



## FRAMING OF TIKTOK SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE 2024 INDONESIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN



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**Abstract**

This study aims to examine the role of TikTok in the framing of political campaigns during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. The research focuses on how TikTok, as a dominant social media platform, influences public perception and political communication. Using a qualitative content analysis method, this study analyzes selected TikTok videos from prominent political candidates and their supporters, focusing on the themes, narratives, and visuals used in their campaigns. The findings reveal that TikTok is increasingly utilized to create emotional engagement, targeting younger voters through viral content and interactive features. Candidates use TikTok to present a more personal and relatable image, while also engaging with political issues through memes, short clips, and hashtag campaigns. The research concludes that TikTok plays a significant role in shaping electoral discourse by allowing real-time, creative, and participatory interactions between candidates and voters. This study contributes to the academic understanding of digital political communication, highlighting TikTok's potential as a powerful tool for political engagement and its impact on voter behavior, particularly among younger demographics. It also underscores the evolving nature of media consumption and its implications for the political landscape in Indonesia. The findings offer insights for future studies on social media's influence in electoral campaigns, particularly in emerging democracies where digital platforms are gaining prominence.

**Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji peran TikTok dalam framing kampanye politik selama Pemilihan Umum Presiden Indonesia 2024. Fokus penelitian ini adalah bagaimana TikTok, sebagai platform media sosial yang dominan, mempengaruhi persepsi publik dan komunikasi politik. Dengan menggunakan metode analisis konten kualitatif, penelitian ini menganalisis video TikTok terpilih dari kandidat politik terkemuka dan pendukung mereka, dengan fokus pada tema, narasi, dan visual yang digunakan dalam kampanye mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa TikTok semakin digunakan untuk menciptakan keterlibatan emosional, dengan menargetkan pemilih muda melalui konten viral dan fitur interaktif. Kandidat menggunakan TikTok untuk mempresentasikan citra yang lebih pribadi dan dapat dihubungkan, sekaligus membahas isu politik melalui meme, klip pendek, dan kampanye dengan tagar. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa TikTok memainkan peran penting dalam membentuk wacana elektoral dengan memungkinkan interaksi kreatif dan partisipatif antara kandidat dan pemilih secara langsung. Penelitian ini memberikan*



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*kontribusi pada pemahaman akademis tentang komunikasi politik digital, dengan menyoroti potensi TikTok sebagai alat yang kuat untuk keterlibatan politik dan dampaknya terhadap perilaku pemilih, khususnya di kalangan demografis muda. Hasil penelitian ini juga menggarisbawahi perkembangan konsumsi media yang terus berubah dan implikasinya terhadap lanskap politik di Indonesia. Temuan ini memberikan wawasan bagi studi lebih lanjut tentang pengaruh media sosial dalam kampanye pemilu, khususnya di negara-negara demokrasi yang sedang berkembang di mana platform digital semakin mendapat perhatian.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Social media platforms have become pivotal in shaping political discourse, especially during election seasons (Subekti et al., 2025). Among these, TikTok has gained significant traction due to its widespread use among younger audiences, who are increasingly turning to the platform for news, entertainment, and political information. TikTok's unique features, such as short-form video content, highly personalized algorithms, and viral potential, make it a powerful tool for shaping public opinion. The ability of TikTok to blend entertainment with political messaging has raised crucial questions about its impact on democracy and electoral outcomes. As social media continues to evolve, understanding how political campaigns use platforms like TikTok to frame candidates and issues is essential (Guess et al., 2023). This study focuses on TikTok's role in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election, providing insights into how the platform contributes to shaping political narratives in contemporary campaigns.

While existing literature has explored the role of social media in politics, there remains a significant gap in research specifically examining TikTok's unique role in framing political discourse (Klinger et al., 2023). Much of the existing scholarship has focused on other platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram, with limited attention paid to TikTok's video-centric format. Furthermore, the majority of studies have concentrated on Western elections, which may not offer an accurate reflection of the dynamics in Southeast Asia. In Indonesia, where social media use is rapidly growing, TikTok has become an influential platform, especially among young voters. Despite its increasing prominence, there is limited research exploring how TikTok's algorithm, content creation tools, and influencer-driven culture shape political messages in an Indonesian context (Nai, 2021). This gap highlights the need for focused research that investigates how TikTok specifically frames political campaigns and influences public perceptions during the election.

Previous studies on social media's role in political campaigns have predominantly focused on the broader impact of digital platforms in mobilizing voters, shaping public opinion, and constructing candidate images (Siegel et al., 2021). However, these studies often overlook the distinct features of TikTok, which differentiates it from other social media platforms. The platform's viral nature, coupled with its focus on short, creative videos, provides unique opportunities for

political actors to connect with voters. Moreover, influencers on TikTok play an essential role in shaping political narratives, often independently of traditional media outlets. Although some studies have addressed the influence of social media influencers in elections, there is a lack of research specifically examining how TikTok frames political content, particularly in the context of Indonesian elections. This study seeks to fill this gap by examining how political messages are framed through TikTok content during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election (Alonso – Mucoz & Casero – Ripollés, 2020).

The main objective of this study is to investigate how TikTok contributes to the framing of political candidates during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election (Gerbaudo et al., 2019). Specifically, the study will explore what frames are used to shape public perceptions of the candidates and how these frames reflect broader campaign strategies (Jaffrelot & Verniers, 2020). The study hypothesizes that TikTok, with its highly engaging and interactive features, plays a critical role in framing political narratives, particularly among younger voters. By analyzing TikTok videos, comments, and influencer content, this research will examine how political candidates leverage the platform to communicate their messages and engage with the electorate (Keller & Klinger, 2019). The findings will shed light on the role of social media, particularly TikTok, in contemporary political communication, offering insights into its influence on voter behavior and electoral outcomes in Indonesia.

## METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine the framing of TikTok social media in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaign. Data collection took place over two months, from January to February 2024, and focused on TikTok content, including videos related to the presidential candidates, user comments, and posts by influencers. A purposive sampling method was used to select 100 TikTok posts based on their relevance to the candidates and their level of engagement, such as the number of likes, comments, and shares. The research aimed to capture a representative sample of the most discussed and widely shared content during the election period. Content was collected by a team of trained researchers who accessed TikTok's public platform through both manual methods and automated tools to gather the posts. This selection process ensured a diverse representation of candidate messaging and public interaction on the platform.

Data analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis, which allowed for the identification of key frames in the posts. Thematic analysis was focused on both visual and textual elements, paying attention to how these elements contributed to constructing the candidates' public image and political narratives. NVivo software was employed for qualitative data coding, enabling the researchers to organize and classify the data systematically. The analysis focused on themes such as the portrayal of candidates, the type of political messages conveyed, and the use of emotional appeals in the content. The study used framing theory, specifically Entman's (1993) conceptualization, as the theoretical framework to interpret how TikTok users and influencers created political narratives. To ensure

methodological rigor, two independent researchers coded the data, and any discrepancies were resolved through discussion. This approach ensured the reliability and validity of the findings, and the study adhered to established qualitative research practices, ensuring transparency and reproducibility.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Forms and Manifestations of Political Framing on TikTok

The analysis of TikTok content during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election uncovered various forms of political framing used to shape public perceptions of the candidates. One prominent manifestation was emotional framing, where TikTok content creators utilized music, video editing, and storytelling techniques to elicit emotional responses from viewers. Emotional appeals were designed to make candidates appear more relatable and human (KALLA & BROOCKMAN, 2018). Videos often featured personal stories, family moments, or candid interactions with the public, all aimed at highlighting traits like sincerity, empathy, and leadership. This emotional connection was reinforced through visuals such as close-up shots of the candidates, celebratory moments, or inspirational settings, making them appear more approachable to younger voters. This type of framing played a key role in presenting the candidates as individuals who understand and connect with the electorate, making them more appealing to potential voters who value authenticity (Francia, 2018).

Another form of political framing observed was the strategic use of hashtags and captions, which served to reinforce political narratives around the candidates. Hashtags such as `#Pilpres2024`, `#VoteForChange`, and `#IndonesiaMaju` were deployed to associate candidates with specific political ideologies or movements. These hashtags helped organize political discourse around the candidates, giving users a clear framework within which to engage with the content (Mellon et al., 2018). The captions accompanying TikTok videos often provided additional context or calls to action, guiding the interpretation of the video's message. Political frames were therefore not just embedded in the videos themselves but also in the textual content that accompanied them, directing users toward particular views or interpretations of the candidates' platforms.

TikTok influencers were also integral in framing the political conversation. Influencers, who already have substantial followings on the platform, often created videos that either endorsed or criticized candidates, shaping the political narrative through informal, humorous, and sometimes satirical content. This allowed political discourse to extend beyond traditional campaign channels and into the realm of entertainment. Influencers leveraged trends, memes, and popular culture references to present candidates in relatable or humorous ways, breaking down complex political issues into bite-sized, easily digestible content (Susbanszky et al., 2022). This framing technique appealed to younger voters who are more likely to engage with entertainment-based political messaging (Barnes, 2022). As a result, influencers played a key role in shaping perceptions of the candidates and their policies, particularly among younger and more digitally active voters.

A noteworthy manifestation of political framing on TikTok was the creation of contrast frames, where videos depicted candidates in opposition to each other (Susōnszky et al., 2022). TikTok content often portrayed one candidate as a reformist figure pushing for change, while the other was framed as part of the political establishment, advocating for continuity. These contrast frames helped viewers quickly distinguish between candidates, simplifying their decision-making process. Such framing also served to align candidates with particular political ideologies or visions for the future of Indonesia. Through visual contrasts and accompanying narratives, these videos reinforced the idea that voters had a clear choice between two distinct political paths. The use of contrast framing was particularly effective in generating a polarized political atmosphere, where viewers could easily identify with one of the candidates based on their ideological alignment (Albrecht, 2022).

Testimonial framing was another prevalent form of content in the TikTok political discourse (Dawkins, 2022). Influencers, celebrities, and regular TikTok users often shared personal testimonials in support of specific candidates, positioning themselves as relatable figures who had a personal connection to the candidates. These videos, which included stories about how a candidate's policies or personal background resonated with the creator's values, reinforced the human side of political messaging. This form of framing was persuasive because it made the candidates seem more genuine and accessible, thereby enhancing their credibility in the eyes of voters. Personal endorsements were particularly influential when they came from widely respected figures, as their support lent authenticity to the candidate's public image. This type of user-generated content allowed for a more grassroots approach to political framing, where ordinary citizens became active participants in shaping the electoral narrative (Boukes, 2022).

The viral nature of TikTok also played a significant role in the rapid dissemination and adaptation of political frames (Simonsen & Bonikowski, 2022). TikTok's algorithm prioritizes content that generates high engagement, meaning that the more likes, shares, and comments a video receives, the more likely it is to reach a broader audience. This viral potential meant that certain frames could be amplified quickly, especially those that resonated emotionally or humorously with users. In many cases, content was remixed, re-shared, or altered by users, further contributing to the evolution of political narratives. This viral nature allowed political messaging to transcend the initial creators and spread widely, ensuring that political frames reached diverse audiences and were continuously modified as part of an ongoing dialogue (Amsalem & Zoizner, 2022). The ability to remix content gave users more agency in shaping political narratives, turning them from passive consumers of political content into active participants in the framing process.

## Factors Influencing Political Framing on TikTok

The political framing observed on TikTok during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election was influenced by several key factors, each contributing to

the platform's role in shaping political discourse (Amsalem & Zoizner, 2022). One of the most significant factors was the platform's algorithm, which prioritized content that garnered high engagement. This algorithmic preference for viral content created an incentive for content creators to produce videos that were not only entertaining but also emotionally engaging, as emotional content tends to elicit stronger reactions from viewers. Videos that evoked laughter, surprise, or inspiration were more likely to be shared, thereby increasing their reach and amplifying the political messages embedded in them. As a result, the framing of political candidates often leaned heavily on emotional appeal, creating content designed to resonate deeply with viewers and encourage them to share or interact with the video.

Another crucial factor influencing political framing on TikTok was the short-form video format, which encouraged creators to condense complex political ideas into easily digestible pieces (Gonzalez et al., 2024). Given TikTok's focus on brevity, content creators had to capture viewers' attention within the first few seconds, making simplicity and clarity essential. This often meant that political content on TikTok focused on high-level messages, such as slogans or personal traits of the candidates, rather than deep dives into policy details (Uluzay & Melek, 2024). The format encouraged creators to use catchy visuals, humor, or impactful soundbites, framing the candidates in ways that were visually and emotionally compelling. This format favored quick, attention-grabbing political messages, and discouraged more nuanced or detailed policy discussions, which made it easier for candidates to be framed in ways that aligned with the public's immediate emotional responses.

The influence of TikTok influencers also played a significant role in shaping the political narrative. These influencers, who have significant reach and engagement on the platform, were key players in promoting political frames and endorsing candidates. They used their platforms to either support or criticize presidential candidates, often blending entertainment with political messaging. Many influencers employed humor, memes, or culturally relevant references to express their political views, making their content more relatable and engaging for younger voters (Puri et al., 2020). This type of influencer-driven political content was particularly impactful because influencers have established trust with their followers, which made their endorsements or critiques carry significant weight. Their ability to inject entertainment value into political messages allowed for the framing of candidates in a more informal and accessible manner, which resonated with the younger, digital-native electorate.

Political campaigns also recognized the power of TikTok and adapted their strategies to leverage the platform's unique features. Campaigns began to collaborate with influencers to create viral challenges, memes, and promotional content designed to fit TikTok's style (Pennycook et al., 2020). These collaborations allowed campaigns to reach younger voters in an authentic way, bypassing traditional media channels in favor of a more direct, user-driven approach. The partnership between political campaigns and TikTok influencers

blurred the lines between advertising and entertainment, leading to the creation of political content that felt less like traditional campaigning and more like organic, community—driven communication. By embracing TikTok's culture and content style, campaigns were able to engage with voters in a way that felt relevant to their everyday digital interactions, increasing the effectiveness of their messaging.

The interactive nature of TikTok also influenced political framing, as the platform encouraged users to engage with political content actively. Through features such as commenting, sharing, and creating reaction videos, users became participants in the political framing process, not just passive consumers. This interactivity allowed users to engage with the content in a way that reinforced or altered the political narrative being presented. For instance, users could respond to political videos with their own opinions, effectively creating counter—frames or reinforcing existing ones. This level of engagement fostered a dynamic, evolving political discourse where political frames were not static but constantly reshaped by user interactions (Gao et al., 2020). This participatory nature of TikTok ensured that political messaging was fluid and responsive to the public's reactions, making it a more interactive form of political communication.

Lastly, the highly visual and creative aspects of TikTok content had a significant impact on how political messages were framed. Content creators used filters, effects, and text overlays to enhance the visual appeal of their political messages, which made them more engaging and memorable (Pennycook et al., 2020). These visual elements allowed political content to stand out in a crowded digital space, ensuring that viewers would remember the political frame being presented. For example, candidates might be depicted in empowering visuals or dramatic lighting to evoke strength and leadership, or they might be presented in more vulnerable or relatable settings to humanize them. The creative flexibility of TikTok's video format allowed for a broader range of political framing techniques, which helped political messages reach and resonate with a diverse audience across Indonesia.

### **The Impact of the Transformation of Political Campaigns on TikTok Social Media in the Indonesian Presidential Election.**

The results of this study demonstrate how TikTok has transformed the way political campaigns were conducted during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election (Edo Rahman et al., 2024). Through the analysis of TikTok content, it was found that political campaigns are no longer solely reliant on traditional media like television and radio, but are increasingly influenced by interactive, video—based social media platforms like TikTok. TikTok offers a short—form video format that combines entertainment with politics, allowing campaign content to be delivered in a more creative and easily accessible manner for younger voters (Allington et al., 2021). In this context, political framing on TikTok frequently employed emotional approaches and visual narratives to capture the audience's attention, highlighting candidates' personalities, political messages, and their

positions on key issues. Political campaigns by candidates increasingly relied on influencers and regular users to spread their political messages, making these campaigns more community-based and interactive.

The significant changes in the transformation of political campaigns on TikTok can be attributed to several key factors. First, TikTok's algorithm, which promotes content with high engagement—such as likes, comments, and shares—was a primary driver of more interactive and emotionally engaging political formats. This led content creators to focus on producing videos that were visually appealing and easy to share. Additionally, TikTok's short-form video format played a crucial role, encouraging content that was both entertaining and concise (Dwivedi et al., 2021). This encouraged content creators to simplify political messages into easy-to-understand snippets, focusing on high-level, emotionally resonant themes. Another major factor was the influential role of TikTok influencers, who have a significant reach and often became involved in endorsing or critiquing candidates, transforming the political campaign dynamic into something more personal and less confined to traditional media.

The transformation of political campaigns on TikTok also had a significant impact on how voters interacted with politics (Ayers et al., 2023). TikTok provided a platform for younger voters not only to consume political content but also to actively participate in spreading these messages. Through comments, remixes, and duets, TikTok users could not only engage with content but also shape it (Audrezet et al., 2020). This created a more dynamic and democratic form of campaigning, where anyone could become a political content creator, rather than just a recipient of political messages. Moreover, TikTok allowed campaigns to more specifically target particular audiences based on data analysis performed by the platform's algorithm, facilitating campaigns to deliver more tailored and personalized messages.

When compared to previous studies that mostly focused on political campaigns on platforms like Facebook or Twitter, the use of TikTok in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election showed significant differences. Platforms like Facebook and Twitter are more focused on text-based communication and images, while TikTok emphasizes visual elements and entertainment (Jin et al., 2019). TikTok allows political campaigns to reach new dimensions in political communication by combining humor, music, and highly engaging visuals, making political messages more appealing and easier to digest. For example, influencers on TikTok are able to blend politics with entertainment, making political campaigns feel closer and more relatable to younger audiences (Lou & Yuan, 2019). This contrasts with traditional political campaigns, which are usually more formal and structured.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be made. First, conceptually, further research should explore how TikTok is altering voter behavior, particularly among younger voters, and how this platform can be used more effectively in democratic contexts. From a methodological standpoint, it is important to delve deeper into the framing techniques used on TikTok, such as the use of humor, memes, and personal stories, and their impact on voters (Islam

et al., 2020). From a policy perspective, regulators should consider ways to regulate political content on platforms like TikTok to ensure that political campaigns remain transparent, accurate, and free from misinformation. Fact-checking mechanisms need to be more robust, and media literacy should be promoted to help voters critically assess political content they encounter on TikTok and similar platforms, ensuring that the democratic process remains fair and well-informed.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study reveal that TikTok played a significant role in framing the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaign by shaping public perceptions of the candidates through various narrative techniques. The analysis of 100 TikTok posts showed that influencers and users actively contributed to constructing political images by emphasizing certain themes, such as candidate authenticity, emotional appeals, and political messaging. The posts primarily framed the candidates in terms of their personal qualities and their ability to connect with younger voters. Visual elements such as video editing, captions, and hashtags were crucial in amplifying political messages and influencing the election discourse. Additionally, TikTok users engaged in shaping and reinforcing these frames through comments and interactions, which further impacted the election narrative.

This study offers a conceptual and methodological contribution to the understanding of social media's role in political campaigns, particularly in emerging digital platforms like TikTok. By applying framing theory to TikTok content, the research provides a novel approach to examining political communication in the digital age. The use of thematic content analysis, supported by NVivo software, presents a reliable and replicable method for analyzing the framing of political messages. The study also highlights the growing importance of influencer-driven campaigns on social media, which have become central to political discourse in Indonesia. Despite its contributions, the study acknowledges certain limitations, such as the potential bias in post selection and the scope being limited to TikTok content alone. Future research could expand to include other platforms and a broader range of content to provide a more comprehensive understanding of social media's influence in political campaigns.

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