

THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING “AYAH” IN BUILDING NASRUL ABIT’S PERSONAL BRANDING IN SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN

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Abstract

In 2020 West Sumatra Regional Elections, Nasrul Abit as the one of governor election candidates, had been trying to build his personal branding by creating a personal nickname which is called as “Ayah”. This research aims to find out the meaning of the call “Ayah” that was shown on Nasrul Abit’s social media account with an analysis approach of Van Dijk’s critical discourse and also to find out how Nasrul Abit’s performance as well as the successful team as actors behind social media accounts for campaign purposes. This study uses qualitative-narrative methods. The research focused on personal branding analysis that Nasrul Abit tried to establish through his “Ayah” call. The results of this study showed that Nasrul Abit through @nasrulabit optimized posts containing the discourse “Ayah” both through photos and videos. The call of “Ayah” was only introduced to the public at the beginning of the campaign. Personal branding that wants to be formed in the call of “Ayah” is a leader who can guide his people. The call of “Ayah” was also intended as a figure who understands the needs of the community including millennials. However, the results of the obtained votes show that the issue of the “Ayah” jargon has little impact. Contrast this to the results of the vote in the Pesisir Selatan where the origin of Nasrul Abit, contributed the most votes. This data shows that regional issues are more likely to generate votes compared to the issue of the “Ayah” jargon.

Keywords: *personal branding, campaign, West Sumatera regional head election*

INTRODUCTION

Social media has emerged as a primary platform for political communication, particularly for personal branding. This is evident in the strategies employed by politicians who utilize social media to connect with the public, including Nasrul Abit, the Vice Governor of West Sumatra and a candidate for the West Sumatra Governor in the 2020 Regional Election (Pilkada). His activities on social media, especially Instagram, are noteworthy as he actively showcases various aspects of his daily life, encompassing both his official duties and personal experiences.

Nasrul Abit maintains several social media accounts, including personal profiles on Facebook and Instagram. While his Facebook account is less active, his Instagram account, under the username @nasrulabit, attracts significant attention as he posts nearly daily updates about his activities as vice governor, ranging from work programs to family moments and engagements with youth. This approach conveys that he is not solely focused on formal duties but is also striving to connect personally with the community, particularly the younger generation.

It is particularly intriguing that Nasrul Abit, despite being older, actively engages with social media, challenging the common assumption that older generations are less adept with technology. This phenomenon recalls Ghina Utami Zufdy's (2019) research on Vice Presidential candidate KH Ma'ruf Amin, who campaigned via Instagram at an advanced age. Zufdy found that despite his age, Amin effectively utilized Instagram for campaigning, albeit with assistance from account managers. This illustrates that while age may present challenges, social media remains an effective tool for reaching a broad audience.

Instagram stands out as one of the most popular social media platforms in Indonesia. According to the *Indonesian Digital Report 2020* by We Are Social and Hootsuite, Instagram ranks fourth among social media platforms in Indonesia, with around 79% of the population using it. Users of Instagram trail only behind YouTube, WhatsApp, and Facebook, which have user percentages of 88%, 84%, and 82%, respectively. The popularity of Instagram provides a compelling rationale for many politicians, including Nasrul Abit, to leverage this platform for political communication.

In the context of the 2020 West Sumatra Pilkada, Nasrul Abit's use of Instagram not only serves to introduce work programs but also to cultivate a more relatable personal brand. A particularly interesting aspect is his frequent use of the term "Ayah" (Father) in his posts, which conveys a nurturing and protective persona, akin to that of a family leader. This suggests that Nasrul Abit aims to be perceived as a leader who is close to and cares for the public, much like a father would for his children.

Previous studies on political communication through social media, such as Zufdy's (2019), indicate that politicians often utilize these platforms to build a positive image. In Nasrul Abit's case, the personal branding he constructs through Instagram is an effort to connect with the youth, who were a primary target in the 2020 Pilkada campaign. As stated by Hendri Septa, the Acting Mayor of Padang, the voices of the youth are crucial in this election, given that 40% of voters are millennials and Generation Z.

Nasrul Abit's active presence on social media also serves as a strategy to bolster his personal image amidst the challenges posed by corruption

cases involving his party, Gerindra. By prioritizing Instagram, he aims to shift public focus from the negative issues surrounding his party to his individual character, capitalizing on his position as an incumbent to strengthen his branding on social media. With over 20,000 active followers on Instagram, his account demonstrates the potential of social media as an effective tool for self-presentation to the public.

One of the strategies Nasrul Abit employs in building his personal brand is showcasing various activities through Instagram, including posts related to his professional life as well as social and family engagements. The use of the term "Ayah" in his posts adds a personal touch intended to foster emotional closeness with the community. In contrast, another candidate, Audy Joinaldy, opts for a branding approach centered on a "millennial" image, emphasizing youthfulness and innovation. These distinct branding strategies illustrate how political communication on social media can be tailored to target audiences.

This study is further relevant when linked to personal branding theory, where a political figure employs social media to shape a positive public perception. Personal branding encompasses not just verbal communication but also the visual representation through photos and videos on social media, which collectively form an individual's image. Nasrul Abit's Instagram posts reflect both explicit and implicit narratives, ranging from formal activities to personal life, portraying him as a leader closely connected to the community.

Based on the background and preliminary findings of this study, the researcher aims to conduct a deeper analysis of the narratives presented in Nasrul Abit's Instagram posts, particularly regarding how he builds his personal brand during the West Sumatra Pilkada 2020 campaign. This phenomenon is significant to explore, as social media has become an immensely effective tool in modern political communication, particularly for image construction and garnering support from the public, especially among the youth.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs critical discourse analysis through a qualitative approach, aiming to provide an understanding of how and why certain phenomena or realities occur (Pawito, 2008). In this research, the researcher applies Teun A. van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, utilizing non-participant observation and documentation studies of the Instagram account and posts of the West Sumatra Governor candidate for the 2020 election, @nasrulabit. The results of the critical discourse analysis and observations conducted yield insights that clearly and comprehensively explain the phenomenon.

The paradigm adopted in this study is the critical paradigm. According to Harmon (in Moleong, 2004), a paradigm is a fundamental way of viewing, thinking about, evaluating, and acting regarding a particular reality. The critical paradigm used in this research is rooted in the ideas of the Frankfurt School, which posits that the media is filled with prejudice, rhetoric, and propaganda, and serves as a tool for the government to control the public. Roger (in Eriyanto, 2012: 23) states that the media is not a neutral entity but can be dominated by dominant groups within society. This critical perspective focuses on the various power dynamics in society that influence communication processes, with critical theory perpetually questioning and scrutinizing the current social conditions.

The Frankfurt School's ideas were further developed by Stuart Hall, who criticized the tendency of media studies to overlook ideology as a crucial component. Since the 1960s, media studies, particularly in the United States, have been dominated by behavioral approaches. According to the Frankfurt perspective, the media is owned and controlled by dominant groups in society, used to reinforce their positions while marginalizing minority groups. Since the media is controlled by these dominant factions, the realities presented are often distorted and misleading. Therefore, media research from a critical perspective aims to uncover the hidden interests behind such control (Eriyanto, 2012: 25-26).

RESEARCH INFORMANT

Informants are essential in research to provide information regarding the issues being investigated. The researcher gathers information through in-depth interviews with informants selected using purposive sampling techniques, aimed at ensuring that the data collected is more representative (Sugiyono, 2007:81). The criteria for selecting informants facilitate the researcher in obtaining relevant data and information. The informants come from three groups: the campaign team, followers of the Instagram account @nasrulabit, and triangulation informants. Informants from the campaign team must have a role in branding the term "Ayah" and be part of the team. Profiles of the sources are included with their consent, with some using their real names while others prefer to remain anonymous for professional reasons.

The informants among the followers of the Instagram account @nasrulabit in this study have specific criteria: they are young voters aged 17-30, have followed the Instagram account, and are active in responding to posts (at least by liking them). These criteria are specifically designed to assess how the discourse of "Ayah" is perceived by the target audience, namely young voters. Below is an overview of the profiles of the informants involved in this research, listed according to their respective groups.

Table 3.1 Research Informant

No.	Name	Occupations
1.	Redho Rama Putra	Spokesperson for the campaign team
2.	X	Media and IT team of the campaign
3.	Febri Rahmat	Field campaign team
4.	Megri Fernando	Head of the campaign team
5.	Winda Nelfira	Fresh graduate
6.	Ami Licia	Private sector employee
7.	Bima Kurnia	Fresh graduate
8.	Reihan Harriz	Fresh graduate

(Source: Processed researcher data, 2024)

In validating the data, the researcher employed source triangulation by comparing information from various informants. The data were obtained from different sources and methods. The researcher conducted an interview with the triangulator, Dr. Asrinaldi, M.Si., a scholar and political observer from Andalas University, to verify the accuracy of the data. The interview was conducted face-to-face at the Graduate Program of the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Andalas University, where the researcher inquired about his views on the data collected, as well as his familiarity with Nasrul Abit, who was the subject of the study.

Tabel 3.2 Triangulation of Research Sources

No.	Name	Occupations
1.	Dr. Asrinaldi, M. Si	lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Andalas University

(Source: Processed researcher data, 2024)

DATA COLLECTION

OBSERVATIONS

In this study, the researcher collected primary data through non-participant observation, specifically by following and "stalking" the Instagram account of the West Sumatra gubernatorial candidate, @nasrulabit, according to the required data criteria from September to

November 2020. During data collection, the researcher observed posts on the candidate's Instagram account, which included photos and videos showcasing activities, accompanied by captions explaining the content of the posts.

DOCUMENTATION

Documentation is a method used to trace historical data. It is typically employed to complement interview or observation methods. The aim is to obtain information that supports data analysis and interpretation (Bungin, 2007). This data may come from public documents such as newspapers, papers, office reports, or private documents such as diaries, memos, letters, and emails (Creswell, 2016). In this study, the researcher sought to collect everything necessary by following the account and selecting posts containing content for building personal branding that could be analyzed.

INTERVIEW

According to Sugiyono, interviews are used as a data collection technique to explore problems and gain deeper insights from a small number of respondents. The researcher will conduct unstructured interviews, using an interview guide consisting of key issues to be addressed (Sugiyono, 2014).

DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis is a systematic process for organizing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The data is categorized, described, synthesized, and arranged into patterns to draw conclusions that are easily understood (Sugiyono, 2014). This study employs critical discourse analysis to examine how Nasrul Abit's Instagram account shapes personal branding. This analysis is based on Van Dijk's text structure, which includes three dimensions: text (micro, superstructure, and macro), social cognition (the author's reasons for creating the discourse), and social context (societal responses). After analyzing these three dimensions, the researcher draws conclusions.

DATA VALIDITY

Research within the critical paradigm, including discourse analysis methods, relies on the researcher's interpretation of texts, making subjectivity unavoidable. This leads to variations in findings and interpretations among different studies, which is considered acceptable in a critical perspective (Eriyanto, 2001:63). The quality of research is evaluated based on the social, economic, and political context, as well as other comprehensive analyses, rather than solely on reliability and validity. The assessment of the objectivity of discourse analysis research lies in the researcher's consistency in applying theoretical approaches and methods

used. Discourse analysis focuses on describing the content of texts, resulting in ideographic findings (Karina, 2016).

The data collected by the researcher consists of posts from the Instagram account of the gubernatorial candidate of West Sumatra, which include images and accompanying captions. The researcher will analyze this data to reveal the personal branding efforts present. To enhance the validity and reliability of the obtained data, triangulation will be employed. Triangulation is a method used to validate data by comparing information from various sources, times, and locations (Fuchs and Ness, 2018: 22; Fuchs, 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. The Meaning of the Term 'Ayah'

The critical discourse analysis of the term "Ayah" (Father) on the Instagram account @nasrulabit, using Van Dijk's theory, encompasses three main dimensions: **text**, **social cognition**, and **social context**. Each dimension provides deep insights into how Nasrul Abit utilizes social media to build his image as a leader who is closely connected to the community, with the term "Ayah" serving as a powerful symbol of personal branding during his political campaign.

a. Text Dimension

According to Van Dijk, the text dimension includes the structure of the text and the discourse strategies used to convey certain themes. In Nasrul Abit's case, the text analysis of his Instagram posts reveals that the use of "Ayah" is a form of political branding aimed at presenting himself as a leader who cares for both family and society. The analysis highlights three main structures in these posts:

- **Macro Structure:** The themes in Nasrul Abit's posts frequently focus on social and family issues. Through these texts, he portrays himself as a "Ayah" figure, not only within his family but also as a community leader who acts as a father to his constituents. This theme consistently appears in various posts that emphasize social interaction and his approach to the community, especially during the campaign period.
- **Superstructure:** This refers to the overall organization of the text. Some posts lack a clear introduction, body, and conclusion, with several going straight to the core message, while others provide context to the activities being carried out. Often, the posts end with a moral message or a call to action, such as doing good deeds or supporting social causes.

- **Microstructure:** On a micro level, the analysis of Nasrul Abit's posts reveals semantic, syntactic, stylistic, and rhetorical elements. Semantically, the implicit meanings suggest that Nasrul Abit wants to be seen as a nurturing and caring leader. Syntactically, the captions are structured according to the standard Indonesian sentence order (subject, predicate, object, complement). Stylistically, he uses formal Indonesian with occasional Minangkabau expressions to connect with the local culture. Rhetorically, the posts depict "Ayah" as a leader who embraces, listens to, and guides the community toward positive change.

Thus, the text dimension analysis shows that Nasrul Abit strategically uses the term "Ayah" as a communication strategy to enhance his image as a leader who is closely connected to society and concerned with social issues.

b. Social Cognition Analysis

The second dimension in Van Dijk's critical discourse analysis is social cognition. This dimension shifts the focus from the text to the mentality of the text producer, examining how individuals (in this case, the admin of the Instagram account @nasrulabit) process events and how their worldview is reflected in the texts they create. Van Dijk argues that texts do not carry meaning on their own; instead, meaning is constructed by the author or user through their understanding and cognitive representation of the world.

In the case of the @nasrulabit account, the admin responsible for managing the posts during the campaign is analyzed in terms of social cognition to uncover the ideologies, understandings, and perspectives that influence their portrayal of Nasrul Abit. Each post demonstrates how the admin views Nasrul Abit as a figure who is not only a leader but also a father guiding the community. Through social activities such as discussions with citizens, distributing masks, or reading the Quran with children, Nasrul Abit is portrayed as a humble leader who is directly involved with the community.

In this context, the social cognition of the @nasrulabit account admin shows that these posts are not merely intended to share information but also to build a larger political image. The "Ayah" branding is strategically used as a symbol of leadership that is caring and approachable, creating an emotional connection between Nasrul Abit and the community.

This is supported by the activities shown in the posts, where Nasrul Abit is often depicted sitting with various community groups and ages, listening to their aspirations, and engaging in direct conversations. These posts aim to reinforce Nasrul Abit's image as a leader who listens, embraces, and works for his people, especially in the run-up to the regional elections (Pilkada).

c. Social Context Analysis

The third dimension analyzed by Van Dijk is the social context, which focuses on how discourse is influenced by power and access within society. This dimension looks at two key elements: the practice of power and access to media.

- **Power Practice:** Power in this context refers to an individual's or group's ability to influence others through social, political, or economic dominance. In Nasrul Abit's case, his position as Vice Governor of West Sumatra gives him significant power and access to resources, including media. This position enables him to use discourse to reinforce his political image during the campaign. Although there is no direct evidence of power abuse, Nasrul Abit's incumbent status provides him with an advantage in gaining support and media coverage.
- **Media Access:** According to Van Dijk, access to media is crucial for disseminating discourse and shaping public opinion. As a public figure, Nasrul Abit has extensive access to local and national media, allowing him to promote positive activities through various platforms. During the campaign, the media often covered Nasrul Abit's door-to-door activities. Even when negative allegations, such as the use of a fake diploma, surfaced, Nasrul Abit was able to counter them with concrete evidence.

The Instagram posts depict Nasrul Abit participating directly in provincial government activities as well as social events involving various community groups. These posts also show his connections with political figures at both the provincial and national levels, highlighting his broad political network and influence in the political arena. Overall, the social context dimension demonstrates how Nasrul Abit utilizes his power and media access to build his image as a leader who cares for the people while reinforcing the "Ayah" branding as the type of leader society needs.

Based on Van Dijk's perspective, this approach to self-branding through social discourse highlights Nasrul Abit's strategic use of the term "Ayah." "Ayah" symbolizes the type of leader the community needs, accompanied by political messages supporting his campaign for the regional elections.

2. Nasrul Abit on Instagram in the Eyes of His Followers

Nasrul Abit, as seen through the lens of his Instagram followers, projects the image of an experienced leader with a positive reputation. Followers of the Instagram account @nasrulabit view Nasrul Abit from various perspectives, reflecting his closeness to the community and how he

presents himself as a caring leader. This is evident in the interactions on his social media, particularly during the 2020 West Sumatra gubernatorial election campaign, where the slogan "Ayah" (Father) was introduced.

According to interviews with four informants, the stimulus of the "Ayah" slogan became one of the main reasons for new followers to start following Nasrul Abit's Instagram account. Bima, an informant from Payakumbuh, for instance, mentioned that his initial attention towards Nasrul Abit arose after seeing a poster on Instagram where "Ayah" was used instead of Nasrul Abit's name. Although Bima already knew Nasrul Abit as the Deputy Governor of West Sumatra, the use of the "Ayah" slogan intrigued him enough to learn more about the figure. Eventually, Bima decided to follow the Instagram account @nasrulabit.

A similar sentiment was expressed by other informants, Ami and Winda, who mentioned different stimuli in getting to know Nasrul Abit. Winda, who hails from South Coast Regency, had known Nasrul Abit since his time as the Regent of South Coast, while Ami was familiar with him through her family's work with Nasrul Abit during his tenure as Deputy Governor. For both of them, the "Ayah" slogan that emerged during the 2020 election campaign further solidified their interest in following Nasrul Abit's Instagram account and learning more about his personality. In their eyes, this slogan portrayed Nasrul Abit as a friendly, people-oriented leader with a fatherly aura.

Three out of four informants Winda, Bima, and Reihan only began following the @nasrulabit account at the start of the 2020 election campaign. They felt that the "Ayah" slogan used in posters, posts, and captions on his social media was a major factor in drawing their interest. Their decision to follow Nasrul Abit on Instagram was also driven by their need to learn more about him as a candidate for Governor of West Sumatra. For instance, Reihan saw Nasrul Abit as a figure capable of reaching out to all social classes, and highly respected, especially among the youth who were often referred to as "Nasrul Abit's children" in campaign narratives.

During the interviews, all four informants agreed that Nasrul Abit is a warm, wise leader who is close to the people. They also viewed him as a political figure with strong character, well-qualified to be the next Governor of West Sumatra. Winda, for example, saw Nasrul Abit as a dignified yet humble leader, while Ami appreciated his down-to-earth personality and his closeness to the community. This reflects how Nasrul Abit's political branding as a people's leader has successfully been communicated through social media, particularly Instagram.

Bima also added that one of Nasrul Abit's Instagram posts, in which he referred to himself as a "datuak" (a traditional Minangkabau leader) rather

than just a gubernatorial candidate, reinforced Bima's belief that Nasrul Abit was the right person to lead West Sumatra in the future. Bima saw Nasrul Abit not only as a political figure but also as a respected community leader in Minangkabau society. This highlights how Instagram plays an important role in shaping a positive perception of public figures, with Nasrul Abit's political branding effectively portraying him as someone closely connected to the community, especially the younger generation.

Another informant, Reihan, viewed the "Ayah" slogan attached to Nasrul Abit as a symbol of strong leadership. According to him, this slogan portrayed Nasrul Abit as a fatherly figure for the people of West Sumatra, someone they could turn to for guidance and support. For Reihan, Nasrul Abit was not just a gubernatorial candidate but a revered figure respected by people from all walks of life.

Once the informants decided to follow the @nasrulabit Instagram account, they were able to receive more information about his activities and political views. Nasrul Abit's active engagement in posting content on both the feed and Instastory allowed his followers to stay updated on his campaign. His Instagram account became an effective platform for reinforcing a positive perception among his followers, as the information presented was easily accessible without the need to search for other sources.

Over time, the informants developed stronger perceptions of Nasrul Abit. Based on the interviews, most informants agreed that Nasrul Abit has a positive brand image, though for different reasons. Ami, for instance, based her opinion of Nasrul Abit's positive branding on her family's personal experiences working with him, while Bima, Winda, and Reihan derived their views from the information they received via social media and news outlets.

These differences in background knowledge influenced how each informant defined positive branding. Ami, who had personal knowledge of Nasrul Abit, focused more on his kind and attentive nature toward his surroundings. On the other hand, Bima, Winda, and Reihan were more interested in the leadership qualities Nasrul Abit displayed through his social media and political campaigns. For them, Nasrul Abit was a wise and experienced leader capable of reaching all levels of society, particularly the youth.

In conclusion, interviews with the four informants indicate that Instagram played a crucial role in shaping a positive perception of Nasrul Abit. The branding presented through his Instagram account successfully built an image of Nasrul Abit as a leader who is close to the people, wise, and possesses a strong fatherly presence, especially through the use of the "Ayah" slogan.

The Meaning of 'Ayah' in Nasrul Abit's Social Media Posts as a Manipulation to Attract Young Voters: A Critical Discourse Analysis Approach Based on Van Dijk

Age plays a significant role in positioning Nasrul Abit as the oldest candidate among his peers; however, this has not hindered him from actively engaging on social media, particularly Instagram, to communicate his political messages. His frequent postings demonstrate a commitment to connecting with the public, even though the level of activity observed on other platforms like Facebook and Twitter is not as pronounced.

According to I Gusti Ayu et al. (2016), branding serves several functions, one of which is to establish a "top of mind" presence. The branding of "Ayah" (Father) not only distinguishes Nasrul Abit from other candidates but also reinforces the self-image he aims to project. This branding strategy enables him to become more memorable and relatable to the public, allowing for the effective transmission of political campaign messages through the manipulation of the "Ayah" branding.

The researcher first recognized the significance of the "Ayah" branding during the 2020 regional election campaign. A story posted by a follower, featuring a poster of Nasrul Abit with the "Ayah" tagline, sparked the researcher's interest in exploring the deeper meaning behind this term. The emergence of "Ayah" served as an introduction of Nasrul Abit's new personal branding to the public, creating a distinctive identity aimed at drawing attention and acting as a branding tool to target specific demographics.

Throughout the campaign months from September to November 2020, Nasrul Abit actively showcased the "Ayah" branding on his Instagram account, @nasrulabit. Out of 163 posts, the researcher selected 16 relevant posts for analysis based on their inclusion of the "Ayah" discourse in the captions. Each post exhibited a superstructure interconnected with the thematic content presented, reflecting a systematic approach to information dissemination.

Nasrul Abit does not restrict the use of regional language when conveying information on his personal account, as evidenced by the choice of photos and videos that complement the depicted scenarios. The use of kinship terms from the Minangkabau culture, such as "dunsanak" (meaning sibling), adds a layer of closeness to his communication style.

The branding of "Ayah" was carefully chosen, aligning with suitable themes and language choices. The selected images depict Nasrul Abit engaging with both the community and his family, embodying the ideal image of a father figure. His nurturing persona is particularly evident in posts where he interacts directly with the public to address community issues.

The researcher conducted interviews with four followers of Nasrul Abit's Instagram account. Three out of the four informants indicated that their interest in Nasrul Abit was piqued upon the introduction of the "Ayah" branding. This illustrates the powerful influence that branding can have on public perception of a political figure. Asrinaldi, a political analyst and lecturer in the Department of Political Science at Andalas University, affirmed that a strong brand significantly impacts the public perception of a political candidate.

During the campaign, Nasrul Abit's Instagram account became a vibrant platform for personal branding. However, upon further examination, it became apparent that not all posts centered around the "Ayah" discourse. In fact, the use of the term "Ayah" was considerably less frequent compared to the overall volume of posts during the campaign. Asrinaldi noted that the "Ayah" branding appeared to lack seriousness and was primarily emphasized on Instagram, while in daily life, Nasrul Abit tends to use the term mainly within his family and close circle rather than in professional settings.

Statements from Nasrul Abit's campaign team revealed that the "Ayah" branding was intentionally focused on Instagram to reach younger voters. Asrinaldi argued that although the "Ayah" branding targeted younger audiences, it was not an entirely effective approach since it did not simultaneously engage all age groups.

Textual analysis revealed that the macro structure of the content supporting the "Ayah" branding effectively articulates the message of each post. The branding presents "Ayah" as a leader who can nurture and adapt to technological advancements favored by younger generations, particularly in West Sumatra. The portrayal of "Ayah" as a warm family leader is further reinforced by posts showcasing his positive relationships with his wife and children. For instance, a post celebrating his child's birthday encapsulated his nurturing role, with the caption expressing heartfelt prayers and well-wishes.

The "Ayah" branding parallels the "Papa Online" persona cultivated by national politician Sandiaga Uno, who similarly utilized social media to establish a relatable public image. This branding approach underscores the significance of personal engagement in politics, which can yield a substantial impact on public perception.

The introduction of the "Ayah" branding led many informants to express increased interest in learning more about Nasrul Abit. Asrinaldi viewed this as a sound branding strategy, as it facilitates public recall of Nasrul Abit by invoking the term "Ayah." The campaign team confirmed that the use of "Ayah" had been somewhat dormant and were uncertain when it would be revived, illustrating that public-assigned titles often wield more influence and longevity than those constructed by campaign teams.

The Process of Discourse Construction of 'Ayah' by the Success Team as the Actors Behind the Social Media Account for the Campaign

The process of establishing personal branding by Nasrul Abit and his campaign team resembles political marketing activities. The team employed an approach that emphasizes political communication to introduce the gubernatorial candidate to the public, highlighting the figure of "Ayah" as a symbol of a leader who nurtures the younger generation. The team was divided into three main sections: the discussion team, the narrative-building team, and the execution team responsible for disseminating the narrative to the public. The branding of "Ayah" was utilized as a political manipulation tool, aiming to enhance public recognition and facilitate the achievement of political goals (I Gusti Ayu et al., 2016).

The narratives produced took the form of photos, videos, and posters, which were then disseminated through various media, including social media, banners, and news coverage. This strategy aimed to broaden the reach of the campaign and provide the public with the opportunity to become familiar with the gubernatorial candidate. The "Ayah" slogan was launched in early October 2020 to create a contrasting branding with the opposing candidate, who utilized millennial jargon, portraying "Ayah" as a leader capable of guiding and nurturing. Although it emerged late in the campaign, the title "Ayah" had already been part of Nasrul Abit's daily life prior to the campaign's commencement.

The researcher observes that Nasrul Abit's efforts in building his personal branding as "Ayah" on social media represent a form of smart political communication, particularly by choosing Instagram as a platform targeting young voters. Based on the three elements of personal branding outlined by Loretta (2015:29), first, **Attribute**: Nasrul Abit employs the term "Ayah" to establish closeness with the community, signaling that he is a figure who will guide and serve as a role model. This term is easy to remember and distinguishes him from other gubernatorial candidates, while also being linked to the vision of "Sumbar Unggul."

Second, **Personality**: Nasrul Abit is portrayed as a wise and caring individual, with a strong political background, including experience as the Vice Regent and Regent of Pesisir Selatan. This character strengthens his image as a leader who listens to the community.

Third, **Value and Benefit**: In the context of the regional election, having a clear vision and mission is crucial as a promise to the electorate. The work programs proposed by Nasrul Abit encompass various priority areas, such as governance and development. The discourse of "Ayah" illustrates that age is not a barrier to engaging in political communication with younger voters. Although this political communication exists, it does not automatically

guarantee voter support for Nasrul Abit, as evidenced by the voter distribution data following the 2020 West Sumatra gubernatorial election.

CONCLUSION

Based on data analysis and interviews with informants from various backgrounds regarding the "Ayah" jargon on social media between September and November 2020, the researcher drew several conclusions. First, the meaning of "Ayah" in Nasrul Abit's personal branding represents a leader who nurtures the younger generation, aimed at attracting the attention of young voters. He is portrayed as a caring, wise individual who enjoys discussions and uses the Minangkabau language in his captions to reflect the communication style of a "Ayah" in Minangkabau culture.

Second, the team divided the work into three interconnected parts: a discussion team that summarizes the ideas and concepts of "Ayah" in daily life; a media and IT team that develops narratives in various forms, such as photos, videos, and posters; and an execution team that disseminates these narratives to the public and media while providing education related to the upcoming local elections. Although this strategy did not yield maximum results across all regions, the highest number of votes for Nasrul Abit came from Pesisir Selatan, his home region, indicating that local identity issues significantly influence the political context.

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