

# Reconstructing Prabowo Subianto's Image in TikTok Content @partaigerindra: A Framing Analysis of the 2024 Presidential Election Campaign

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## ABSTRACT

### Keywords

*Framing; political communication;  
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The development of social media has transformed political communication strategies, especially in election campaigns. TikTok has become one of the main platforms used to build political image through short video-based content. This research aims to analyze how framing in TikTok content of @partaigerindra account is used to reconstruct Prabowo Subianto's image during the 2024 presidential election campaign. By using descriptive qualitative method and Entman's framing analysis (1993), this study identifies the political communication patterns applied in shaping Prabowo's image. The results showed that the @partaigerindra account actively used framing strategies to change public perception of Prabowo Subianto, from a figure synonymous with the military to a figure that is more humorous and closer to the public, especially generation Z voters. The narrative built through TikTok content emphasized aspects of humor, closeness, and engagement in digital trends favored by Generation Z. In addition, TikTok's for You Page (FYP) algorithm plays a role in massively disseminating this content, increasing audience engagement, and strengthening Prabowo's positive image among young voters. This research provides insights into how social media can be used to reconstruct Prabowo Subianto's image during the 2024 elections and can be a reference for academics and digital campaign practitioners in understanding political framing strategies in the digital era.

## 1. Introduction

The development of digital technology has drastically changed the landscape of political communication. One significant change is evident in the political campaign patterns, which no longer solely rely on public debates, television ads, or print media, but also utilize social media as the primary medium. The format of communication has also shifted: from text and images to short video content. Platforms like TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts encourage politicians to develop more engaging and emotional communication strategies to reach voters, especially the younger generation. According to (Marquart, 2023), the dominance of audio-visual media has prompted politicians to use more engaging visual narratives in framing their political messages.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of TikTok as a political communication tool. (Carson, 2021) shows that TikTok's algorithm can create echo chambers, amplify political polarization, and drive audience engagement through emotional and provocative content. Meanwhile, (Kamindang & Amijaya, 2024) found that at the local level, TikTok usage is still minimal; politicians tend to rely on Facebook or face-to-face communication. When used, political

content on TikTok tends to follow entertainment trends rather than explicitly conveying political messages. These studies highlight the effectiveness of TikTok, but few have examined how the platform is systematically used to reshape the public image of national political figures, especially through framing strategies.

In the 2019 Presidential Election, Prabowo presented a distinct military-style image: wearing brown or white safari shirts paired with fabric trousers, reinforcing his military background (Kompas.com, 2018). His facial expressions were tense, his speeches delivered in a high-pitched tone, and his dramatic gestures, such as fist-clenching and pointing, emphasized his character as a firm and uncompromising leader. The campaign was often conducted on large stages with dramatic lighting and decorations that featured large red and white flags, symbolizing nationalism and courage.

However, in the 2024 Presidential Election, a significant shift in Prabowo's image occurred. This transformation is reflected in how he conveys his political messages through social media, particularly TikTok. Instead of maintaining his militaristic and stern image, Prabowo now presents himself in a more relaxed and friendly manner. This more humanistic communication style, combined with digital trends such as TikTok dances and viral sounds, successfully changed the public's perception of him, especially among younger voters. This change not only reflects an adaptation to technological advancements but also represents an effort to appeal to a broader voter base by adopting a communication style that is lighter and more easily accepted by the digital audience.

This research offers an analysis of how framing strategies in TikTok content have successfully reshaped Prabowo Subianto's political image. Unlike previous studies that focused on the effects of algorithms or general TikTok usage, this research specifically traces the dynamics of visual communication and political narratives engineered through short video content. Thus, this study provides a new contribution to the field of digital political communication, particularly in understanding the practice of *image reconstruction* of political figures through social media platforms.

This study aims to examine the role of content on the TikTok account @partaigrindra in shaping political framing of Prabowo Subianto during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign. The focus is on how visual narratives and digital trends are strategically used to construct a new, more humanistic image. Additionally, this research aims to offer a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of social media, especially TikTok, as a tool for political communication in the digital age, as well as its relevance for academics and political practitioners in designing adaptive and participatory campaign strategies.

## 2. Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to understand and describe how the TikTok account @partaigrindra shapes and reconstructs the image of Prabowo Subianto during the 2024 presidential election campaign. This method is chosen because the study focuses on an in-depth analysis of political communication strategies on short-video-based social media, rather than numerical data. In line with the qualitative approach, this research aims to explore the meanings and narratives constructed by the TikTok account.

The subject of this study is the most viral TikTok content from the @partaigrindra account during the 2024 presidential election campaign period, from November 28, 2023, to February 10, 2024. The selection of viral content is based on its broad audience reach and high engagement levels, which reflect the influence of the content in shaping public opinion. Virality is measured by looking at the number of views, audience engagement (likes, shares, comments), and issue resonance (how often the video is discussed or quoted on other platforms).

To collect data, this study employs two main techniques: document analysis and framing analysis. Document analysis is conducted by examining videos uploaded by the @partaigrindra TikTok account, which serve as digital documents recording the political narratives constructed during the campaign. Subsequently, framing analysis is used to identify how specific political issues are constructed in these campaign videos. This technique will examine four key elements of framing: (1)

defining the problem, (2) diagnosing causes, (3) making moral judgments, and (4) providing treatment recommendations.

This method allows the researcher to delve deeply into how TikTok, as a short-video-based social media platform, functions in shaping public perceptions of Prabowo Subianto. By using this qualitative approach, the study is expected to provide deeper insights into how political communication strategies on social media can influence political image in the eyes of the audience.

### 3. Result and Discussion

This study examines how the official TikTok account @partaigerindra framed the image of Prabowo Subianto during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign. The analysis revealed a clear shift in Prabowo's public image, which was repositioned from a militaristic and masculine figure to one that is warmer, humorous, and more relatable to younger voters.

The findings indicate that the TikTok account played an important role in reshaping Prabowo's image through engaging visual approaches and using humor to make him more approachable to the younger generation. This effort reflects a strategic move to align Prabowo's political image with the expectations of modern, emotionally driven young voters.

The use of TikTok as a platform demonstrates how social media can be an effective tool for delivering political messages and shaping public perceptions. The shift in Prabowo's image highlights the importance of adapting political figures to the dynamics of digital media and the need to reach young voters in a more engaging and media-savvy manner.

These findings emphasize the role of social media in influencing public perceptions of political leaders, especially among young voters, ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election.

#### Presenting the Results

##### Define Problems



Figure 1. Prabowo's Angry Expression

Source: TikTok  
@sospolku



Figure 2. Prabowo Subianto Crying During His Speech

Source: Tiktok @partaigerindra



Figure 3. Prabowo Subianto Dancing During the 2024 Campaign

Source: TikTok @partaigerindra

The 2019 Presidential Election campaign video, which circulated widely on social media, shows Prabowo Subianto standing upright with a raised voice and aggressive gestures. He slams the table three times and then shouts about how Indonesia's wealth has been plundered. With a fiery tone, pointing fingers, and an angry expression on his face, the narrative conveyed seems to focus on the nation's economic sovereignty, but what stands out more is the anger itself.

According to Robert Entman, the framing process begins with defining the problem, which is how an event or issue is framed as a problem. Explicitly, this video appears to highlight the major issue of national wealth being plundered by foreign parties and elites. However, when examined more closely, public attention is directed more toward the way Prabowo delivers the message. His explosive gestures, slamming of the table, and the dominant high-pitched tone throughout the speech shift the framing focus from the substance of the issue to the individual's character.

The problem that arises is not just about economics or foreign dominance, but about a character that comes across as overly emotional, even prone to outbursts. In this case, framing no longer works to emphasize political vision or strategy, but instead shapes public perception of the candidate's personality specifically, Prabowo as a figure with an unstable temperament.

In contrast, in the 2024 campaign video, Prabowo highlights his emotional side as a leader who "cries for the people." This narrative indirectly shapes the perception that emotional fragility is no longer a weakness, but rather a sign of sincerity and closeness to the people. This is a symbolic strategy to contrast the old image of Prabowo as temperamental and tough with a new, softer, more humane, and caring image.

In another campaign video for the 2024 Presidential Election, Prabowo appears again with a different style not fiery or tearful, but dancing on stage during a campaign event. With fun and relaxed movements, the public's attention is once again directed at the personal side of the presidential candidate, rather than the content of his speech during the campaign. This presentation might aim to create an image of friendliness and ease, but it also emphasizes that the political communication strategy is focusing more on personal image than on presenting a vision and solutions for the nation's problems.

If we trace the thread, the three moments in Prabowo's campaigns from his anger in 2019, emotional tears, to dancing in 2024 demonstrate a symbolic shift in his image. From a tough and firm figure to one who is empathetic and warm. However, this shift shows how personal branding began to dominate the campaign space, pushing aside the political messages that should have been at the core. When public attention is more directed at style rather than substance, the greatest risk is the fading of discussions about ideas.

### Diagnose Causes



Figure 4. Prabowo's Angry Expression  
Source: TikTok @sospolku



Figure 4. Prabowo Subianto Crying During His Speech  
Source: Tiktok @partaigerindra

The framing of Prabowo's expression of anger in the 2019 campaign is not merely a reflection of his personal temperament, but rather the result of a well-calculated political communication strategy. The anger displayed through firm gestures, and a high-pitched tone was framed to build the image

of a leader willing to fight against injustice. But this strategy didn't stop there. In the 2024 campaign, a major shift occurred: from an expression of hard power to one of emotional softness. Prabowo, who once slammed the table, is now crying for the people. This change not only alters his image but also transforms the way the public is invited to feel the presence of a leader.

Emotion remains the primary weapon, but it has been repackaged to suit the current political landscape and the psychology of voters. At this point, it can be interpreted that tears have become a new symbol of courage not the courage to be angry, but the courage to appear vulnerable in the public space. It is precisely here that the power of this image-making lies. At this point, softness is no longer just a trait, but a political tool used to control perception, as effective as the anger that was once displayed.

### Make Moral Judgement



Figure 6. Moka the Cat

Source: TikTok @partaigerindra

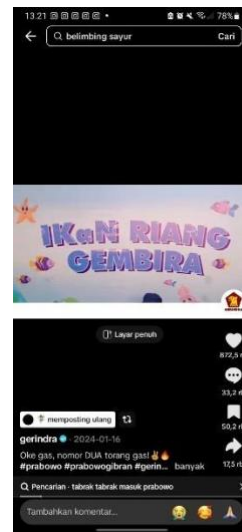


Figure 7. "Oke Gas" Campaign Video Clip

Source: TikTok @partaigerindra

In this context, the framing of Prabowo's campaign also illustrates how moral values are shaped and embedded through symbols that resonate with everyday life. The campaign video featuring Mokka the cat, for instance, constructs the image of a gentle, caring leader who appears warm in daily interactions contrasting sharply with the previously attached hard-edged style.

Meanwhile, the "Oke Gas" campaign music video presents a cheerful and friendly atmosphere, complete with lyrics emphasizing support for the common people and references to the new capital city, Ibu Kota Nusantara (IKN), as a symbol of progress. Interestingly, the video also slips in a reference to the benefits of starfruit (belimbing wuluh), a fruit that had often been used humorously to tease Gibran. Rather than rejecting or countering the nickname, the campaign embraces it with humor and positivity, aiming to transform the stigma into a point of pride.

At this stage, moral messages are conveyed not through formal speeches, but through light yet meaningful visual and musical narratives. Campaigning is no longer solely about explaining problems or offering solutions; it is also about shaping impressions of who stands on the side of 'goodness.' According to Entman's framing analysis, this reflects the "making moral judgment" stage where Prabowo's image is crafted as a figure who not only cares but also responds wisely to public satire.

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### Treatment Recommendation

When linked to the "treatment recommendation" stage in Entman's framing theory, Prabowo's five campaign videos consistently offer one main solution to the various problems constructed within the narratives: Prabowo is the right person to become the President of the Republic of Indonesia.

When he slammed the table, the intended message was that Indonesia needed a leader who dared to fight against injustice. When he cried for the people, the message conveyed was that the nation needed a sincere and empathetic leader. When he danced on the campaign stage, it projected an image of a relaxed, approachable, and unpretentious leader.

Through the video featuring the cat, the campaign sought to portray him as a gentle, caring, and humanized figure. Meanwhile, the "Oke Gas" music campaign, with its depiction of cheerful everyday life, positioned him as a visionary figure committed to the future.

All these gestures, emotions, and symbols are woven into a unified message: choosing Prabowo is not only a rational decision but also an emotional one, an invitation to believe that every type of leader the people need can be found within him.

### Reconstructing Prabowo's Political Image

In analyzing Prabowo's five campaign videos, it becomes evident that the reconstruction of his political image aligns with the previously discussed findings. Through a framing strategy that includes problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation, the campaign gradually reshaped public perceptions of Prabowo. From a rigid and temperamental military figure, he was rebranded as a soft, affectionate, humorous, and even visionary leader. Each emotional gesture from anger and tears to dancing was not coincidental, but rather part of a curated visual and narrative communication design intended to generate specific impressions.

In line with (Kuypers, 2020), this framing constructs certain moral evaluations; as seen in the cat video or the campaign song, Prabowo is framed as a compassionate figure. Meanwhile, the visual approach explored by (Wang et al., 2023) and (Joshi & Buntain, 2024) is clearly reflected in the use of bright colors, joyful rhythms, and domestic symbols that soften his militaristic image. For instance, light blue, a color often associated with calmness, safety, and peace serves a symbolic function in Prabowo's campaign. It not only conveys serenity but also distances him from the aggressive and authoritarian image tied to his military background. This color becomes a symbolic tool to appeal to younger voters and to project a leader who is approachable rather than intimidating.

Thus, the reconstruction of Prabowo's image through digital campaigns operates not only at the rhetorical level but also through emotional and strategic visualization. Here, political communication strategy functions subtly yet effectively shaping perception through the repetition of symbols and the creation of atmospheres, rather than through argumentation alone.

### Create a Discussion

This study reveals that the TikTok account @partaigerindra actively utilized framing strategies to reconstruct Prabowo Subianto's image, transforming him from a strict military figure into a humorous, empathetic, and relatable leader, particularly among generation Z voters. This transformation was achieved through the consistent use of visual and emotional narratives, such as videos featuring cats, expressions of crying, and a relaxed communication style.

These findings align with previous research that indicates social media platforms, such as TikTok, have become strategic tools in shaping political images and influencing public opinion. However, unlike these studies, which focus more broadly on populist and humanistic approaches, this research specifically analyzes the application of Entman's (1993) framing theory within the context of political campaigns in Indonesia. This difference may be attributed to varying political and cultural contexts between the countries studied, as well as differences in the targeted audience.

This deeper shift invites reflection: why is it that in the Indonesian context, especially targeting Gen Z, a total image rebranding is prioritized over mere populist appeals? Could it be that the younger demographic demands not just relatability but a redefinition of authenticity, one that hinges on

emotional vulnerability and humor? Compared to prior research conducted in Western democracies, where populism often leverages anger or dissatisfaction, this case suggests a different cultural formula, where emotional softness and digital playfulness become key political assets.

Furthermore, although this study's scope is limited to a single social media account during a specific timeframe, the implications are significant. They suggest that successful digital campaigns in Indonesia may increasingly depend on mastering platform-specific emotional codes rather than relying solely on traditional populist narratives. Future research could test this hypothesis by comparing cross-platform strategies and analyzing whether similar re-framing efforts are replicated among other candidates, particularly as Indonesia's political communication landscape continues to evolve alongside its tech-savvy electorate.

#### 4. Conclusion

The official account @partaigerindra consistently frames campaign content to portray a different side of Prabowo Subianto not as a rigid military figure, but as a humorous and approachable leader. Through its 2024 campaign videos, the narrative presented is personal and emotional. The dominant use of bright blue in the visual elements contributes to a sense of calm, trustworthiness, and emphasizes the humanistic side of Prabowo. This color choice is not merely aesthetic but part of a symbolic strategy to soften his militaristic image and appeal to younger voters who are more emotionally and visually driven.

An analysis of five Prabowo Subianto campaign videos using Entman's framing theory reveals that the campaign not only delivers political messages but also systematically undertakes a project of image reconstruction. From problem definition to treatment recommendation, the stages of framing are used to shape the perception of Prabowo as a leader who is assertive yet empathetic, serious yet humorous, visionary yet grounded. This strategy demonstrates how framing functions not only as a tool of political communication but also as a means of shaping public emotion and moral imagery.

The international literature supports these findings. As (Kuypers, 2020) suggests, media framing in political contexts plays a crucial role in constructing the moral evaluations of leaders. Research by (Wang et al., 2023) and (Joshi & Buntain, 2024) further confirms that visual elements in political campaigns significantly influence public perception both emotionally and ideologically. In the context of Prabowo's campaign, all of these elements are utilized to construct an image of a leader who is responsive to the spirit of the times and the character of the electorate.

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