identity-image gap in the post-election phase, where an algorithmically constructed persona confronts the realities of policy-making and governmental performance. The electoral cycle, which comprises the campaign phase, election day, and the post-election period, shapes the atmosphere, affect, and electoral memory that determine how political brand images and values are constructed, stored, and revised. The discrepancy between the communicated brand identity and the image received by the public can trigger political brand transgression, particularly when the expectations of youth voters fostered by profoundly positive electoral experiences during the campaign are not fully met by the complexities of actual governance.

This study offers three significant theoretical contributions. First, regarding the position of AI in political branding, this research finds that AI is no longer a mere functional tool; rather, it functions as an active agent that plays a decisive role in determining political branding strategies. Second, it argues that in the AI era, the conceptualization of brand equity requires further scholarly deliberation by integrating the roles of algorithms and affective politics. This study demonstrates that the Prabowo-Gibran branding in the 2024 Presidential Election was not solely constructed by the campaign team, as algorithms significantly influenced the co-creation and dissemination of the brand. Third, it identifies a critical identity-image gap, where the algorithmically constructed 'Gemoy' persona may diverge from political reality. The role of

authenticity in AI-based political branding which determines the long-term sustainability of brand value remains a problematic area that necessitates further research in the future.

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