

## **Abdul Wahid's Visual Communication on TikTok During the 2024 Riau Gubernatorial Election Campaign**

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### **Abstract**

This study analyzes Abdul Wahid's visual communication on TikTok during the 2024 Riau Governor and Vice Governor election campaign using a qualitative-interpretive paradigm and a hermeneutic/social semiotic approach. The unit of analysis includes posts from the @wahid\_simbar account about market visits, community dialogues, and mass religious gatherings, along with additional data in the form of text, on-screen text, and audio. Key findings demonstrate the formation of an ethos of "moral courage" through the medium composition of a close-up orator (white shirt, red cap) under a green-and-white tent, as well as deictic gestures that focus attention; the red/green color scheme plays a role in affective-cultural salience, while eye-level framing and vector movement build social closeness. The programmatic promise package of free education and employment is easily connected to the audience's daily life through a shared wide shot, a uniform shooting rhythm, and a closing pose with young people in green tones. Abdul Wahid's visual resonance is primarily generated by a consistent compositional arrangement between ethos, gesture, and spatial context, with the presence of Ustadz Abdul Somad as a symbolic reinforcement.

**Keywords:** TikTok, social semiotics, hermeneutics, 2024 Riau Gubernatorial Election

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Riau Provincial General Elections Commission (KPU) declared Abdul Wahid-SF Hariyanto as the elected Governor and Deputy Governor of Riau following the 2024 direct regional head elections (Siregar, 2025). KPU Riau Decree Number 531 of 2024 concerning the Determination of the Results of the 2024 Riau Provincial Governor and Deputy Governor Election stated that Abdul Wahid-SF Hariyanto received 1,224,193 votes. Meanwhile, candidate number 2, M Nasir-M Wardan, received 877,511 votes, and candidate number 3, Syamsuar-Mawardi M Saleh, received 661,297 votes (Rusdan, 2024). One contributor to Wahid-Hariyanto's victory was the use of

social media to disseminate their profiles and campaign messages (Syafriadi, 2024).

New media is a supporting tool for the development of democracy in Indonesia. In today's era of globalization, society is required to adapt to advances in technology and information to support the delivery of public aspirations through new media. Research shows that the presence of new media in Indonesia has dramatically transformed politics and democracy in Indonesia. Furthermore, political communication through new media such as the internet and social media in Indonesian elections is considered an effective and efficient breakthrough (Setiawan dkk., 2022) .

Contemporary social media has had a significant impact on democratic practices. Campaign success is often linked to candidates' social media presence (Brito & Adeodato, 2022). Furthermore, in the digital era, voters' direct access to political information via the internet bypasses filtering by media newsrooms. Social media itself plays an increasingly prominent role in the evolving political landscape, serving as a conduit for information between candidates, parties, and voters. Images, and especially audiovisuals, have become central to political communication on social networks, rendering texts secondary.

The development of modern social media has transformed the strategies used in political campaigns. Compared to traditional advertising, social media can reduce campaign costs. Social media generates 30% of the vote because it can disseminate messages quickly, widely, and interactively. Political actors utilize social media to develop their image (Moekahar dkk., 2022)

Today, political leaders and candidates must campaign in a multimedia world, not only through traditional media platforms such as newspapers, radio, and television, but also through new digital media, particularly social media. Each platform has a different reach and reaches different audiences in different ways, and campaigns often have to launch separate campaigns across these platforms. In some cases, these platforms are crucial in shifting mainstream media coverage. On the other hand, digital media remains underutilized and underdeveloped. As is always the case in politics, outcomes dependent on economic and social conditions often determine public readiness for certain messages (Davis dkk., 2022)

Visual elements play a crucial role in emotionalizing political communication and shaping voter perceptions of candidates (Nugraha & Budiwaspada, 2022). The strategic use of visuals in campaigns has been found to influence voter understanding of issues, candidate evaluations, and even voting behavior (Steffan, 2020). Social media and digital platforms have transformed political communication, enabling politicians to carefully craft their image. While social media has transformed politics, misinformation and manipulation of public opinion remain concerns. Politicians' bold avatars can

misrepresent their goals and policies, creating distorted public policy debates (Srikandi dkk., 2024). Another study explored how political campaigns utilize visual symbols and TikTok to build ideology and engage voters. Cultural and political symbols in anti-disinformation campaigns on TikTok have been shown to increase user engagement, elicit positive emotional responses, and foster trust in the electoral process (Bhattacharya dkk., 2024)

In Indonesia, candidates, such as presidential candidates, use TikTok as a medium for information and political communication. Public interaction and response contribute to the formation of perceptions. TikTok has a significant influence on shaping public opinion toward presidential candidates in the 2024 election. TikTok effectively influences public perception through audiovisuals and political narratives, which are transformed into new news stories that capture public attention (Nababan dkk., 2024) .

Social media was used effectively by Joko Widodo's 2012 campaign to become governor of Jakarta and then president in 2014 and 2015. Social media was also effectively used by Basuki 'Ahok' Tjahja Purnama in his campaign for governor of Jakarta in 2017. Social media has taken on new significance in Indonesian elections. Studies have noted that their experimental use of social media, integrated with on-the-ground campaigning (*blusukan*) and the involvement of volunteer groups, was a key part of their successful political marketing strategy. Since 2014, the extensive use of social media in campaigns has changed and remains a key element of political campaigns. Social media is no longer simply mobilized to garner voter support, but also plays a role in creating hate politics, political polarization, and ethnic nationalism. Electoral actors, from incumbents to the opposition, utilize religious and ethnic identity politics to garner votes, attack opponents, and influence public opinion. These issues are fabricated, framed, and amplified on various social media platforms through the support of the political consulting industry, political celebrities (social media influencers with large followings, typically known for their political commentary), and buzzers (individuals paid to disseminate specific content on social media platforms) (Hurriyah, 2024).

A Kompas survey of 1,200 respondents in 38 provinces in May 2023 showed that 42.3 percent of respondents frequently accessed social media for political information, including news about presidential candidates. This was followed by television channels (41.1 percent), online media portals (9 percent), and radio (2 percent). Political content and campaigns in the digital space are inseparable from image strategies to attract votes. This strategy will increasingly utilize visual presentations, in addition to verbal ideas. In the 2019 election or earlier, face-to-face activities such as "blusukan" (visiting voters) often became a topic of public discussion in the media. However, in the 2024 election, we see more viral issues related to memes and gimmicks created by candidates. This is a new phenomenon that has the potential to continue in the 2029 elections (Kurnia, 2024) (Kurnia, 2024).

This article examines how Abdul Wahid, the elected Governor of Riau, communicates visually on social media. The social media platform chosen is TikTok. This is based on data from a November 2024 survey by Lingkaran Survei Indonesia Denny JA on the Riau Governor and Deputy Governor Election, which found that 64.4% of Riau residents access the internet. Of that number, 68.9% have TikTok accounts, and 73.8% of those account holders access TikTok very frequently (Sopa, 2024).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Hermeneutic Theory (Gadamer & Ricoeur)**

Hermeneutics is concerned with how meaning is produced through interpretation, particularly in the dynamic relationship between parts and whole. According to Gadamer, understanding is shaped by a “fusion of horizons”—the merging of a viewer’s historical, cultural, and subjective background with the text or artifact being interpreted. In political communication, hermeneutics helps explain how audiences assign meaning to campaign visuals based on context, prior beliefs, and sociocultural cues embedded in the imagery (Gadamer dkk., 2004).

Ricoeur expands hermeneutics by framing interpretation as a process of configuration (plotting) and re-figuration (restructuring understanding). In TikTok-based campaigns, visuals, gestures, captions, and spatial environments serve as “texts” that audiences reinterpret within their sociopolitical horizon. This makes hermeneutics a powerful tool for decoding how voters attribute moral, cultural, or emotional values to candidate imagery in micro-video formats Communication Behavior (Ricoeur, 1976).

### **Social semiotics**

Social semiotics examines how signs—such as colors, gestures, gaze, and spatial arrangements—produce meaning within a specific cultural and social context. Kress and van Leeuwen argue that visuals operate through a “grammar” comparable to language: elements like salience, framing, vectors, and color combinations work together to shape how viewers understand images. In campaign videos, semiotic elements such as green religious tones, red for assertiveness, or gesture vectors (like pointing) guide viewer attention and frame the candidate’s ethos (Kress & Leeuwen, 2020).

This theory is particularly useful for analyzing TikTok political content, where visuals dominate over text. Semiotic analysis helps explain how candidates communicate power, empathy, authority, or closeness without relying on long verbal explanations. It also clarifies how audiences interpret

symbolic cues—such as religious co-presence, cultural colors, or crowd cutaways—as meaningful representations of political identity.

## Visual Political Communication Theory

Visual political communication focuses on how images influence voters' emotions, credibility judgments, and political decisions. Grabe & Bucy argue that visuals—such as close-ups, crowd shots, body gestures, and color themes—construct political personas that voters read as trustworthy, powerful, empathetic, or authoritative. In digital settings like TikTok, where attention spans are short, visual cues become even more critical to shaping immediate perceptions of a candidate (Grabe & Bucy, 2009).

This theory is central to understanding how Abdul Wahid's TikTok videos generate resonance: eye-level shots produce intimacy, gestures signal moral authority, and color symbolism connects the candidate to culturally familiar values. Visual framing can also highlight issues (education, economy) and anchor policy messages in everyday environments (markets, communities).

## METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative-interpretive paradigm and a hermeneutic approach to interpret campaign visual messages on TikTok. The unit of analysis is videos uploaded to Abdul Wahid's official account, @wahid\_simbar; additional data includes captions, on-screen text, audio, and engagement metrics. The data collection period was determined to align with the official campaign schedule for the 2024 simultaneous regional head elections, which began on September 25, 2024, and lasted until the quiet period leading up to the vote on November 27, 2024. This timeframe was chosen because it represents the phase with the highest visual communication intensity, during which image-building strategies and the delivery of work programs are carried out in a massive and structured manner. This temporal analysis allows researchers to observe the evolution of the candidates' visual narratives in response to the dynamics of political issues developing on the ground throughout the election process.

The justification for selecting three key videos—a market visit, a dialogue with residents, and a large-scale religious study—is based on their capacity to represent the full spectrum of Abdul Wahid's visual communication strategies. The three videos represent different typologies of political narratives: populism through direct interaction (blusukan),

programmatic deliberation through vision-mission discussions, and spiritual-communal legitimacy through religious symbols.

These three videos collectively encompass the full spectrum of Abdul Wahid's image strategy: as a friend of the people (market), as a technocrat who listens (dialogue), and as a moral leader supported by the community (pengajian). By analyzing these three categories, researchers can draw comprehensive conclusions about how visual communication is used to target various psychographic segments of voters in Riau.

The interpretation process follows a hermeneutic circle—a back-and-forth movement between the part (specific visual elements) and the whole (the campaign narrative and socio-political context)—to achieve an understanding of the communicative intent and audience horizon (Gadamer & Gadamer, 2003). The objects studied are three videos: a market visit, a dialogue with residents, and a campaign in the form of a mass religious gathering.

The technical analysis is conducted through the pre-figurational stages (mapping the local political context and TikTok affordances), configuration (coding visual elements: composition, framing, gaze, salience, color, modality, intertextuality), and re-figuration (linking visual findings to image-building strategies, framing, and possible public readings). The analytical framework draws on visual design grammar as well as visual methodologies (Kress & Leeuwen, 2020; Rose, 2016) and political visual communication literature (Grabe & Bucy, 2009)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Dialogic Campaign Video

The video opens with a medium close-up of the orator (white shirt, red cap) under a green-and-white tent, accompanied by the overlay “LEADERS MUST BE COURAGEOUS—must not be afraid for the benefit of the people.” As a temporary whole, this visual text directs the initial reading to the value of courage linked to a religio-communitarian horizon; interpretation moves in a hermeneutic circle between part and whole (Gadamer dkk., 2004; Ricoeur, 1976)). From a grammar of visual design perspective, the salience of the red color (cap/text) emphasizes assertive affect, while the dominance of green implies religio-cultural associations. Eye-level framing and gestural vectors establish social proximity and direct attention; This combination creates an offer/demand relationship for the audience (Kress & Leeuwen, 2020; Rose, 2016).

The moral claim “not for corruption, dare” reconfigures the concept of courage as an ethos of integrity. The pointing gesture reinforces the deontic

position (normative imperative) and expands the horizon of meaning from leadership style to anti-corruption commitment (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Ricoeur, 1976). Cutaways of the audience—men and women—showcase the plurality of audience sites, emphasizing that the negotiation of meaning takes place in the community space. The raised hand gesture and focused gaze index participation and social acceptance (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Rose, 2016) The gradual subtitles—“good education,” “free if needed,” “if employment is easy,” and the conclusion “after that, free education”—form a narrative package of well-being (education-employment-education). The final repetition leverages the primacy-recency effect to strengthen audience memory (Grabe & Bucy, 2009).

At the platform's affordance level, the short caption, bold typography, and steady shot rhythm align with TikTok's attention economy and facilitate easy replication/dissemination, forming imitation publics (Rose, 2016; Zulli & Zulli, 2022). The climax, a group pose of young men in green uniforms with a pointing finger gesture, constructs a ritual of support; the green iconography blends with the event's landscape, creating a fusion of horizons between local cultural identity, community values, and the candidate's image (Gadamer & Gadamer, 2003; Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

Overall, the configuration of visual elements—color salience, gestural vectors, audience cutaways, and gradual subtitles—constructs a frame of moral courage and an education-welfare policy package compatible with TikTok's logic of circulation.

The opening shot places the event in a communal space with a green-and-white tent. This grassroots aesthetic positions the campaign as a practice of social intimacy while activating local horizons. Within hermeneutic circles, this production site becomes the initial context for understanding the candidate's communicative intentions (Gadamer dkk., 2004). When the candidate enters the frame and greets, affiliative relationships are affirmed through easily readable gestures. Eye-level framing maintains a naturalistic modality and minimizes social distance, so that the audience is framed as dialogical partners, not passive objects (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006; Rose, 2016)

Close-ups with contrasting red caps/accents create affective salience. Moral keywords such as "brave" and "honest" frame the leadership ethos; these verbal-visual affirmations configure interpretive schemas about integrity (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Ricoeur, 1976). Cut-aways of audience members nodding or raising their hands validate the sowing of meaning in the community space. Nonverbal cues from the audience indexed acceptance and reinforced the campaign's claim of authenticity as a citizen-driven campaign (Rose, 2016)



At the programmatic moment, the phrase sequence "good/free education" and "easy employment" constructed a concise and memorable



welfare package. The repetition in the closing section exploited the primacy-recency effect, anchoring education as a top priority (Grabe & Bucy, 2009)



The collective pose with the "number one" finger symbol ritualized support and closed the visual narrative through a fusion of the candidate's horizons with the community—green iconography resonates with local religio-cultural identities (Gadamer & Gadamer, 2003; Kress & Leeuwen, 2006)

**Table 1. Analysis Visual Hermeneutics of Campaigns Dialogic**

1		<p>Close-up of the candidate ( white shirt , peci red ) speaking on stage tent green ; partly back audience visible in the foreground.</p>	<p>Medium-close framing; color contrast red – green ; microphone ; natural backdrop open .</p>	<p>Marking theme narrative courage leader ; color red highlighting salience and affect; ' ummah ' links the religio - cultural horizon local .</p>
8		<p>Wide shot of the audience sitting below tent ; man middle- aged in the front row lift hand .</p>	<p>Layered lateral composition ; depth of field; village / community event attributes .</p>	<p>Validating production sites — campaigns based community ; gesture hand give index support / participation .</p>

<p>15</p>		<p>Mid - shot candidate facing audience , gestures hand active .</p>	<p>Gestural vector; eye - line to audience ; microphone as orator marker .</p>	<p>Contrasting ' brave ' vs ' corruption ' ; emphasizing ethos integrity as a moral frame for the campaign .</p>
<p>24</p>		<p>Close - up of guest / audience line the man sat watching .</p>	<p>Static framing; clothing casual ; audio speakers are visible at the back .</p>	<p>Shifting theme to policy public (quality education) as promise programmatic .</p>

<p>26</p>		<p>Candidates on stage ,              camera from side              right audience .</p>	<p>Diagonal              composition ;              tent green white              ; audience              woman in the              foreground ( veil ).</p>	<p>Offer intensity policy              (tuition/fee relief) —              modality normative '              need ' marking              pragmatism .</p>
<p>35</p>		<p>Wide shot audience              mixed ( adult -              female ) with              background              settlements .</p>	<p>Communal              space village ;              social horizon ;              chair plastic              blue ; banner              small in the              distance .</p>	<p>Welfare frame              economy ; linking              promise Work with              daily life community              local .</p>

45		Candidate gestures pointing to front ; audience focus .	Saliency in the figure of the orator; gesture deictic ; rhythm shot uniform .	Tie narrative become package policy priority ( education ) as differentiation candidate .
55		Photo/pose with young men in clothes customs / uniforms green , all pose finger index finger .	Intertextuality identity Malay / Islam; color green dominant ; gesture number - one.	Ritualized closing support ; fusion of candidate horizons - youth; iconography green call religio - cultural values .

## 2. Visit Video to the Traditional Market

This video located in a busy market alley activity buy and sell , display row stalls , tarpaulin colorful , and current dynamic walker . Within the framework hermeneutics , market landscape functions as a whole the beginning ' that guides reading the next visual parts — namely gestures greetings , dialogue questions price / supply , inspection commodities , up to documentation together traders . With make the market a production site meaning , message political in a way early contextualized in the people's economy , not formal stage (Gadamer & Gadamer, 2003; Rose, 2016).

Abdul Wahid's entry into the frame, accompanied by Ustadz Abdul Somad (UAS), immediately marking the adjacent religio - cultural horizons with the market economy horizon . In the grammar of visual design, eye-level framing and proxemics near create modality naturalistic as well as equal interpersonal relations ; position hands and greetings (haptics) configure rites affiliate that reduces distance social candidate-citizen . Here , the presence of UAS functions as witnessing and source credibility that strengthens legitimacy message (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006; Rose, 2016).

A series of close-ups in front commodities — chilies , rice , eggs , and vegetables — bring salience to the object material . With Thus , the ethos of ' listening ' and ' responding ' is concretized . through materiality commodity : candidate link claim policies on measurable daily problems ( prices , supply , quality ) . In linguistic hermeneutics , these moments This move configuration meaning : parts ( gestures) pointing , expression traders , scales ) form pattern representation visible concern eye (Grabe & Bucy, 2009).

Transaction cutaway — scales , cash , bags plastic — act as marker indexical that market economy takes place . Scene This validate that political dialogue No happen in room empty ; he embedded in practice buy and sell real . With tying dialogue to material practice , video does anchoring so that claim policy get references empirical in front of viewer (Rose, 2016) .

UAS involvement on the side candidate throughout track hallway form co-presence that adds thickness meaning (thick description) . In a circle hermeneutics , co-presence the enrich horizon of understanding : issues price / supply read together religio- communitarian values , creating bridge between need material citizens and the symbolic -moral capital they bring figure religious . At the point this , “ who is beside candidate ” same ” meaning with “ what is being said candidate ”.

At the TikTok platform level, the choice of short captions , rhythm shot stable , and focused on the moments easy replicated support visual circulation . Selfie/ photo moments together traders , for example , in platform is very shareable and can trigger imitation publics — namely participating public through imitation and remix symbolic (Zulli & Zulli, 2022) . Affinity between documentation ritual and logic platform circulation explained Why piece kind of This lock memory viewer .


In a way compositional , dominance color fabrics / veils and fresh commodities create a contrasting ' market palette ' However warm . The candidate's gestural vectors — pointing , reaching , nodding — yield direction binding view audience on the flow interaction . Eye contact and eye-line strengthen interpersonal relations , while depth field ( crowd , stalls lined up ) guarding context still present . Constellation This establishing cohesive ties between visual and narrative parts collective (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).



At the re-figuration stage , the sequence issues ( price / supply / quality ; relations traders-buyers ) are summarized to scale community through gestures deictic to a number of stalls and invitations to dialogue. Ended with documentation



together , circle hermeneutics closed : parts returned to overall identity — candidates who are ' present and listening ' in the market, accompanied by UAS as witnesses and binders of the religio- cultural horizon . The result is image politics rooted in experience daily However compatible with logic platform virality (Gadamer & Gadamer, 2003).


Synthesis : the video shows image material bias (*price, supply*) reinforced by credibility symbolic (UAS) in busy market space . Through movement back and forth part — whole , audience invited conclude that proximity social , caring concrete , and religio- cultural legitimacy each other strengthen . All three explain Power campaign visual resonance kind of this on TikTok: easy understandable , easy shared , and easy remember (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Rose, 2016; Zulli & Zulli, 2022)

Table 2 Analysis Campaign in Traditional Markets

Time ( range )	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
0-4		Market hallway; candidate entering the frame; UAS is visible accompany by the side candidate .	Stalls, tarpaulins , price signage , traffic flow pedestrians .	Establishing the people's economic site ; opening the horizon of reading .

Time (range)	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
5-10	 <p>karena dia mencerminkan tentang</p>	Greetings , UAS stands up near listening chat .	Eye-level, haptics, micro-interaction , crowd proximity.	Rites affiliation ; closeness social with witnessing UAS.
11-16		Close-up dialogue about price / supply ; candidate & UAS side by side .	Gestural vectors, goods foreground merchandise , expression focus .	' Hear ' as performativity representation public .

Time (range)	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
17-22		Transaction buyers on the scales ; candidates & UAS observe in the background .	Scales , money , depth of field, activity continuous .	Validation social through practice transaction real .
23-28		Interaction warm with trader women ; the crowd is getting bigger meeting	Proxemics close , color cloth / veil , camera stable .	Inclusive witnessing ; legitimacy social community ).

Time ( range )	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
35-42		Deictic gestures to a number of stall ; UAS directs view to audience .	Salience figure , deictic gesture , background crowded .	Recap issue to scale communal ; unification narrative .

### 3. Tabligh Akbar Video

Video opens in space bustling communal —and the flow pedestrians passing in the background . By hermeneutics , landscape This functioning as a whole beginning ' (pre-understanding) that gives direction in interpretation: message political currently negotiated in space daily life citizens , not formal stage . As a result , every gestures , gazes , and objects that will be looks will read with a concrete socio -economic horizon (Gadamer dkk., 2004; Rose, 2016).

Presence candidates at eye-level with distance proxemics near produce modality naturalistic : camera No elevate (high angle) or demeaning (low angle ) , so that relation subjective felt equal . Interaction short — position hands , nods , smiles — work as rites affiliates that lower distance social and signify 'we are here ' . In the grammar of visual design , the decision distance and angle view contribute to interpersonal contracts (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

Gestural vector ( palm open , index finger deictic ) directing track view viewer from figure to object and return Again to audience . Circulation gaze This organize channel attention : from candidate → commodity / object → response citizens . In compositional , image tend guard cohesion through

repetition color dominant and rhythm steady shot — a strategy for prevent lost focus on the screen small TikTok.

When the dialogue takes place in front of object / commodity , materiality act as visual evidence . This is where claim policy jump from abstraction become something tangible eyes : price , quality , availability , or cleanliness can be ' designated ' literally . According to Ricoeur (Ricoeur, 1976), moment like This is part from configuration namely compile parts ( gestures , objects , expressions ) into the pattern that gives form in the meaning of ' present and listening '.

Audience cutaway a look , a nod , a hesitant smile , or even the endless traffic care become index acceptance and negotiation . Signs small This show that meaning message No only ' delivered ' , but negotiated in crowd , present witnessing strengthening social or challenge claim candidate (Grabe & Bucy, 2009; Rose, 2016).

A number of shot implies organization information given–new (left–right ) and deal–real ( top–bottom ). Objects or banner on the section on give 'ideal' framework— vision or value — temporary activity hands , products , or cash on the part lower affirming 'real'— a practice that is currently happened . Structure This help viewer mapping out the ' what is promised ' and the ' how He realize (Kress & Leeuwen, 2006).

Expression face , distance body , and tempo of speech produce economy affective : warmth , urgency , or empathy . Affect does not stand alone , he mediate meaning policy . When smile juxtaposed with object need everyday , audience tend connect concern with concrete actions , not just words (Grabe & Bucy, 2009) . Rhythm shot that relatively stable — interspersed transition mid-shot to close-up — in tune with limitations TikTok duration . The absence of text overlay long create audio, gestures , and objects Work more hard as carrier meaning . In a way platformic , this enlarge opportunity shareability at a time make it easier remix (Zulli & Zulli, 2022).

Palette consistent color Good from cloth , attributes , and commodities create easy visual anchor introduction fast in the feed. Repetition form ( row stalls , rows of people) building cohesion that maintains legibility narrative even though camera moving and crowd dynamic .


Approaching end , gesture deictic and repositioning camera to medium –wide widen scale from interaction micro to audience wide . This is re-figuration stage : the previous parts scattered (dialogue, objects , responses ) united become description collective about need citizens and directions policies offered (Ricoeur, 1976).



Closing through greeting goodbye tie narrative with easy social rituals remembered . This ritual important No only For archives community , but also for logic circulation on TikTok is easy shared , easy imitated , and because That



easy develop become imitation publics that expand range message (Zulli & Zulli, 2022).


In a way overall , embroidery video proximity social , materiality issues , and validation audience become image politics rooted in experience everyday . For the audience , ' who is present ' , ' what is touched ' , and ' how audience respond to ' meet in circle hermeneutics part – whole . Implications ethically : claim policy should be always anchored to evidence empirical that can read public — a demands harmonious transparency with expectation citizens in digital space .

Table 2 Analysis Campaign Grand Tabligh

Time ( seconds )	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
0.0–11.2	 <p>video4_seg1_5.6s.jpg</p>	Landscape room communal : crowd inhabitant	Composition landscape ; signage/ attributes ; repetition color dominant .	Setting up social sites as context reading meaning .

Time ( seconds )	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
11.2-22.5)		UAS waving hand to inhabitant together candidate .	Eye-level; haptics/ gestures greeting ; crowd proximity.	Rites affiliation and proximity social candidate-community .
33.8-45.0		Audience cutaway : expression listening / responding ; flow of people.	Depth of field; gesture audience ; rhythm shot stable .	Validation social through response audience .

Time (seconds)	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
45.0–56.2	 <p>A man in a white shirt and red cap is speaking into a microphone on a stage. He is pointing his right hand upwards. Behind him is a banner with the text 'kabar lainnya' and '231 maka Aku cari anak Riau yang cerdas'. A signature 'Abdul Wahid' is visible at the bottom of the screenshot.</p>	UAS observes object or pointing direction ; gesture deictic .	Deictic gesture ; salience figure ; line of sight audience .	Anchoring claims on materiality / space ; direct focus issue .
67.5–78.8	 <p>Three screenshots showing a large audience at an outdoor event. The top screenshot shows a crowd of people sitting on bleachers. The middle screenshot shows a speaker on a stage in front of a large audience. The bottom screenshot shows a view from behind the audience looking towards the stage.</p>	Recap issue / invitation to the audience more wide ; camera catch background context .	Salience figures ; medium-wide framing; background crowded .	Widening the frame to scale communal ; unification narrative .

Time ( seconds )	Screenshot	Excerpt / Description short	Key visual elements	Interpretation hermeneutics
78.8–90.0 ( ~ 79.0s)		Closing : documentation together / selfie or greeting goodbye to inhabitant .	Documentati on ritual ; line meeting ; smile / code hand .	candidate horizons – community through documentation closing .

## DISCUSSION

In the decade Lastly , new media penetration to in life everyday , especially through use of the internet and social media , has play role important in form pattern communication political contemporary research Pugu, Triolita and Yusuf study how new media has change landscape communication politics and its impact to participation public in the democratic process . Research results This show that new media has give opportunities and challenges new in communication politics . In one side , new media allows politicians For reach out and interact with voters in a way direct and more personal , and promote participation more public wide in the political process . On the other hand , the phenomenon like room the echo and polarization online creates concern about quality discussion democratic and capable voters For make the right decision . Research This emphasize that while new media give opportunity big for democracy , there is need urge will be effective mitigation strategies so that impact the negative can minimized (Pugu dkk., 2024).

Current digital era this picture has become powerful tool for politicians For involved with voters them on social media platforms . Visual content has Power pull unique emotional states that often lead to increased involvement

users. However, research by De Lima et al (de-Lima-Santos dkk., 2024) about visual communication still relatively limited, especially in the Global South. Through two studies, De Lima observed consistent patterns among candidates. This in use communication their visual politics. In particular, identifying prevalence images that are celebratory and tonal positive. Pictures it also shows a strong sense of personalization, depicting connected candidates with voters them at a higher level emotional.

Social media has become tool powerful campaign, enabling candidates For reach voters young and influential opinion public. Effectiveness digital campaigns depend heavily on content and methods delivery. In addition, the issues raised by each candidate must reflect needs and expectations society, as well as challenges faced by Indonesia at the moment this. With increasing the role of social media in politics, understanding How information distributed and received become crucial (Faradis A dkk., 2023)

Social media has become tool communication the main thing that changes partitions modern communication. Characteristics of open social media make its utilization in various aspect including aspect campaign political become maybe. Campaign model moment This Lots using social media Because its area range audience. However, the use of social media No close possibility occurrence each other attack like campaign negative and campaign black (Mubarok, 2022).

The leaders political using social media For form image they during election general. Social media and digital platforms have change communication politics, which allows politicians For form image they with be careful. Social media has change politics, impact visual cues to engagement, and preferred platforms For visual communication. Extensive study about consequence term long from tactics this visual communication show that use of social media by politicians For convey story own lasting impact on perception and engagement public in political (Srikandi dkk., 2024).

Use of social media in Indonesian politics has experience significant evolution since 2019 election. This digital platform has speed up polarization opinion public and facilitate distribution hoax and political propaganda. Social media has change landscape political with in a profound way. In one side, social media has make things easier participation political society. However, on the other hand, the convenience access and distribution information has utilized For manipulate opinion public and hinder constructive dialogue.

For guard integrity democracy is needed effort together For increase digital literacy of society and compiling effective regulations to prevent distribution misleading information (Fatih, 2024). The public provides response to each posts content elections, in the form of comment negative and positive. The interaction patterns created can seen from Comments, likes, and shares. TikTok has become a campaign medium. with target main people young. His height TikTok social media users are people young. Young people

capable state opinion them on their TikTok social media account with lift issues politics . The minimum level literacy and introduction things political make part big people young only see issue political from a content just (Nababan dkk., 2024).

## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This study contribute to the study of local visual political communication by demonstrating how the prominence of color, eye-level framing, gestural deictics, and programmatic slogan packages interwoven into imagery of "courage," "morals," and "care" that align with "welfare" and the economy, TikTok's focus lies in its power, which lies in the hermeneutics of in-depth description and the utilization of the grammatical framework of visual design.

In the context of Riau 2024, Abdul Wahid's campaign recognized that the traditional "stage" was being replaced by the "FYP" (For You Page). The campaign's reliance on UAS was not simply celebrity endorsement but an act of "religio-cultural reinforcement," where the integrity of reputed clerics served as "testimony" to the candidate's moral suitability. This strategy responded to a broader national trend in which 59.1% of voters considered religion "important" in determining their political choices, often viewing it as a religious obligation to elect leaders who reflected Islamic values. The 2024 campaign of Riau Gubernatorial Candidate Abdul Wahid represents a sophisticated blend of traditional Islamic studies and modern digital "politainment." Leveraging the religio-cultural credibility of Ustadz Abdul Somad through a meticulous application of visual design grammar, Abdul Wahid successfully constructed a narrative of moral and material well-being that resonated with heuristic-based voters. However, reliance on such strategies carries significant risks of polarization, commodification of the sacred, and the erosion of substantive policy debate.

As TikTok continues to dominate Indonesia's political landscape, the ability of voters and researchers to decipher these "intentional meaning systems" is crucial. The Riau experience underscores that while visual grammar can create a powerful image of "presence and audibility," the long-term stability of democracy depends on its ability to move beyond symbolic justification toward ethical and transparent governance. Future research should prioritize the quantitative validation of these semiotic theories to ensure that current digital "politainment" does not lead to future democratic "fragmentation."

The explicit strength of this research lies in its utilization of the visual design grammar framework. This theory, developed by Kress and van Leeuwen, was originally designed to analyze how images communicate through structures similar to linguistic grammar. This study tests the theory

in specific and novel contexts: first, new media (TikTok) by analyzing how TikTok's unique features (such as its short duration and multimodal nature) influence political communication. Second, local political communication in Riau, applying a Western semiotic framework to local political dynamics in Indonesia, specifically in the 2024 Riau Regional Election. Third, Synergy of Religious Authority, examining how visual design theory can explain the phenomenon of "testimony" and "religio-cultural anchors of credibility" presented by figures such as Ustadz Abdul Somad in supporting political candidates.

While utilizing existing theory, this study makes an important contribution by demonstrating how specific visual variables operate in local culture: framing and gesture. It demonstrates how eye-level framing and deictic gesture are used to construct images of "courage" and "morality" that are acceptable to local audiences. Then, symbolic justification explains the process of "deep descriptive hermeneutics," where the presence of religious figures unites "religious horizons" with everyday economic practices, thereby gaining symbolic justification for political promises in the public eye.

Future research is needed to more operationalize whether this visual strategy is truly a primary consideration for voters, or whether other factors are more dominant. This aligns with the need for quantitative methods such as conversion rate analysis or sentiment analysis using digital data to validate these semiotic findings.

In conclusion, this report serves as a case study that expands the scope of visual design grammar theory into the realm of religious "politainment" on Indonesian social media, while also identifying the limitations and potential alternative readings of this visual strategy.

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