Becoming Relevant in the Generation Z Era: A Study of PKS' Political Communication Strategy in the 2024 Election

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 election is a new challenge for political parties in Indonesia to reach Generation Z, a group of young voters who have the characteristics of digital natives, are critical of information, and value authenticity. This study examines the political communication strategy of the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) in reaching Gen Z through social media. With a qualitative approach and intrinsic case study, data were collected through digital content analysis, in-depth interviews, ethnographic observation, and documentation. Using Brian McNair's political communication theory framework and Robert Entman's framing theory, the results of the study show that PKS adapts a message strategy through visual narratives, emotional approaches, and digital participation to build a relevant party image in the eyes of Gen Z. Despite the increase in digital interaction and online community involvement, this strategy still faces challenges in reaching the more pluralist and progressive Gen Z segment. This study concludes that the success of political communication in the digital era depends not only on technology but also on the party's ability to understand the values and communication styles of the younger generation authentically and substantially.

Keywords: Political Communication, Generation Z, PKS, Social Media, Framing

INTRODUCTION

Political dynamics in Indonesia are constantly evolving, influenced by demographic shifts, technological innovations, and social and cultural transformations. The 2024 General Election (Pemilu) is a crucial momentum that will not only test the resilience of existing political parties but also challenge their ability to adapt to a new segment of voters who now play a significant role: Generation Z. This group, born

between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, has become a substantive part of the voter list, having unique characteristics that fundamentally distinguish them from previous generations (Pew Research Center, 2019). As true "digital natives," they grew up in an environment closely related to the internet, social media, and abundant access to information. These conditions inherently shape their preferences in receiving information, interacting, and making decisions, including in the political context.

As one of Indonesia's main political parties, the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) faces similar challenges as other parties in gaining the sympathy and support of Generation Z. Historically, PKS is known to have a strong mass base from religious circles and some older voters. However, to maintain its relevance and competitiveness in the future, PKS needs to formulate an effective political communication strategy to reach Generation Z. An approach that relies solely on conventional methods will likely be inadequate, considering the way Generation Z consumes media and forms views. PKS's success in the 2024 Election will be primarily determined by its capability to understand and respond to the political needs and expectations of Generation Z. This is not only related to gaining votes but also to efforts to build long-term connections and encourage political participation from demographic groups that will become the backbone of the nation in the future.

CONTEXTUALIZATION OF RESEARCH

In the context of the 2024 Election, changes in the political communication landscape are very clearly recorded. The emergence of various social media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter (now X), and YouTube as the primary sources of information for Generation Z has changed the paradigm of political campaign implementation. Political news and narratives no longer only come from traditional mass media but also from influencers, content creators, and personal interactions in the online realm. Generation Z seeks concise, visual, and personal information and is more interested in issues relevant to their lives, such as the environment, equality, mental health, and economic opportunities (Forbes, 2021). They also have a critical eye for information, can identify disinformation, and highly value authenticity.

PKS, as a party with a strong Islamic identity and religious values, needs to find a way to articulate its vision in a relevant way for Generation Z without eroding its original

identity. This challenge is not only about adapting technology but also about adapting the narrative and substance of the message. How can PKS communicate the values of justice, welfare, and integrity that it upholds to appeal to Generation Z, who may have different perspectives on these issues? This study will examine how PKS seeks to bridge this gap and build a communication bridge with Generation Z voters facing the 2024 Election. This research is relevant considering that PKS is a party that has been active in the national political arena for quite some time and has a loyal mass base, so a study of its adaptation to young voters will provide important insights for other political parties.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political communication is a fundamental element in any political process, playing a central role in shaping public opinion, mobilizing voters, and legitimizing power. In his work An Introduction to Political Communication (2011), Brian McNair defines political communication as "the process by which political actors and political institutions interact with their audiences to influence political behavior, shape public opinion, and build consensus." McNair emphasizes that modern political communication is not limited to electoral campaigns but also includes the daily interactions between governments and citizens, as well as the role of the media in shaping political discourse.

McNair's political communication theory is highly relevant to this study because it offers a comprehensive framework for analyzing how political messages are produced, transmitted, and received in the contemporary media ecosystem. McNair identifies several key elements in political communication, including political actors (parties, politicians), media (traditional and new), and audiences (voters). He also highlights the importance of message strategy, framing, agenda setting, and the use of technology in influencing public perception. In the digital era, McNair (2011) also asserts that "social media has changed the nature of political interaction, enabling direct communication between politicians and citizens and facilitating mass mobilization in previously impossible ways." This quote underlines the relevance of social media in modern political communication and is particularly significant for the study of Generation Z.

Several previous studies have discussed the political communication strategies of political parties in Indonesia, but most have not specifically highlighted adaptation to Generation Z with a focus on PKS. For example, research by Sari and Putra (2018) discusses a party's political communication strategy in facing the Election but does not detail voter segmentation by generation. Likewise, a study by Wibowo (2020) examines the role of social media in political campaigns, but it is more general and not specific to the context of PKS and Generation Z.

On the other hand, research on Generation Z consistently shows their characteristics as critical voters, seeking authenticity and relying heavily on information from digital media. Smith (2022) states in his article, "Generation Z seeks authentic connections with politicians and issues relevant to their lives, not just empty campaign promises." This indicates that effective communication strategies for Generation Z must go beyond the traditional one-way approach.

RESEARCH GAPS

Although there have been many studies on political communication and research on Generation Z, there is still a significant gap in the literature that examines explicitly the political communication strategies of certain parties, in this case PKS, to attract Generation Z amid the 2024 Election. This gap includes:

Lack of Specific Focus on PKS: Most research on political party communication strategies in Indonesia tends to be general or focuses on other major parties. Not many studies analyze in depth how PKS, with its unique identity and voter base, formulates strategies to reach young voters.

In-depth Adaptation of Political Communication to Generation Z: Although the trend of Generation Z as new voters has been recognized, no comprehensive study has dissected how political parties in Indonesia specifically adapt their communication strategies—from content, channels, and delivery style—to bridge this generational gap.

Applying McNair's Theory in the Context of PKS-Generation Z: Although McNair's political communication theory provides a strong framework, its application in analyzing PKS's political communication strategies aimed at Generation Z in the 2024 Election has not been widely explored. This study will fill this gap using McNair's

theoretical lens to understand political messages' production, dissemination, and reception.

Empirical Data Analysis Post-2024 Election: Most studies were conducted before or during the campaign. This study will attempt to analyze data and findings post-2024 Election to see the effectiveness of the strategies implemented by PKS.

These gaps are an important justification for conducting this research. A better understanding of PKS's communication strategy toward Generation Z will provide academic insights and practical implications for political parties in Indonesia in the ever-changing political landscape.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Based on the background, contextualization, literature review, and research gaps that have been described, this study has the following main objectives:

1. Identifying and describing the political communication strategies used by PKS in reaching and attracting the sympathy of Generation Z in the 2024 Election. This will include analyzing the message content, platforms (mainly social media), and the communication style applied.

2. This study will analyze the effectiveness of PKS's political communication strategy toward Generation Z in the 2024 Election based on McNair's political communication theory. It will evaluate how the strategy achieves PKS's political goals, such as increasing awareness, forming positive opinions, or encouraging Generation Z voter participation.

3. Identifying the challenges and opportunities of PKS in building relevance with Generation Z in the future. This research is expected to provide recommendations for PKS and other political parties to face the dynamics of young voters in the upcoming Election.

By achieving these objectives, this research hopes to significantly contribute to understanding political communication in the digital era, especially in Indonesia's shifting voter demographics.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

The theoretical framework in this study is based on the theory of modern political communication developed by Brian McNair. This theory is used to understand how the political communication strategy is carried out by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), especially in the context of facing Generation Z in the 2024 Election. Political communication, according to McNair (2011), is a process of conveying political information that occurs between political actors and the broader community through various media, both traditional and digital.

1. **McNair's Elements of Political Communication**

    McNair identifies five main components that make up political communication:

    a. Political Actor

        In this study, the leading actor is PKS, a political party seeking to convey its vision, mission, and programs to voters.

    b. Political Message

        This is the content or communication material delivered by PKS, such as ideas about social justice, Islamic values, and attitudes towards current issues such as the environment and the digital economy.

    c. Communication Media

        In today's digital context, social media such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, and YouTube are the most relevant communication media for reaching Generation Z. These platforms allow for visual, concise, and interactive messaging.

    d. Audience

        The primary focus of this research is Generation Z, a group of young voters who are digital natives who are critical of information, interested in social issues, and authentic messages.

    e. Social and Cultural Context

        Every political message cannot be separated from the social and cultural context in which it is communicated. Technological developments, social media culture, and shifting social values shape how Generation Z receives and interprets political messages.

2. **Digital Communication Strategy in McNair's Perspective**

McNair highlighted that modern political communication cannot be separated from the development of digital media. Social media has changed the communication pattern from one direction (top-down) to interactive and dialogical. In this context, parties such as PKS must adjust their communication style to be more open, responsive, and personal.

Some important strategies, according to McNair, that are relevant to the analysis in this study include:

a. Framing

How PKS structures messages to suit the values or interests of Generation Z, for example, raises the issue of economic justice in language relatable to young people.

b. Agenda Setting (issue determination)

Determining what issues the party wants to focus on and how these issues will be brought into the public sphere to get Generation Z's attention.

c. Priming

Influencing how Generation Z views parties through repeating specific issues or narratives. Example: emphasizing the values of integrity and transparency in every post.

Through this strategy, parties convey information, build an image, and create an emotional connection with voters.

3. **The Relevance of McNair's Theory to the Characteristics of Generation Z**

The integration of McNair's political communication theory with the characteristics of Generation Z is an important foundation in the analysis of this study. Generation Z has several main characteristics, including:

a. Growing up in a digital environment, we are used to fast, visual, two-way information.

b. Value authenticity in communication; do not readily believe messages that seem engineered or overly formal.

c. Critical and independent, they tend to double-check information and compare sources before making decisions.

d. Care about social issues such as climate change, social justice, gender equality, and economic opportunity.

Based on these characteristics, political communication aimed at Generation Z needs to be:

a. Personal and humanistic: not just delivering the program but also including a narrative of experience or story that touches on emotional aspects.

b. Visual and concise: Use short videos, infographics, memes, and other interactive content.

c. Responsive and interactive: Open dialogue through comments, polls, or online Q&A sessions.

d. Consistent and transparent: keeping messages consistent and not raising suspicions of political motives.

This framework serves as a tool to evaluate whether PKS's communication strategy aligns with Generation Z's digital preferences and habits. It also helps assess the effectiveness of political communication in creating participation, shaping opinions, and building long-term loyalty among young voters.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study strategy. The primary focus of this study is to understand in depth how the political communication strategy implemented by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) is directed at Generation Z during and after the 2024 Election, primarily through social media. This approach allows researchers to explore the meaning behind political communication practices, understand the perspectives of communication actors, and contextual assess the target audience's responses.

1. **Research Approach**

A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on deepening meaning and context, not quantifying data. The researcher seeks to understand comprehensively how communication strategies are formed, interpreted, and received by Generation Z, the main target of the PKS campaign.

This type of research is an intrinsic case study. It is conducted to understand a specific phenomenon in a unique context: the PKS communication strategy

towards young voters. Case studies provide the flexibility to explore phenomena comprehensively and in-depth by considering the social and cultural dimensions inherent in the research subject.

2. Data Sources and Collection Techniques

This study uses primary and secondary data, with the following data collection techniques:

a. Digital Content Analysis

Researchers will examine content uploads from PKS's official social media accounts on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X, and YouTube. The focus of the analysis includes:

1) Narratives and themes used in political messages.

2) Content delivery format and style (visual, text, audio).

3) Elements of interactivity such as polls, Q&A, or open comments.

4) The tone of communication is formal, casual, religious, humorous, or persuasive.

5) At least 50 contents from each platform will be analyzed during the 2024 campaign and post-election period.

b. In-depth Interview

Interviews were conducted semi-structured to explore participants' experiences and views. The interview subjects consisted of the following:

1) PKS's strategic communications team is responsible for designing digital campaigns.

2) PKS social media admin who manages daily content and digital interactions.

3) Ten Generation Z people who are active followers, commentators, or observers of PKS digital content.

The interviews aimed to understand the reasons behind the chosen strategies, perceptions of communication effectiveness, and assessments from the perspective of young voters.

c. Netnography Observation

Observations were made on Generation Z's digital activities responding to PKS content on social media. Researchers will follow discussions,

comments, popular hashtags, and forms of support or criticism that appear online. Observations focused on trends that emerged organically, such as:

1) Use of campaign hashtags.

2) Reviews or reactions to political posts.

3) Creative content (memes, edited videos, story re-shares) created by young voters.

    d.   Documentation

    Data includes

1) PKS's political manifesto during the 2024 Election.

2) The party's official work program and digital publications.

3) Digital campaign materials such as promotional videos, online flyers, or infographics.

3.   Analysis Techniques and Validity

    a.   Data

    The collected data will be selected and categorized based on McNair's five elements (actor, message, media, audience, and context).

    b.   Categorization

    The data will be organized into main themes such as:

1) Language style (formal, casual, religious, visual).

2) Use of Islamic symbols and references.

3) Narratives about the young generation, social justice, and the creative economy.

4) Form a call-to-action or direct invitation in the content.

    c.   Framing and Intertextuality Analysis

    Framing theory is used to analyze how PKS frames key issues to appeal to Generation Z. Intertextual analysis is also conducted to understand the relationship between PKS content and the public's spontaneous digital responses.

    d.   Triangulation of Sources and Techniques

    To maintain validity, triangulation was carried out between:

1) Interview results.

2) Netnographic observation.

3) Digital content analysis.

The goal is to ensure that findings are unbiased and reflect reality from multiple perspectives.

e.   Ethical Aspects

This research pays attention to the following ethical principles:

1) Maintaining the confidentiality of participant identities, especially from interviews.

2) Obtain written or verbal permission before the interview is conducted.

3) Only use public social media data; do not take data from personal accounts without consent.

RESEARCH LIMITATIONS

Every study has limitations that need to be explained openly so that readers can understand the scope and context of the results obtained. In this study, several important limitations need to be noted:

1.   Limited Focus on One Political Party

This study only focuses on the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), so it does not provide a comprehensive picture of the political communication strategies implemented by other parties in Indonesia. Thus, generalizations to the entire national political landscape need to be done with caution.

2.   Audience Segmentation in Generation Z

This study explicitly highlights Generation Z as the primary target group of the PKS communication strategy. Therefore, the results cannot be immediately applied or concluded for other generations with different characteristics and communication preferences, such as Generation X or Y (Millennials).

3.   Limitations of Digital Data Sources

Primary data were obtained from social media platforms and online interviews. Both sources have certain limitations, such as:

a.   Potential bias in representation (e.g., only active or vocal users are monitored).

b.   Lack of emotional expression and body language in online interviews.

c.   Limited access to private or internal party data could provide deeper insights.

However, these limitations do not reduce the value of the research because they still provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of PKS political communication in a specific digital and demographic context.

REASONS FOR CHOOSING THE METHODOLOGY

The selection of a qualitative approach with a case study strategy in this study is based on considerations of the suitability between the research objectives and the characteristics of the data needed. There are several main reasons underlying the selection of this methodology:

1. The Need for an In-depth Approach

   Qualitative research allows researchers to explore what parties communicate, how and why these strategies are implemented, and how target audiences receive them.

2. Digital Context as a New Research Domain

   In the digital era, political communication often occurs on dynamic, visual, and interactive social media. Therefore, using methods such as digital content analysis and ethnographic observation becomes very relevant to capture the reality of contemporary political communication, which is no longer centered on conventional media.

3. Suitability of Case Studies for Specific Phenomena

   Focusing on PKS as a single case study allows this research to uncover unique and distinctive strategies, which quantitative approaches or general surveys cannot describe. Case studies provide space to understand phenomena in depth in their real context.

4. Complexity of the Relationship between Technology, Strategy, and Audience

   This approach was also chosen to capture the complex relationship between three main components: party political strategy, use of social media, and Generation Z political behavior. Researchers can construct a more complete and meaningful picture with a contextual and interpretive approach.

With the above considerations, the methodology used in this study is believed to significantly contribute to understanding effective political communication strategies in the digital era, especially in facing the challenges and opportunities posed by the presence of a new generation of voters.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

PKS Communication Strategy Profile in the 2024 Election

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) faces the 2024 Election with a political communication strategy focusing on the younger generation, especially Generation Z (Gen Z). By utilizing social media and a tailored communication approach, PKS is trying to frame its political message to be relevant and attractive to this segment of voters. Using Robert Entman's Framing Theory, PKS's communication strategy can be analyzed through four main elements: problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and recommendations for handling. PKS defines the main problem as social injustice and the need for change in governance. The party interprets the cause of the problem as a result of government policies that do not favor the people. Morally, PKS assesses the need for justice and welfare for all levels of society. As a solution, PKS recommends change through active political participation, especially from the younger generation.

PKS uses social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube to convey political messages. The content often combines elements of humor, memes, and popular pop culture trends among Gen Z. This approach aims to frame political messages in a lighter and more digestible format, increasing engagement and resonance with young audiences.

The Pontianak case study shows how PKS uses Instagram as a political communication tool to reach young voters. With low turnout among first-time voters, PKS uses the platform to build political awareness and encourage active participation through content tailored to Gen Z preferences. This strategy reflects PKS's efforts to reframe the party's image to be more appealing to the younger generation.

In Pontianak, PKS faces significant challenges in reaching young voters, especially Gen Z, who show high political apathy. Data from the General Elections Commission (KPU) noted that in the 2019 Election, the abstention rate in Pontianak City reached 24%, with 30% of voters being first-time voters. To overcome this, PKS utilized Instagram as its primary political communication tool.

Through the @pkspontianak account, PKS implements a communication strategy that adapts to Gen Z preferences. The content presented includes memes, humor, and

popular pop culture trends to frame political messages in a lighter and more digestible format. This strategy aims to increase engagement and resonance with young audiences. However, research shows that although this strategy has increased media activity and competence among Gen Z, audience satisfaction and motivation are still relatively low. This indicates the need for further evaluation and adjustment in communication strategies to achieve higher effectiveness.

In addition, PKS developed PKSTV as a digital campaign media that shapes public perception and influences voters' political behavior. By highlighting key issues and building positive public opinion towards PKS, PKSTV plays an important role in the party's communication strategy, especially in framing political messages relevant to Gen Z's needs and aspirations.

However, challenges remain, especially in dealing with rampant disinformation and hoaxes on social media. PKS has formed a special team to monitor and respond to information that could harm the party's image. This team is tasked with disseminating clarification and accurate information to maintain the party's reputation in the eyes of the public. This approach shows PKS's seriousness in maintaining the integrity of information and building public trust.

Overall, PKS's political communication strategy for the 2024 Election combines digital technology with a community-based approach. By targeting various voter segments through tailored messages and intensive interactions, PKS seeks to increase electability and expand its support base amidst increasingly tight political competition.

Gen Z's Perception of PKS Communication

In the increasingly developing digital era, political communication has undergone significant transformation, especially in reaching the younger generation, such as Generation Z. The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), one of the political parties in Indonesia, has attempted to adjust its communication strategy to attract the attention of Gen Z. However, the effectiveness of this approach needs to be analyzed critically, primarily through the lens of the Framing Theory proposed by Entman.

Framing theory highlights how media and political actors frame information to influence public perception. In this context, PKS attempts to frame its political message to suit the values and preferences of Gen Z, who are known to be critical, digitally

literate, and value authenticity. However, to what extent has PKS' framing succeeded in forming a positive perception among Gen Z?

One of PKS's efforts is through social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram. They produce content in a style that is considered "trendy," using humor, memes, and pop culture references to attract attention. However, this approach is often considered a shallow "image" effort by Gen Z, who tend to be skeptical of inauthentic content. A study by Medina Serrano et al. (2020) shows that TikTok users, especially young ones, are more responsive to content that is considered authentic and not fabricated. When political parties try too hard to "enter" Gen Z culture without a deep understanding, they risk losing credibility.

Furthermore, TikTok's highly personalized algorithm can create a "filter bubble," where users are only exposed to content that matches their preferences. Boeker and Urman (2022) found that language, location, and user interactions influence the type of content recommended. In this context, if PKS content does not match Gen Z's values or interests, it is unlikely to appear in their feeds, reducing the effectiveness of PKS's political communication.

In addition, Gen Z is known as a generation that values transparency and honesty. They tend to reject content that is considered manipulative or overly political. In this case, PKS's political message must be framed carefully not to appear to be forcing a particular political agenda. Instead, a more dialogic and participatory approach may be more effective in building trust with Gen Z.

However, it is also important to note that not all PKS's efforts to reach Gen Z have failed. There are several examples where their content has gained positive attention and engagement. This shows that with the right approach, PKS can build effective communication with Gen Z. The key is understanding Gen Z's values and preferences and framing political messages authentically and relevantly.

Overall, PKS's communication strategy in reaching Gen Z through social media shows an effort to adapt to the changing digital political landscape. However, its effectiveness depends heavily on its ability to frame political messages authentically and relevantly to Gen Z's values. Without a deep understanding and sincere approach, this effort risks being seen as mere image building, which could damage PKS's image in the eyes of the younger generation.

Effectiveness of PKS Social Media and Digital Campaigns

The 2024 election marks a new chapter in Indonesia's digital political communication evolution. One of the leading actors taking advantage of this transformation is the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). By adopting a strategic approach based on agenda-setting theory, PKS disseminates campaign messages through social media and actively shapes public issue priorities through digital framing and visualization techniques. The effectiveness of this strategy cannot be separated from PKS's ability to utilize dialogic and visual-based social media features and support the production of two-way narratives so that they can create emotional and ideological resonance for target segments, especially Generation Z.

Social Media as an Agenda-Setting Tool

Agenda-setting theory states that the media influences not only what the public thinks but also what the public considers important. In the context of the PKS campaign, this strategy is reflected in the intensity of content production on the themes of social justice, Islamic values, and youth involvement, which are consistently distributed through channels such as TikTok, YouTube, and Instagram (Utomo & Ahmad, 2023). The choice of these platforms also reflects a precise target segmentation: TikTok for first-time voters, Instagram for young urban voters, and YouTube as a channel for visual political documentation and education.

Through digital content analysis, it was found that PKS actively created positive narratives for internalizing party values and critical narratives toward the government as a form of issue framing (Febrianti & Saptawan, 2023). Visual campaigns such as PKSTV videos and vlogs of young PKS politicians showcase the party's humanist and religious side, making it easier to associate with the public's emotional needs (Ramadhani et al., 2024). This narrative technique functions as "emotional reframing," which consciously positions the party as a public servant, not just an institution of power. This is also a form of soft persuasion that bridges the ideological image with the emotional needs of Gen Z.

Netnography and PKS Digital Community

Using the nethnography method, observations of the behavior of the PKS online community on social media show the existence of a loyal digital volunteer ecosystem. Hashtags such as #PKSMuda and internal conversation groups are a means of consolidating communication and mobilizing digital masses, which strengthens the spread of the party's agenda organically (Mas'ud, 2024). Netnography also shows that the PKS digital community is active and creative; they not only re-share official content but also create interpretive content that links party messages to everyday issues, such as staple food prices, education, and religious life.

PKS's digital campaign also touches on emotional and ideological aspects. Content-themed "change in national morals" or "obedient people's representatives" shows the direction of the party's agenda-setting, which wants to highlight ideological characters rather than programmatic ones. On the other hand, personal communication styles, such as vlog videos from young PKS politicians, also provide an informal and intimate nuance that attracts the attention of young voters. This closeness is reinforced by two-way interactions, such as comment responses and live sessions, strengthening the perception that PKS speaks and listens. Narrative content created by the PKS community shows the characteristics of user-generated agenda setting, where sympathizers help produce content, expand reach, and strengthen the campaign's central message. This community also becomes a tool for monitoring public discourse and responses to the framing built by the party. This makes nethnography an observation method and a tool for mapping the dynamics of public discourse on PKS's political narrative.

Campaign Effectiveness and Party Image

PKS has succeeded in placing the issues raised as a "public agenda" that is discussed, especially among young people and first-time voters. Compare this with PDIP, which utilizes more spin doctor strategies and symbolic narratives (Athoriq, 2024). PKS, on the other hand, shows consistency in values and closeness to religious audiences and digital urban voters. This consistency is seen in the structure of recurring messages and symbols, such as the narrative of social justice based on Islamic values.

This indirectly forms the perception that PKS is a "value" party, not just an electoral party.

Even when comparing digital performances between parties, PKS is considered more effective in conveying its political positioning and ideological values visually and narratively (Utomo & Ahmad, 2023). This approach shows the campaign strategy's effectiveness in reaching voters and creating a collective perception of PKS's role in the national political landscape. With this strategy, PKS strengthens electoral branding and builds a party's digital identity consistent with its core values (Islam, justice, and public service). This effectiveness is also shown through the growth of social interactions in the media, the involvement of netizens in virtual campaigns, and the increase in discursive interest in the issues raised by PKS, especially in religious and urban digital communities.

Relevance of PKS Political Narrative to Gen-Z Values

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), one of the Islamic-based political parties in Indonesia, is trying to adjust its communication strategy to the characteristics of Generation Z (Gen Z). This group strongly favors values such as honesty, social justice, inclusiveness, and openness of information. The PKS political narrative approach, which was initially normative, has begun to shift to being more personal, visual, and digital-native, in line with Gen Z's communication character (Videska, 2023).

Through the perspective of McNair's political communication theory, political communication is understood as an intentional and participatory process between political actors, the media, and society. Communication is no longer one-way but is based on social interaction in public spaces, including digital media (Ihsani, 2023). In this context, PKS is seen actively producing digital content through channels such as Instagram @pksmudacom, TikTok, and PKSTV to shape public opinion and portray the party as a "relatable" and inclusive political actor (Ramadhani et al., 2024).

Content analysis shows that PKS messages often use religious narratives wrapped in visual formats familiar to Gen Z: memes, vlogs, reels, and testimonies from young figures. These narratives reflect Islamic-based principles of morality, social solidarity, and nationalism (Videska, 2023). However, these efforts have not fully reached Gen Z, who are more liberal and critical of identity politics.

Regarding values, PKS tends to successfully align itself with some values held by religious Gen Z, such as honesty, integrity, and simplicity (Triartanto et al., 2024). However, PKS' narrative approach still shows limitations in adopting the values of inclusivity, freedom of expression, and pluralism, which are also important to many urban Gen Z members (Primagara & Yulianita, 2024).

Through McNair's lens, PKS can be seen as being in the process of narrative transition from a communication model dominated by hierarchy to a more horizontal and interactive model. However, as shown in the case study of PKS's Instagram communication (Videska, 2023), message resonance is still higher among Gen Z with strong religious affiliations, while this strategy has not fully reached more secular segments. Thus, despite efforts to modernize the narrative, PKS still needs to expand the spectrum of political narratives to be more responsive to the complexity of Gen Z values.

Furthermore, it is worth highlighting that Gen Z prioritizes horizontal involvement, where political participation is interpreted as voting in elections and involvement in discourse, social campaigns, and collaboration in digital spaces. In this case, PKS needs to go beyond one-way communication patterns and create a two-way communication ecosystem through interactive features such as Q&A on social media, live discussions, or digital forums that bring together party elites with young sympathizers.

On the other hand, PKS's success in building a strong narrative on platforms like TikTok shows an awareness of the shift in Gen Z's information consumption patterns. Short video-based content and emotional storytelling have proven effective in creating brand engagement. However, this success must still be supported by credible value substance. Gen Z is a group that is critical of "empty slogans," so political narratives not accompanied by real action will be considered mere symbolism.

The relevance of the PKS narrative also needs to be considered in the context of micro politics. The local experiences and representation of young PKS cadres at the city or district level have great potential in building personal relationships with Gen Z at the grassroots level. Through this approach, political narratives are not just about "big ideas" at the national level but also about supporting concrete issues such as education, mental health, digital jobs, and strengthening young MSMEs. As a conclusion to this discussion, it needs to be emphasized that the success of political narratives in the Gen

Z era is determined by how much content is produced and by how deeply political parties can read and respond to changes in values. PKS's strategy of combining modern Islam, visual communication, and a strong digital presence is a good initial foundation. However, to achieve a complete depth of meaning and value connectivity, this party must continue to adapt its approach to creating authentic, dynamic, and relevant narratives in the eyes of Gen Z.

THEORETICAL DISCUSSION AND COMPARISON

In An Introduction to Political Communication, Brian McNair (2011) asserts that political elites or the media do not exclusively carry out political communication but rather a multi-layered social process involving negotiation of meaning, symbolic dissemination, and public contribution in a discursive space. McNair lists five functions of political communication, namely:

1. Informing the public about public issues.
2. Providing a forum for political participation.
3. Facilitating public debate.
4. Building a political image and symbols of power.
5. Organizing political action.

In this case, political communication is no longer top-down but somewhat interactive, dialogical, and digitally fragmented. Social media has become an arena for producing and reproducing political narratives, and society—especially Gen Z—is not only a consumer but also a producer of meaning (prosumer). Gen Z is not only digitally but also ideologically literate—they are more skeptical of political propaganda and believe more in transparent, authentic, and emotional-resonant political communication (Rohman, 2024). In this case, PKS is required to:

1. Redesigning its ideological narrative to be not dogmatic but inspiring.
2. Presenting young cadres who can be role models for a dynamic Islamic lifestyle.
3. Avoid manipulative communication styles because Gen Z has a high sensitivity radar for "empty imagery."

McNair's theory emphasizes that credibility and authenticity are two important currencies in modern digital political communication. This means that effective

branding is not just visual but based on emotional narratives that match the audience's values.

According to McNair, political communication must also face the risk of fragmentation of meaning, especially in the post-truth era, where emotions are more important than facts. This is especially relevant in the context of Gen Z, where social media has become a space full of "subjective truth." PKS's strategy is to produce content with light religious visuals, Islamic political humor, and symbols of a halal-urban lifestyle. However, this also carries risks: narratives that are too "smooth" can be considered unsubstantial, and Gen Z can reject them if they are not accompanied by data, real action, or two-way engagement (Videska, 2023).

Videska, AVV (2023), in a thesis entitled PKS Political Communication in Attracting Millennial Votes on Instagram @pksmudacom, used a combination of in-depth interviews and ethnographic observations and analyzed PKS's digital communication strategies targeting Gen Z. Some of the findings are:

1. PKS, through @pksmudacom, uses a relaxed language style, memes, emojis, and visual expressions typical of Gen Z. This creates the impression of a party that is not rigid but more intimate and relatable. Narratives such as "Cadres are not just politicians, but millennial friends" are used to build emotional connections. This finding strengthens McNair's theory that political communication in the digital era must target experience and emotion, not just convey political programs. (McNair, 2011)

2. Focus on Modern Islamic Moral Values and Identity. Most of the content raises themes such as Social piety (helping neighbors, caring for the environment), Casual preaching with Q&A format or short reels, and Successful young Muslim figures (cadre influencers). This shows that PKS is trying to reframe Islamic ideology to be inspiring and relevant for Gen Z, who, although digital and progressive, still have a religious background.

3. The @pksmudacom account actively replies to comments, reposts posts from followers, and holds polls/interactive stories. According to interview respondents, this creates a sense of personal closeness to the party, such as speaking directly to their representatives. This aligns with McNair's two-way communication principle, which states that modern political actors must interact in a horizontal public arena.

This study shows that PKS's digital communication strategy through @pksmudacom successfully builds the image of a "contemporary Islamic party" and approaches young voters. Visual, emotional, and symbolic approaches have proven effective for moderate-religious Gen Z. We can also verify that PKS's digital communication strategy tends to try to adapt to Gen Z's consumption patterns. However, the party still faces challenges in reaching the more pluralistic or progressive Gen Z group regarding values.

CONCLUSION

The Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) has transformed its political communication strategy for the 2024 Election, primarily focusing on Generation Z as the target of new voters. This generation has distinctive characteristics as digital natives, is critical of information, and values authenticity in communication. To reach them, PKS utilizes digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube with content that adapts to Gen Z trends and preferences. This strategy is an important form of adaptation to maintain the party's existence and relevance in increasingly competitive political competition.

Through McNair's theoretical approach and Entman's framing technique, this study shows that PKS frames political messages in a light, visual, and emotional format. Islamic values, social justice, and the role of the younger generation are often raised in the party's digital content. However, the effectiveness of this strategy varies. On the one hand, the visual and participatory approach has succeeded in increasing digital interaction and forming a party image that is more friendly to the younger generation. On the other hand, some Gen Z audiences consider this approach superficial and not yet fully authentic or substantial.

The study also highlights how social media algorithms and digital culture influence the reach of PKS's political messages. The existence of the "filter bubble" phenomenon means that the party's messages do not always reach the more pluralist or secular Gen Z segments. In addition, PKS is still considered to have limitations in adopting progressive values important to some urban Gen Z, such as inclusivity and freedom of expression. This is a challenge for the party in expanding its support base from the younger generation.

However, initiatives such as the formation of digital communities, the production of emotion-based narrative content, and the involvement of young cadres in public communication indicate that PKS is transitioning towards more horizontal and interactive political communication. Efforts to present the image of a "contemporary Islamic party" through @pksmudacom are an example of the success of some of these strategies. However, to reach the entire spectrum of Gen Z values and preferences, PKS needs to deepen the narrative, increase the credibility of the substance, and open up a more expansive participation space.

In conclusion, PKS's political communication strategy in the 2024 Election shows significant progress in responding to demographic and technological challenges. PKS has built a strong initial foundation through digital communication but needs to complement this strategy with a more in-depth, responsive, and inclusive approach. This study provides important insights into the fact that the success of political communication in the Gen Z era depends not solely on the quantity of content but on the quality of relationships, depth of meaning, and the suitability of values between the party and its young voters.

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