

## Personal Branding of Prabowo Subianto Ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election: Content Analysis of Instagram @Prabowo Photos & Captions

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### ABSTRACT

Contestations in general elections are often followed by personal branding carried out by political figures. Not only through mass media but also through social media. It is interesting to study how political figures try to create their personal branding through their personal social media. This research aims to analyze Prabowo Subianto's personal branding on Instagram in the period from March 1 to August 31, 2023, which covers an important time on the road to the 2024 Presidential Election. The research was conducted using the quantitative content analysis method on 31 randomly selected photo and video posts from @prabowo's Instagram account. The variables analyzed include personal branding themes and personal branding strategies based on the uploaded text/caption and uploaded photos on the feeds. Themes and strategies are then associated with the concept of personal branding according to Kotler and Armstrong using 5 personal branding concepts. The results showed that Prabowo's personal branding theme was dominated by indicators of sincerity and ability by emphasizing the image of a leader who is reliable and has an emotional closeness to the people. This research is important to understand the use of Instagram by politicians in branding themselves ahead of the five-year democratic party.

**Keywords:** *Personal branding, Instagram, 2024 Presidential Election, Content Analysis*

### INTRODUCTION

The development of Internet technology in Indonesia has led to changes in political communication activities. The internet is now one of the effective campaign media for politicians to build an image and gain voter support (Ulung, A. 2020). One of the widely used social media platforms is Instagram. According to the January 2023 We Are Social survey, Instagram is ranked as the second most popular social media platform in Indonesia after WhatsApp with 67 million users. Therefore, many politicians utilize Instagram as a means of political campaigning through uploading content in the form of photos and videos on their personal accounts.

Content on social media that aims to form a positive image is known as personal branding (Angraeni, et al. 2022). Several previous studies have examined the use of Instagram for personal branding of politicians in Indonesia, such as those conducted by

Putri (2021) on Anies Baswedan's Instagram account and Agung Yudha (2019) on Joko Widodo's Instagram account. Therefore, it is important to analyze how Prabowo is doing personal branding on Instagram ahead of this five-year democratic party.

The purpose of this study is to analyze Prabowo Subianto's personal branding on his @prabowo Instagram account from March 1 to August 31, 2023, ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election. This research examines a long period of time, from March 1 to August 31, 2023, which covers an important time on the way to the 2023 Presidential Election. Researchers will conduct a content analysis of uploaded content in the form of photos and videos to see what themes and personal branding strategies are used to increase electability and gain the support of millennial voters (Yasser, G. 2018).

The results of the study are expected to provide a new understanding of the use of Instagram in building political image in Indonesia, especially the figure of Prabowo Subianto. In addition, the research results are also expected to provide practical insights for politicians and success teams in developing effective social media campaign strategies. Thus, this research is important to conduct considering that there have not been many similar previous studies related to Prabowo's personal branding on Instagram ahead of the 2024 presidential election.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORY**

Personal branding is an identity or characteristic that is attached to a person. In the Great Indonesian Dictionary (KBBI), a brand is an identifying mark on goods that projects an image of the superiority and quality of the goods. The brand of goods is the same as a personal brand, which is an image of a person that is recognized or known by others. Kotler & Armstrong (2006: 140) suggest that the core of the brand personality concept is that both brands and humans have personality characteristics, and consumers tend to choose brands that reflect or are in line with their own personality characteristics. To evaluate brand characteristics, the Five Brand Personality Traits proposed by Kotler & Amstong in 2006 are used. The five scales include Sincerity which refers to four characteristics of a brand: down to earth, honest, wholesome, and cheerful, Excitement which is based on the traits of a brand that is daring, spirited, imaginative, and up-to-date,

Competence which refers to traits that show a brand is reliable, intelligent, and successful, Sophistication which is based on brand traits that illustrate its upper class and charming appeal, Ruggedness which highlights brand characteristics that are outdoorsy and tough and resilient.

Social media is a digital platform that facilitates users to communicate, interact, and share information in the form of writings, photos, and videos online. Users can easily participate, share, and create content including blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Another opinion says that social media is online media that supports social interaction and social media uses web-based technology that turns communication into an interactive dialog. In addition, social media also offers new means for users to represent themselves and build relationships with others. Users can befriend and interact with anyone on the platform. They can also search and select accounts to build relationships with. Indirectly, interaction on social media builds social relationships, which is a group of people who relate and interact with each other, and there is a reciprocal relationship of exchanging information.

Social media is considered capable of presenting a new way of communicating with technology that is far different from traditional media. Various communication media in this "cyber" world form a rich communication network without time and space limitations. Then along with the development of communication and information technology, even marketing strategies began to shift to content marketing. Various roles of social media are carried out, one of which is as a means of disseminating "eye-catching" content. Not only content in the form of articles, but videos, podcasts (audio content), e-books, and so on are also distributed on web blogs or official websites and social networks. If social media is directed to a site or blog, then the site persuades visitors to spread it on various social networks, and it can increase visibility.

Instagram is a social network based on user-generated content, where users themselves create content on the platform. Instagram provides a platform for users to send pictures or videos to each other instantly using the internet network. Instagram helps users to experience the virtual world by presenting a menu of home page, search, explore, reels, create, and others. Like most other social media platforms, Instagram

operates on the principle of dialog between users through the following and follower features. In their posts, users can mention other user accounts, caption posts, give locations, use hashtags, and add songs to their posts. In addition, users have the ability to comment, like, send, and save uploaded photos and videos. That way, communication can be established with the like and comment features in other users' posts.

Instagram serves as a communication channel that allows its users to interact, share, and communicate with others through various features such as posts, comments, direct messages, and visual content. Instagram has an extraordinary function because it can be a source of information needed by the community. Instagram plays an important role as a social media platform that allows users to share information, interact, and communicate with various parties. For example, many users, including public figures and news organizations, utilize Instagram to spread actual information, breaking news, and insights that are useful to the community.

As such, Instagram provides people with access to relevant and necessary sources of information. Therefore, Instagram has now become a necessity in the lives of many individuals in today's digital age.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The research method contains the research methods used, data collection techniques, and data analysis techniques used. It also explains the object of research (population and sample, goodness criteria, unit of analysis, etc. adjusted to the method used). In addition, it also explains the results of the validity test that has been carried out.

This research uses the content analysis method with a quantitative approach. Quantitative content analysis was chosen because it aims to obtain an objective and systematic description of the content of media messages. The overall population amounted to 1048 caption text uploads, both photos and videos, published on @prabowo's Instagram account. The selection of the time span is based on the consideration that the period a year before the general election is the most intense period for political actors in conducting campaigns and branding themselves.

The research sample was determined using a simple random sampling technique, which was 200 posts randomly selected from the population during the research time span, namely March 1 to August 31, 2023. The research variables consisted of personal branding themes and personal branding strategies. Personal branding themes include issues raised, activities/activities carried out, and political messages conveyed.

The research data is in the form of text/caption, photos, and videos uploaded on Instagram @prabowo. The data is collected using the documentation technique, which is data retrieval sourced from documents, in the form of screenshots of Instagram content along with the captions. The results of data analysis will be associated with 5 personal branding concepts according to Kotler & Armstrong, namely Sincerity, Excitement, Competence, Sophistication, and Ruggedness.

Tabel 1. Variables, Concept & Indicator

Variables	Concept	Indicator
Personal Branding of Prabowo Subianto in his Instagram account @prabowo	Brand Personality (Kotler and Amstrong)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sincerity</li> <li>● Excitement</li> <li>● Competence</li> <li>● Sophistication</li> <li>● Ruggedness</li> </ul>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prabowo Subianto's personal branding through Instagram ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election requires an in-depth understanding of how Prabowo uses social media to influence public perception, especially millennial voters. From the analysis conducted, it is clear that Prabowo emphasizes "Competence" as the main aspect of his personal branding strategy. This is in accordance with Kotler & Armstrong's theory, which states the importance of displaying expertise and credibility in building a strong personal image.

Prabowo Subianto, as a senior political figure, understands the importance of utilizing social media to communicate his political messages, including Instagram. Instagram, with its predominantly young audience, is an important tool to attract the support of millennial voters. In the time span of March to August 2023, Prabowo displayed various aspects of his life that were not only limited to political activities, but also social

interactions, involvement in community issues, and demonstrations of his personal competence.

One strategy that stands out in Prabowo's personal branding is the use of narratives that demonstrate his leadership and decision-making skills. This is reinforced by posts featuring activities in which Prabowo has played an active role, both on a national and international scale. This not only highlights his expertise and experience but also communicates the message that he is a reliable and influential figure. In addition, Prabowo also frequently posts content that shows his warm interactions with the public. This helps in building an image as a leader who is familiar and accessible to the people. This kind of approach is important in building an emotional connection with voters, especially in the digital era where personal connections are crucial.

Related to Kotler & Armstrong's personal branding theory, Prabowo seems to understand the importance of "Sincerity" in communication. Sincerity in delivering messages and interacting with voters can increase trust and give an image that he is an authentic and honest leader. In the context of "Excitement" Prabowo uses Instagram to showcase the side of his life that may not be widely known to the public, such as his hobbies or leisure activities. This gives a sense of excitement and humanity to his political image, making him more relatable to young voters. "Civility" and "Toughness" are also represented in the uploaded content. Politeness is reflected in the way Prabowo respects and interacts with different groups of people, while toughness is shown through an emphasis on leadership strength and resilience in the face of challenges.

Overall, Prabowo's personal branding strategy through Instagram shows a good understanding of how to utilize social media to build a positive image and attract support. This is important, given that social media has become one of the main channels in modern political campaigns, especially in appealing to young voters who will play an important role in the 2024 presidential election.

Based on the results of the analysis of 31 Instagram posts @prabowo in the period March 1 - August 31, 2023, with 5 indicators, the following results were obtained:

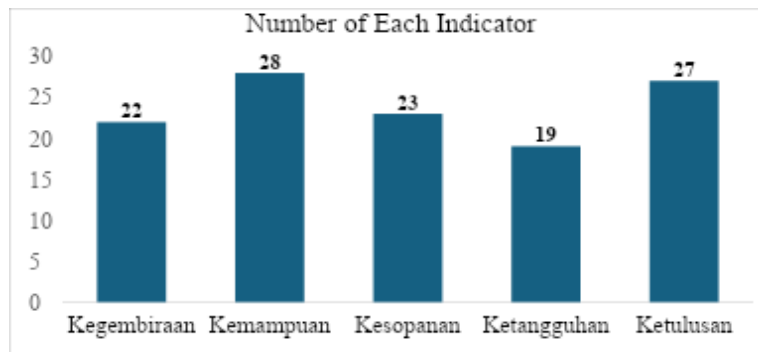


Figure 1. Total Number of Each Indicator

Sincerity is associated with interactions that show trust and openness, such as the meeting with Teo Chee Hean (March 1, 2023) which reflects sincerity and openness in diplomatic relations. This shows that Prabowo not only presents himself as a political figure but also as an open and sincere individual in interactions between countries. There are 27 (23%) indicators of sincerity found in Prabowo's Instagram posts.

Excitement, measured through the emotional stimulation evoked, can be seen from the cheerful expressions and enthusiasm of participants in an event (March 3, 2023), which reflects excitement and emotional engagement with his audience. This indicates that Prabowo is able to connect with his audience not only in a serious context but also through more relaxed and playful moments. In the analysis, there are 22 (18%) indicators of joy in each upload.

This ability, which is focused on meeting the needs and expectations of the audience, is evident from activities that show Prabowo's expertise in military and diplomacy, such as when he is shown in the cockpit of a fighter plane (March 8, 2023). This emphasizes his military capabilities and supports his image as a competent leader. This is supported by the results of the analysis which shows that the ability indicator has a high number of 28 (24%), so it can be said that the ability indicator is the most prominent.

Courtesy measured through an image of luxury, elegance, or premium class, seen in formal appearances and neat meeting settings on various occasions, shows high manners and politeness. An example is the meeting at the Ministry Office (March 1, 2023), which reflects professionalism and politeness. The politeness indicator contained in

@prabowo's Instagram uploads based on the analysis obtained 23 (23%) which is the highest result after the ability indicator.

Toughness is measured through the impression of strength, reliability, or masculinity, reflected in Prabowo's commitment to unity in a peaceful nation (March 5, 2023), showing strength and resilience of character.

Each of these indicators is represented in various posts that show how Prabowo interacts with various parties and how he handles various situations. This provides evidence that Prabowo integrates aspects of personal branding in his activities on social media, in a seemingly deliberate and strategic way, to build and reinforce the political and personal image he wants to project to millennial voters. As such, Prabowo appears to be using Instagram as a tool to reinforce narratives of leadership capacity, value sustainability and social engagement that resonate with the expectations and aspirations of his audience.

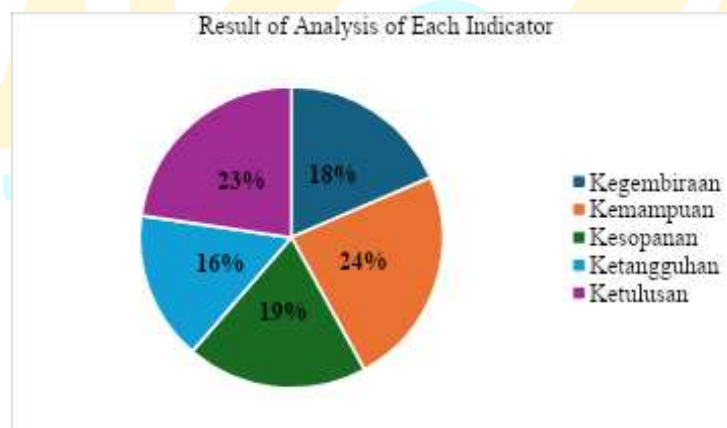


Figure 2. Percent Analysis Results for Each Indicator

Based on the analysis, it can be seen that in the context of personal branding, Prabowo Subianto displays a combination of various indicators with varying dominance depending on the context of the situation in each upload. Sincerity and ability are two aspects that consistently stand out in various activities. This analysis shows that the aspects of sincerity (23%) and capability (24%) are often the most prominent in Prabowo Subianto's personal branding in various contexts, emphasizing his image as a caring and competent leader.

## CONCLUSION

Prabowo Subianto's personal branding strategy on Instagram features a combination of indicators that highlight competence and sincerity as the main elements, reflecting the image of a leader who is reliable and has an emotional closeness with the people. By utilizing warm interactions, expertise in leadership, and engagement in social issues, Prabowo managed to build relationships with young audiences, which is crucial for success in the 2024 presidential election. The analysis shows a strategic and layered approach, asserting leadership strengths and values that resonate with voters' expectations.

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