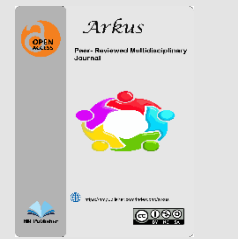




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PAN's Political Communication on Instagram: Analyzing Celebrity Politicians' Messages

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 general election in Indonesia carries significant importance as it provides the nation with an opportunity to exercise its democratic rights and actively participate in shaping the country's political landscape. As the cornerstone of Indonesia's Unitary State, the election mandates direct, public, free, confidential, honest, and fair representation based on Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution. This study focuses on Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN), one of the prominent political parties participating in the election, and examines its political communication strategies on Instagram. The research delves into the content and style of Instagram posts made by PAN's celebrity politicians, who have backgrounds in the entertainment industry. By employing content analysis, the study identifies three types of messages conveyed by these celebrity politicians: political messages, political events, and non-political messages. The analysis uncovers PAN's efforts to establish a dynamic online presence and engage with the audience through a diverse content mix. Furthermore, the research explores the unique characteristics of Instagram Reels, which constitute the majority of PAN's posts, and their alignment with the short attention spans of netizens. Reels offer a powerful communication channel for politicians to connect with their audience and disseminate their political messages effectively.

1. Introduction

The 2024 general election in Indonesia holds paramount importance as it provides the nation with an opportunity to exercise its democratic rights and actively participate in shaping the country's political landscape. As mandated by PKPU Number 7 of 2022, this election serves as a fundamental tool for the people to elect representatives and leaders, including members of the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat (DPR), Dewan Perwakilan Daerah (DPD), the President, Vice President, and members of the Regional Representative Council (DPRD).

Upholding the principles of directness, public participation, freedom, confidentiality, honesty, and fairness, the election stands as the cornerstone of

Indonesia's Unitary State, founded on the principles of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. In accordance with the Law Number 7 of 2017 on elections, political parties aspiring to contest seats in the legislative bodies must fulfill stringent criteria to be recognized as legitimate participants.

Recently, the general elections commission (KPU) declared the successful verification of 24 political parties, marking them as official contenders in the upcoming election.¹ Among these are prominent national parties, such as the National Awakening Party (PKB), the Gerindra Party, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), the Golkar Party, the NasDem Party, the Indonesian Labor Party (Partai Buruh), and the Partai Gelora. In addition to these, six

local parties representing the interests of Aceh have been cleared for participation. These parties include Partai Nanggroe Aceh, Partai Generasi Atjeh Beusaboh Tha'at dan Taqwa, Partai Darul Aceh, Partai Aceh, Partai Adil Sejahtera Aceh, and Partai Solidaritas Independen Rakyat Indonesia.

Among the array of political parties, Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) stands as a notable player, emerging during the era of reform. Established on August 23rd, 1998, PAN's declaration was attended by an assembly of esteemed national figures, including Amien Rais, Goenawan Mohammad, Rizal Ramli, AM Fatwa, and several other prominent personalities.² Since its inception, PAN has played a pivotal role in shaping Indonesia's political landscape. In the 2019 General Election, PAN garnered an impressive 9.57 million votes, accounting for 6.84% of the total, and secured 44 seats, amounting to 7.65% in the DPR RI for the 2019-2024 legislative period.

A remarkable and intriguing phenomenon observed in Indonesia's political landscape is the rising influence of celebrities venturing into the realm of politics.^{3,4,5} Many celebrities have found a political platform within PAN, leading to the party earning the affectionate moniker of "Partai Artis Nasional" among the public.⁶ This intriguing trend has sparked a deeper examination of the interplay between celebrities and politics, questioning how these celebrity politicians navigate the complexities of political communication and engage with the voting populace.

Celebrities often have strong social networks, which they can mobilize to support political causes or campaigns.⁷ Their endorsement of specific policies or candidates can boost public support and raise awareness for important issues. Their involvement in politics can bring new demographics into the political process, as their fan base may become more interested and engaged in politics due to their favorite celebrity's affiliation. As a result, political participation might increase, leading to a broader representation of the electorate.^{8,9}

In the digital age, social media platforms have emerged as a revolutionary tool for political

communication, providing a direct and accessible means of engagement with the public. Instagram, in particular, has gained immense popularity among politicians¹⁰, including celebrity politicians, as a medium to disseminate their messages, share their visions, and connect with voters on a personal level.^{11,12,13}

The objective of this research is to delve into the political communication strategies employed by PAN on Instagram, given the substantial presence of politicians with backgrounds in the entertainment industry. By closely analyzing the content and style of their Instagram posts, this study aims to uncover the underlying political messages conveyed to the public. Additionally, it seeks to shed light on how celebrity politicians strategically leverage Instagram as a powerful promotional tool, projecting their political image and engaging with potential voters.

By unraveling the intricacies of political communication on Instagram within the context of celebrity politicians affiliated with PAN, this research intends to contribute valuable insights into the interplay between celebrities and politics. Moreover, it seeks to understand the implications of this phenomenon for political participation, voter engagement, and the democratic process in Indonesia. The findings of this research are anticipated to enrich the scholarly discourse on political communication in the digital age, providing relevant implications for political parties, politicians, and media professionals alike.

2. Methods

The primary objective of this content analysis is to examine the political communication strategies employed by Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) on Instagram

(<https://www.instagram.com/amanatnasional/>). The data were collected from December 14th, 2022 (since the Indonesian General Election Commission/KPU decided on the verified participants of the 2024 Election) to August 4th, 2023.

Specifically, we aim to analyze the content and style of Instagram posts made by PAN politicians who have a background in the entertainment industry (celebrity politicians). The focus is on understanding the political messages conveyed through these posts and how these celebrity politicians utilize Instagram as a platform to promote themselves and engage with potential voters.

To construct a representative sample, we will identify PAN politicians with a background in the entertainment industry based on public records and official party announcements. The sample will include a diverse group of celebrity politicians, such as actors, singers, and other public figures, who are actively posting on Instagram and have engaged followers.

We will collect data from the Instagram accounts of the selected celebrity politicians over a specific period, ensuring an adequate number of posts for analysis. The data collection period will cover the latest six months leading up to the research start date to capture recent and relevant content.

Content analysis is limited to the observable content on Instagram posts and cannot capture the motivations or intentions behind the posts. Additionally, the analysis focuses solely on PAN celebrity politicians and may not represent the strategies used by politicians from other parties or non-celebrity politicians.

3. Results and Discussion

Instagram reels over posts

There are 588 contents posted on the official PAN account. 524 of them are in the form of Instagram Reels, while the rest are regular content (static graphics) or carousels.

Instagram Reels have specific characteristics that make them particularly appealing for political content in social media.¹⁴ These characteristics are well-aligned with the short attention spans of netizens, creating an effective communication channel for politicians to connect with their audience.¹⁵

Firstly, the short and engaging format of Instagram Reels is one of its key features. Reels are typically limited to 15 to 30 seconds, forcing politicians to

convey their message concisely and creatively. In the fast-paced social media environment, where netizens often have limited attention spans, bite-sized content, or we could say snackable content. It is more likely to capture their interest and keep them engaged. This format compels politicians to distill their political messages into easily digestible and attention-grabbing snippets.

Secondly, Instagram Reels leverage visual storytelling through video and audio effects, making them visually appealing and entertaining. The use of graphics, music, and captions captures the audience's attention and encourages them to watch the entire Reel. For politicians, this means they can present their political content in a visually compelling manner, increasing the likelihood of netizens stopping to view and engage with the content.

Moreover, Reels are an excellent platform for sharing informative and shareable content. Politicians can use Reels to share policy highlights, campaign updates, or messages on current issues. The shareable nature of Reels enables netizens to easily forward and spread the content within their networks, increasing its potential reach and impact. By tapping into the power of shareability, politicians can turn their followers into brand advocates, further disseminating their political messages across the social media landscape.

Additionally, Instagram Reels often follow trends and challenges, and politicians can leverage these trends to make their content relatable and part of the current social media conversation. By participating in popular trends, politicians can capture the interest of netizens and stay relevant in the rapidly evolving digital world. Aligning political content with ongoing trends and challenges helps maintain relevance and ensures that the messages resonate with the current interests and preferences of the audience.

Lastly, Reels enable real-time interaction with the audience through comments and direct messages. Politicians can respond to questions, feedback, and concerns promptly, fostering a sense of connection and engagement with their followers. This direct

interaction builds trust and reinforces the image of a responsive and accessible politician, which resonates with today's tech-savvy audience seeking personalized engagement.

Instagram Reels serve as a powerful tool for politicians to navigate the short attention span of netizens and effectively communicate their political messages in the fast-paced landscape of social media. By leveraging the short and engaging format, visual appeal, shareability, trend participation, and real-time interaction, politicians can effectively reach and engage with their audience on Instagram, fostering meaningful connections and promoting their political agenda in the digital age.

Frequent appearances of PAN’s celebrity politician faces

Many political parties are fielding celebrities as legislative candidates (caleg) in the 2024 election, whether they are soap opera actors, television presenters, chefs, musicians, models, athletes,

selebgrams, preachers, or comedians.

In the upcoming 2024 election, PAN will become the party with the most celebrity candidates. In total, there are 17 celebrity candidates. They are Adelia Wilhelmina, Astrid Kuya, Bebizie, Desy Ratnasari, Eko Patrio, Eksanti, Ely Sugigi, Haji Faisal, Lula Kamal, Opie Kumis, Primus Yustisio, Selvi Kitty, Pasha Ungu, Tom Liwafa, Uya Kuya, Verrel Bramasta, and Virnie Syafitri Ismail.¹⁶

Although Partai Amanat Nasional (PAN) boasts numerous celebrity politicians, only a select few are featured on the party's official Instagram account. The party's strategy and focus may influence the choice to showcase specific influential celebrity politicians whose presence aligns closely with the party's key messages and objectives.^{17,18}

Based on the analysis results, there are five celebrity politicians from PAN who frequently appear. This can be seen in the Figure below.

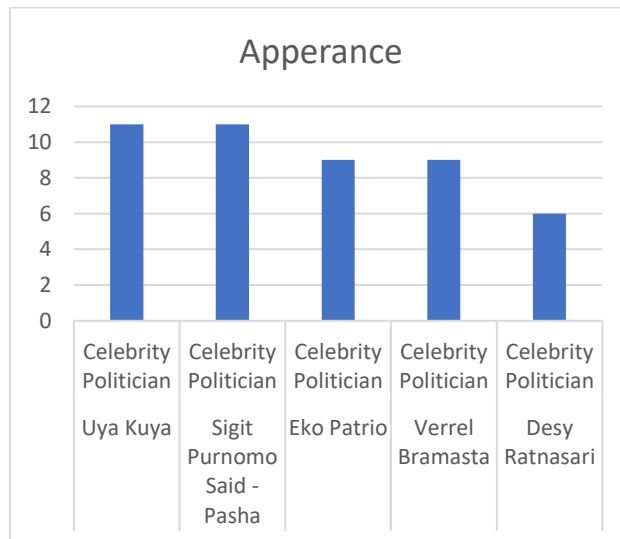


Figure 1. List of celebrity politicians with the most appearances on Instagram PAN.

The decision to highlight specific celebrity politicians might also be influenced by their performance and engagement metrics on the platform, with those generating higher user interactions receiving more prominence.¹⁹ One of the attention-grabbing points is the frequent appearance of Verrel

on Instagram PAN. Considering his generation, he can be categorized as a Gen-Z celebrity politician.

People often establish a sense of connection and relatability to politicians of their generation. This influence on voting decisions can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, individuals from the same

Types of messages from frequently featured celebrity politicians

Based on the content analysis of Instagram PAN, the contents featuring celebrity politicians consist of three types of messages. These messages include political messages that communicate PAN's key stances and strategies, political events that follow the party's program, and non-political messages.

The political messages aim to promote the party's agenda and engage with the audience on political issues, while the political events showcase the party's activities and participation in various programs. Additionally, the non-political messages provide a diversified content mix, potentially aimed at engaging followers on a more personal or light-hearted level. The utilization of these different message types reflects PAN's efforts to establish a dynamic online presence and maintain a connection with its audience beyond purely political matters.

"PAN Sapu Tukang Tipu", this political message appears to promote the party's stance on combating fraud or deception. The use of the word "sapu" (sweep) suggests a strong and decisive approach by PAN against individuals or entities engaged in fraudulent activities. This message could be aimed at portraying PAN as a party that values integrity and transparency.

Meanwhile, "Tips Lolos jadi DPR" try to provide guidance or advice on how to successfully become a member of the People's Representative Council (DPR). By sharing such tips, PAN might be attempting to attract potential candidates and show its support for individuals aspiring to join the legislative body. This message aligns with the party's interest in promoting its presence in the political landscape.

Moreover, "PAN's Jingle" indicates the party's use of audio-visual content to create a catchy and memorable tune that represents PAN's identity. Jingles are often used as a marketing strategy to enhance brand recognition²⁴, and in this context, it serves as a political message to reinforce PAN's presence and ideals among its followers.

Additionally, the content analysis reveals non-political messages, such as "Teh Dessy Kapan

Rencana Mau Tua?", suggesting that the party occasionally shares content unrelated to politics. Such non-political messages might be aimed at diversifying the content and engaging with followers on a more personal or light-hearted level.

4. Conclusion

The general elections commission (KPU) has verified 24 political parties, including PAN, for the upcoming election, with six local parties representing Aceh. An intriguing phenomenon observed in Indonesia's political landscape is the increasing influence of celebrities venturing into politics, with many finding a platform within PAN. The party has gained the nickname "Partai Artis Nasional," highlighting the presence of celebrity politicians within its ranks.

Celebrities hold a unique advantage in politics, leveraging their social networks and endorsements to boost public support and raise awareness for important issues. Additionally, their involvement in politics can attract new demographics, increasing political participation and representation.

Social media, particularly Instagram, has become a revolutionary tool for political communication. Instagram Reels, in particular, have proven effective for politicians to navigate the short attention spans of netizens and disseminate their political messages in a visually appealing and shareable manner.

Within PAN, only a select few celebrity politicians are frequently featured on the official Instagram account. This strategic selection might be influenced by electability, popularity, content relevance, and party strategy.

The content analysis identified three types of messages from celebrity politicians: political messages, political events, and non-political messages. These messages reflect PAN's efforts to establish a dynamic online presence, engage with the audience, and promote its political agenda beyond just political matters.

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