

Questioning the Political Strategies of Sleman DPRD Candidates: A Study of the Failure of Golkar Party Female Legislative Candidates in the 2024 Elections

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Diinput : 05 July 2025

Diterima : 09 July 2025

Direvisi : 09 August 2025

Diterbitkan : 10 August 2025

Abstract

This study analyzes the failure of political strategies used by female candidates from the Golkar Party in the 2024 Sleman Regency DPRD elections, focusing on cultural and structural challenges that impeded their success. The research method employed is a qualitative descriptive literature study, with data collected through primary and secondary sources. This study focuses on new female candidates, particularly those from the Golkar Party, and examines the reasons behind their failure to secure a seat in the legislative body. The findings highlight the ineffectiveness of campaign strategies, such as door-to-door visits and traditional media use, which failed to resonate with female voters' specific concerns. Cultural barriers, including deeply rooted patriarchal norms and a lack of resources such as funding and media access, further limited their campaign impact. This study underscores the need for voter empowerment through political education, particularly for women, to highlight the importance of electing representatives who can effectively address gender-specific issues. In conclusion, this research offers insights into the challenges faced by female candidates and provides recommendations for improving political strategies that promote female political participation and representation

Keywords: Female Political Representation, Golkar Party, Political Strategy, Women in Politics, Cultural Barriers

Introduction

General elections (Pemilu) are a democratic mechanism that provides space for the people to determine their representatives in legislative institutions. In Indonesia, elections not only serve to elect legislative representatives but also serve as a forum to reflect democracy and representation of all levels of society, including women. Women's participation in politics, especially in legislative candidacy, is a crucial issue in the fight for equal and inclusive representation. Although there is an affirmative action policy through Law Number 2 of 2011 that requires political parties to include at least 30% female representation in their lists of legislative candidates, the implementation of this policy has not resulted in significant changes in women's representation in legislative institutions.(Budiatri, (2016).

According to data from the General Elections Commission (KPU), although the number of women running for office in the 2019 elections increased, the number of women elected remained stagnant. In the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), only 20.8% of women were elected, while at the provincial and district/city DPRD levels, the figures were even lower. This phenomenon indicates a significant gap between women's candidacy and their success in securing legislative seats, which is influenced by various factors, including structural and cultural factors, as well as the political strategies employed by female legislative candidates.

In the 2024 elections, female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party in Sleman Regency face significant challenges in securing seats in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). This study aims to analyze the failure of the political strategies employed by female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party in the 2024 elections in Sleman Regency, as well as the factors that led to these failures. The main focus of this study is on new female legislative candidates who failed to secure seats in the DPRD. This study addresses the limitations of their campaign strategies, which failed to attract female voters, and the structural and cultural challenges that hamper their efforts.

It is important to understand that the failure of female legislative candidates' political strategies is not only caused by internal factors, such as a lack of competence or individual quality, but also by external factors, including the deeply rooted patriarchal culture in society and social structures that provide greater support to male legislative candidates. Several previous studies have shown that women in politics face greater obstacles than men, particularly in terms of access to political resources, power networks, and the media. These obstacles are further exacerbated by patriarchal cultural factors that place women in subordinate positions within the social structure, resulting in low voter trust in women as political leaders.(Prasetyo, 2021).

Theoretically, this research refers to the theory of women's political representation, which distinguishes between descriptive representation and substantive representation. Descriptive representation focuses on the quantity of women in legislative institutions as a symbol of representation, while substantive representation refers to the extent to which elected women champion women's issues in public policy.(Dahlerup, 2020)According to this theory, to achieve effective substantive representation, the presence of women in the legislature is not enough simply to fulfill quotas; they must also be given the opportunity to advocate for gender interests and become agents of change that bring women's voices to public policy. In this context, political parties play a crucial role in supporting women to achieve these positions by providing training, financial support, and access to the media.(Putri, 2021).

Furthermore, gender-based campaign strategies are also an important aspect of this research. Women's campaign strategies are often hampered by limited access to resources, leading them to rely more on community-based and relational approaches in their campaigns. These approaches, while effective at the local level, are often insufficient to compete with male legislative candidates who have greater access to resources.(Kurniawati, 2022)Previous research also shows that identity-based campaigns, which explicitly address gender issues, can increase the electability of female legislative candidates if conducted appropriately and supported by issues relevant to voters (Hartono, 2023).

Indonesian society remains heavily influenced by patriarchal values that consider political positions more suitable for men. This perception stems not only from male voters but also from female voters themselves, who have internalized these values. This distrust of women's leadership capacity demonstrates that women's political struggles depend not only on increasing the number of women in the legislature, but also on changing social values that support substantial female representation.(Saraswati, 2022).

This study aims to identify the factors that contributed to the failure of the political strategies of female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party in Sleman Regency and to provide recommendations for developing more effective political strategies. The focus of this study is on the campaign strategies used by female legislative candidates, the structural and cultural barriers they face, and the influence of patriarchal culture on voter perceptions. By analyzing these factors, this study is expected to contribute to formulating campaign strategies that are more responsive to the needs of female voters and help improve the quality of women's political representation in Indonesia. The results of this study are also expected to provide input

for political parties in strengthening the capacity of their female cadres so they can compete healthily and fairly in political contests, and encourage more inclusive social change.

THEORETICAL OR CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This research draws on several key theories related to women's political representation and gender-based campaign strategies, which will be used to analyze the failure of the political strategies of female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party in the 2024 Election in Sleman Regency. The theories underlying this study include the theory of women's political representation, gender-based political strategies, and structural and cultural barriers to women's politics.

1. Theory of Women's Political Representation

The theory of women's political representation is the primary foundation of this research. Women's political representation refers not only to the quantity of women holding legislative positions (descriptive representation), but also to the quality of representation provided by elected women in advocating for issues related to gender interests (substantive representation). Dahlerup (2020) emphasizes that descriptive representation, while important, is not sufficient to ensure significant change for women in politics. For example, while quota policies have increased the number of women in legislatures, substantive representation remains highly dependent on how effectively women advocate for policies that support gender equality.

In this context, this study focuses on how women, despite being registered as legislative candidates, not only fill quotas but also act as actors who can effectively champion women's issues in the political arena. Therefore, this theory helps explain how the unsuccessful campaign strategies of female legislative candidates in the 2024 Election in Sleman were influenced by a lack of institutional and structural support from political parties, as well as a minimal focus on substantive issues related to women.

2. Political Strategy from a Gender Perspective

Gender-based campaign strategies focus on how female legislative candidates design and implement their campaigns to reach female voters and build broader support. Previous research has shown that female legislative candidates often experience limited access to important political resources, such as campaign funds, mass media, and broader political networks, which can hinder the effectiveness of their campaign strategies. (Kurniawati, 2022).

This gender-based political strategy emphasizes the importance of gender identity in shaping campaign narratives. Campaigns that emphasize women's identities as an integral part of the political narrative can be more easily accepted by female voters if the issues raised align with their needs and aspirations, such as equal rights, women's empowerment, and protection against gender-based violence. Research by Princess (2021) shows that female candidates who are able to use identity-based strategies and introduce themselves as women's representatives who care about women's issues have a greater chance of attracting the attention of female voters.

However, this study found that the campaign strategies used by female legislative candidates in Sleman relied more on conventional methods such as door-to-door campaigns without maximizing the potential of social media, making them less attractive to younger female voters who are more likely to use social media in determining their political choices.

3. Structural and Cultural Barriers to Women's Political Participation

Women in politics often face structural and cultural barriers that prevent them from competing fairly with male candidates. These structural barriers include unequal access to political resources, such as campaign funding, media support, and broader political networks.(Prasetyo, 2021)These resource limitations often mean that female legislative candidates can only rely on community-based approaches that are less far-reaching than the strategies used by male candidates who are more financially secure and have stronger networks.

On the other hand, cultural barriers deeply rooted in Indonesian society also influence voters' perceptions of women in politics. Communities still influenced by patriarchal values often assume that political positions are more suitable for men. This perception stems not only from male voters but also from female voters themselves, who often feel more comfortable voting for men due to internalized social norms that deem women inadequate for leadership.(Saraswati, 2022). Research byNugroho (2010)shows that this deep-rooted patriarchal culture greatly impacts the quality of women's representation, because even when women are elected, they are often not given the space to fight for policies that favor women.

These two barriers, both structural and cultural, pose significant challenges for female legislative candidates in Sleman Regency seeking seats in the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). Therefore, changes to internal party support systems and increased gender-based political literacy are crucial to improving women's representation in local politics.

4. Identity Politics and Solidarity Building

Identity politics plays a crucial role in building a support base for marginalized groups, including women. In the context of women's political campaigns, identity politics involves organizing voters based on their identities, such as gender, to build collective solidarity. This identity politics can strengthen women's political standing by highlighting issues directly related to the needs and aspirations of women voters, such as women's empowerment, gender equality, protection against gender-based violence, and so on.(Wijaya, R., & Lestari, 2023).

However, in practice, such strategies are not always sufficient to guarantee electoral success.Hartono (2023)This study demonstrates that identity politics, including the use of gender identity as an electoral appeal, plays a significant role in increasing the electability of female candidates. This gender identity is often combined with local, religious, or cultural identities to build emotional connection with voters. Furthermore,Hartono (2023)explains that identity politics is one approach relied upon by female candidates to increase electability. In campaigns, identities as women, mothers, or community leaders are often leveraged to build emotional connection with voters. However, this approach is insufficient to overcome the structural barriers faced, such as limited access to media, unequal funding, and the persistent influence of patriarchal culture in determining voter preferences.

However, as explained byWijaya, R., & Lestari (2023)The power of identity politics will only be effective if accompanied by solidarity building, namely the establishment of strong solidarity between female legislative candidates and female voters. This solidarity can be created through open discussions, women's forums, and activities focused on strengthening women's voices in politics. In many cases, solidarity among women within political parties or within society is more difficult to achieve, resulting in a lack of support for female legislative candidates, even among female voters themselves.(Saraswati, 2022).

It's important to emphasize that identity-based campaigns aren't just about arousing feelings, but also about changing public perceptions of women's leadership abilities. This study found that female legislative candidates in Sleman predominantly used traditional and conventional approaches, without building their identities or explicitly addressing gender

issues in their campaign narratives. For example, while they presented relevant visions and missions, there was a lack of strong emphasis on women's issues that could differentiate them from male legislative candidates.(Hartono, 2023).

This gender-based solidarity also plays a role in mobilizing support, especially in societies still influenced by patriarchal culture. Therefore, identity politics must be accompanied by efforts to strengthen women's collective awareness of the importance of electing women as their representatives in legislative institutions.(Prasetyo, 2021)Campaigns that prioritize gender identity, when accompanied by strong solidarity, have the potential to improve women's political representation and challenge male dominance in politics.

5. The Influence of Social Media and Digitalization on Women's Political Campaigns

In today's digital era, social media plays a crucial role in political campaigns, including those of female legislative candidates. Social media enables female legislative candidates to reach a wider audience and build closer relationships with their voters, unhindered by geographic or economic barriers. The use of social media in women's political campaigns can increase their visibility, convey more personalized political messages, and strengthen women's identity-based political narratives (Kurniawati, 2022).

However, despite social media's immense potential to support women's political campaigns, many female legislative candidates have yet to fully utilize it. Many only use social media to disseminate basic information, such as their ballot numbers and photos, without developing more substantive content that could attract female voters. This demonstrates that, despite the significant potential of social media, its use in women's political campaigns remains very limited.

An effective digital campaign requires a strong narrative, segmented messaging, and the use of algorithms and platforms to maximize reach.(Marzuki, 2023)When used appropriately, social media can be an effective tool for building gender-based solidarity, strengthening identity politics, and expanding women's political influence. Therefore, it is crucial for female legislative candidates to optimize their use of social media as a tool to introduce themselves, voice women's issues, and garner broader voter support.

Method

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, aiming to explore in-depth the political strategies employed by female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party and to understand the factors that led to their failure in the 2024 elections, particularly in Sleman Regency. A qualitative approach was chosen because of its ability to explore meanings, narratives, and socio-political dynamics that cannot be explained quantitatively. Qualitative methods provide flexibility in exploring the experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved, as well as providing deeper insight into the reasons behind the failure of women's campaign strategies in the local political context.(Creswell, JW, & Poth, 2018).

A descriptive research design was chosen to map the patterns, challenges, and socio-cultural contexts that influence the political behavior and campaign strategies of female legislative candidates. This research aims to understand, naturally and without intervention, how internal and external factors shape women's political strategies, and how cultural and structural factors play a role in election outcomes.

This research was conducted in Sleman Regency, Yogyakarta Special Region, which is one of the electoral districts for the regency-level Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). This location was chosen because of its high voter turnout and active base of Golkar Party cadres. Sleman Regency was chosen to illustrate the challenges faced by female

legislative candidates in a region with complex political dynamics, but also to offer potential for in-depth analysis of campaign strategy failures.

The research period lasted for three months, from March 1 to June 1, 2024, which included several stages, namely: (1) Primary data collection, through in-depth interviews with female legislative candidates, party members, and female voters; (2) Secondary data collection, through literature studies, previous election documents, and internal party reports; (3) Field observations to obtain contextual data on political dynamics in Sleman Regency, including campaign activities and interactions between female legislative candidates and voters.

The subjects of this study were female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party who ran for the Sleman Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in the 2024 election. The primary focus of this study was on newcomer female legislative candidates who failed to secure legislative seats, either failing completely or not being elected despite garnering significant votes. The subjects included female legislative candidates aged 30 to 50, with diverse backgrounds, ranging from women's organization cadres and social activists to academics and local community leaders.

The units of analysis include: (1) Personal profiles and backgrounds of legislative candidates, including education, organizational experience, and involvement in socio-political activities; (2) Campaign strategies used, both traditional (such as door-to-door) and digital (social media campaigns); (3) Internal and external factors influencing failure, including limited campaign funds, structural support from parties, and patriarchal cultural factors influencing voter perceptions of women in politics; (4) Party responses to election results, including evaluations of support provided during the campaign period and post-election follow-up; (5) Perceptions of female voters towards female legislative candidates, collected through interviews with voters in electoral areas in Sleman Regency.

This descriptive qualitative approach will use thematic analysis techniques to identify key themes emerging from interviews and secondary data. A coding process will be used to classify the data obtained based on relevant themes, such as campaign strategies, structural barriers, and cultural factors. The results of this thematic analysis will be used to better understand the failures of female legislative candidates' campaign strategies and identify steps that can be taken to increase women's representation in local politics.

Results and Discussion

1. Research Results

a. General Profile of Female Golkar Party Legislative Candidates for Sleman Regency

Based on data from the Sleman General Elections Commission (KPU) and in-depth interviews, it was discovered that the female Golkar Party legislative candidates running in the 2024 election are generally newcomers. They are aged between 30 and 50, and most have backgrounds as women's organization cadres, social activists, and local community leaders. Their educational levels range from Diploma Three (D3) to Master's degrees, with most coming from lower-middle class backgrounds.

Despite their competence and organizational experience, none of these female legislative candidates managed to secure a seat in the Sleman Regency Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) in the 2024 election. This suggests that despite their strong social capital, they failed to optimize campaign strategies relevant to voter needs. Their campaigns relied more on traditional methods such as door-to-door campaigning, which, while

effective in building emotional connection, were insufficient to reach young female voters who are more active in using social media to make their political choices.

The complete profile of the Golkar Party's female legislative candidates for Sleman Regency can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. General Profile of Female Golkar Party Legislative Candidates in Sleman Regency for the 2024 Election

No	Age (Years)	Background	Last education	Economic Status	Elected Status
1	32	Social activist	D3	Lower middle class	Not selected
2	36	Women's organization cadres (KPPG)	S1	Lower middle class	Not selected
3	41	Local community leaders	S1	Lower middle class	Not selected
4	47	Academics (lecturers at private universities in Sleman)	S2	Lower middle class	Not selected
5	39	Children and women's education activist	D3	Lower middle class	Not selected

Source: Internal documents of the Golkar Party of Sleman and interview results

b. Campaign Strategy Used

The campaign strategy adopted by the female Golkar Party legislative candidate in Sleman Regency for the 2024 election shows a tendency toward a conventional approach, limited to door-to-door campaigning. This type of campaign involves visiting residents' homes to introduce themselves, convey their vision and mission, and build more personal social relationships. While this strategy is effective in establishing emotional closeness with voters, particularly in rural areas and local communities, it has proven unable to compete with the more massive and structured strategies employed by male candidates who have more resources and media support.(Nugroho, B., & Astuti, 2021).

Furthermore, traditional campaign media strategies such as brochures and stickers distributed both physically and through Facebook platforms have also proven ineffective. These campaigns are more one-way, disseminating basic information such as ballot numbers, slogans, and candidate photos, without a strong narrative or deeper engagement with voters. This makes female candidates' campaigns less likely to differentiate themselves from those of male candidates who also employ similar strategies. The lack of optimal use of social media and the lack of creativity in the content they produce render their digital campaigns ineffective (Kurniawati, 2022).

Another campaign practice identified is the provision of material assistance, such as basic necessities and other household necessities, to prospective voters. This practice remains common in local electoral politics, including by female legislative candidates, in the hope of increasing short-term voter loyalty. While this approach is often successful in quickly increasing candidate electability, it emphasizes transactional relationships and underemphasizes the substantive aspects of women's political struggles. Important issues such as women's protection, family finances, or gender equality, which are the focus of women's campaigns, receive insufficient space in their campaign narratives (Saraswati, 2022).

This approach, which relies on money politics and material assistance, risks reinforcing pragmatic political practices that ignore issue-based political awareness. Even within the context of democratic ethics, this approach limits the opportunities for female legislative candidates to emerge as agents of social change who advocate for women's interests structurally (Sirekap KPU, 2024).

In general, all campaign strategies employed by female legislative candidates demonstrate a passive campaign pattern and do not explicitly promote women's issues. Female candidates tend to conform to a common campaign model without establishing differentiation based on gender identity or perspective. This suggests that despite a willingness to participate in politics, the capacity to articulate a women's political agenda remains limited, both in terms of communication strategy and the use of media and political networks (Fitriani, 2023).

Therefore, efforts to strengthen women's political capacity are needed going forward, focusing not only on quantitative representation but also on mainstreaming substantive issues in their political campaigns. Unfortunately, current strategies lack strong differentiation from those of male candidates and tend to be conventional, not explicitly promoting women's issues.

c. Structural and Cultural Barriers

Golkar Party female legislative candidates in Sleman Regency faced a number of significant structural and cultural barriers during the 2024 election contestation process. These obstacles impacted the effectiveness of their campaigns and hampered their potential for victory in a competitive contest. Nugroho, B., & Astuti (2021) highlighted that women's political participation at the regional level still faces various structural and cultural barriers. These barriers include limited access to political resources, low support from political parties, and deeply embedded gender stereotypes in society. Despite this, opportunities remain, particularly when female candidates are able to build strong political networks and capitalize on specific social momentum.

Meanwhile, (Nugroho, B., & Astuti, 2021) explains that women's political participation at the regional level still faces a duality between opportunities and obstacles. Although the 30% quota regulation provides formal space for women to advance in political contests, the reality on the ground shows that women, especially newcomers, still face significant challenges such as limited political experience, dominance of male power networks, and social expectations that limit their political mobility. This aligns with the findings of research on female Golkar legislative candidates in Sleman who failed to win seats, where their traditional campaigns were unable to address women's specific issues or penetrate the social structures that limit them.

1). Structural Barriers

The structural barriers faced by female legislative candidates in Sleman relate to limited political resources, particularly in terms of campaign funding and technical support from political parties. One of the main challenges they experience is limited personal campaign funds. Unlike male candidates, who generally have broader access to economic resources, most female candidates come from lower-middle class backgrounds, with strong social capital but limited financial resources. Campaign costs, including logistics, campaign attributes, transportation, and even meals for the winning team, require a substantial budget that not all female candidates can afford. This limitation directly impacts their campaign reach and visibility amidst increasingly commercialized political competition (Fitriani, 2023).

Besides economic constraints, another obstacle lies in the lack of support from internal party structures. In the context of the Golkar Party at the regional level, structural support for female legislative candidates is often symbolic and does not address substantive needs. Female candidates are often left to fend for themselves in implementing campaign strategies without adequate technical support, funding, or training from the party's Regional Representative

Council (DPD). This situation shows that although parties have met the 30% quota for women as stipulated in the Election Law, this has not been accompanied by adequate structural support to strengthen their political positions (Nugroho & Astuti, 2021). In some cases, women are merely used as administrative complements to fulfill candidacy requirements, rather than as figures genuinely motivated to win.

Furthermore, many female legislative candidates do not receive specific training on campaign strategy, political communication, team management, and the use of digital strategies. Without adequate training, female candidates tend to lack strong campaign skills, making it difficult to build effective campaigns. This weakens their bargaining position with voters and within party dynamics. Political parties have not yet recognized the importance of strengthening women's political capacity as part of an institutional strategy to promote meaningful female representation (Marzuki, 2023). Limited funding, minimal party support, and the absence of training are key factors contributing to the low competitiveness of female legislative candidates, despite their potential, organizational experience, and strong social capital.

2). Cultural Barriers

In addition to structural barriers, female Golkar Party legislative candidates in Sleman also face significant cultural barriers that impact their electoral chances. One of the most fundamental obstacles is the persistently strong patriarchal culture embedded in the community's social structure. Although Sleman is known as a region with a relatively high level of education, social norms that place men as primary leaders in the public sphere remain dominant. This patriarchal culture subtly places women in subordinate positions, both within the family and within the community, so that women's presence as political actors is often perceived as inappropriate or not entirely legitimate by the majority of society (Nugroho & Astuti, 2021).

This patriarchal culture is closely intertwined with negative perceptions of women's leadership competency. In many cases, women are perceived as less assertive, less emotional, or lacking the capacity to lead and make strategic political decisions. This perception stems not only from male voters but also from female voters themselves, who have internalized these dominant values. As a result, even though female legislative candidates possess organizational experience, adequate educational backgrounds, and strong social track records, they still have to work extra hard to convince the public that they are worthy of being elected and trusted to hold public office. (Kurniawati, 2022).

Women's political strategies in legislative elections not only reflect efforts to gain political power, but are also part of the struggle for gender representation in a political system that is still dominated by patriarchal values. Mulia, R., & Susanti (2022) emphasized that female candidates' campaign strategies often stem from a representational approach, with issues of equality and women's interests becoming the primary narrative in their political communications. However, in local contexts like Sleman, this strategy has not been fully effective due to cultural constraints and limited resources.

Even more ironic is the growing distrust among some female voters toward female legislative candidates themselves. In many cases, gender-based solidarity does not automatically form in the context of general elections. Most female voters still feel more trust in male figures who are perceived as more experienced, better able to build networks, or more socially and economically accessible. This distrust reflects a weak collective awareness of women as a political group with shared interests that can be championed through representation in legislative institutions (Saraswati, 2022). The lack of gender-based political education and

limited public discussion about the importance of women's representation also exacerbate this situation.

Furthermore, the practice of providing material assistance such as basic food items and other household necessities to voters, a common campaign strategy at the local level, further compounds the complexity of cultural barriers. While this approach may increase short-term loyalty, it emphasizes transactional relationships and disregards substantive aspects of women's political struggles, such as advocacy for women's protection, family finances, or gender equality. This risks reinforcing pragmatic political practices and undermining efforts to build a deeper, issue-based political awareness. Even within the context of democratic ethics, this approach is considered to limit the opportunities for female legislative candidates to emerge as agents of social change who defend women's interests structurally.(KPU Recapitulation, 2024).

These cultural barriers demonstrate that the challenges faced by female legislative candidates come not only from external sources, such as male competitors or a competitive electoral system, but also from within society itself, including from fellow women. Therefore, women's political struggles require a two-pronged approach: building personal and political capacity, while simultaneously challenging discriminatory cultural norms and perceptions. Long-term strategies such as gender-based political education, strengthening solidarity among women, and transforming values at the community level are crucial to creating a more equal space for future female leadership.

d. Response of Female Voters

From the results of interviews with female voters in several sub-districts (Mlati, Depok, and Berbah), it was found that:

1) Many female voters do not know the legislative candidates running from the Golkar Party

Most female voters admitted they were unaware of the Golkar Party's female legislative candidates, indicating a lack of public awareness of these candidates. This poses a major challenge to female candidates' efforts to build relationships with voters and establish a strong base of support.

2) Lack of information about the work programs or visions of female legislative candidates

Many female voters lack adequate information about the work programs or visions championed by female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party. Without clear information about their campaign agendas and goals, female voters tend to feel less connected to these female legislative candidates.

3) Tend to choose based on personal closeness, not gender awareness

Female voters are more likely to vote based on personal connection to the candidate, rather than gender awareness or support for women's issues in politics. This phenomenon suggests that while female voters may desire to support fellow women, they lack sufficient gender-based political awareness to consider gender as a determining factor in selecting legislative candidates.

2. Discussion

The failure of the Golkar Party's female legislative candidates' campaign in Sleman Regency in the 2024 elections cannot be separated from their campaign strategy, which tended to be less grounded and not based on a gender-based political representation approach. In the context of representative democracy, women's political success depends not only on quotas but also on strategies that are responsive to issues affecting female voters. ResearchMulia, D., & Susanti (2022)This demonstrates that women's political campaigns must prioritize gender

representation in a more relevant and effective manner to address the specific needs of female voters. This reflects the inability of many female legislative candidates to translate women's issues such as maternal and child health, social protection, or educational equality into campaign narratives that can appeal to female voters.

This study found that campaigns conducted by female Golkar Party legislative candidates relied more on traditional methods, such as door-to-door campaigns. While effective in building emotional connection with voters in rural areas, they were less effective in reaching younger voters who increasingly use social media to make their political choices. Identity-based campaigns and emotional connection, which have proven effective in many regions, as noted by Hartono (2023), were significantly underutilized. This approach could strengthen voters' relationships with female legislative candidates if accompanied by a stronger narrative on relevant issues, particularly those related to women's needs.

Furthermore, more modern social media strategies should provide a platform for identity-based campaigns and for building solidarity between female legislative candidates and female voters. Unfortunately, many female legislative candidates, including those in Sleman, are still underutilizing social media to its full potential. WhatsApp, for example, which should be used to consolidate and disseminate substantive issues, is now primarily used for simple communication through neighborhood association (RT) groups or communities. This underutilization of social media has rendered their digital campaigns ineffective, resulting in fragmented information and a lack of a coherent public perception of their capacity as female legislative candidates.

Structural barriers also played a significant role in the campaign's failure. Many female candidates faced limited campaign funds and minimal technical support from their political parties. Most female candidates come from lower-middle class backgrounds, limiting their access to political resources compared to male candidates, who generally enjoy greater financial and media support. The Golkar Party, their umbrella party, despite fulfilling the 30% women's quota stipulated in the Election Law, failed to provide adequate structural support. Female candidates often struggled to design and implement campaign strategies on their own without adequate technical support, funding, or training. This demonstrates that while parties have fulfilled their quota obligations for women candidates, the actual support provided to ensure equality in electoral competition remains very limited (Nugroho & Astuti, 2021).

Furthermore, solidarity among women in politics, both within parties and among female voters, remains very low. Saraswati (2022) argues that gender-based solidarity in women's politics is crucial for creating collective awareness of the importance of women's representation in the political process. Without this solidarity, even among women, the lack of mutual support becomes a major obstacle to increasing the electability of female legislative candidates. Worse still, although many female voters want to support fellow women, they lack sufficient gender-based political awareness to consider gender as a determining factor in selecting legislative candidates. This is reflected in female voters' distrust of female legislative candidates themselves, who prefer male figures perceived as more experienced or better able to build networks. (Saraswati, 2022).

The persistent patriarchal culture in Sleman society also plays a significant role in exacerbating the failure of female legislative candidates. Most people still believe that men are more suitable for political office, while women are considered more suited to the domestic sphere. This perception stems not only from male voters but also from female voters, who have internalized patriarchal social values. This distrust of women's competence in politics presents a powerful cultural barrier. Solidarity among women, both within political parties and among female voters, has not been sufficiently developed to foster collective awareness of women's representation in politics. (Saraswati, 2022).

Going forward, to ensure more substantial representation of women, gender-based political education must be strengthened at the grassroots level, particularly among female voters, to foster a deeper gender-based political awareness. Furthermore, political parties need to provide substantive support to female legislative candidates through campaign training, equitable funding, and strengthening women's political capacity as part of their institutional strategies. Strengthening solidarity among women also needs to be focused on creating collective awareness regarding women's representation in legislative institutions. Only then can women's representation in local politics, particularly in Sleman, be substantially improved.

Conclusion

This study has examined the factors that influenced the campaign failure of female legislative candidates from the Golkar Party in Sleman Regency in the 2024 Election. Based on the research results, it can be concluded that the failure was influenced by a combination of ineffective campaign strategies, structural obstacles, and cultural obstacles that hindered the success of female legislative candidates.

Campaign strategies that rely heavily on traditional methods like door-to-door canvassing and underutilize social media have prevented female candidates from building a strong narrative that resonates with the needs of female voters, particularly younger and more digitally engaged voters. Furthermore, the lack of support from political parties, both in the form of training and campaign funding, indicates that political parties have not provided substantive support to female candidates to compete fairly in electoral contests.

On the other hand, cultural barriers related to patriarchal norms in Sleman society also worsen voters' perceptions of women's capabilities in politics. Low solidarity among women in politics, both within political parties and among female voters, further exacerbates the challenges faced by female legislative candidates. Distrust of women's leadership abilities remains a significant obstacle to achieving substantive representation.

Based on these findings, this study provides several recommendations to improve women's representation in local politics, particularly in Sleman Regency: (1) Strengthening women's political capacity: Political parties, including the Golkar Party, need to provide gender-based political training and equitable financial support so that female legislative candidates can compete on equal terms with male legislative candidates; (2) Optimizing the use of social media: Female legislative candidates need to utilize social media optimally as a tool to build campaign narratives based on women's identity and gender awareness. Social media can be used to disseminate issues relevant to women's lives and reach young female voters who are more active in the digital world; (3) Gender-based political education: To increase gender-based political awareness among voters, stronger gender-based political education efforts are needed at the grassroots level, particularly among women. Empowering female voters to better understand the importance of women's representation can encourage them to elect female legislative candidates who are able to fight for issues relevant to women; (4) Strengthening solidarity among women: Gender-based solidarity needs to be strengthened in politics, both among female legislative candidates and among female voters. This solidarity can create collective awareness about the importance of women's representation in legislative institutions.

Although this study provides important insights into the campaign failure of female Golkar Party legislative candidates in Sleman, there are several limitations that need to be noted: (1) The scope of the study is limited to one region (Sleman Regency) making the findings in this study not necessarily generalizable to other regions with different social or political characteristics; (2) Data obtained from interviews with female voters and female

legislative candidates may have subjective bias, as respondents' perceptions and experiences may be influenced by their personal views; (3) This study focuses more on campaign analysis and structural and cultural barriers, while other factors such as digital media strategies or the influence of external factors such as mass media may not have been explored in depth.

Given the existing limitations, further research could delve deeper into several aspects that have not been touched upon by this study: (1) Comparison between female and male legislative candidates in other districts/cities to see whether the challenges faced by female legislative candidates in Sleman also apply in other areas with different social conditions; (2) In-depth analysis of the use of digital media in women's campaigns, to find out more about how social media can be used more effectively in women's political campaigns, as well as how digital algorithms influence the dissemination of women's political messages; (3) Research on the influence of gender-based political education on women's voter awareness and their participation in elections can help in designing long-term strategies to strengthen women's representation.

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