The Communication Style of Gibran Rakabuming on Twitter from a Symbolic Interactionism Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Abstract: This study analyzes the communication style of Gibran Rakabuming on social media platform X using the perspective of symbolic interactionism. As a prominent young figure in politics who frequently demonstrates unique communication methods on social media, Gibran uses these platforms to build his self-identity and interact with the public. Through a literature review, this research reveals how the symbols, meanings, and interactions Gibran creates on social media reflect the process of identity formation and how the public responds to them. The findings show that from the perspective of symbolic interactionism, Gibran Rakabuming's communication style can be understood as a process of symbolic interaction between Gibran and his audience on social media. He employs symbols such as casual language, humor, and a minimalist communication style to create a strong and memorable impression. Thus, symbolic interactionism helps explain how Gibran utilizes symbols in his political communication to influence public opinion and enhance his electability.

Keywords: *Communication style, social media, Gibran Rakabuming, symbolic interactionism, literature review*

A. Introduction

In the current digital era, social media has become one of the primary platforms for individuals to express themselves and build a public image. The development of social media provides access for everyone to craft their persona and exert influence on others virtually through impression management.[1] Social media, specifically X (formerly Twitter), allows its users to connect more closely with their followers. The uniqueness of Twitter lies in its text-based nature.[2] Twitter is a microblogging site that allows individuals to post short texts called 'tweets' to the public. Twitter features a directed friendship model, where users choose Twitter accounts to 'follow,' and each account has its own group of 'followers.' While Twitter enables individuals to send private messages to those they follow through Direct Messages

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[1] Bigsby, K. G., Ohlmann, J. W., & Zhao, K. (2019). Keeping it 100: Social Media and Self Presentation in College Football Recruiting. Social Media, Self Presentation, and Football, 3

[2] Boyd, D., & Marwick, A. (2011). Social Privacy in Networked Publics: Teens' Attitudes, Practices, and Strategies. 1–29. https://doi.org/10.31219/osf.io/2gec4

(DM), the dominant mode of communication is public.[3] This explains the difference between Twitter and other networked media, namely that Twitter makes intrinsic conflicts visible.

Twitter becomes an authentic space for personal interaction, while also raising issues of oversharing and privacy concerns. Twitter users face new opportunities, as well as tensions and conflicts, when combining public interaction with interpersonal communication. Previous researchers have indicated that the use of Twitter is driven by various needs that must be satisfied. These needs and the drive for gratification in using the platform align with the argument put forth by the uses and gratification theory, which posits that individuals use media or make content choices based on their motivations, goals, and personal needs.[4]

Social media X has become a platform for entertainment and the delivery of messages from users to their followers. Celebrities and political figures have started using social media to convey messages and share their daily activities. Specifically for political figures, social media has become an effective and efficient campaign tool, as it does not require high costs or significant manpower. However, social media remains an open space for disseminating messages, including those that may be inappropriate or impolite.[5]

There are four reasons why individuals use media: diversion, which refers to escaping from daily routines or problems; personal relationships, which occur when people use media as companions; personal identity, which serves as a way to reinforce individual values; and surveillance, which pertains to how media helps individuals achieve specific goals. Social media X also holds significant power in driving the unification of public opinion. Therefore, X users have the ability to influence and impose dogmas on their group members and followers, as well as impact the movements of opposition parties and political rivals.[6]

A politician requires a strategy to achieve success in political communication. A strategy is a goal-oriented plan developed by an individual or organization, implemented progressively to achieve the desired outcome. Along with the advancement of technology and the growing penetration of the internet, social media has become an important platform in political communication. Today, leaders and political figures utilize social media not only to

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[3] Ibid, 34

[4] Morissan. 2013. Teori Komunikasi Individu Hingga Massa. (Jakarta: Kenca Prenada Media Group), 510

[5] Arifin, Muhammad. (2017). Pengaruh Kompensasi Dan Kepuasan Kerja Terhadap Kinerja (Studi terhadap Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Muhammadiyah Sumatera Utara). Jurnal EduTech .Vol. 3 No.2. 87-98.

[6] Ibid, 510

convey information and policies but also to build their personal image, engage with the public, and garner support.[7]

One of the notable figures among young political leaders is Gibran Rakabuming Raka, a businessman and politician, also known as the son of President Joko Widodo. Gibran's communication style on social media, particularly in delivering messages and interacting with the public, reflects a unique social dynamic by showcasing humorous and satirical elements.

Since Indonesia's independence, the country has been led by presidents over the age of 40 seven times, indicating that both the president and vice president have typically been individuals who are more mature in age. However, in the 2024 presidential election, a young individual under the age of 40 emerged as the winner for vice president. This highlights the distinctiveness of a young person's political communication style in persuading the public, especially considering the skepticism many have about the capabilities of younger generations. Gibran Rakabuming Raka, as a young leader, successfully campaigned for himself through social media with a unique style, enabling him to win the 2024 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election.

Gibran uses social media as a tool to connect with the public, share his political views, and build his personal identity. In the context of symbolic interactionism, Gibran's communication is not merely about conveying information; it also involves a process of creating meaning through the symbols he uses in his interactions. Through an analysis of his communication style, we can understand how Gibran builds social relationships, shapes his political identity, and manages his public image in a diverse society. However, Gibran's communication style on social media also invites various reactions and interpretations from the public. This illustrates that communication is not a one-way process; rather, it involves dynamic interaction between the sender and the receiver of the message. Therefore, it is crucial to explore how the symbols used by Gibran in his digital communication influence public perception and shape broader social interactions.

Thus, this study aims to delve deeper into Gibran Rakabuming's communication style on social media and its implications from a symbolic interactionism perspective. This research is expected to offer new insights into how individuals can use social media to build relationships and meaning within a larger social context. This study uses the theory of

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[7] Putri Yolanda, H., & Halim, U. (2020). Partisipasi Politik Online Generasi Z Pada Pemilihan Presiden Indonesia 2019. CoverAge: Journal of Strategic Communication, 10(2), 30–39. https://doi.org/10.35814/coverage.v10i2.1381

Symbolic Interactionism, developed by George Herbert Mead and Herbert Blumer, which focuses on the creation of meaning by individuals through interactions with others. This theory emphasizes the role of symbols and language as the primary tools in communication and identity formation. According to the symbolic interactionism theory proposed by George Herbert Mead, as explained by Ritzer and Goodman, social interaction stems from fundamental ideas that shape meaning based on human thought. The purpose of this interaction is to mediate and interpret meaning within society. Through interaction, individuals construct meaning in relation to others.

B. Method

This study applies a qualitative method. The qualitative method is an approach that utilizes interpretation through description, producing data in the form of narratives rather than numbers. The choice of this method aims to build knowledge through a deep understanding of the research object. In addition, this research employs a descriptive analysis approach, based on the author's understanding of the topic by comparing existing data from relevant previous studies. Data collection is conducted through a literature review, where the researcher examines relevant documents such as journals, books, and theses.

In this study, the qualitative method is used to obtain data through in-depth examination of relevant sources. The researcher plans, collects, interprets, and analyzes the data, then presents the results. Thus, the researcher acts as the primary instrument, assisted by several tools that facilitate the research process. These tools include data analysis guidelines, such as Gibran Rakabuming's X account @Gibran_tweet (formerly Twitter), which places significant emphasis on examining communication style and understanding the symbols conveyed through social media X.

This data collection process aligns with Rafiek's (2013: 4) perspective, which states that the process begins with reading available materials, understanding the applied theories and methods, conducting a thorough evaluation, and concluding with drawing conclusions. The author also applies qualitative data analysis, where the analysis is performed directly using the previously explained data collection methods, ensuring that the research proceeds smoothly.

This study uses a literature review method to analyze Gibran Rakabuming's communication style on social media. Data is collected from various secondary sources, including journal articles, books, and relevant online sources related to the topic. The

literature review allows the researcher to identify emerging themes and patterns in Gibran's communication and relate them to the theory of symbolic interactionism.

C. Discussion

Gibran Rakabuming Raka's communication style on social media can be understood from several perspectives.

Low Context Communication Style:

There are two types of communication contexts when processing information: High Context Communication and Low Context Communication. High Context Communication (HCC) refers to a culture where the procedure of transferring information is difficult to communicate. In contrast, Low Context Communication (LCC) is a culture where the information transfer procedure is easier to communicate. Gibran employs a low context communication style, characterized by casual, straightforward, and blunt language, yet detailed in providing information based on data and facts. This indicates that Gibran chooses to convey messages in a simple and easily understandable manner for the public.

Gambar 1. Unggahan Foto X Gibran membalas tweet pemkot Solo

Sumber: X Twitter @gibran_tweet 2024

In his posts on his X account, Gibran Rakabuming expresses his dissatisfaction with the Solo City Government using Javanese language, along with short, concise, and clear sentences.

Humor Strategy:

Gibran often uses humor in his political communication on social media. This humor strategy is employed to build a more engaging political image and expand his audience reach. Humor can make political messages more appealing and memorable. The discussion of this

research utilizes a qualitative content analysis approach to explore the use of humor in posts on the X social media account @gibran_tweet, owned by Gibran Rakabuming. Data were collected through direct observation of these posts, which allowed for the identification of various types of humor, such as jokes, satire, and irony, as well as their intended purpose within the political context.

Gambar 2. Unggahan Foto Profile X Gibran

Sumber: X Twitter @gibran_tweet 2024

The findings indicate that Gibran utilizes humor in various forms and for different purposes, ranging from building a positive image to conveying political messages in a lighter and more attention-grabbing manner. A deeper analysis reveals that the most common type of humor in Gibran's posts is light-hearted jokes accompanied by sharp satire.

Economical Speech Communication Style:

During the campaign period, Gibran was known for his economical speech communication style, which often led the public to question his debating skills as a vice-presidential candidate. However, the words spoken by Gibran frequently became trending topics on social media and were easily remembered by the public.

Gambar 3. Unggahan Foto X Gibran membalas tweet pengikutnya

Sumber: X Twitter @gibran_tweet 2024

Discourse Analysis:

Research on the discourse analysis of Gibran's political communication style shows that he uses casual, straightforward, and blunt language, yet is detailed in providing information aligned with data and facts. This indicates that his political messages are positively received by the public.

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, Gibran Rakabuming Raka's communication style can be understood as a process of symbolic interaction between Gibran and his audience on social media. George H. Mead categorizes symbolism into three aspects: First, **Mind**: the ability to use symbols that carry a shared social meaning, where individuals develop their thoughts through interaction with others. Gibran consistently strives to display shared symbols on his X account, showcasing his sense of humor and using short, easily understandable phrases with his followers, incorporating Javanese and colloquial language.

Second, **Self**: the ability to reflect on oneself through the judgment of others, which consists of two aspects: "I" and "Me." This theory also highlights the relationship between the self and the outside world. Gibran consistently responds to the negative symbols he receives from the public who dislike him by presenting what is being accused of him.

Gambar 4. Unggahan Foto X Gibran mengganti latar profile akun X nya.

Sumber: X Twitter @gibran_tweet 2024

On his X account, Gibran once changed his account header to display insults from another X user.

Third, Society: The network of social relationships that individuals create, build, and construct within society. Each individual actively and voluntarily participates in the behaviors they choose, which ultimately facilitates the role-taking process within society. X social media users always strive to communicate with Gibran actively, making them a part of Gibran's self-construction process. As a result, Gibran consistently reflects on the symbols provided to him by society.

Gibran Rakabuming Raka uses symbols such as casual language, humor, and an economical speech communication style to create a strong and memorable impression. Thus, symbolic interactionism helps explain how Gibran utilizes symbols in his political communication to influence public opinion and boost his electability.

D. **Conclusion**

Gibran Rakabuming Raka's communication style on social media, when viewed through the lens of symbolic interactionism, can be understood as a process of symbolic interaction between Gibran and his audience on social media. He uses symbols such as casual language, humor, and an economical speech communication style to create a strong and memorable impression. Thus, symbolic interactionism helps explain how Gibran leverages symbols in his political communication to influence public opinion and enhance his electability.

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