

Is Personal Branding The Key To Success In Simultaneous Elections In 2024?

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ABSTRACT

In the context of representative democracy, elections play a central role in determining the direction of a country's policies and leadership. In Indonesia, the moment of general elections, especially the presidential and vice presidential elections, is very important to determine the political future of the nation. With the development of democracy, the phenomenon of first-time voters has emerged-a new generation that is actively involved in the political process. This study aims to examine the impact of personal branding of presidential and vice presidential candidates on novice voters in the 2023 general election. The method used is quantitative with data collection through questionnaires and data analysis using Smart PLS. The results showed that personal attributes such as honesty, professional background, populism, and wealth have a significant positive influence on the perception of personal branding of presidential and vice presidential candidates among novice voters. These findings make a significant contribution to the understanding of how personal branding elements can influence the decisions of novice voters in general elections.

Keywords: first time voters, general election, personal branding

INTRODUCTION

In the context of representative democracy, elections are a central process in determining the direction of policy and leadership for a country. In Indonesia, the general election process is an important moment in determining the president and vice president. In general elections, voters have a crucial role in determining who will ensure the interests and welfare of their people in the future. In Indonesia, general elections play a crucial role, especially in electing the president and vice president. This process not only determines who will lead the country, but also determines the direction of policies that will be taken for the future. The choices made by voters in general elections will affect various aspects of life such as the economy, education, health, and social policies. Voters, as part of society, have a very important role to play in this process. They are responsible for electing candidates who are deemed most capable and committed to ensuring the interests and welfare of the people. By casting their votes, voters influence the direction and priorities of government policies and ensure that elected leaders truly represent the wants and needs of the people. Overall, elections are at the core of the representative democratic process as they provide an opportunity for the people to participate in political decision-making and ensure that their interests and aspirations are accommodated in government policies.

Along with the development of democracy, there have been demographic changes in the electorate, including the emergence of first-time voters, a new generation that has begun to actively engage in the political process. In the 2024 general election, first-time voters are estimated to reach 63 million people, accounting for 31.23% of the total electorate. Meanwhile, the number of old voters or non-



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beginners is estimated to be around 140 million people or around 68.77% of the total voters. Based on this data, first-time voters have a voice that is highly calculated and considered by presidential and vice presidential candidates.

With this sizable proportion of first-time voters, it is clear that their votes have a significant impact in the election. Presidential and vice-presidential candidates and political parties will certainly consider this group seriously. First-time voters often have different views, expectations and priorities compared to older voters. They may be more focused on issues related to the future, such as education, employment and climate change. Therefore, candidates and political parties need to adjust their campaign strategies to meet the expectations and needs of first-time voters in order to win the support of this highly influential group. Overall, the emergence of first-time voters represents a new dynamic in elections that requires special attention from all parties involved in the political process.

First-time voters tend to have different mindsets and preferences compared to older voters or non-beginners. They tend to be more open to campaign messages and are more likely to be influenced by personal branding than more experienced voters. This is in accordance with Dewi Haroen's (2014: 13) opinion on personal branding, which is a process that involves forming individual perceptions of various aspects of a person, such as their personality, skills, or values. The goal is to foster a good impression among the public, which is ultimately used as a marketing tool. Therefore, it is crucial to understand how the personal branding of presidential and vice presidential candidates influences the preferences of inexperienced voters, providing insight into the dynamics of contemporary politics.

Novice voters, who are identical to the younger generation, are dominant users of social media. Social media use is one of the most popular activities today. In 2018, there were an estimated 2.65 billion people using social media and by 2021 it is expected to reach almost 3.1 billion. In another opinion, during the last general election, many political figures have conveyed their personal "brand" or "branding" through various media channels, especially on social media platforms. The utilization of social media by politicians to express their personal brand is a growing practice, with Facebook and Twitter as important instruments in implementing this strategy. (Hidayati 2021). From this data, it can be said that novice voters are easy to reach with content that is made by adjusting the current style.

First-time voters, who are synonymous with the younger generation, are the dominant users of social media, making them a prime target for political campaign strategies. Social media use has become one of the most popular activities today, with the number of users jumping from around 2.65 billion in 2018 to nearly 3.1 billion in 2021. In the context of the last general election, many political figures utilized these platforms to convey their personal "brand" or "branding". These political branding strategies are increasingly evolving, with Facebook and Twitter as the main instruments for image building and communicating with voters. Thus, first-time voters, who are active on social media, are more easily reached through content designed to suit their current style. Relevant content that follows the latest trends, such as creative videos and eye-catching graphics, can be more effective in attracting attention and support from this group.

The success of a presidential and vice presidential candidate is determined by the number of votes obtained. To get votes, there needs to be promotional efforts made. The promotional strategy for these candidates is different from the strategy used when marketing a product. In the political field, the personal branding of each candidate greatly influences voter alignment. Personal branding includes the trustworthiness, character, authority, and affordability built by a presidential and vice

presidential candidate to attract the attention of first-time voters and influence their perceptions. For example, candidates who are seen as authoritative, leader-like and have an authentic image are often preferred by first-time voters. Based on previous research conducted by Izzatul Muslimah. In politics, using personal branding as a strategy allows a candidate to build a lasting impression in voters' memories, differentiate themselves from competitors, and inspire confidence in their vision and leadership abilities.

The purpose of this scientific article is to investigate the voting preferences of first-time voters in general elections, with a focus on the influence of personal branding of presidential and vice presidential candidates. This research is expected to provide better insight into the factors that influence the development of more effective campaign strategies for presidential and vice presidential candidates.

METHOD

This research uses a quantitative approach to explore the preferences of novice voters based on the personal branding of presidential and vice presidential candidates. This approach allows in-depth statistical analysis of the data obtained from respondents. The research design used in this study was a survey. The survey was conducted by distributing questionnaires to novice voters who are students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Pringsewu. This survey helps in collecting data on voter preferences, with the dependent variable being voter preferences and the independent variable being the image of the presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs.

The population in this study were all students of Universitas Muhammadiyah Pringsewu who were first-time voters. The sample was selected using purposive sampling method, with inclusion criteria as students who have reached voting age and are willing to participate in this study. The number of samples taken was 300 respondents. Data collection was conducted using a questionnaire that was prepared based on the research conceptual framework. The questionnaire consisted of questions related to voter preferences, personal branding of presidential and vice presidential candidates, and the image of candidate pairs. The questionnaire was distributed online to respondents, and data was collected through the completion of questionnaires by respondents.

Research Instruments The main instrument in this study was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed with in-depth consideration of the conceptual framework and research objectives. The validity of the questionnaire was tested using content validity test by related experts. The reliability of the questionnaire was measured by a retest test on a number of respondents. **Data Collection Procedure** Data was collected by distributing questionnaires through online platforms to respondents. The researcher provided clear instructions and guidelines to the respondents to complete the questionnaire carefully. The data collection time was 2 weeks and during this period, the researcher was available to provide assistance or clarification if needed.

Data Analysis. The collected data will be analyzed using statistical methods, including descriptive analysis to obtain an overview, as well as regression analysis to assess the relationship between voter preference variables and the image of presidential and vice presidential candidate pairs. Ethics in research is carried out by paying attention to data security and confidentiality of respondents' identities. All information obtained will be used only for research purposes and will not be disseminated without the permission of the respondent.

This study developed a measurement model to assess the validity and reliability of survey items. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) values were performed to confirm

the construct validity of the measurement model. Composite Reliability (CR) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values were calculated to assess convergent reliability and construct validity. A structural model was developed to test the hypotheses and examine the relationships between variables. PLS-SEM uses SmartPLS to estimate path coefficients and evaluate the significance of direct and indirect effects. The next process is bootstrapping with resampling techniques to assess the significance of indirect effects and the moderating role of risk tolerance and transparency of knowledge sharing. The measurement test results are presented in the figure below:

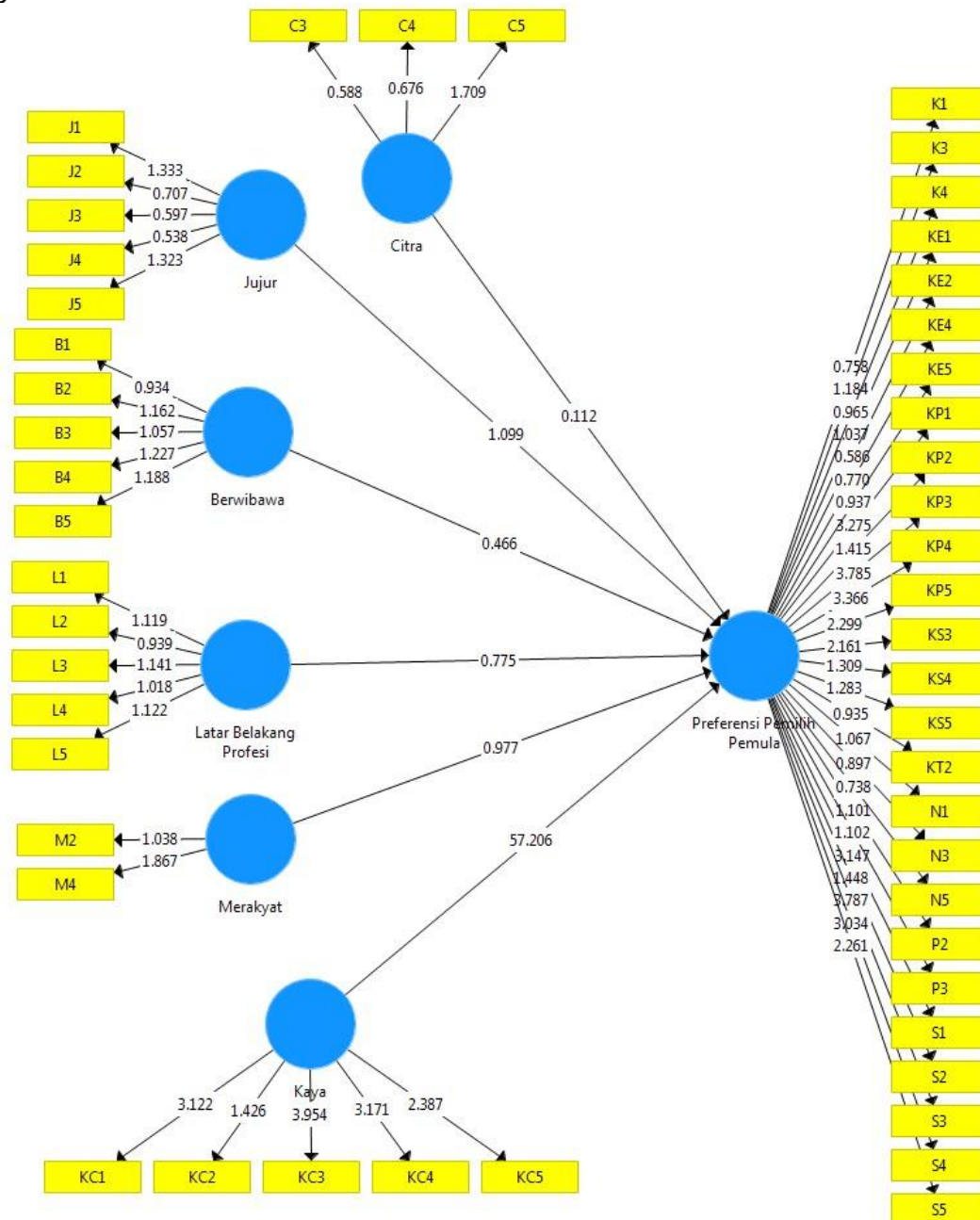


Figure 1. Measurement Testing Results
Source: Data Processing

In Figure 1 above, it is known that the loading factor value for 1 item on the image variable and the voter preference variable does not exceed the 0.5 requirement so that it cannot be used to measure the personal branding variable. The measurement analysis of the model aims to assess the validity and reliability of indicators relating to

a particular construct. The first step evaluates the internal consistency reliability of the construct using the composite reliability value measure as shown in Table 1 below:

Tabel 1. Validity and Reliability

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Voter Preferences	0,823	0,857	0,874	0,583
Honest	0,854	0,875	0,894	0,63
Professional Background	0,799	0,836	0,866	0,619
Popular	0,905	0,956	0,929	0,722
Rich	0,802	0,824	0,902	0,989

Source: Data Processing

As shown in Table 1, all constructs appear to have acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha above 0.7), indicating that the items are reasonably interrelated. Another measure is that the combined reliability range for each variable is above 0.50, indicating that each variable has acceptable reliability. (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2007). The next step is to evaluate validity by looking at convergent and discriminant validity values. Convergent validity is determined by factor loading and calculating the average variance (AVE). As shown in Table 1, the AVE values for all constructs are greater than 0.50. (Hair et al., 2014) found that the results showed acceptable convergent validity.

The discriminant validity of a construct is determined by whether it has more variation in its measurements than other constructs. The square root of AVE is compared to the correlation between latent constructs (Hair et al., 2014). As shown in Table 1, a construct is considered valid if its AVE square root is greater than its correlation with other constructs. Overall, the PLS measurement method produced acceptable reliability and validity for each construct.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Novice voters' perceptions of the aspects that a person has that lead to personal branding spur novice voters to make their choices in choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates. In this study, researchers have examined several variables that influence beginner voters in choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates. These variables include honest variables, professional background variables, populist variables and rich variables.

The honest variable, the professional background variable, the populist variable and the rich variable are examples of novice voters' preferences. Overall, it shows that the rich variable is a significant source of competitive advantage for novice voters in choosing the president and vice president. Novice voters tend to value honesty in presidential and vice presidential elections, as this quality creates trust and builds an image of the candidate as a transparent and reliable leader. Novice voters often look for integrity in presidential and vice presidential candidates. When candidates are seen as honest, it can create an emotional connection and greater trust. Honesty can also be perceived as an indicator that the candidate is willing to commit to their campaign promises, which can influence first-time voters' preference for consistent and trustworthy leaders.

Then the professional background variable can influence the preferences of novice voters in the presidential and vice presidential elections. The experiences and

perspectives gained from the work of each presidential and vice presidential candidate can shape individual values and priorities. Novice voters tend to support candidates who have a deep understanding of the issues related to their work sector or have policy plans that match the needs and aspirations of their profession. For example, someone who works in the education sector may be more likely to support a candidate with a strong education policy plan. Similarly, professional background can influence views on issues such as the economy, health and the work environment. Therefore, candidates who can respond positively to the needs of a particular profession may be more favored by first-time voters with that professional background.

First-time voters tend to pay attention to aspirations and issues that are relevant to the majority of society. They often look at issues that directly affect their daily lives and the wider community. In the political decision-making process, first-time voters tend to look for leaders who can represent or fight for their interests and aspirations as well as the wider community. If a candidate has strong support from a broader cross-section of society, including the populace, first-time voters may feel that the candidate better represents the interests and needs of the majority. Popular support can also create an image of the candidate as a figure who is connected to the people and understands the realities of everyday life. This is due to the tendency of first-time voters to be attracted to candidates or political parties that are able to communicate directly and authentically with them, and have programs that can improve the welfare of society as a whole. Novice voters also tend to support presidential and vice presidential candidates who provide a participatory platform and space for the aspirations of novice voters, which is an important factor in attracting their interest in the political process.

The wealth of presidential and vice presidential candidates can significantly influence the preferences of first-time voters. This is because the image of wealth is often associated with the success and ability of presidential and vice presidential candidates to lead a country. The wealth of presidential and vice presidential candidates has differences in perspectives, needs and values that individuals may have based on their economic background. First-time voters, who often lack in-depth political experience, are likely to be influenced by such images. Candidates with great wealth are often able to gain greater exposure through expensive campaigns, create an image of success and gain greater media support. However, this can also raise concerns about money politics, where wealthy candidates can use their wealth to influence elections and dominate the political landscape. This can influence their views on economic policy, taxes and wealth-related issues.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the preferences of novice voters in choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates are influenced by a number of variables including honesty, professional background, connection to the community, and wealth. The results show that these variables play an important role in shaping the preferences of first-time voters. Novice voters tend to appreciate the honesty and transparency of these candidates, and look for leaders who can represent the aspirations and needs of the wider community, including the people. Professional background is also a significant factor, as first-time voters tend to favor candidates who have a deep understanding of issues related to their work sector. However, the wealth of presidential and vice presidential candidates also significantly influences the preferences of first-time voters, as images of wealth are often associated with the ability and success to lead. While wealth can open up opportunities for greater exposure, it also raises concerns regarding money politics and domination of the political landscape. Therefore, in

choosing presidential and vice presidential candidates, first-time voters tend to consider a variety of factors including integrity, community representation, and views on economic issues and wealth. Thus, the choice of political novices is influenced by complex dynamics that involve interactions between multiple variables and diverse preferences.

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