

PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF INDONESIA'S 2024 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES: A SOCIAL MEDIA MEME SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS

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Article Info	Abstract
<p>Article History Received: July 2024 Revised: August 2024 Published: October 2024</p> <p>Keywords Indonesian presidential election 2024; Public perceptions; Social media; Viral memes;</p>	<p><i>In the context of the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, a new phenomenon has emerged among social media users: the creativity in making memes. These memes, which can take the form of text or images, address issues and events in an evocative style, becoming widely discussed due to their rapid dissemination and commentary on social media. This research aims to describe the signifiers and signifieds in memes related to the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates, elucidate the meanings contained in these memes, and explore the connection between memes on social media and the representation of public perception. This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design by employing semiotic analysis. The markers in these memes include snippets of cartoon and film scenes. The allusions in the memes align with the reality of the Indonesian 2024 presidential and vice-presidential candidate debates. These memes convey statements that contain information and public perceptions regarding the behavior, attitudes, and outcomes of the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidates. The results indicate that public perceptions are represented in the memes of the 2024 presidential candidates, encompassing expressions, perceptions, criticisms, humor, and satire. Furthermore, signifiers and signifieds are identified in each meme. This study reveals that memes play a crucial role in reflecting and shaping public perceptions during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election. Through creative expressions of humour, criticism, and satire, memes capture and communicate public sentiments about the candidates, highlighting their influence as a powerful tool in modern political discourse and public engagement.</i></p>
<p>How to cite: Darlius, A.N.S., Aprilia, F., & Neisyia, N. (2024). Representations of Public Perceptions on Indonesia's 2024 Presidential Candidates: A Semiotic Analysis of Memes on Social Media. <i>JOLLT Journal of Languages and Language Teaching</i>, 12(4), 2004-2015. DOI: https://doi.org/10.33394/jollt.v12i4.12219</p>	

INTRODUCTION

In the recent Indonesian presidential election of 2024, there were three presidential candidates and their vice-presidential running mates. Similar to elections in various other countries, Indonesia also held presidential and vice-presidential debates, which could be viewed by the public on television, YouTube, and social media (Rusnali, 2019). Following these debates, the Indonesian public began to transform formal and competitive political discourse into humorous content, creating memes that reflect the debates. Amid the increasingly heated political competition at the elite level, netizens have creatively "reduced political tension" by producing funny and thought-provoking political memes. For many netizens, especially the youth, elite political competition is not something to be taken too seriously. Before the elections scheduled for February 14, 2024, the presidential candidates and their running mates have organized their campaign teams and aligned with supporting parties. On social media platforms such as Twitter (X) and Instagram, a proliferation of memes has emerged. For instance, the Twitter account @partaimedsos45 frequently posts

memes about the presidential and vice-presidential candidates. In another example, the Twitter user @rdavid_99 created a meme featuring vice-presidential candidate number 02, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, whose face was edited into the character Shiva, a child character who dislikes being called a kid by adults. This meme references an argument between Gibran and vice-presidential candidate number 03, Prof. Dr. H. M. Mahfud MD, during the debates.

Immediately after the presidential and vice-presidential debates, various memes responding to the debate issues began circulating on social media. These anonymous memes are generally humorous, intriguing, but also carry a bitter undertone. The emergence of such memes introduces a new dimension to the political landscape, which is often perceived as serious and thus unappealing to some young people. This phenomenon creates two opposing perspectives: Gen Z, who have traditionally viewed politics as dirty, serious, power-driven, and burdensome, now find that the existence of memes makes politics and the 2024 Indonesian elections more amusing and less solemn. The term "meme" was first coined by the British biologist Richard Dawkins. It originates from the Greek word "mimeme," which means "to imitate." Examples of memes include melodies, ideas, slogans, clothing styles, and techniques for making pottery or building domes (Dawkins, 1989). A meme refers to popular items that are widely utilized by younger people at the moment. Nowadays the spread of memes is more and more common. Numerous social media profiles often contain memes about ideas or different topics (Gumilang & Juanda, 2018). A meme's creative source is its strongest point. Graphics, movies, pictures, and text and combining different content in a way that readers can easily understand (Suswandari et al., 2021). Memes in daily existence, have diverse roles, through the interaction of common and distinct tendencies, furthermore one's political personality might be projected through a shift in political style. Some memes are a smart design decision to convey messages (Handayani et al., 2016).

In relation to this, representation involves the construction of ideas about a subject through specific means of communication. It refers to the depiction or portrayal of aspects of reality—such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities, and other abstract concepts—through any medium of communication. This representation can be oral or written, as well as through still images or animation (Cercone & McCalla, 1987). Public perception refers to the type of data derived from surveys conducted with the general public. In other words, "public opinion" represents the collective opinions of a group of people (often a randomly chosen sample) who are explicitly asked about their beliefs regarding certain topics or events. Responses to structured questions can be captured and quantified in an easily understandable manner, providing a "snapshot" of opinion at a specific point in time (Dowler et al., 2006). Public perception refers to widely shared notions or opinions that are influenced by appearances or presentations (Price & Neijens, 1997).

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between social media memes and the portrayal of public perception. This study specifically examines a case of social criticism conveyed through memes concerning the 2024 Indonesian Presidential and Vice Presidential Election. It offers a dynamic communication perspective by disseminating messages to a broad audience. The Saussure theory (1857–1913) is employed to analyze the viral memes related to the Indonesian 2024 presidential and vice presidential candidates (Saussure, 1959). This research investigates semiotic concepts, starting with the signifier, signified, and meaning conveyed through memes depicting the presidential candidates in Indonesia's 2024 election. Specifically, it delineates the signifier and signified elements in these viral memes and clarifies their significance within social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter (X). Approximately, social media provides a platform for relationship management, connection creation, and explicit communication. Some interpretations, such as defining social media according to its collection of features or "building blocks". These apps are social media-based. People have ubiquitous access to the internet through Twitter,

Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Tiktok, and LinkedIn are among the social networking sites (Kietzmann et al., 2011). Content is considered viral if it has been shared extensively by social media users and disseminated across their networks (Deza & Parikh, 2015). Viral content is distinguished by its high virality score relative to other content. This score is typically indicated by factors such as the number of views, a high proportion of upvotes from social media users, a low number of downvotes, and a significant share value—indicating how often the content is reshared compared to other content (Deza & Parikh, 2015).

The research questions are how do the symbols depicted in memes of Indonesia's 2024 presidential contenders convey their semiotic meanings and how do memes of the Indonesian presidential candidates for 2024 reflect the opinions of the general public. the aims of this research are to depict the symbol's semiotic implications as they appear in memes featuring Indonesia's 2024 presidential contenders and to ascertain the public opinions reflected in memes featuring Indonesia's 2024 presidential contenders. Understanding how textual and visual elements in memes function as signifiers and are associated with signified (the resulting meaning) is one way that this research is novel in that it analyzes semiotic theory (signifier and signified), particularly in the context of the 2024 presidential candidate's memes. The creative link between signifier and signified with political symbolism that gives meaning to memes regarding presidential candidates is what makes them fresh. Particularly in relation to political communication via memes, this research might investigate how semiotic conventions evolve in the digital age. The innovative aspect of the analysis is how memes are utilized to construct political narratives through the use of humor, irony, and sarcasm.

Based on the explanation above, the researchers set the range for engagement metrics differently on Instagram and Twitter (X). On Instagram, the researchers focus on likes, ranging from 1000 likes to 7000 likes, as there are no view counts available. Conversely, on Twitter (X), the researchers consider views, ranging from 300 views to 2000 views. This approach acknowledges the distinct metrics used on each platform—likes on Instagram and views on Twitter (X)—to analyze and compare the virality and engagement of content.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopted a descriptive approach, utilizing qualitative methods to analyze non-numerical data, rendering it a qualitative descriptive study in its entirety. Qualitative inquiry is a methodology aimed at delving into and comprehending the significance individuals or groups assign to a social or human issue (Aprilia & Neisyia, 2023). This method entails the emergence of inquiries and methodologies, with data typically gathered in the participant's environment. Analysis of the data proceeds inductively, progressing from specific instances to overarching themes, while the researchers interpret the significance of the collected data (Neisyia, Aprilia & Anita, 2023). This method was particularly suitable for analyzing viral memes related to presidential and vice-presidential candidates. Qualitative research involved studying the nature of phenomena, including their characteristics, various manifestations, the contexts in which they occurred, and the perspectives from which they could be perceived. However, it did not aim to quantify phenomena in an objectively determined context (Chinyere & Val, 2023).

Research Design

The research adopted a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study design to explore the topic in depth. This design was chosen because it allows for an in-depth examination of specific instances or phenomena within their real-life context, which in this case, involved understanding semiotic meanings and public perceptions as represented in memes. The study employed two primary data collection techniques: observation and documentation. Observation facilitated a direct analysis of visual and textual elements in memes, enabling the

researcher to identify patterns and nuances in how meaning was constructed. In addition, documentation was used as a complementary technique, involving the systematic collection and analysis of various documented sources, such as digital records and previously published materials, which served as evidence to support the findings. The documentation technique, as noted by Aprilia, Neisyia, and Whariyanti (2023), provided a reliable and robust method for collecting data from existing documented sources, thus enhancing the study's validity. These techniques were particularly well-suited for the analysis of semiotic meaning, as they allowed for a comprehensive examination of the visual and cultural cues embedded in the memes. Consequently, this approach effectively addressed the research objective of understanding how public perceptions are conveyed and shaped through the semiotic representation found in memes, making it an appropriate methodological choice for the study.

Instruments

The objects of this study were memes of the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates circulating on social media. The study focused on memes from Twitter (X) and Instagram, featuring the following presidential and vice-presidential candidate pairs: H. Anies Rasyid Baswedan, Ph.D., and Dr. (H.C) H. A. Muhaimin Iskandar (candidate pair number 1); H. Prabowo Subianto and Gibran Rakabuming Raka (candidate pair number 2); and H. Ganjar Pranowo, S.H., M.I.P., and Prof. Dr. H. M. Mahfud MD (candidate pair number 3) (Faradis et al., 2023). These memes reflect public sentiment and are shared widely on social media platforms, making them a significant source of data for analyzing public perceptions during the election period.

The researchers employed several data collection methods to gather relevant memes. First, in-depth searches were conducted on social media platforms, specifically Twitter (X) and Instagram, to identify viral memes related to the election. For Instagram, the selection criteria focused on memes with high engagement, specifically those receiving between 1,000 to 7,000 likes, as Instagram does not provide view counts. Likes were used as the primary metric to assess the popularity and reach of the memes. On Twitter (X), memes were selected based on view counts, focusing on those with between 300 to 2,000 views. Views were considered a key metric to evaluate audience engagement and content dissemination. After identifying relevant memes, the researchers conducted a comprehensive analysis of the viral content. Each meme was thoroughly read and examined to deepen the researchers' understanding of the phenomena surrounding viral memes. This analysis aided in preparing the study and provided insights into how these memes contribute to shaping public perception and discourse around the presidential and vice-presidential candidates in the 2024 Indonesian election.

Data Analysis

To analyse the research data, the study employed the semiotic theory developed by Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913). The procedures utilized by the researchers in analysing the data are 1) Categorization: Memes were categorized using the principles of semiotic theory, 2) Interpretation and Description: The meaning of the memes, including the signifier and signified, was interpreted and described, 3) Information Collection: Information was gathered based on how public perception is represented through memes of the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates on social media, 4) Result Synthesis: The findings from the research were synthesized, 5) Conclusion: Conclusions were drawn based on the research findings.

This research ensures the trustworthiness of the data. Verifying the reliability of the data is a crucial step in mitigating errors in the data collection process, which might impact the credibility of the study's ultimate findings. Researchers verify the data's validity

(trustworthiness) to generate reliable data that meets scientific standards. The concept of "trustworthiness," which encompasses credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability, was proposed by Guba and Lincoln as an alternative to reliability and validity (Morse et al., 2002). However, in this research, the focus is on transferability. Research that meets the criterion of transferability allows readers to clearly understand the results and see them as applicable in other contexts. The transferability testing in this research aims to ensure that others can comprehend the research results related to public perceptions of memes about the 2024 Indonesian presidential and vice-presidential candidates using Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory (1857–1913).

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Findings

The results of the research included signifiers, signified, and meanings of 2024 presidential and vice-presidential candidate memes on social media platforms including Instagram and Twitter (X). In the context of public perception, signifiers identified by the public (for example, certain symbols, slogans, or visual images) play an important role in shaping and influencing their perceptions. Signifiers contribute to the representation of public perception; words used as signifiers shape how certain events or people are perceived (Handayani et al., 2016). Certain images that are constantly displayed in the media can become signifiers that carry certain stereotypes or prejudices (Kulkarni, 2017).

Table 1
Viral Memes on Social Media: Instagram

No	Data/Memes	Likes	Signifier	Signified	Meaning
1.	<p>: JAMAAH JUM'AT YANG BERBAHAGIA JAMAAHNYA:</p>  <p>Posted on: February 16, 2024 Account: @hayasaka_crack</p>	1.3 K	“ <i>Jamaah Jum’at Yang berbahagia. Jamaahnya</i> ”	The actor Will Smith and presidential candidates number 02	This meme was uploaded on Friday, exactly two days after the quick count recapitulation for the 2024 election, on February 14, 2024. Following the national vote count results in the 2024 Presidential Election (Pilpres), Prabowo-Gibran was declared victorious with 96,214,691 votes (58.58%). In Islamic tradition, Friday is a day of congregational prayers for men, which traditionally signifies a day of celebration and joy.
2.	 <p>Posted on: December 22, 2023 Account: @meme_politik_colongan @meme_shitpost_colongan @netizen_pilitik.id</p>	2.2 K	Gibran, Cak Imin, Mahfud	The online game boxing in which there are three fighters: one holding the person to be hit, and another preparing to deliver the blow.	This meme surfaced after the 2024 vice presidential candidate debate, focusing on Gibran who attracted attention for employing various tactics during the debate. Gibran was observed to imply that Cak Imin had copied notes from his previous presentations. Additionally, Gibran initiated a discussion about raising Indonesia's ranking in SGIE, to which Cak Imin responded with uncertainty about SGIE's meaning: "Terus terang SGIE saya gak paham, SGIE itu apa?" In contrast, Gibran demonstrated his ability to hold his own against more experienced opponents like Cak Imin and Mahfud in political debate. During an exchange with Mahfud MD, Gibran gestured with his hands to his temples

No	Data/Memes	Likes	Signifier	Signified	Meaning
					and said, "Saya lagi nyari jawabannya Prof Mahfud, saya nyari-nyari di mana ini jawabannya? Kok gak ketemu jawabannya," in a slightly urgent tone.
3.	 <p>Posted on: February 16, 2024 Account: @thinkaboutzurri</p>	2.7 K	Khotib: Hadirin Yang Berbahagia 01 02 03	The actor Will Smith wears a kopies (cap) in three different expressions: sad, happy, and sad again.	This meme was uploaded on Friday, two days after the quick count recapitulation for the 2024 election. It depicted the sadness, disappointment, and unhappiness of supporters of presidential candidates 01 and 03, as they lost the election. Anies-Amin received 40,971,906 votes (24.95%), while Ganjar-Mahfud garnered 27,040,878 votes (16.47%). In contrast, supporters of Prabowo-Gibran were jubilant, as they secured victory with 96,214,691 votes (58.58%).
4.	 <p>Posted on: February 7, 2024 Account: @meme.comic.lovers</p>	6.7 K	“Bob dia kenapa?” “Pingsan belum makan” “Salah Sendiri milih internet gratis”	The cartoon characters SpongeBob SquarePants and Patrick Star embrace a limp Squidward Tentacles.	This meme surfaced when the presidential candidates' programs began to gain traction on social media. It humorously portrayed a scenario where a supporter of presidential candidate number 03 fainted from hunger, opting instead for free internet, which was part of Ganjar-Mahfud’s program. In contrast, Prabowo-Gibran's program included a free lunch initiative. This meme highlighted the contrasting choices of programs between Ganjar-Mahfud and Prabowo-Gibran, sparking humorous comparisons and critiques between the two.
5.	 <p>Posted on: February 16, 2024 Account: @ meme.comic.lovers</p>	6.8 K	“Sabar ya dik makan gratisnya nanti tahun 2029”	In the anime film from Japan "Grave of the Fireflies," there is a scene where the protagonist's little sister succumbs to starvation.	This meme surfaced when it was revealed that the free lunch program promised by presidential candidate Prabowo-Gibran would only be implemented by 2029. Gibran mentioned this timeline, stating, "Fokusnya ke area 3T (tertinggal, terdepan, dan terluar) dulu". This statement came in response to inquiries about the delayed implementation of the free lunch program, leading citizens to feel disillusioned and betrayed by the presidential candidates they had supported.

Table 2
Viral Memes on Social Media: Twitter

No	Data/Memes	Views	Signifier	Signified	Meaning
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No	Data/Memes	Views	Signifier	Signified	Meaning
1.	 <p>Posted on: January 31, 2024 Account: @r david_99</p>	332	-	Vice presidential candidate number 02, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, had his face edited into the cartoon character Shiva.	This meme emerged after a presidential candidate debate, featuring an edited image where Gibran's face was superimposed onto the body of Shiva, a child who despite being young, resists being labeled as such by adults and is characterized as strong-willed. This juxtaposition symbolically associates Gibran with Shiva's assertiveness. Gibran garnered attention during the debate for employing various tactics. Initially, he challenged Cak Imin to improve Indonesia's SGIE ranking, demonstrating his ability to engage competently with more seasoned opponents like Cak Imin and Mahfud, despite his relative political inexperience. Furthermore, the meme draws a parallel between Gibran and the Shiva character, particularly highlighting an altercation with Mahfud MD. Gibran's remark, " <i>ini tadi tidak saya jelaskan karena kan beliau (Mahfud MD) kan seorang professor</i> " was perceived as disrespectful. In response to Mahfud's remarks, Gibran gestured as if searching for something, covering his eyes with his right hand while lowering his body and looking around. This action further underscored the generational gap between them, with Mahfud MD being 67 years old and Gibran 36 years old.
2.	 <p>Posted on: February 16, 2024 Account: @lioenita</p>	1,1 K	01 & 03 02	The man with a "V" finger pose, symbolizing "Peace" or "Victory," at someone's funeral with a happy expression.	This meme humorously depicts presidential candidates 01 and 03 as if they had passed away due to their loss in the general election. Anies-Amin received 40,971,906 votes (24.95%), while Ganjar-Mahfud garnered 27,040,878 votes (16.47%). In contrast, the meme portrays presidential candidate number 02, Prabowo-Gibran, as the only "survivor" because they won the election with 96,214,691 votes (58.58%).
3.	 <p>Posted on:</p>	1,1 K	Gibran Mahfud MD Cak Imin	There are three dragons: the first dragon looks fierce, the second dragon looks fierce and gazes fiercely at	This meme highlights the dynamics of the vice-presidential candidates during debates. Gibran is portrayed with a serious and intense expression, suggesting his active and competitive participation in both the first and second vice presidential debates. He is noted for using new and unfamiliar foreign language terms or abbreviations when posing questions

No	Data/Memes	Views	Signifier	Signified	Meaning
	December 22, 2023 Account: @aevyrynn			the third dragon, while the third dragon looks innocent.	to his debate opponents. On the other hand, Mahfud is depicted as having a prominent stature, symbolizing his stature as a professor. Mahfud is shown as capable of handling difficult questions effectively during the debates. Throughout the debate sessions, Mahfud demonstrates adeptness in steering discussions, particularly in areas he is well-versed in, such as law and state administration. In contrast, Cak Imin's appearance in the debates is portrayed as humorous and amusing. He confesses his unfamiliarity with terms like SGIE, prompting him to write down Gibran's question and seek clarification during the debate. Cak Imin's repeated use of the word "slepet" fifteen times adds to his comedic portrayal during the vice presidential debate.
4.	 <p>Posted on: February 18, 2024 Account: @cfc_marr</p>	1,3 K	“Perubahan? ?” It ended before it even started	There are members of the Power Rangers series.	This meme critiques Anies-Amin's campaign program, particularly focusing on their tagline "Desak Anies" used as a political marketing strategy to promote a series of campaign agendas across various locations. Anies Baswedan aimed to convey a vision of "change" in national leadership, emphasizing continuity rather than abrupt shifts. However, the meme humorously juxtaposes this vision against the outcome of the 2024 election, where Anies-Amin ultimately lost. This contrast highlights the irony of a vision for change ending before it fully began due to electoral defeat.
5.	 <p>Posted on: February 14, 2024 Account: @cellomello123</p>	1,8 K	“makanlah sikit nanti sakit..”	There is a man who looks gloomy and sad, refusing to eat even though someone tries to feed him.	This meme highlighted presidential candidates number 01 and 03, emphasizing their defeat in the 2024 presidential election. Anies-Amin received 40,971,906 votes (24.95%), while Ganjar-Mahfud secured 27,040,878 votes (16.47%)."

Discussion

The memes featuring the Indonesian 2024 presidential candidates on Instagram and Twitter (X) illustrate the science of signs, a field referred to by Ferdinand de Saussure as "semiology." Semiology is the study of signs and symbols as elements of communicative behavior. Saussure classified symbols into two main components: the signifier and the signified. The signifier is a form that the sign takes, such as a word, image, sound, or gesture

that represents a concept or meaning. On the other hand, the signified is the interpretation or meaning attributed to the signifier. This relationship between signifier and signified forms the basic unit of meaning in semiological analysis.

When analyzing memes related to the 2024 Indonesian presidential candidates, researchers identified various signifiers and their corresponding signifieds. The most frequently meme-ified presidential candidate on Instagram and Twitter (X) was Prabowo Subianto (presidential candidate number 02), followed by Anies Baswedan (presidential candidate number 01), and Ganjar Pranowo (presidential candidate number 03). Among the vice-presidential candidates, Gibran Rakabuming Raka (number 02) was the most featured, followed by Mahfud MD (number 03), and Muhaimin Iskandar (number 01).

Memes related to the 2024 Indonesian presidential election presented diverse representations of both winners and unsuccessful candidates, reflecting various perspectives from supporters, critics, and the general public. These interpretations encompassed several key themes, each illustrating different aspects of the election and its candidates. One prominent theme was pride and celebration. Memes celebrating the victory of the winning candidate often featured expressions of happiness and pride, reflecting the supporters' joy. These memes underscored the hope of all candidates to achieve victory and power, a victory that is entrusted to them based on the agreements among political parties (Sihombing, 2023). Effective communication, as noted by Putra et al. (2022), must convey the grandeur of the message to function correctly and avoid being influenced by particular groups. Prabowo-Gibran's memes, in particular, highlighted this theme of happiness and pride, as demonstrated by meme data number 1 on Instagram and number 2 on Twitter (X).

Another significant theme was hope and optimism. Memes in this category illustrated the public's hopes for a better future under the new president's leadership, emphasizing eagerly anticipated campaign promises. An example of this is the free lunch program proposed by Prabowo-Gibran, which was initially misreported to begin in 2029. Budisatrio Djwandono later clarified that the program would start immediately after their inauguration in October 2024. This scenario highlights the importance of clarifying misinformation and managing expectations regarding campaign promises (Rahmat & Marut, 2023). The prevalence of hoaxes and hate speech in political contests underscores the need for strict monitoring by election supervisory bodies (Hidayat, 2020).

Memes also served as a medium for criticism and skepticism, focusing on political figures and issues. Social and political criticism on social media has grown more vocal, often employing humor and satire. Iconic political memes during the 2024 elections critiqued various societal aspects through depictions of political figures, events, and settings, reflecting ongoing social phenomena (Redia & Haryanto, 2015). For instance, memes featuring Prabowo's use of a cane and his emotional responses during interviews elicited mixed reactions, highlighting skepticism about his candidacy.

Humor and satire played a significant role in political memes, with social media witnessing a rise in political criticism through these means. Political memes often use visual and verbal symbols to humorously and satirically criticize political subjects. These memes convey concise and impactful political messages, engaging netizens in political discourse through entertainment (Redia & Haryanto, 2015). An example is a meme depicting Gibran arguing with Mahfud MD, emphasizing their significant age difference and portraying Gibran disrespectfully, reflecting societal perceptions about age and respect.

Lastly, memes addressing significant social issues such as citizens' rights, environmental policies, and economic reforms highlighted the political divergence and outcomes. These memes redefined political narratives and were strategically used for political propaganda (Putra et al., 2022). For example, a meme contrasting the free internet program proposed by Ganjar-Mahfud with the free lunch program by Prabowo-Gibran reflected

criticism and rivalry between their respective policies. Overall, these memes showcased a wide range of emotions and perspectives from different groups, serving as tools to articulate viewpoints, construct narratives, and shape public perceptions through creative and engaging means.

The diverse interpretations of memes related to the presidential candidates who lost the 2024 Indonesian election highlighted a variety of emotions and perspectives. One prominent theme was disappointment and frustration. Supporters of the losing candidates, such as Anies-Amin and Ganjar-Mahfud, used memes to express their sadness and regret. These memes often employed irony and satire to convey their messages, making the emotional response more poignant and relatable (Wadipalapa, 2015). An example of this can be seen in a meme on Twitter (X) that depicted Anies and Ganjar refusing food, symbolizing their reaction to the election loss.

Humor and satire were also significant elements in the memes related to the losing candidates. These memes often exaggerated the reactions or consequences of the candidates' loss to create a comedic effect. This technique not only made the political commentary more engaging but also made it accessible to a broader audience (Redia & Haryanto, 2015). For instance, a meme that humorously depicted a man refusing food effectively captured the disappointment felt by the supporters of the losing candidates. Another notable theme in these memes was the response to the winning supporters. Memes frequently contrasted the unsuccessful candidates with the winners, highlighting differences in their policies or leadership styles. Through the use of humor and satire, these memes conveyed ironic and critical messages, reflecting societal awareness and commentary on political themes (Wadipalapa, 2015). For example, a meme on Instagram depicted various expressions of supporters, emphasizing the disparities in their reactions to the election results, thus underscoring the contrasting emotions and perspectives following the election. In conclusion, memes related to the Indonesian 2024 presidential election serve as powerful tools for expressing political viewpoints, constructing narratives, and shaping public perception. They encompass a wide range of emotions and perspectives, from pride and celebration to criticism and satire, reflecting the diverse reactions of the public to the election outcomes. These digital messages demonstrate how memes can effectively engage netizens in political discourse and influence public opinion.

CONCLUSION

The memes related to the 2024 Indonesian presidential election serve as a vivid illustration of semiology, the study of signs and symbols in communication. By analyzing these memes, researchers identified various signifiers (forms that signs take) and their corresponding signifieds (meanings attributed to these forms). Prabowo Subianto, Anies Baswedan, and Ganjar Pranowo were the most frequently depicted presidential candidates in these memes, while Gibran Rakabuming Raka, Mahfud MD, and Muhaimin Iskandar were the prominent vice-presidential candidates. The memes encapsulated a wide range of emotions and perspectives, from pride and celebration to criticism and skepticism, reflecting the multifaceted reactions of supporters, critics, and the general public.

Memes celebrating the winning candidates often depicted joy and pride, emphasizing the victory as a significant achievement endorsed by political parties. These celebratory memes highlighted the importance of effective communication in maintaining the integrity of the political message. On the other hand, memes expressing hope and optimism focused on the public's expectations for a better future under new leadership, although they also underscored the necessity of clarifying campaign promises to manage public expectations. Meanwhile, memes filled with criticism and skepticism addressed political issues and personal attributes of the candidates, using humor and satire to convey more impactful

messages. Additionally, memes addressing social issues highlighted political divergence and were used strategically to critique or promote specific policies, further showcasing the memes' role in political propaganda and public discourse.

The memes related to the losing candidates captured a different array of emotions, primarily disappointment and frustration. Supporters of Anies-Amin and Ganjar-Mahfud used memes to express their sorrow and regret, often employing irony and satire to make their messages more relatable and poignant. Humor and satire also played a significant role, with exaggerated portrayals of the candidates' reactions to their loss, making the political commentary more engaging and accessible. These memes contrasted the unsuccessful candidates with the winners, highlighting differences in their policies or leadership styles and reflecting societal awareness of political themes through ironic and critical messages. For instance, memes depicting varied expressions of supporters emphasized the disparities in reactions to the election results, thus underscoring the contrasting emotions and perspectives post-election.

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