

The Role of Beauty in Political Marketing: A Case Study of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's 2024 East Java Regional Representative Board Win

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ABSTRACT

This research discusses the role of beauty as a political marketing strategy in Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory in the East Java Regional Representative Board election. The main objective of this research is to analyze beauty as a factor influencing public perception and garnering voter support in a political context. The hope of the researcher is that this study can provide an understanding of how visual aspects like beauty in today's era can be a political marketing strategy and contribute to the success of candidates in local political contexts. Practically, this research provides a guide for political candidates and campaign teams in developing effective political marketing strategies by considering visually appealing aspects for voters. The methodology used is qualitative analysis through a case study of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's political campaign in the 2024 East Java Regional Representative Board election and media analysis related to voter responses to beauty images in politics. The research findings indicate that beauty plays a significant role in influencing public perception and gaining voter support. Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory in the East Java Regional Representative Board election highlights the importance of political marketing strategies that combine visual aspects and political messages relevant to voters' needs in political competition.

Keywords: *Beauty, Political Marketing, Kondang Ayu, East Java*

INTRODUCTION

Political marketing has become an inseparable element of the democratic process in the modern era. In Indonesia, political marketing strategies are a major focus because they are key to the success of candidates and political parties in gaining voter support. One strategy that has become increasingly popular in political marketing is the use of beauty as a tool to enhance a candidate's attractiveness and image in the eyes of the public. This research aims to examine the role of beauty as a strategy in political marketing, as well as the implications of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory in the East Java Regional Representative Board election.

In the context of political marketing, it is important to understand that political campaigns are not just about vision, mission, and programs, but also about how candidates build an attractive image and brand image for voters. Beauty is one of the

factors that is closely observed in this process. The use of beauty as a political marketing strategy is not new, but it is increasingly evolving and receiving greater attention in the current digital and social media era.

Kondang Kusumaning Ayu, a candidate who gained prominence in the East Java Regional Representative Board election, is an interesting example to analyze. As a woman with an attractive appearance and a strong image, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu successfully captured public attention and built a solid support base. However, the question arises as to how much a candidate's beauty influences voter perception and other factors that play a role in the success of political marketing.

This research aims to provide a deeper understanding of how beauty is positioned in political marketing strategies and how it affects voter decisions, especially in the context of the Regional Representative Board election in East Java. By analyzing the case of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu, it is hoped that a comprehensive picture of the role of beauty in political marketing and its impact on political election results can be drawn.

In the context of political elections in Indonesia, which has a complex political culture, beauty often attracts public attention and becomes a significant topic of discussion. However, it should be noted that beauty is just one of many factors that influence voter support. Factors such as integrity, competence, political programs, and track record also play a significant role in determining voter choices.

The analysis of the Kondang Kusumaning Ayu case in the East Java Regional Representative Board election will provide deeper insights into how beauty can be a strength in political marketing, while also highlighting the importance of examining other factors that also influence a candidate's political success. This research will also explore public responses and perceptions towards political marketing strategies that use beauty as a key element.

By deepening understanding of the relationship between beauty and political marketing, it is hoped that the results of this research can make a meaningful contribution to political practitioners, academics, and the general public in understanding the dynamics of political marketing in an increasingly complex and

dynamic modern era. In conclusion, beauty can indeed be an effective strategy in political marketing, but it also needs to be balanced with other factors that can enhance the quality of leadership and service to the public.

In recent years, the concept of political marketing has gained significant attention and importance in the realm of modern politics. With the advent of digital technologies and social media platforms, political campaigns and strategies have evolved to encompass a wide range of techniques and methods aimed at capturing the attention and support of voters. This shift towards a more sophisticated and nuanced approach to political marketing has led to the exploration of various factors that can influence voter perceptions and decision-making processes.

One such factor that has garnered considerable interest is the role of beauty in political marketing. Beauty, often associated with attractiveness, charisma, and positive qualities, has been used by political candidates and parties as a strategic tool to enhance their image and appeal to the public. The utilization of beauty in political marketing is not a new phenomenon; however, its significance and impact have grown significantly in the digital age.

Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory in the 2024 East Java Regional Representative Board Election election serves as a compelling case study to delve deeper into the dynamics of beauty as a political marketing strategy. As a candidate who garnered attention for her attractive appearance and strong public image, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's success highlights the potential influence of beauty in shaping voter perceptions and decisions.

This research aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of beauty in political marketing, with a specific focus on its implications in Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory. By examining the strategies and tactics employed during her campaign, as well as the public's response and perception towards her use of beauty, this study seeks to uncover valuable insights into the effectiveness and ethical considerations of utilizing beauty as a political marketing strategy.

Furthermore, this research seeks to contribute to the broader discourse on political marketing strategies and their impact on democratic processes. By shedding

light on the role of beauty and its interaction with other factors such as integrity, competence, and policy platforms, this study aims to enhance our understanding of the complexities involved in contemporary political campaigns.

Through an in-depth analysis of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory and the broader implications of beauty in political marketing, this research endeavors to offer valuable insights and recommendations for political practitioners, policymakers, scholars, and the general public. By critically examining the intersection of beauty, politics, and marketing, this study aims to foster a more informed and nuanced dialogue on the evolving landscape of political communication and engagement in the modern era.

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORY

Beauty in Political Marketing

Beauty is often considered a factor that can influence public perception of a political candidate. Various studies have highlighted the role of beauty in political marketing and its impact on voter support. Beauty in the context of political marketing is an interesting topic to research because it has a significant influence on public perception of a political candidate.

Many studies have revealed that an attractive physical appearance can help build a positive image for a candidate and increase his or her appeal to voters. For example, research by Nursidqi & Sofyan (2023) shows that candidates who are considered to have an attractive appearance tend to be more liked by voters, although this does not always have a direct impact on voting decisions. This attraction can come from physical appearance, speaking style, personality, performance.

To provide context for the visual analysis of candidates, this research highlights the concept of personalization, which is receiving increasing attention in the study of political social media strategy. Research (Setiyani, 2022) has revealed that an attractive physical appearance can provide a competitive advantage for a candidate in attracting the attention of voters. Brand physicality refers to all the physical attributes associated with a brand that come to mind when the brand name is mentioned. These components

are considered the basis that allows a brand to be recognized easily and without ambiguity. The physical appearance of a brand shows the special characteristics and qualities inherent in the brand. Through this physical aspect, brands can create functional added value for consumers.

Social media platforms allow politicians to circumvent news gatekeepers to raise their profiles and communicate directly with citizens. As a consequence, there is increasing interest in studying politicians' messages on social media and what makes them effective (Manon et al., 2020). To provide context for the analysis of candidates' visual self-representations, this research highlights the concept of personalization, which is receiving increasing attention in the study of political social media strategies. Candidates who are perceived to have an attractive appearance are more likely to receive positive media coverage, which in turn can increase their popularity and public support.

In addition, psychological theories such as the halo effect also support the concept that attractive physical appearance can influence voters' perceptions of a candidate's character and competence. For example, research by (Peng, 2021) found that voters tend to associate attractive physical appearance with higher leadership qualities, although this may not always be accurate.

The case study of *Kondang Kusumaning Ayu* is a clear example of the use of beauty images in political campaigns. By utilizing an attractive physical appearance and relevant messages, *Kondang Kusumaning Ayu* succeeded in gaining significant support in the East Java Regional Representative Board election. The use of visuals to communicate femininity is also a subtle strategy for female candidates to display masculine competence and feminine warmth.

However, it should be noted that the use of beauty imagery in political marketing also raises ethical and sustainability questions. As understanding of the impact of beauty in politics increases, researchers are expected to dig deeper into the implications of marketing strategies based on physical appearance on the democratic process and political participation in society.

Thus, beauty in political marketing is not just a cosmetic issue, but is also an aspect that has a significant impact on political dynamics and societal decision making. The role of beauty in politics must be understood holistically, taking into account the various factors that influence public perception, ethics and the long-term sustainability of the democratic process.

Kondang Ayu's Political Campaign

Kondang Kusumaning Ayu is a political figure who uses the image of beauty in her political campaigns. Through its attractive appearance and relevant message, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu is an interesting example to be used as a case study in the context of political marketing. By using the image of beauty as one of the main strategies in her political campaign, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu succeeded in attracting the attention of many voters and won quite significant votes in the East Java Regional Representative Board election.

The political campaign held by Kondang Kusumaning Ayu included various communication and promotional strategies that relied on an attractive physical appearance. This is balanced with messages that are relevant to the issues important to voters. This strategy proves that the use of beauty imagery can be an effective tool in attracting attention and winning voter support.

The use of visuals to communicate femininity is a subtle way for female candidates to overcome the “double bind” that demands female candidates display both masculine competence and feminine warmth (Carpinella & Bauer, 2021). Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's use of beauty as a political marketing strategy has interesting implications for further study.

However, as well as bringing success, the use of beauty imagery in political marketing also raises questions regarding ethics and sustainability. This invites deeper discussion about the role of physical appearance in politics and how it can influence the democratic process and political participation of society as a whole.

The case study involving Kondang Kusumaning Ayu provides an opportunity for researchers to further explore political marketing strategies based on physical

appearance. The implications of the use of beauty images in politics need to be analyzed thoroughly to understand their impact on political dynamics and democratic governance.

Along with the development of technology and social media, the use of beauty images in political marketing is also increasingly complex. Politicians now have greater access to interact directly with voters via online platforms. This opens up new space for understanding how images of beauty are projected and understood by the public in a modern political context.

In this case, it is important for researchers and political practitioners to continue to monitor and analyze developments in the use of beauty images in political marketing. Ethics and sustainability are two key aspects that must be taken seriously when developing political strategies based on physical appearance. With a deeper understanding, we can optimize the potential of beauty as a tool to strengthen healthy and inclusive political participation.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative analysis approach with a focus on the case study of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's political campaign. Data was obtained through content analysis of campaign materials, Media Data Analysis and Public Opinion through comments on TikTok social media. The research method used in this study is a qualitative analysis approach which focuses on the case study of the Kondang Kusumaning Ayu political campaign. (Crescentini, 2009) describes that qualitative research has detailed clarification of research questions. This approach was chosen because it can provide an understanding of how beauty is used as a political marketing strategy in a specific context. The data used in this research was obtained through content analysis of various campaign materials including speeches, campaign advertisements, media interviews, and online content related to Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's political image.

Qualitative methods such as content analysis can be used to analyze political messages and narratives shared on social media by candidates and political parties (Ismawani et al., 2019). This analysis will focus on identifying the main themes,

strategies, and tactics used in their social media campaigns (Moslehpour et al., 2021). Each of these qualitative methods contributes to a different understanding of political communication, offering insights that can help shape effective campaign strategies and encourage more informed and engaged voter participation.

An explanation of the formation of this political image will be obtained through textual and visual data which cannot be explained through numbers or quantitative data. According to Strauss and Corbin (in Creswell, 1998), qualitative research is a loosely defined category of research designs or models, all of which produce verbal, visual, tactile, natural and sensory data in the form of descriptive narratives such as field notes, recordings or transcriptions. from audio and video, as well as written notes and film images.

Apart from that, this research also uses Media Data and Public Opinion Analysis techniques to gain broader insight into how Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's beauty image is positioned and perceived by the general public. By analyzing mass media and public opinion, researchers can see how narratives and perceptions of beauty in a political context are influenced by various existing social factors and dynamics.

The qualitative analysis approach allows researchers to explore hidden meanings and complexities in the use of beauty as a political marketing strategy. The data collected through this method was then analyzed in depth to identify patterns, key findings, and implications of the use of beauty images in the context of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's political campaign.

Thus, the qualitative analysis approach used in this research provides a strong basis for understanding and analyzing the use of beauty images in political marketing, especially in the context of the Kondang Kusumaning Ayu political campaign. This method allows researchers to see more than just numbers and quantitative data, but also deeper and more complex aspects of the political phenomena being observed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION*Result*

The politician studied in this writing is Kondang Kusumaning Ayu. He is a new Regional Representative Board candidate from the East Java electoral district. Kondang graduated from the Faculty of Psychology, Airlangga University in 2017. According to information taken from the official UNAIR website, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu chose the title of her thesis entitled 'Illustration of Emotional Intelligence in Women as Single Parents Due to Divorce' in 2017.

Apart from that, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu has a personal social media account on Tiktok with the username @kondangkusumaningayu, as well as on Instagram with the usernames @kondangkusumaning_ayu10 and @kondangkusuma. Kondang Kusumaning Ayu has been confirmed as a candidate for member of the Regional Representative Board of Indonesia from the Electoral District of East Java for the period 2024-2029, with serial number 10.



Figure 1: Google search source

By representing herself on the voting paper with her beautiful face and attractive smile, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu succeeded in stealing the attention of voters and becoming one of the popular East Java Regional Representative Board member candidates. The use of attractive and pleasing imagery in a political context often has a significant impact in shaping the public's perception of a candidate.

Kondang's success in attracting voters' attention with her image of beauty and smile shows that visual aspects can be an effective tool in political marketing strategies. However, while outward appearance can strengthen a candidate's appeal, it is still important to consider the true substance of leadership, vision, and competency when selecting a leader.

Kondang Kusumaning Ayu, managed to get a lot of votes in the 2024 elections. In fact, based on the temporary real count carried out by the General Election Commission, Kondang managed to enter the top four candidates with the most votes. Previously, the action of East Java netizens who voted en masse for Kondang went viral on various social media. Netizens revealed that they voted for Kondang because of her beautiful face in the photo.

The results of the analysis show that Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's beauty plays a significant role in influencing voter perceptions and support. The image of beauty projected through various political campaign media has a positive impact on electability.

The results of research from a qualitative analysis approach to Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's political campaign revealed a quite interesting phenomenon related to the use of beauty images as a political marketing strategy. Data obtained through content analysis of campaign materials and analysis of media data and public opinion provide a more comprehensive picture of these dynamics. However, the research results also highlight several implications that need further attention regarding the impact of using this strategy.



Figure 2: TikTok source @kondangkusumaning_ayu10

One of the main findings of this research is the construct that beautiful political candidates have a greater chance of being elected. This shows that women's physiological factors are the main consideration for some voters in determining their choice. This phenomenon, although it can be an effective strategy in gaining votes, also raises questions about how women are positioned in the world of politics.

Figure 2 highlights the comments column on the TikTok account which displays a photo of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu. Several netizens commented, one of them on Agassi's account, "it turns out there are a lot of them. I voted for her because she's the prettiest. Wow" These comments show that the use of beauty as a political marketing strategy often ignores the abilities and potential of women who enter politics. This indicates that women are often viewed from a physiological perspective and considered more as a supporting role or tool to gain votes, rather than as individuals who have the potential and capability to carry out political tasks well.

Opinions like this indicate that women are still often assessed in terms of their physical appearance and are seen more as support or tools for gaining votes, rather than as individuals who have the potential, thoughts and capabilities to carry out political tasks well. This reflects the gender perception that still dominates in some societies, where intellectual and leadership qualities are often subordinated to judgments based on physical appearance. In this context, the importance of a fair and equitable assessment of political candidates, without relying solely on visual or gender aspects, needs to be considered to ensure equality and broader opportunities for women in the political field.



Figure 3: screenshot of one of the TikTok accounts which was flooded with comments from netizens

Many netizens started giving negative comments when commenting on the upload. The following are several comments written by netizens in the video regarding the Regional Representative Board of Indonesia candidate named Kondang Kusumaning Ayu. The adlnovianaa account commented "I was fooled by Remini", as did the abdinsyah_ account, "What year was the photo on the legislative candidate paper?" As stated in research (Savolainen et al., 2020), physical attractiveness can also lead to violent victimization. Technically, in everyday language they may be equated with discrimination.

But several people also expressed support for Kondang, saying that she was still beautiful and deserved to be chosen as a Regional Representative Board member to represent East Java. Write a comment from the ubiinmasjidd account "How beautiful. There's nothing wrong with providing our best photos. So, people, the photos we want to upload on IG, we just have to choose a good photo, right?"

Apart from that, this phenomenon also shows that the world of politics is still characterized by dominant masculinity, so that aspects of femininity such as ability, success and track record in the world of politics are often neglected. The importance of empowering women in the political field is an important concern in this context, so that women can be recognized and assessed based on their abilities and contributions to the development of society and the country.

Meanwhile, the public as voters are also reminded to be more rational in choosing political candidates. Although interest in the physiological aspects of women is natural, it is also important to consider the vision and mission and track record of the candidates so that those elected can truly represent the interests of the people and carry out their political duties well. Thus, elections are not only a means to enter the world of politics but also an effort to obtain qualified representatives who can effectively realize people's aspirations.

Discussion

Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory in the context of the East Java Regional Representative Board election has highlighted the importance of political marketing

strategies that combine beauty as a visual aspect with persuasive political messages. In a political era increasingly influenced by image and appearance, the combination of an attractive physical appearance and a strong political message has proven itself to be a key factor in success. This shows that voters are not only influenced by the substance of the political message, but also by the appearance and visual strength of the candidate.

The implications of the political marketing strategy used by *Kondang Kusumaning Ayu* underscore how important it is to understand voter demands and preferences in building a successful political campaign. The East Java Regional Representative Board election is an example of how marketing strategies that are relevant to voters' desires can significantly influence election results. This suggests that political candidates need to consider factors such as voters' aspirations, values and expectations in designing effective campaigns.

This is reminiscent of plurality elections in Germany which combine first-past-the-post elections with proportional representation based on party lists, in research (Potrafke et al., 2020) shows that plurality elections provide more space to translate physical attractiveness into success elections compared to proportional representation. It remains unclear whether political parties are strategically using beauty premiums to optimize their electoral goals. However, physically attractive MPs allow themselves to dissent more often, that is, they vote against the party line more often than their less attractive colleagues.

The incorporation of beauty as a visual aspect in *Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's* political marketing strategy also raises ethical questions about how a candidate's image and physical appearance can influence voter support. This highlights the debate surrounding the relevance of physical appearance in the world of politics, whether it is a valid factor in voter decision making or simply an immoral, manipulative strategy.

Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's success also highlights that a successful political marketing strategy is not only based on a strong political message, but also on the candidate's skill to build a strong emotional connection with his voters. In this context, the use of beauty as a political marketing strategy can trigger a debate about how a candidate's image and personality influences the public's perception of them. This

shows that in the world of politics, visual and emotional aspects also have a significant role in shaping opinion and support from the public.

Apart from that, the success of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu also emphasizes the importance of the connection between personal image and political marketing strategies. The presence of social media and digital platforms strengthens politicians' ability to build personal connections with voters, including through visual elements such as beauty. However, this also raises ethical questions about how political marketing should be conducted, given the risks of image manipulation and an emphasis on visual aspects rather than a candidate's political substance and leadership capacity.

Finally, Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory reminds us of the complexity and dynamics of today's politics, where elements such as image, political messages and voter aspirations are interrelated and influence each other. This is a valuable lesson for political candidates and their campaign teams to pay more attention to marketing strategies that are holistic and relevant to voter demands and preferences in an effort to gain strong support.

Based on the results of research on the use of beauty as a political marketing strategy in the context of Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's political campaign in the East Java Regional Representative Board election, several important things can be taken, including:

1. **Effectiveness of Beauty Strategy:** This study shows that the use of beauty imagery can be an effective strategy in gaining voter support. This phenomenon is proven by Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory in the East Java Regional Representative Board election, which shows that attractive appearance and relevant messages can influence public perception of a political candidate.
2. **Rational Considerations of Voters:** Although beauty may be a determining factor for some voters, it is important to caution that political decisions are best taken with broader rational considerations. A candidate's vision and mission, track record and abilities should be the main factors in determining political choices.
3. **Women's Empowerment:** The use of beauty in political marketing often creates dilemmas regarding the position and role of women in the world of politics.

Although images of beauty can be an effective strategy to attract voters' attention, this can also cause women to be seen more as visual objects or political attractiveness enhancers, rather than as individuals with substantial capabilities and contributions to political governance. In this context, it is important to substantially strengthen efforts to empower women. This includes providing wider access for women in politics, strengthening women's political education and leadership, and creating an environment that supports women's active role in political decision making. In this way, women can be better recognized for their capabilities, vision and contributions in advancing political agendas that have a positive impact on society as a whole.

4. **Criticism of the Dominance of Masculinity:** This phenomenon, which highlights the use of beauty as a dominant political marketing strategy, also raises criticism of the dominance of masculinity in the world of politics. The long-standing tradition of prioritizing masculine attributes such as strength, authority and aggressiveness often means that aspects of femininity such as ability, success and contribution to politics are neglected or considered secondary. Women in politics are often faced with a paradox where they have to prove themselves excessively to be taken seriously, while their judgment is still often trapped in physical appearance and gender stereotypes.

The perception that women are better suited to supporting or softer roles in politics reflects the dominance of gender norms that are still strong in society. Understandings that base judgments on physical attributes or gender not only hinder gender equality, but also reduce individual capabilities in carrying out political responsibilities. Criticism of dominant masculinity in this context underscores the importance of viewing individuals from the perspective of capability and achievement, not simply based on gender stereotypes or physical appearance.

A paradigm shift is needed in the world of politics to overcome the injustice and gender inequality that are still rampant. Steps such as educating the public about the importance of gender equality, promoting candidates based on their abilities and vision,

and bringing in new faces who represent society in an inclusive manner can help change the political dynamics to a more just and equitable one.

CONCLUSION

Beauty plays an important role in influencing public perception and gaining voter support in political contexts. This research highlights that political marketing strategies that combine visual aspects that appeal to voters, such as beauty, with relevant political messages can be the key to success in modern political competition. *Kondang Kusumaning Ayu* is an interesting example of how an image and brand image built on beauty can attract public attention and build a solid support base. In addition, this research also shows that the use of beauty as a political marketing strategy raises ethical questions about how a candidate's image and physical appearance can influence voter support. This sparked debate around the relevance of physical appearance in the world of politics, whether it is a valid factor in voter decision making or simply an immoral, manipulative strategy. *Kondang Kusumaning Ayu* succeeded in showing that an effective political marketing strategy does not only depend on a strong political message, but also on the candidate's ability to build emotional connections with voters, where beauty can be one element that plays a role in shaping public perception.

Kondang Kusumaning Ayu's victory in the East Java Regional Representative Board election provides valuable lessons about the complexity of modern politics where elements such as image, political messages and voter aspirations are interrelated and influence each other. Political candidates and their campaign teams need to pay attention to marketing strategies that are holistic and relevant to voter demands and preferences to gain strong support. The use of beauty as a political marketing strategy can be an effective factor in gaining voter support, but it is important to consider other factors such as the vision and mission, track record, and a candidate's ability to attract voters rationally.

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