

# Political Communications of Prabowo Subianto Campaign Using Tiktok on 2024 President Elections

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## ABSTRACT

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The research manuscript examines the political communication strategies employed by Prabowo Subianto's campaign during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, with a specific focus on the use of the social media platform TikTok. The study aims to identify the main strategies utilized by Prabowo's campaign team in leveraging TikTok, analyze the effectiveness of these strategies in reaching and engaging the target audience, and assess the role of TikTok in shaping public opinion and influencing voter decisions. The research utilizes a qualitative approach, including interviews with key campaign officials and social media managers, as well as the analysis of engagement metrics such as likes, comments, and shares on Prabowo's TikTok posts. The findings suggest that Prabowo's campaign successfully used TikTok to humanize the candidate, create an emotional connection with voters, and offset his controversial past. The campaign's use of humor, empathy, and visual elements on the platform helped to appeal to younger voters and build a sense of community among Prabowo's supporters. The study highlights the growing importance of social media platforms, particularly TikTok, in shaping the political landscape and the potential implications for the integrity of electoral processes.

## 1. Introduction

The The 2024 Indonesian presidential election is an important event in Indonesia's political landscape, with various candidates vying for the highest office. Among the candidates, Prabowo Subianto, a prominent figure in Indonesian politics, has been actively using social media platforms, particularly TikTok, to promote his campaign (Mediana, 2024). This phenomenon raises important questions about the role of social media in political communication and its impact on election outcomes. Prabowo Subianto's political communication strategy has been criticized for its lack of transparency and credibility in the past.

His track record in the Presidential election of the Republic of Indonesia has been consistently unfavorable due to the public's view of him, which is often associated with past human rights sins. Despite this, Prabowo has made various efforts to improve his image through various media activities, including social media platforms such as TikTok5 (Bentiyan, 2024). TikTok, a popular short video sharing platform, has become a very important medium for political promotion in Indonesia. Its widespread use among young people, an important demographic in elections, makes it an attractive platform for political candidates to reach their target audience. The interactive nature of the platform, characterized by humor, nuance, and culinary content, has proven to be particularly effective in engaging users and fostering a sense of community. However, the use of TikTok in political campaigns has also raised concerns over potential misinformation and manipulation of public opinion.

Platform algorithms that prioritize content that generates high engagement can create an echo chamber effect where users are only exposed to information that confirms their beliefs. In addition, the increasing reliance on social media for political communication also raises concerns about the

erosion of traditional forms of political engagement, such as face-to-face interaction and debate. The lack of structured and systematic arguments in political discourse on social media may also contribute to the decline of critical thinking and informed decision-making among voters (Aan Setiadarma et al., 2024).

This research will use a qualitative method approach. Qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. The qualitative component will involve analyzing traffic data from TikTok, focusing on content engagement metrics (Abdurrohman, 2024). This research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. Its findings will have important implications for the development of effective political communication strategies. (Sihabudin et al., 2023). This theory states that Prabowo's campaign used TikTok to create an emotional connection with voters by showcasing his authentic and human side, which helped offset his controversial past and appeal to the younger generation.

Prabowo Subianto, a former special forces commander, has a history of controversial actions, including allegations of human rights abuses and political repression. Despite this, he has managed to gain significant support, especially among young voters, through the use of social media platforms such as TikTok in his campaign. The theory is based on the concept of emotional connection, which is an important aspect of political communication. An emotional connection is formed when voters see a candidate as authentic, relatable and empathetic, leading to increased trust and support. TikTok, with its short and visually appealing content, provides an ideal platform for candidates to create this connection.

Prabowo's campaign used TikTok to humanize him by showing his personal side, such as dancing and interacting with his supporters. These videos humanized Prabowo, making him more relatable and appealing to younger voters who were less familiar with his controversial past.

The use of humor, empathy and emotional appeal in the TikTok videos in this campaign created an emotional connection between Prabowo and his viewers. This relationship helped offset his controversial past and appealed to voters who were unfamiliar with his history (Noer Zulfa Jauhariyah et al., 2024). The use of videos, memes, and other visual elements helped create a sense of familiarity and authenticity, further enhancing the emotional connection with voters. The campaign's TikTok content encouraged interactivity and engagement through comments, likes and shares. This interactivity helped create a sense of community and belonging among Prabowo's supporters, further strengthening the emotional connection.

Prabowo's campaign was extremely popular on TikTok, with his videos gaining millions of views and interactions. This popularity suggests that the campaign was successful in creating an emotional connection with voters. Videos featuring Prabowo dancing and interacting with his supporters went viral, further humanizing Prabowo and creating an emotional connection with voters (Sari et al., 2024). Despite his controversial past, Prabowo's campaign managed to gain significant support among young voters, indicating that the emotional connection created through TikTok was effective in offsetting his negative image.

This literature review examines the political communication strategies used by Prabowo Subianto during Indonesia's 2024 presidential election, with a focus on his use of TikTok. The analysis draws from five academic papers and news articles that provide insights into Prabowo's campaign and its impact on public opinion and public behavior.

Prabowo Subianto, a former special forces commander, has a controversial past marked by allegations of human rights abuses. Despite this, he has managed to improve his public image through various media activities, including the use of TikTok. The platform has become an important electoral battleground, with more than half of Indonesia's 204 million voters among the younger generation who are more likely to use TikTok (Nuryaningsih, 2023). Its users tend to like and interact with videos that create a personal connection and evoke emotions, making it an ideal space for politicians to connect with their audience. The platform's features, such as hashtags and viral challenges, allow users to engage with content in a more interactive and entertaining way, which is particularly appealing to younger voters.

Prabowo's use of TikTok had a significant impact on public opinion and behavior. His campaign successfully redefined the public narrative around him, shifting the focus from his controversial past

to his more lighthearted and relatable persona. This rebranding effort was instrumental in winning over young voters who may not have known his history (Anasta Novi Hidayati et al., 2023). Content farms and political actors can create and spread false information quickly, making it difficult for fact-checkers to keep up. In addition, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) and deep forgery can further complicate the verification of information, posing significant challenges to the integrity of electoral processes.

## 2. Method

This methodology outlines an approach to analyze Prabowo Subianto's campaign political communication using TikTok in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. This research aims to examine the strategies used by Prabowo Subianto's campaign team to utilize TikTok as a political communication platform and its impact on the election results. Among others: (1) To identify the main strategies used by Prabowo Subianto's campaign team in utilizing TikTok for political communication. (2) To analyze the effectiveness of these strategies in reaching and engaging the target audience. (3) To assess the role of TikTok in shaping public opinion and influencing voter decisions. Data Collection obtained through Primary Data Interviews with key campaign officials and social media managers responsible for managing Prabowo Subianto's TikTok account (Suryawati, 2021). Use of social media monitoring tools to track engagement metrics, such as likes, comments and shares, for Prabowo Subianto's TikTok posts.

## 3. Result and Discussion

Results Indonesia's 2024 presidential election will be an important milestone in Indonesia's political history, with the rise of social media platforms such as TikTok playing an important role in the campaigns of various candidates. Among them, Prabowo Subianto's campaign became particularly important due to his effective use of TikTok to connect with young voters and rebrand himself as a more accessible and vulnerable leader.

TikTok, a Chinese video-sharing platform, has become increasingly popular in Indonesia, especially among young voters. With more than 125 million monthly active users. TikTok has emerged as a key battleground for political campaigns, offering a unique opportunity for candidates to connect with their audiences through short-form, visually appealing content.

Prabowo Subianto's campaign has been particularly aggressive in using TikTok, leveraging the platform's power to rebrand himself as a more relatable and vulnerable leader. This shift in strategy is a significant change from previous campaigns, which focused more on his military background and strongman image.

One of the key elements of Prabowo's TikTok strategy is the emphasis on creating an emotional connection with his audience. This is achieved through a mix of personal stories, heartfelt messages, and humorous moments that show his human side. For example, a popular campaign video shows Prabowo getting emotional during the second presidential debate, which has been viewed more than 49 million times on TikTok.

Another important aspect of Prabowo's TikTok strategy is the emphasis on authenticity and vulnerability. By sharing personal anecdotes and experiences, he is able to connect with his audience on a deeper level, presenting a more relatable and human side of himself (Hidayati, 2021).

Prabowo's campaign content on TikTok is diverse and engaging, ranging from campaign speeches and debates to personal stories and funny moments. His team was also active in responding to comments and interacting with users, thus fostering a sense of community and connection with his audience.

The impact of Prabowo's TikTok strategy on his campaign has been significant. His popularity among young voters has increased, and his campaign has been able to reach a wider audience through the platform. In addition, the use of TikTok has helped rebrand Prabowo as a more sociable and vulnerable leader, which is particularly effective in reaching younger voters who are more likely to engage with original and authentic content.

Despite the success of Prabowo's TikTok strategy, there are several challenges and concerns faced by his campaign. One of the main concerns is the spread of misinformation and disinformation on the platform, which can severely damage political campaigns (Kurniawati, 2023). In addition, there are concerns about the potential for bots and paid influencers to manipulate public opinion and influence election results.



**Figure 1.** Prabowo Subianto's TikTok account  
Source: Official Tiktok Prabowo Subianto



**Figure 2.** Prabowo Subianto's TikTok account  
Source: Official Tiktok Prabowo Subianto

Indonesia's 2024 presidential election saw a significant shift in political communication strategies, especially among the three main candidates: Prabowo Subianto, Anies Baswedan, and Ganjar Pranowo. Among the three, Prabowo Subianto's campaign stands out for its innovative use of TikTok, a platform that has become important for reaching younger demographics. This discussion will study the political communication of Prabowo Subianto's campaign on TikTok during the 2024 presidential election, highlighting its impact on public opinion and public behavior.

Prabowo Subianto, Minister of Defense and former special forces commander, used TikTok to rebrand himself as a friendly, cute, and "grandfatherly" character. This change was crucial in shifting public perception away from his controversial past and towards a more acceptable image. His campaign utilized TikTok's short video format to showcase a lighter side of himself, often featuring him dancing or engaging in humorous skits.

TikTok's influence on Indonesia's 2024 presidential election cannot be overstated (Fathurochman & Tutiasri, 2023). With 125 million monthly active users, TikTok has become a very important tool for Indonesians to find the latest news and information about the election. The short video format and emphasis on authenticity and originality made the platform an ideal place for Prabowo's campaign to connect with young voters.

Prabowo's campaign on TikTok relied heavily on the Snowball Effect, where small actions can lead to bigger and bigger actions that ultimately result in huge changes. This phenomenon allowed his campaign to spread ideas and trends quickly, capitalizing on TikTok's collaborative nature where many users contribute to the amplification of an idea or video trend.

Prabowo's TikTok campaign had a huge impact on public opinion (Cici Nugraheni, 2023). By presenting a lighter side of himself and engaging with younger voters, he was able to shift the focus away from his controversial past and towards a more relatable image. This change resonated with younger voters who may have been unaware or unaware of her history, which ultimately contributed to her victory.

Indonesia's 2024 presidential election highlights the important role of social media in shaping people's behavior and public opinion. Prabowo's campaign on TikTok shows how social media platforms can be used to influence voter behavior and create viral narratives. This phenomenon is not unique to Indonesia; social media has become a very important tool for political campaigns around the world.

#### 4. Conclusion

The 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election shows a significant shift in political communication, especially with the use of TikTok by Prabowo Subianto's campaign. This shift is characterized by a deliberate strategy to increase the platform's popularity among young voters and create a more memorable and appealing image of the candidate. This conclusion will analyze key aspects of Prabowo's TikTok campaign and its impact on the election.

Prabowo's campaign effectively capitalized on TikTok's huge user base, especially among young voters. The platform's popularity among millennials and Generation Z was a key factor in the campaign strategy. With more than 52% of registered voters under the age of 40, the campaign recognized the importance of engaging this demographic through a medium they are familiar with.

Prabowo's campaign focused on creating a more memorable and engaging image of the candidate. This was achieved through a series of videos that showcased his human side, such as dancing and interacting with his supporters. These videos were designed to humanize Prabowo and make him more accessible to younger voters who may not be familiar with his past controversies. The campaign also utilized memes and viral content to create a sense of connection with young voters. Memes depicting Prabowo as charming, using the term "gemoy" (adorable), were particularly effective in generating positive sentiment and engagement on the platform. These memes helped create a sense of humor and camaraderie among young voters, further strengthening Prabowo's popularity.

Prabowo's campaign also utilized live streaming and interactions on TikTok to interact directly with voters. This allowed the candidate to connect with his supporters in real-time, fostering a sense of community and personal connection. The use of live streaming and interaction in this campaign was particularly effective in reaching young voters who are used to instant gratification and interactive content. The impact of Prabowo's TikTok campaign on the election was significant. The campaign's focus on creating a memorable image and utilizing memes and viral content helped generate widespread popularity among young voters. Prabowo's campaign was able to effectively offset his controversial past by presenting a more appealing and memorable image.

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