

Digital Communication Strategies in Developing the Political Image of Central Java Provincial Legislative Council Representatives

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the role and practices of digital media use by the Deputy Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council in the context of political communication. In addition, this study also examines how content impacts audience perception and satisfaction levels in creating a positive image. This study thoroughly investigates how the use of digital media, particularly platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok simultaneously, influences public perception of legislative members. This study uses a qualitative approach and case study method. After field observations, interviews, and document analysis were used to collect research data, Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis method was used to analyze it. The study shows that although digital media has been used to disseminate constitutional activities, they still need to improve their ability to create a positive image, especially in terms of transparency and impartiality towards the community. The type of content that shows the process of conveying public aspirations and direct interaction between legislators and the community is considered the most effective. Compared to content that shows formal activities such as meetings, regional visits, and hearings, which tend to be rigid and less interesting to the audience, content with these characteristics is able to produce a more humanistic and communicative image, according to Sarif Abdillah's administrative analysis. However, there is still a belief that political and personal interests take precedence over public interests. Therefore, to increase public happiness and trust, relevant content that focuses on the needs and desires of the community is very important.

Keywords: *Digital Media; Image; Political Communication; Deputy Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council.*

INTRODUCTION

The election of the Chair and Vice Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council for the 2024–2029 term, which consists of 120 council members, has the responsibility to organize and manage each commission. One of the constitutional mandates given to each member of the Representative Council is to fulfill and continue the aspirations of the community. Various activities, such as hearings, recesses, and other constitutional

activities, help carry out this responsibility (Source:<https://dprd.jatengprov.go.id/>). Members of the Central Java Legislative Council are not only responsible for conveying and receiving the aspirations of the people, but also for maintaining public trust in their performance and commitment to their constituencies. Utilizing digital media, which is rapidly developing in line with technological advances in the modern era, is one way to build that trust.

Society has entered the digital age due to rapid advances in information and communication technology. Patterns of social interaction and public communication have undergone significant changes. These changes have become an important part of political communication and the way political actors gain public legitimacy and interact with their constituents. They are no longer peripheral (Wahid, 2016). Currently, digital media, especially social media, are used as strategic platforms to showcase one's identity, disseminate information, and manage the image and reputation of public officials. Very few council members actively use digital media to build a good reputation in society, especially in the Central Java Provincial Council. However, some Legislative Council members have shown awareness and made efforts to use digital media to increase public trust and create a good image. In today's era of computers and the internet, the level of public trust can be seen from what is posted on social media. Sarif Abdillah, Deputy Chair of the Central Java Legislative Council from 2024 to 2029, is an example of how he uses digital media for political communication. Sarif Abdillah targets young people who are dynamic, open to change, and adaptable to technological advances. He has successfully built relationships with the public and gained trust, leading to his election as a member of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council for the 2024–2029 term.

Sarif Abdillah, S.Pd.I., son of Hj. Siti Rosidah, S.Ag., a member of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council from the National Awakening Party (PKB) faction from 2019 to 2024, strives to build a positive image as an independent young man who is close to the community. He demonstrates inclusive, communicative, and responsive leadership to various social issues in his neighborhood to achieve this goal. Although he comes from a family that plays an important role in local politics, Sarif Abdillah strives to build his own identity and social legitimacy through social activities, direct interaction with others, and participation in various youth activities. Therefore, the image that is built is not solely based on the political power or position of one's parents, but also on individual abilities, commitment to public service, and the desire of the younger generation to make a real contribution to society.

According to Adriza (2017), image can be defined as a representation of views, beliefs, attitudes, stereotypes, and behaviors that reflect an organization. Therefore, to gain public trust, both individuals and organizations, including regional leaders, need the right image management approach. Studies on the use of digital media in government institutions, particularly in regional representative councils, have been conducted extensively. One of them was written by Syarifah Namira Azzahra (2023), who conducted research on how the use of social media in digital public relations activities

can improve the image of the West Java Provincial Legislative Council. Her study shows that Legislative Council public relations staff use various content on each social media platform according to its function. However, this utilization is considered to not fully reflect the relationship between council members and the community and their role in fighting for the aspirations of the people.

This study specifically examines how Deputy Chairman of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council Sarif Abdillah uses digital media to build, manage, and strengthen his positive image in the public sphere. In this case, the use of digital media is considered a political communication strategy that allows public figures to interact with the community more quickly, effectively, and openly. Sarif Abdillah can convey institutional activities, work programs, ideas, and responses to various social issues that arise in the community through various digital media platforms. In addition, this study aims to examine the reasons why digital media is used as a strategic means of building a positive image. This study views digital media not only as a communication tool, but also as a place to create images that shape public perception of political figures. Therefore, this study seeks to understand how digital communication strategies can influence public acceptance of political figures.

The main objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of how digital media is used as a communication strategy to create a positive perception of public figures. More specifically, the objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To analyze the digital interaction strategies of the Deputy Chair of the Regional Representative Council with the public through various digital media platforms. This includes two-way communication, responses to public aspirations, and audience engagement in the digital space.
2. To identify how communication messages delivered through digital media are used to create a positive image, whether related to institutional activities, work programs, social issues, or persuasive messages.
3. Analysis of digital content management techniques used to create personal and institutional narratives, including the use of visuals, communication language, and subjects raised in each post.
4. Evaluation of the relevance of published digital content, as well as its relationship to the information needs and public perception of the Deputy Chair of the Regional Representative Council.
5. Description of the role of digital media as a means of modern political communication in shaping public perception, improving relations with constituents, and creating a positive digital public space.

It is hoped that this study will provide a better understanding of how to utilize digital media in modern political communication. In addition, this study is expected to reveal how digital media functions not only as a tool for disseminating information, but also as a strategic place to communicate, shape public perception, and strengthen the social legitimacy of political figures. This research is also expected to emphasize the importance of public figures, especially local legislative officials, managing a positive

image regularly and continuously. This is done to build public trust, improve communication with constituents, and increase their confidence that they are doing what they should do as public representatives.

METHODOLOGY

This study investigated how digital communication tactics affect the Deputy Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council's political image using a qualitative research methodology and a single case study design. Because it allows for a thorough understanding of complex social phenomena within their real-life environment especially when the borders between the phenomenon and setting are not readily apparent a qualitative case study was deemed acceptable (Yin, 2019; Afrizal, 2020). Because the political figure actively uses a variety of digital communication tools to interact with people and spread political ideas, the example was purposefully chosen.

The study involved ten purposively selected informants representing different stakeholder groups to obtain multiple perspectives on the phenomenon under investigation. The participants consisted of one Deputy Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council (Sarif Abdillah), one digital media administrator responsible for managing his official social media accounts, two political communication experts, two journalists covering regional politics, and four followers of Sarif Abdillah's social media accounts. Informants were selected based on predetermined criteria, including: (1) direct involvement in managing or producing political communication content; (2) expertise or professional experience in political communication and digital media; (3) active engagement with Sarif Abdillah's digital platforms; and (4) willingness to participate voluntarily in the study. This purposive sampling strategy ensured that participants possessed relevant knowledge and experiences capable of providing rich and meaningful information.

Semi-structured in-depth interviews, document analysis, and digital content analysis were used to gather primary data. In order to accommodate participant availability, semi-structured interviews were performed between March and May 2026 utilizing both in-person and online platforms (Zoom and Google Meet). With the participants' permission, each interview lasted between 45 and 90 minutes, was audio recorded, and was then verbatim transcribed. Open-ended questions about digital communication tactics, political branding, audience participation, perceived political image, and the efficiency of social media use made up the interview guide.

Qualitative content analysis of digital communication materials posted on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok was done to supplement the results of the interviews. During the research period, communication topics, message framing, visual representation, interaction patterns, and audience engagement were the main areas of analysis. To improve contextual knowledge and enable data triangulation, supporting papers such as official publications, organizational reports, and news items were also reviewed.

The six-stage paradigm put forward by Braun and Clarke (2021) was followed in the thematic analysis of the data, which was aided using the qualitative data analysis program NVivo 14. To familiarize oneself with the data, all interview tapes were first transcribed verbatim and reviewed several times. Second, significant data units were given first descriptive names as part of the open coding process. Third, axial coding was used to methodically group comparable codes in order to find conceptual connections and more general analytical categories. Fourth, categories were integrated into overarching themes that represented the digital communication techniques used in the development of political images through the use of selective coding. NVivo helped with systematic data arrangement, coding consistency, coded segment retrieval, coding association visualization, and theme map creation during the coding process. Before being interpreted within the theoretical framework of digital political communication and political image creation, the resulting themes were constantly improved through iterative comparison across interview transcripts, social media material, and documentary evidence.

This study used a number of validation techniques based on Lincoln and Guba's criteria for qualitative research in order to increase the reliability of the results. Source triangulation, technique triangulation, extended interaction with the data, and member checking asking many participants to confirm the accuracy of interview interpretations were used to create credibility. Every phase of data collection, coding processes, analytical choices, and theme development was recorded in an audit trail to ensure reliability. Peer debriefing and ongoing comparisons between actual data and theoretical interpretations were used to improve confirmability and reduce researcher bias. Rich contextual details were included to assist transferability, allowing readers to assess how applicable the results are to comparable situations.

The recognized ethical guidelines for qualitative research were also followed in this study. All participants were given comprehensive information on the study's goals, methods, voluntary nature, confidentiality, and their freedom to leave at any time without repercussions prior to data collection. Each participant provided written informed permission prior to the start of the interviews. Research documentation, transcripts, and interview recordings were all anonymised, safely preserved, and utilized only for academic purposes. According to qualitative research guidelines, ethical norms pertaining to participant respect, confidentiality, and appropriate data management were used throughout the study (Yin, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Analysis of the Relationship between Central Java Provincial Legislative Council Members and the Public through Digital Media

Political communication has undergone a major transformation thanks to digital media, which has made it possible for citizens and political officials to connect more directly and openly. Social media platforms serve as conduits for ongoing contact rather than just political information dissemination, which enables public authorities to

communicate with individuals outside of traditional face-to-face settings. This change is a reflection of the larger movement away from one-way political communication and toward dialogic and participatory communication, in which individuals are positioned as active participants in political discourse rather than just receivers of messages. Therefore, analyzing the Deputy Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council's use of digital media offers crucial insights into whether digital communication fosters more political trust, accountability, and public involvement.

The results show that the Deputy Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council now primarily uses Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to provide information on legislative events, policy agendas, community visits, and public services. These platforms provide accessibility for many demographic groups by enabling the delivery of political messages in a variety of media, such as pictures, brief films, live broadcasts, and written narratives. More significantly, the digital platforms create a communication environment that may encourage reciprocal contact between elected officials and their people by giving voters the chance to reply via direct messages, comments, and other interactive elements.

These results show that digital media has the structural ability to promote dialogic connections between political actors and citizens from the standpoint of Dialogic Communication Theory (Kent & Taylor, 2016). Openness, responsiveness, mutual understanding, and ongoing contact are highlighted by dialogic communication as crucial elements of developing a connection. Through a variety of interactive elements on his social media platforms, Sarif Abdillah purposefully established contact channels in the current study, enabling individuals to contribute complaints, recommendations, criticisms, and ambitions. Such actions show a willingness on the part of the institution to create communication that goes beyond the conventional distribution of political information.

Interviews with journalists, political watchers, and followers, however, provide factual evidence that the quality of engagement is still inconsistent. Despite the abundance of public involvement possibilities, a number of informants stated that Sarif Abdillah's direct reactions to private messages and comments are still very rare. The digital media staff still handles the majority of exchanges administratively, and political actors only sometimes participate directly. As a result, communication is more often informative than truly dialogic.

This conclusion is especially important since it shows that meaningful political involvement does not always result from the presence of digital communication platforms. According to Kent and Taylor (2016), dialogic communication necessitates both ongoing response that shows sincere attention to public issues and technology accessibility. Even if political players are very visible on social media, chances for establishing long-term political trust may decrease when individuals perceive a lack of reciprocal contact. As a result, the quality of interactions formed between political representatives and their audiences should be taken into consideration when assessing

the efficacy of digital political communication, in addition to the frequency of material publishing.

The results are in line with earlier research by Enli and Skogerbø (2013), who contended that while many politicians are effective in raising their profile on social media, they often fall short of achieving significant community involvement since communication is still primarily symbolic. In a similar vein, Kruikemeier (2014) discovered that while social media facilitates interactive political communication, politicians often place more importance on information sharing than two-way conversation. By showing that responsiveness becomes a crucial factor in determining political image building at the regional legislative level in Indonesia, the current study both confirms and expands on earlier findings.

From the standpoint of digital political communication, Sarif Abdillah's communication approach shows how traditional political communication gradually gives way to networked communication. Faster information transmission, a wider audience reach, and instant public input are all made possible by the usage of several digital channels. However, the public's expectations for timeliness, openness, and accessibility have also increased as a result of digital transformation. Instead of depending just on institutional communication methods, citizens are beginning to demand political leaders to communicate directly and regularly. As a result, in the digital age, political legitimacy is impacted by both the amount of information that is disseminated and the caliber of engagement that goes along with it.

The connection between internet activity and the formation of political image is another significant result. Results from interviews repeatedly show that supporters consider politicians as more accessible, open, and responsible when they actively interact and address public issues. This implies that political image is created through ongoing interpersonal connection made possible by digital platforms in addition to visual representation and advertising tales. The results support political branding theory, which contends that rather than discrete campaign statements, public impression is formed via repeated communication encounters that consistently display responsiveness, openness, and sincerity.

Additionally, the empirical data shows that effective political communication tactics depend heavily on audience comprehension. The communication team led by Sarif Abdillah tries to modify communication approaches based on audience demographics and platform features. Stronger emotional ties between political actors and citizens are facilitated by this kind of adaptation, which also makes the message more relevant. The literature on strategic political communication, which highlights how audience-centered communication greatly enhances message acceptance, trust building, and political participation, is supported by this observation. Effective digital communication needs political actors to understand voters' expectations, communication preferences, and involvement patterns across many digital platforms, rather than just disseminating political information.

Overall, the results show that by increasing chances for information sharing, involvement, and relationship development, digital media has improved communication between the public and the Deputy Chair of the Central Java Provincial Legislative Council. However, the study also points out a significant limitation: effective political involvement depends on political actors' desire to regularly engage in dialogic interaction in addition to offering interactive communication capabilities. By indicating that three interrelated dimensions communication accessibility, dialogic responsiveness, and audience oriented interaction are integrated to create political image in the digital era, this research adds to the body of literature on digital political communication. Successfully integrating these elements increases the likelihood that political actors will build long-lasting public trust and bolster their political legitimacy in addition to the rapid visibility that social media platforms provide.

2. *Implementation of Digital Media in Developing a Positive Image*

Political players now use digital media as a strategic tool to build, preserve, and improve their public image. Digital platforms allow political leaders to deliberately express their principles, skills, and leadership traits to a variety of audiences in addition to serving as means for the diffusion of information. As a result, in the digital age, political image building is more influenced by how political players consistently display themselves across many online platforms rather than just offline political performance. This result highlights the rising significance of digital political branding, where communication tactics are intended to foster public trust, credibility, and emotional attachment in addition to raising exposure.

The results show that Sarif Abdillah uses several social media channels in accordance with audience demographics as part of a segmented digital communication strategy. Instagram caters to millennials, Facebook is largely utilized to reach older constituencies, and TikTok is the primary site for interacting with Generation Z viewers. This platform differentiator shows a purposeful audience-centered communication approach rather than merely increasing communication reach. From the standpoint of strategic political communication, audience segmentation increases message efficacy and audience engagement by allowing political messages to be tailored to each demographic group's communication preferences, media consumption habits, and behavioral traits. This result validates Arifin's (2017) contention that in order to optimize compelling political communication, communication channels should be chosen according to audience characteristics. More significantly, the current study indicates that platform choice has evolved into a crucial element of political branding as it shows how well a politician can comprehend and adapt to the communication styles of various voter groups.

The results of the interviews also show that Sarif Abdillah continuously uses the phrase "Energy Young Generation" as a key component of his political persona on digital media. This story is more than just a catchphrase; it's a sign of youth, creativity, and closeness to community goals. Repeated symbolic narratives can create a unique

political character that sets political players apart from their rivals, according to political branding theory. As a result, the slogan serves as both a communication message and a branding tool that improves image consistency and public awareness across a variety of communication channels. This result is in line with Rakhmawati's (2021) assertion that public trust and loyalty are strongly influenced by a favorable institutional and individual image. The current study, however, expands on earlier findings by showing that symbolic branding gains persuasiveness when combined with visible political acts conveyed via digital media.

Analysis of interview transcripts and digital content further demonstrates that image construction is achieved primarily through two interconnected communication dimensions, namely strategic content management and narrative reinforcement. Strategic content management refers to the systematic planning of communication materials that emphasize legislative performance, community engagement, and policy advocacy, whereas narrative reinforcement involves continuously presenting consistent messages that strengthen Sarif Abdillah's identity as a responsive and approachable political leader. According to the social media administrator, Rangga Dwi Srinardi, content portraying Sarif Abdillah's direct interaction with citizens including public discussions, field visits, community services, and informal encounters generated substantially higher public engagement than ceremonial or institutional content.

These results show that people prefer genuineness over symbolic political performance. From the standpoint of cyber public relations, genuine communication is not just about expanding the amount of published information but also about openness, involvement, and message trustworthiness. Because it lessens the psychological gap between political leaders and residents, political communication that visibly exhibits empathy, accessibility, and direct engagement in resolving community issues is seen as more trustworthy. As a result, rather than being the result of a sequence of discrete advertising actions, image building becomes the result of ongoing relational communication. This finding is in line with other research that indicates individuals' opinions of political legitimacy and trustworthiness are much improved by genuine internet interaction.

The contribution of visual storytelling to enhancing political image is another significant discovery. Positive public opinions of Sarif Abdillah were consistently shaped by field trips, community discussions, and direct encounters with constituents, according to interviewees. Visual narratives that demonstrated direct involvement with community concerns were considered more compelling than formal institutional documentation because they offered concrete proof of political commitment rather than just symbolic representation. Goffman's (1959) Impression Management Theory, which contends that public personalities deliberately control the impressions they communicate through carefully chosen acts given in front of audiences, is supported by this study. Photographs and videos of direct involvement serve as strategic performances in the context of digital political communication, conveying leadership traits like empathy, accessibility, competence, and responsibility.

However, the results also show that maintaining a favorable political image necessitates ongoing creativity in communication. A number of informants stressed that consumers are moving away from repetitious informational postings and toward dynamic and engaging multimedia material. Live broadcasts, interactive Q&A sessions, short-form movies, and behind the scenes material were seen to be more effective at drawing viewers in and promoting public involvement. According to this research, political players must constantly modify communication formats in response to shifting media consumption patterns as digital political communication is becoming more and more audience-driven. As a result, sustaining a favorable political image depends on the communicator's capacity to provide interesting, pertinent, and interactive digital material in addition to message consistency.

The results also show that a favorable political image is created by integrating audience oriented content methods, authentic communication, symbolic identification, and ongoing citizen participation rather than just visual representation. By demonstrating that, in the digital communication context, image evolves via repeated communication encounters rather than solitary political statements, this interpretation expands on Ruslan's (2010) definition of image as a mirror of public perception. In Sarif Abdillah's instance, regular exposure to digital narratives that show direct public interaction, responsiveness, and legislative activity reinforces the image of an accessible, communicative, and community focused leader. Therefore, rather than just being the consequence of deliberate commercial communication, political image in the digital age should be seen as a dynamic social construction that arises from ongoing interaction between political players and citizens.

Lastly, this study adds to the body of knowledge on digital political communication by showing how audience segmentation, genuine political branding, strategic content management, and dialogic interaction are all necessary for the establishment of a successful political image. The current findings imply that authenticity and ongoing citizen contact are just as important in determining long-term political legitimacy as visibility and message propagation, which have been the main focus of earlier research on these factors. These results offer theoretical proof that digital political branding works best when symbolic political narratives are regularly bolstered by noticeable public participation and significant citizen communication.

3. Relevance of Published Content

The results show that one of the key factors influencing successful political communication and the formation of a favorable political image is the relevancy of digital information. When it comes to digital political communication, content relevance goes beyond just giving information; it shows how well political communications align with the demands of the populace, social realities, and public expectations. According to interview data, audiences were more receptive to articles that addressed topics that directly affected their everyday life, such as healthcare, education, employment possibilities, community economic empowerment, and regional infrastructure

development. These results imply that individuals assess political communication on the basis of perceived utility and contextual relevance to their daily experiences in addition to message quality.

From the perspective of Agenda-Building Theory, these findings demonstrate that political actors influence public attention not only by increasing the visibility of particular issues but also by selecting issues that resonate with citizens' priorities. Rather than operating just as communication conduits, social media platforms become strategic venues where politicians negotiate issue salience and public significance. Consequently, communication becomes more persuasive when digital narratives consistently reflect actual community concerns rather than exclusively promoting political achievements or personal branding. This finding extends previous studies by showing that issue relevance is a critical factor influencing the credibility of political communication at the regional government level.

The research also shows that material must be contextual, flexible, and sensitive to shifting social situations in order to be effective in digital communication. Informants stressed that articles outlining current issues in the community, how policies are being implemented, and how the government is responding were thought to be far more helpful than publications that were very formal or ceremonial. This result implies that rather than only meeting institutional communication requirements, audiences are beginning to demand political representatives to communicate in ways that show an awareness of local circumstances. As a result, contextual communication enhances individuals' beliefs that elected officials are actively involved in resolving public issues and are sensitive to community demands.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory, which contends that audiences actively choose communication material that can meet their social and informational requirements, is in line with this conclusion. Instead of passively consuming political content, citizens now assess whether digital communication offers useful information, broadens political awareness, and makes it easier to participate in public affairs. Because individuals are more inclined to connect with information that reflects topics that directly touch their lives, relevancy becomes a crucial factor in determining audience engagement. According to the current research, relevance should be viewed as a strategic communication tool rather than just a feature of message content.

The influence of communication style on public perceptions of credibility is another significant discovery. The findings of the interviews show that participants favored conversational, genuine, and personal communication over extremely formal and institutional communication. According to informants, genuine communication decreased the psychological barrier between residents and political officials and increased a sense of emotional closeness. The Cyber Public Relations paradigm, which stresses that digital communication should promote openness, transparency, and reciprocal involvement rather than serving only as a tool for institutional promotion, is supported by this research. As a result, individuals increasingly link open communication

with political responsibility and integrity, making communication authenticity a crucial element of long-term relationship development.

The study does, however, also point out a number of issues that have an impact on the efficacy of digital political communication. According to interviews with a number of social media followers and political analyst Muhammad Taufiqurrahman, some released information was seen as being too symbolic and concentrating too much on political activities rather than significant policy accomplishments. Despite Sarif Abdillah's active use of social media to share legislative activity, several participants contended that certain tweets prioritized political visibility above policy effect. This result indicates a possible mismatch between the expectations of the public and the communication tactics used by politicians. While political actors often place a high priority on image exposure, audiences are demanding communication that explains how policies are implemented, quantifiable public benefits, and concrete answers to local issues.

From the standpoint of Political Branding Theory, this disparity shows that symbolic representation is insufficient to preserve a political image. Citizens ultimately assess political leaders based on the coherence between digital narratives and observable public performance, even while branding efforts are crucial for boosting recognition and fortifying political identity. Because audiences see discrepancies between political messaging and real governance outcomes, symbolic political communication that lacks substantial policy communication may progressively erode public confidence. As a result, in digital communication contexts, authenticity and policy relevance become equally crucial factors in preserving political legitimacy.

The results also show that public trust in political leaders is greatly increased when digital narratives are balanced with actual community interaction. When field trips, public consultations, and direct citizen encounters were supported by digital documentation outlining their goals, methods, and results, informants consistently viewed these activities as more credible. This implies that digital communication should serve as an extension of actual political activity taking place in society rather than as a replacement for political performance. Therefore, when digital narratives authentically depict real governmental performance instead of selectively emphasizing symbolic political events, political communication becomes more convincing.

Overall, the current study shows that content relevance is a crucial element of digital political communication as it affects public trust, political legitimacy, audience engagement, and image construction. The results show that integrating problem relevance, contextual communication, genuine engagement, and evidence-based policy narratives is necessary for effective political communication. The current study shows that citizens increasingly assess political actors based on the consistency between digital communication and their real contribution to resolving community issues, in contrast to earlier research that focused primarily on communication visibility and message dissemination. As a result, in the digital age, political image is created by the ongoing

creation of meaningful, pertinent, and socially responsive information that represents the reality faced by citizens rather than just through regular social media exposure.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the use of digital media plays an important role in shaping a positive image for young politicians, especially in the case of Sarif Abdillah. Publishing activities directly with the public, increasing information transparency, and using attractive and communicative visual content are some of the communication strategies that are considered effective. However, there are still several limitations in their implementation, especially in terms of the tendency to prioritize personal political aspects. Public trust in the performance of legislators can be strengthened through a communication approach that focuses on transparency, responsiveness, and public participation. In addition, openly managing public criticism and collaborating with the media are strategic steps to enhance a positive image in the digital world. Public satisfaction and support for Legislative Council members tend to increase when the content displayed shows activeness, empathy, and support for the community. According to this study, Legislative Council members should train their digital media teams or administrators, particularly in crisis management, audience analysis, and creative content production. This is done to ensure that communication strategies remain relevant and aligned with current social and political issues. To gain a better understanding of how digital political communication works at the local level, research should be expanded to include more legislators from different regions and political parties.

BIODATA

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