



Original Article

Gerindra Party's Political Narrative on TikTok During the 2024 Presidential & Vice Presidential Election Campaign Period

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Abstract:

TikTok has become a social media platform experiencing rapid user growth in Indonesia. During the 2024 Presidential Election campaign, TikTok became a crucial platform for creating political narratives, especially for young voters. Gerindra is a political party that actively used TikTok, with 35 posts during the campaign period. Fifteen posts from Gerindra's TikTok account received more than one million views. This study examines the political narratives used by the Gerindra Party during the 2024 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election campaign on TikTok. This research is qualitative, using Barthes's semiotics as its analytical tool. From 35 content posts on Gerindra's TikTok during the campaign period, researchers categorised them into six categories. These categories are: Prabowo attending campaign events, content in image format, Prabowo speaks at forums, broadcasts of presidential candidate debates, Prabowo's humanistic side, and Prabowo's informal activities. Within each category, researchers selected posts with high impressions. Analysis of the TikTok posts shows that the Gerindra Party used symbols that support Prabowo Subianto's political narrative in its election campaign. The political narrative created by the Gerindra Party TikTok account focuses less on the programs that presidential candidate Prabowo will implement and more on Prabowo's brand image.

Keywords: political communication, presidential and vice presidential elections, digital media, semiotics, TikTok

Introduction

On February 14, 2024, Indonesia successfully held direct presidential and vice-presidential elections (Pilpres). KPU data shows that the 2024 presidential election was a battleground for young people, with 115 million votes (52% of the total voter base) coming from Millennials and Gen Z (Ayu, 2023). During the campaign period (November 28, 2023–February 10, 2024), political parties must convince young people, who may have never participated in an election before, to vote for their presidential and



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vice-presidential candidates. One effective strategy is the use of social media in campaigning. The presence of social media has transformed political communication due to its rapid dissemination of information ([Casero-Ripollés, 2020](#)). Social media provides a space for young voters to initiate political discussions through its features ([Hadma & Anggoro, 2022](#)).

TikTok has become one of the fastest-growing social media platforms, with a total of 1.5 billion users, the majority of whom are aged 18-34 ([Rizaty, 2024](#)). TikTok's significant user growth is due to its diverse content. TikTok's content is largely algorithm-based and features the latest and most recent (trending) content ([Zeng & Abidin, 2021](#)). The For Your Page algorithm provides equal opportunities for content creators to go viral and reach a wider audience ([Karimi & Fox, 2023](#)). Furthermore, various filters and music options facilitate user content creation ([Serrano, Papakyriakopoulos, & Hegelich, 2020](#)). Indonesia has 127.5 million TikTok users, making it the country with the most TikTok users in the world ([Rizaty, 2024](#)).

TikTok has evolved from an app primarily for entertainment to a platform for young people to discuss political and social issues ([Cervi, 2023](#)). TikTok users can use exposure from TikTok's algorithmically recommended videos to promote political narratives that can influence other users' perceptions and shape political identities ([Arshad & Khurram, 2020](#)). Social media has indeed become an effective platform for conveying political messages ([Solehudin et al., 2024](#)). For the younger generation, TikTok is considered more likely to influence political attitudes and engagement, both online and traditional, than other forms of social media ([Karimi & Fox, 2023](#)).

TikTok, as a platform featuring visuals and sound, provides opportunities for political actors to convey messages through symbols and culture ([Ameen & Taj, 2024](#)). The vote recapitulation results from the General Elections Commission (KPU) showed that the Prabowo-Gibran ticket secured 96,214,691 votes ([KPU, 2024](#)). This demonstrates the success of the campaign conducted by the supporting party, one of which was through the social media platform TikTok.

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach with semiotic content analysis. The content analysis was conducted to understand how signs and symbols shape political communication during the 2024 presidential election campaign on TikTok. The sample selection was conducted using purposive sampling. The researcher used TikTok reels data from the Gerindra Party's TikTok account during the 2024 presidential election campaign (November 28, 2023–February 10, 2024) as the primary data source. This research chose Gerindra TikTok account because it is one of the parties that won the presidency and vice presidency in the 2024 presidential election. Furthermore, Prabowo Subianto's political brand has shifted from masculine to more humanistic ([Triyogo, Suwiknyo, Al Hosen, & Saptawan, 2023](#)), making it interesting to analyse how the Gerindra TikTok account's political narrative contributed to the victory of the Prabowo-Gibran ticket.

TikTok reels videos will be curated according to the criteria set by the researcher. The criteria set are uploads with high impressions, namely views above one million. Curation was conducted to ensure the relevance and quality of the posts analysed. The total number of posts from the Gerindra Party account during the 2024 presidential election campaign was 35. The author then conducted observations to categorise the content of the posts. Next, the author took samples according to the criteria. The

Gerindra Party TikTok account had 1.4 million followers and 27.3 million likes as of August 20, 2024. These data indicate that the engagement of the Gerindra Party account is relatively high. The semiotic analysis used was Barthes' semiotics, analysing denotative and connotative meanings.

Research on the use of TikTok to disseminate political narratives has been conducted by Ameen & Taj (2024) in Pakistan and Cervi (2023) in Spain. Ameen & Taj's (2024) research demonstrated the strategic use of symbols in shaping political narratives. Cervi's (2023) research showed that mayoral candidates adapted to the language and culture of TikTok and employed marketing techniques employed by influencers and internet celebrities. Numerous studies have also been conducted on the use of social media during the 2024 presidential election campaign, with various focuses, such as the image of Prabowo-Gibran on Instagram (Junior & Hanif, 2024) and how Gerindra Party TikTok content shapes Gen-Z's voting decisions regarding candidate pair 02 (Wulandari & Lexianingrum, 2024).

This study attempts to reveal the political narrative employed by the Gerindra Party in presenting its candidate pair on TikTok, using a semiotic perspective. Semiotics were chosen because they not only examine individual communication patterns but also reveal a country's cultural and political climate (Ameen & Taj, 2024). As a presidential candidate, Prabowo also experienced a shift in political branding, from masculine to "gemoy" (Triyogo, Suwiknyo, Al Hosen, & Saptawan, 2023), making it interesting to analyse. The term branding is quite well known in the marketing field, but this term is still less well known in the political field (Gangloff & Yuran, 2020). Political branding is an important effort to rebuild public trust and it refers to the feelings, impressions, and associations a particular leader or organisation has toward another, distinguishing them from others in the eyes of voters or the public (Brubaker, 2020). Building a political brand requires distinctive, relevant, and consistent characteristics (Kurniasih & Setianti, 2024). This research can contribute to the effectiveness of using social media, especially TikTok, in conducting political communication during the campaign period.

Results

During the presidential and vice-presidential campaign period, the Gerindra Party TikTok account featured six categories of TikTok content: 1) Prabowo attending campaign events, 2) image content, 3) Prabowo speaks at a forums, 4) presidential debates, 5) Prabowo's human side, and 6) Prabowo's informal activities.

The first category depicts Prabowo visiting regions for campaign events. The videos show Prabowo in the middle or front of a large crowd. This angle suggests Prabowo's widespread support. The second category consists of image posts. Gerindra's TikTok posts are not limited to videos, as some images are accompanied by music. The third category shows Prabowo speaks at a forums. These video posts highlight statements made by Prabowo. The fourth category is clips from presidential debates. These clips typically highlight the responses of other candidates and those of Prabowo or Gibran, edited with captions or music.

The fifth category highlights Prabowo's human side. Content with a humanist theme includes videos of Prabowo crying in emotion or depicting his love for animals. The next category of Gerindra TikTok content is Prabowo's informal activities, with videos showing his activities outside of official campaign events.

Gerindra posted 35 pieces of content on TikTok during the presidential and vice-

presidential campaign period. Fifteen of these posts received high impressions, with views exceeding one million. Data collection took place on November 7, 2024. Of the 15 posts, three were in image format. The highest number of views was a photo featuring Prabowo, Gibran, Joko Widodo, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, with 28.3 million views and 2.4 million likes.

The highest number of impressions in video format was in the campaign category. The video featured Raffi Ahmad attending Prabowo's campaign event. In the content, Prabowo compares his handsomeness to Raffi Ahmad. The uploaded content received 7.1 million views, 525.6 thousand likes, and 24.7 thousand comments.

Prabowo attends a campaign event

In digital political communication, particularly on the TikTok platform, understanding how political narratives are constructed and disseminated is crucial (Ameen & Taj, 2024). In the category of content about Prabowo attending campaign events, several posts received high impressions. These posts included Prabowo's visits to several regions in Indonesia for campaigning and invitations to attend a major campaign rally. One of the highest impression is campaigning with Raffi Ahmad in Bengkulu. The content uploaded on January 11, 2024, received high impressions, with 7.1 million views, 525.6 thousand likes, and 24.7 thousand comments, indicating that it successfully reached a broad audience. The caption written was "Ganteng mana guys?? 🤔 @raffi_nagita #prabowo #prabowosubianto #raffiahmad #prabowogibran2024 #gerindra". Translated "*Which one is more handsome, guys?? 🤔 @raffi_nagita #prabowo #prabowosubianto #raffiahmad #prabowogibran2024 #gerindra*" with the campaign song "Oke Gas-Richard Jersey" as the background.



Figure 1. Thumbnail campaign event



Figure 2. Screen capture campaign event

Denotative Analysis

Visual Elements:

- **Prabowo's Appearance:** Prabowo is depicted in front of a podium wearing traditional regional attire, namely a head covering and a shawl with a distinctive Bengkulu motif.
- **Crowd & Setting:** The video setting shows Prabowo among his supporters.
- **Facial Expressions and Body Language:** A smiling expression after making a joke, as well as Prabowo dancing.

Auditory Elements:

- **Speech:** A semi-formal atmosphere with Prabowo's jokes.
- **Background Sound:** Prabowo's voice, followed by the reactions of supporters with resounding cheers.
- **Music & Sound Effects:** The song used is the campaign song "Oke Gas".

Connotative Analysis

The approach taken in publicizing Prabowo's campaign activities is depicted as pleasant and relaxed. The focus of this content is Prabowo's joking remarks and does not mention any programs he will implement as a presidential candidate. The statement chosen to be broadcast on the Gerindra Party TikTok account concerns Prabowo's comparison of his and Raffi Ahmad's handsomeness. Prabowo is also shown dancing in front of his supporters. This aligns with Prabowo's rebranding process, from being known as a dashing and charismatic former commander-in-chief to a "cute" presidential candidate ([Triyogo, Suwiknyo, Al Hosen, & Saptawan, 2023](#)).

Raffi Ahmad's presence at the campaign event demonstrates Prabowo's engagement with young voters and encourages them to support him. Raffi Ahmad is an artist and influencer with tens of millions of followers. The thumbnail used in this content is an image of Prabowo with Raffi Ahmad, with the caption "Ganteng Mana?", translated "Which one is more handsome?" serving as the hook. Featuring Raffi Ahmad in his content uploads is a symbol that Prabowo is supported by young voters; besides that, adolescents and young adults refer to influencers to make sense of political information ([Peter & Muth, 2023](#)).

During the presidential and vice-presidential campaign, the Prabowo-Gibran campaign team created a campaign song. The song, titled "Oke Gas Prabowo Gibran Paling Pas," was adapted to the soundtrack commonly used on TikTok. The editing of the video and the soundtrack emphasized and strengthen the message they want to convey.

In this content, Prabowo is depicted respecting local culture by wearing a head covering and scarf with Bengkulu cultural motifs. Prabowo's coming down from the podium and mingling with supporters for photos demonstrates the close distance between him and the supporters who came.

Image Content

Among the image content uploads, several posts achieved high impressions. These included Prabowo displaying images of Joko Widodo and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, images of Prabowo-Gibran supporters, satirical content, and invitations to attend major Prabowo-Gibran campaign rallies.

Image content only displays photos or posters with captions and customised background music. A single image usually contains multiple images. Slides can replace these images. One of the highest impressions in this category is the photo of Prabowo, Gibran and Jokowi. This image upload features a music background. The

content "Photos of Alone, Two of Us & Three of Use" received 28.3 million views, 2.4 millions likes, and 40.6k comments.



Figure 3. Screen capture image content

Denotative Analysis

The visual element featured is Prabowo himself, with the caption "Alone". Prabowo is wearing casual attire, a jacket, and a smiling face, depicting Prabowo as unassuming. The following slide shows a photo of Prabowo and Gibran wearing light blue, the signature colour of Prabowo-Gibran during the campaign. The caption for the second photo is "Two of Us". The third slide shows a photo of Prabowo, Joko Widodo, and Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono wearing formal attire with the caption "Three of Us". The final slide is a photo of Prabowo and Gibran with the caption "Berkelas abangkuh! Tetap Ilmu Padi. Apotik tutup, Capt! Tipis-tipis, Capt! Menyala Abangkuh!". The caption of the post reads, "*Kasih paham, Capt!* 🦁🦁🦁🦁🦁 #prabowogibran #gerindra #koalisiindonesiamaju #allinprabowo #fyp #prabowo #pilpres2024 #prabowosubianto #prabowogibran2024".

Connotative Analysis

The uploaded content is a trending template with the caption "Sendiri, Berdua, Bertiga". Translated "Alone, Two of Us, and Three of Us". Prabowo's campaign team can utilise this trending template for their campaign.

The uploaded content, "Alone, Two of Us, and Three of Us" aims to demonstrate that Prabowo-Gibran is a pair supported by the President and Vice President. This content demonstrates the strength of support Prabowo-Gibran has received. The inclusion of the President and former President will increase public

confidence in the Prabowo-Gibran ticket. This content also serves as a source of optimism from the Prabowo-Gibran campaign team for victory in the election.

The captions used are trendy slang among young people. For example, "Berkelas Abangku", which means classy. "Tetap Ilmu Padi", which means keep humble. "Apotik tutup", translated as "closed pharmacy", which means unmatched. "Tipis-tipis capt", which means relax, and "Menyala abangku", which means cool. This content targeted young voters with the trendy caption.

This content does not contain any elements of Prabowo's program as a presidential candidate. It focuses on the strength of support for Prabowo-Gibran. The content also demonstrates Prabowo's affinity with young voters through its use of terms and emoticons familiar to young voters.

Prabowo speaks at a forum

In this category, only one post surpassed 1 million impressions. It was Prabowo's statement regarding the Japanese ambassador's question about free trade. The content, uploaded by the Gerindra TikTok account, related to Prabowo's policy direction as a presidential candidate.



Figure 4. Screen capture Prabowo speaks at a forum

Denotative Analysis

The post about Prabowo's foreign policy direction was one of the most impression posts, containing his proposed work program as a presidential candidate. The post garnered 4.4 million views, 525,600 likes, and 27.4 million comments. The caption read: "Hilirisasi merupakan solusi untuk memajukan bangsa, memberikan kesejahteraan untuk rakyat dan menjadikan Indonesia sebagai negara berdikari dan berdaulat. #prabowo #prabowogibran #gerindra".

Visual Elements:

- **Prabowo's Appearance:** Prabowo stands at the front of the forum wearing formal attire.
- **Facial Expressions and Body Language:** Prabowo's facial gestures are serious, with

body language emphasising certain aspects.

- **Additional Evidence:** Additional evidence is shown in the form of screenshots of online news reports related to Prabowo's policy direction.

Auditory Elements:

- **Speech:** Prabowo's voice is serious and uses a mix of English terms.
- **Music & Sound Effects:** The music used is orchestral, emphasising the importance of Prabowo's statement. There is no music towards the end of the video. At that point, Prabowo delivers a final statement, concluding the video.

Connotative Analysis

Prabowo wore formal attire to convey the importance of the event. In this post, Prabowo presents the topic in a serious manner, indicating that it is of great importance. He emphasised the use of sound effects for every statement deemed important. His use of English in his responses also demonstrated his eloquence.

This post demonstrates Prabowo's firm stance on foreign policy, with his voice sounding serious during his statements. The content also includes evidence in the form of screenshots of news reports regarding Prabowo's policy direction. This evidence is intended to illustrate Prabowo's consistency in his foreign policy direction and to increase public trust. This content also provides a glimpse of Prabowo's assertiveness in foreign policy direction.

Presidential debate broadcast

In the Presidential debate content category, two uploads received over 1 million impressions. These two posts were about satire of political opponents and the closing remarks of the presidential debate. The content with the highest impressions was Prabowo's closing statement at the end of the series of open debates between the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. The highest impression is closing statement in the final debate between the presidential and vice-presidential candidates.

Denotative Analysis

This content is 3:59 long and has no video cuts. The Gerindra TikTok account only added a song soundtrack to this upload. Impressions for this content totalled 2.5 million views, 468,000 likes, and 30.6,000 comments. The caption reads: *"Well done, Pak Prabowo dan Mas Gibran. Semua ikhtiar sudah kita lakukan, niat-niat baik kita sudah disampaikan, sekarang semuanya kita kembalikan lagi kepada rakyat, karena rakyat adalah pemegang kekuasaan tertinggi di negara demokrasi ini. Terima kasih juga kepada seluruh rakyat yang sudah memberikan kepercayaan, dukungan, dan doanya kepada Pak Prabowo dan Mas Gibran, semoga apa yang kita harapkan dalam kontestasi pilpres ini bisa terwujud. Aamiin YRA. #prabowogibran #gerindra #allinprabowo #fyp"*.



Figure 5. Screen capture closing statement debate candidate

Visual Elements

- **Prabowo's Appearance:** Wearing blue clothing, in keeping with the Prabowo-Gibran campaign branding colours.
- **Facial Expressions and Body Language:** Prabowo reads his final statement and emphasises key points with hand gestures. Gibran makes a gesture of bringing his palms together across his chest at the end of his statement.
- **Crowd & Setting:** As Prabowo finishes his closing statement, supporters applaud and shout supportive chants. This indicates their agreement with Prabowo's closing statement.

Auditory Elements

- **Speech:** Prabowo's voice tends to be low because his statement begins with an apology. His voice begins to rise towards the end, explaining his goals and aspirations for the Indonesian nation.
- **Background Score:** The background score is played at a low volume and does not overshadow the statement. The song chosen is a slow-tempo song.

Connotative Analysis

The content of the closing statements in the presidential and vice-presidential debates was delivered formally, with no video editing, including length cuts. The TikTok account Gerindra broadcast Prabowo's entire closing statement, adding the word "Gerindra" in the right corner and the Prabowo-Gibran logo in the left corner. The apology was placed at the beginning of Prabowo's statement. This indicates that the apology was a key aspect emphasised and considered important by the Prabowo-Gibran campaign team. Gibran's presence next to Prabowo indicated that the statement was from Prabowo and Gibran. Sympathisers embraced the apology with support in the comments section. One example of support came from the account Tetangga Jenral, which wrote, "Orang Pintar Mau meminta maaf ketika ia salah, tetapi orang bijak, MAMPU MEMINTA MAAF WALAU DI ATIDAK SALAH. ALL IN PRABOWO GIBRAN." Translated: "Smart people want to apologise when they are wrong, but wise people can apologise even when they are not wrong. ALL IN PRABOWO GIBRAN)". It gained 25,000 likes.

At the end of the video, Prabowo emphasised the programs he would implement as president. In addition to his vocal intonation, Prabowo also used hand gestures to emphasise his point. Furthermore, Gibran made an apology gesture by placing his hands together across his chest.

Prabowo's Humanist Side

In the category of content highlighting Prabowo's humanist side, two pieces of content garnered over one million views. These two pieces of content featured cats and Prabowo, both of which brought out emotional responses. The piece with the highest number of impressions was the one about Prabowo with cats.



Figure 6. Screen Capture Prabowo with cat

Denotative Analysis

This content has received 3.2 million views, 334.9 thousand likes, and 9,736 comments. It was uploaded on January 14, 2024, with the caption “*Akankah terjadi perebutan tahta antara @Bobby Kertanegara dan Mocca? 🤔 #prabowo #prabowogibran #gerindra #allinprabowo #pilpres2024 #fyp*”.

Visual Elements:

- Appearance: The cat is shown first as the hook of the content. Prabowo is shown wearing a traditional regional hat.
- Facial expressions and body language: Prabowo is dancing, supporters are smiling.
- Crowd & Setting: The shooting angle is from above, using a drone to show the gathered supporters.

Auditory Elements:

- Speech: The speech shown is from a supporter carrying a cat.
- Editing Techniques: Dynamic transitions between scenes are matched to the music.
- Music & Sound Effects: The music and sound effects in this content are the main elements used in the video editing process.

Connotative Analysis

In this content post, Prabowo is depicted as someone who loves cats. Prabowo is depicted holding the cat of one of his supporters while attending a campaign event. This gesture depicts Prabowo as a humanist with a gentle manner, despite

being a former general. Furthermore, the content also shows Prabowo dancing on stage. The intended branding portrays Prabowo as a cute and playful figure. The use of drones from above with the appearance of Prabowo supporters shows that many people support Prabowo.

Prabowo's Informal Activities

In the content category about Prabowo's activities, only one piece of content received more than one million views. The content, depicting Prabowo using dumbbells, received 2.2 million views, 215,200 likes, and 4,575 comments.

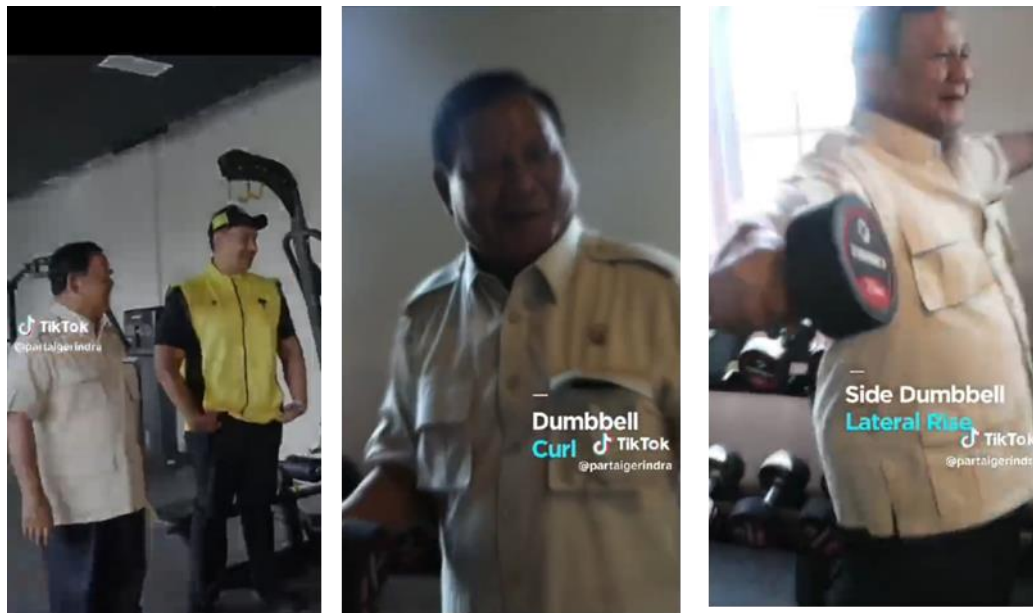


Figure 7. Screen Capture Prabowo exercising

Denotative Analysis

The content shows Prabowo together with Ario Bimo, Minister of Youth and Sports, exercising at the gym.

Visual Elements:

- Appearance: Prabowo wears semi-formal attire, indicating that the event is not formal.
- Facial Expressions and Body Language: His facial expressions and body language show him lifting dumbbells while smiling.

Auditory Elements:

- Editing Techniques: Dynamic transitions between scenes match the music and video captions.
- Music & Sound Effects: The music and sound effects in this content are the main elements used in the video editing process, ensuring the video and music are in harmony.

Connotative Analysis

This content aims to demonstrate that Prabowo possesses stamina comparable to that of young people. This is illustrated by the juxtaposition of Prabowo and Ario Bimo at the beginning of the video. This message resonated with Prabowo supporters on TikTok. This is evidenced by a comment from the account

justmort, which read, "70 tahun lateral raise sambil senyum, gw 20 tahun lateral raise kaya nahan BAB *skull emoticon". Translated "70 years of lateral raising while smiling, I am 20 years old, lateral raising like I am holding in a poop *skull emoticon*," with 15.5 thousand likes.

Conclusion

Barthes' semiotic analysis reveals that the political narratives constructed on TikTok require complex symbols. For example, Prabowo's humanist nature is portrayed in a post featuring him holding a cat. Cats are a symbol of protected and cared-for animals. Furthermore, Prabowo's health and fitness are portrayed in content featuring him with the Minister of Sports and playing with dumbbells. The political narrative created by the Gerindra Party TikTok account focuses less on the programs that presidential candidate Prabowo will implement and more on Prabowo's *brand image*. This research does not yet provide a picture of the perceptions of audiences exposed to the Gerindra account's TikTok content.

Suggestion

This research does not yet provide a picture of the perceptions of audiences exposed to the Gerindra account's TikTok content. Further research will likely be able to measure the effectiveness of messages conveyed on social media, particularly TikTok, from the audience's perspective.

The narrative created by the Gerindra Party on TikTok is a form of political communication that effectively targets its intended audience. The message is tailored to the target audience, such as by using trendy language, viral background music, and meme-based posts. Political parties must understand the audience of the media they use, as each medium has different characteristics. A precise strategy for determining the audience will ensure the message reaches its intended target.

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