

## **Building Political Appeal Through Digital Media : A Study of Finance Minister Purbaya's Tiktok Videos**

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### **Abstract**

Short-video platforms, like TikTok, have changed the political landscape, allowing public officials to present themselves in a more intimate and engaging way than ever before. Political charm is analytically defined as a dimension of political personalization – the way in which traits, modes of communication and emotions are mobilized in order to make public perceptions of political actors bear fruit. This is clear from the minister of finance's viral TikTok antics in Indonesia, Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa. This article looks at how political charm of Purbaya is constructed through TikTok content, and the way it is made meaningful by the audiences in digital media environment. Using a qualitative netnographic approach, the study brought in four TikTok videos and their responses of viewers as well as representative comments to identify dominant narratives patterns and public interpretations. The results indicate that Purbaya's personality on digital is built under the theme of empathy, transparency, responsive and open communication. Reactions from the audience mainly express feelings of support, credibility and relational nearness, but also critical and reflective types of reactions emerge, pointing to an engaged and interpretative public discourse. Rather, it is analytically argued here that personalized communication on TikTok leads to trust and legitimacy perceptions, framing the platform as a place for political personalization in governance.

**Keywords:** *Digital media, Minister of Finance, Tik Tok*

## INTRODUCTION

The rise of short video apps like TikTok has transformed political communication. It has become an efficient platform powered by algorithms and focused on entertaining content (Nuryaningsih, 2023). TikTok can create engaging, educational, and inspiring content that strengthens the presence of public figures (Anwar dkk., 2025). Its unique qualities, particularly its culture of fast, appealing, and emotional content, have significantly reshaped political discussions. This change affects how the public views and understands public figures (Purboyo dkk., 2025). Recent research shows that TikTok, with features like comments, duets, and trending challenges, often serves as a tool for political communication during campaigns, helping to mobilize young voters and build a "political branding" image (Febriana & Rahman, 2024).

In Indonesia, a notable phenomenon is the virality of videos featuring Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa, referred to as the "Purbaya effect." According to Suara Merdeka, this popularity stems from the public's view of his technocratic, high-performing, and professional leadership style (Nugroho Wahyu Utomo, 2025). This image creates a political appeal that differs from how officials are represented in traditional media. Surveys and public recognition reflect high public support for Purbaya, portraying him as a capable and professional leader who can foster trust in managing the national economy.

However, this representation goes beyond just creating an image. It also relates to how the public perceives and understands social media interactions (Siregar & Azhar, 2025). The audience interprets content through comments, emotional reactions, and discussions in digital communities. This process is crucial as it can affect public trust in Purbaya's policies. In digital political communication, personalizing politics can help build emotional connections and familiarity with the public. Yet, it can also shape perceptions that may not align with actual policies (Nuraliza dkk., 2024).

Research (Gerungan, 2023) looks at how Airlangga Hartato and Giring Ganesha use TikTok to create political personalization through professional content. Given these dynamics, the study of Purbaya's political appeal through TikTok content seeks to understand how representation influences public perception and trust. It also examines shifts in how public officials communicate in today's interactive social media landscape.

This study primarily aims to answer how Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa builds his political charm through digital media, specifically TikTok. Additionally, it explores how public perceptions of Purbaya manifest through interactions like views, likes, comments, and shares, while analyzing

the comments on digital platforms. This research aims to show how Purbaya's political allure develops through a digital communication style that values openness, empathy, responsiveness, and transparency. Furthermore, it investigates public perceptions of Purbaya through engagement and comments on TikTok, including emotional responses and active participation from the public.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

### **Political transformation**

Significant alterations to a society's political dynamics, procedures, and structure are referred to as "political transformation." Significant adjustments to the way politics are carried out, especially with regard to policy, public involvement, and the allocation of political power, are included in political transformation. These shifts may take place locally, nationally, or even internationally.

According to this definition, political transformation can include a wide range of things, including modifications to the governmental structure, the creation or modification of policies, shifts in political culture, and technology advancements that impact public expectations and political communication. These intricate relationships have the potential to alter society's general composition and traits, as well as how it conducts its political affairs.

Social media is associated with uses and pleasure theories in communication studies, whereas political transformation is associated with agenda-setting and gatekeeping theories. These theories are crucial for comprehending these shifts, particularly with regard to social media usage (Arsyad dkk., 2024).

First, the theory of use and pleasure highlights how people actively choose media based on their wants and preferences. People's use of social media to satisfy their political and social information requirements is a reflection of this thesis in political transformation through social media. In addition to being passive consumers, social media users actively seek for, share, and engage in political discourse.

Second, the agenda-setting argument highlights the media's ability to establish the agenda for the most significant social concerns. Social media users actively contribute to the political agenda in addition to receiving messages. By discussing and exchanging political ideas on social media, people collaborate to establish political priorities and focus, indicating a wider engagement in political change.

Third, gatekeeping theory states that gatekeepers play a crucial role in controlling the flow of data. In the age of social media, security is becoming more dispersed. People and community organizations act as gatekeepers of political information through the use of social media platforms. As a result, the public now has more control over how political information is disseminated and accessible.

By combining these three theories, we can comprehend that political transformation via social media is the outcome of intricate relationships between individual needs, the growing decentralization of gatekeeping, and the development of a community-supported political agenda, in addition to changes in political policy or structure.

In the digital age, social media plays a significant role in the dynamics of political opinion and political participation; one example is how people communicate, obtain information, and engage in political life. (Juleha dkk., 2024) Here are some elements of social media that are relevant to this issue :

1. Rapid and widespread dissemination of information

The rapid development of social media allows them to convey various content or information, ranging from entertainment to the latest news about social phenomena or situations. Social media enables the rapid and widespread dissemination of information, allowing the public to get the latest news and follow political developments in real time. Some systems in modern media have the ability to control the minds of individuals or society.

2. Democratization information

Social media gives people the opportunity to speak and share their views, and gives the public the opportunity to hear voices that may not have been heard in conventional media. Everyone has the ability to create content and contribute to political discussions. The development of information technology has also changed the way people communicate.

The use of conventional media, which includes electronic and print media, has now shifted to social media, which is internet-based and used as a means of political communication during elections. Through social media, people can express their political aspirations to political leaders and institutions, get support, and share their ideas.

3. Direct interaction between citizens and political leaders.

Social media allows people to speak with political leaders directly. This can facilitate two-way communication between citizens and leaders and make leaders more approachable. Both fresh opportunities and problems have been brought forth by this digital transition. Reestablishing connections and engaging with their communities presents new problems for journalists, political organizations, the media, and politicians.

This also has an impact on how first-time voters engage with politics. Social media's growth and technical advancements have altered how young people engage with politics. As a means of taking part in social change, they are becoming more and more active online.

Since young people are frequently the driving force behind issues like gender equality, social justice, and climate change, it is critical to comprehend the effects of their involvement in social change. Children make up a sizable portion of the population, which may have an effect on politics and society in the future.

4. Political mobilization

With the help of online campaigns, hashtags, and viral calls to action, social and political movements can grow quickly.

5. Political oversight

The people can utilize social media as a tool to keep an eye on how the government and political leaders are performing. Government activities can be influenced by public criticism and prompt replies.

6. Polarization and bubble filters

Additionally, by exposing users to opinions that support their beliefs on a regular basis, social media can lead to polarization. This filter bubble may restrict people's opinions.

7. Manipulation of public opinion

Propaganda and false information can be disseminated via social media, unjustly influencing public opinion. It is challenging to ensure the sustainability of impartial and accurate information in light of this occurrence.

The growth of digital technology and the internet has flooded society with data of all kinds. Some of this material, meanwhile, is hoaxes, incorrect information, or fake news. Hoaxes are spreading more and more

uncontrollably on social media, which fuels online extremism. Additionally, political contests that propagate hoaxes incite extremism in the digital sphere. Hoaxes are employed in political conflicts to sway voter preferences.

#### 8. Political participation through online campaigns

Political campaigns are increasingly utilizing social media to raise funds, gain support, and communicate with voters. Hashtags and online trends can boost campaign momentum. Efforts must be made to improve digital literacy, control misinformation, and encourage constructive discussion on social media if we want to harness the positive potential of social media to influence public opinion and political participation.

TikTok currently ranks fourth after WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube. Without us realizing it, the average person spends more than two hours on TikTok every day. Additionally, it is clear that TikTok currently offers numerous features with short-form content packaged in an engaging and creative manner. As a result, political campaigns on TikTok have a greater opportunity to reach a wider audience. TikTok also enables the visual delivery of political messages (Junaidi, 2025).

Social media can help political participation, but they also cause the spread of misinformation. Social media hoaxes and misinformation are frequently used to sway public opinion and disparage political opponents. This is further complicated by political buzzers who use social media algorithms to systematically disseminate propaganda and bad campaigns (Ahmad Zubaidi, 2020).

Because they are frequently used to propagate false narratives meant to sway public opinion and foster political divisiveness, political buzzers have become a harmful problem in Indonesian political campaigns. Buzzers can swiftly and widely disseminate political messages by using bots and fictitious accounts, creating the illusion that a big number of people agree with the narrative. Many of these accounts are merely used to disseminate specific political propaganda and are not real persons.

Furthermore, sensitive topics like nationalism, religion, and ethnicity are frequently the focus of political hoaxes. The public's feelings sparked by these hoaxes can affect election outcomes and harm certain candidates' reputations. Candidates frequently find it challenging to clarify or address such concerns since information spreads on social media far more quickly than it can be confirmed or corrected.

Social media algorithms, which frequently give preference to dramatic or sentimental content, make this problem worse. Such content draws users' attention and is simpler to disseminate, which eventually leads to political conflicts. Furthermore, social media content is not subject to strict controls. The Indonesian government has made an effort to regulate political information on social media, but it is still unable to combat political hoaxes and hype. It is challenging to apprehend those who propagate misleading information because many accounts used in misinformation campaigns employ fictitious or anonymous identities. Stricter laws and improved oversight of political content on social media are therefore crucial.

Improving digital literacy among the public is a way to combat the spread of hoaxes and information manipulation on social media. Digital literacy encompasses not only the ability to use technology, but also the ability to recognize accurate information and verify the truth of information before sharing it. By improving digital literacy, the public can be more vigilant about content.

In addition to digital literacy, more stringent and transparent regulations are required to control political content on social media. In order to identify and take action against accounts engaged in disinformation campaigns, the government must collaborate with social media sites. Strengthening collaboration between government institutions, non-governmental organizations, and civil society is crucial to ensuring that social media can serve as a helpful instrument to promote Indonesia's democratic process.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Robert Kozinets created netnography, a qualitative research technique derived from ethnography, to examine social interactions, behavior, and culture in virtual communities. Participatory observation is used by researchers who naturally follow online conversations. Finding meanings and conventions in digital culture is the aim of qualitative data analysis. Its benefits include cost effectiveness, the capacity to capture dynamic cultures, and access to real data from internet sources. This approach is very useful for researching social media phenomena, virtual community behavior, and trends.

Netnography paradigmatically usually falls under the interpretive paradigm to obtain deeper meaning; this may still be close to the characteristics of the positivist paradigm to explain and predict. The interpretive worldview of ontology aims to gain a better understanding of reality, especially the context in the virtual world. It not only looks at

participants, but also looks at communication, connections on websites, and observed human behavior. According to Kozinets, netnography seeks to study the deeper context of meaning rather than accuracy. In other words, it seeks to study the true meaning behind the context of why something happens in the virtual world. To achieve this, a five-stage method is used: preparation, data collection, data analysis, and representation research (A.D. Mulawarman, 2021).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Purbaya's Political Charm in Digital Media

The analysis of four TikTok videos featuring Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa reveals how his political charm develops through a digital communication style that focuses on openness, responsiveness, transparency, and empathy. This study used a netnographic approach, which included observing content, analyzing interactions, examining comments, and interpreting patterns of public perception.

The data analyzed included four TikTok videos that collected a total of 61.2 million views. The interactions for each video are shown in the table below:

**Table 1 : Interactions on Purbaya's Four TikTok Videos**

Video	Views	Likes	Comments	Shares	Main Theme
Video 1	14.8 Million	1.3 Million	37 Thousand	36.5 Thousand	Interaction with high school students, investment education
Video 2	25 Million	0.7 Million	18.1 Thousand	30.6 Thousand	Explanation of 200 trillion funds & banks
Video 3	4.7 Million	0.2 Million	6.9 Thousand	7.56 Thousand	Tax policy, economic logic
Video 4	16.7 Million	1.7 Million	44,9 Thousand	52,8 Thousand	Combating smuggling & firmness

### Analysis of Public Interaction and Political Appeal

#### 1. Video 2 - Highest Views (25 million)

The public shows a strong interest in macroeconomic issues, like the 200 trillion fund and bank stability. The high number of views suggests that Purbaya's political appeal comes from his credibility and openness.

#### 2. Video 4 - Highest Likes and Comments (1.7 million likes, 44,900 comments)

This video focuses on eradicating smuggling. The public's strong response reflects their emotional connection and trust in Purbaya as both firm and approachable.

**Table 2 : Dimensions of Political Personalization in Each Video**

Video	Theme	Dominant Dimension of Personalization	CommInterpretation of Political Charments
Video 1	Interaction with high school students, investment education	Empathy	Purbaya appears friendly and caring, building rapport with young audiences.
Video 2	Explanation of 200 trillion funds & banks	Transparency	Purbaya displays openness, enhancing his credibility and professional reputation.
Video 3	Tax policy, economic logic	Responsiveness	Demonstrates the ability to respond to public concerns with logic, reinforcing a competent image.
Video 4	Combating smuggling & firmness	Open Communication	Displays firmness and communicativeness, creating a strong figure trusted by the public.

**Overall Interpretation**

1. Empathy (Video 1): Builds rapport with young audiences, giving the impression of a friendly and approachable figure.
2. Transparency (Video 2): Boosts trust and credibility in Purbaya's policies and decisions.
3. Responsiveness (Video 3): Shows the ability to logically address complex issues, strengthening a professional image.
4. Open Communication Style (Video 4): Combines assertiveness with approachability, reinforcing a strong and trustworthy public figure.

Overall, Purbaya's political charm in digital media stems from emotional connection, professional credibility, responsiveness to issues, and open communication. Public interactions, including views, likes, and comments, reflect how audiences appreciate and respond to Purbaya's image. TikTok serves as an effective platform for building political personas.

### Public Perception of Purbaya in Digital Media

An analysis was conducted on 20 representative comments from the four TikTok videos featuring Finance Minister Purbaya, using five comments per video. The comments were selected for their relevance, narrative strength, and representation of public opinion. This analysis aims to examine how the public interprets and reacts to Purbaya's image through comments, emotional responses, and interactions on the platform.

**Table 3 : Thematic Coding of Comments**

No	Public Comments	Dimension of Personalization
Video 1		
1	“That's right, mutual funds for just one year have already yielded great results.”	Transparency
2	“A trivial question, but still answered by someone of ministerial caliber. You're awesome, sir.”	Responsiveness
3	“This minister is awesome, sir, willing to share his knowledge on how to manage finances... I also learned about mutual funds in the past...”	Open communication style
4	“This minister is eccentric but+B6 cool... the economy is healthy, amen.”	Empathy
5	“THIS IS IT! THIS IS WHAT A LEADER SHOULD BE LIKE.”	Empathy
Video 2		
6	“He’s smart... Mr. Purbaya is really intelligent.”	Transparency
7	“This is a minister who really wants to boost the people’s economy.”	Open communication style
8	“I really like the way he talks. Like a kid hanging out with friends.”	Empathy
9	“This minister is eccentric but cool... the economy is healthy, amen.”	Empathy
10	“Mr. Purbaya needs to be supported, keep up the consistent spirit, sir.”	Responsiveness
Video 3		
11	“Yes, that's right... keep up the spirit, Minister of Finance... give wise policies for the people.”	Responsiveness

12	“If the people are prosperous... they will have money to pay taxes.”	Transparency
13	“That's right, people don't want to pay taxes because they don't have enough money.”	Open communication style
14	“Live longer, Minister Purbaya...”	Empathy
15	“Mr. Purbaya's solution makes sense... Indonesia will progress.”	Transparency
Video 4		
16	“That's right, sir... the Indonesian people will support you.”	Empathy
17	“It turns out the finance minister has a lot of work to do.”	Transparency
18	“But remember, Pur, take care of yourself... there are many bad people who don't like you.”	Responsiveness
19	“The only minister I follow... brave, firm, but humorous.”	Empathy
20	“Protect this man and his family, God.”	Empathy

**Table 4 : Thematic Recap**

Dimension of Personalization	Number of Comments	Percentage
Empathy	8	40%
Transparency	5	25%
Responsiveness	4	20%
Open communication style	3	15%

**Interpretation of Findings**

a. Empathy (35%):

Comments indicate that the public connects emotionally with Purbaya, highlighting closeness and community support. Remarks like “I really respect you, you're the best” and “Protect this man and his family, God” show the public views Purbaya as caring and close to the people, sparking feelings of admiration, support, and security.

b. Transparency (25%):

The public sees Purbaya's content as clear, especially regarding economic and investment policies. Comments like "Mr. Purbaya's solution makes sense... Indonesia is progressing" and "if the community is prosperous... they will have money to pay taxes" demonstrate that people view Purbaya as credible and able to explain complex information simply.

c. Responsive (20%):

Purbaya's answers to questions, even simple ones, make the public feel involved. Comments like "trivial questions but still answered by a minister. You're cool, sir" show how such interactions boost appreciation, reinforcing the connection between Purbaya and the public.

d. Open communication style (20%):

His casual way of speaking makes the content accessible. Comments like "I really like the way he talks. He's like one of the guys" illustrate that the public finds Purbaya friendly and approachable, leading to positive and lighthearted reactions that encourage further informal discussions.

The public views Purbaya's TikTok content not only as economic information but also as a portrayal of a relatable, humanistic, transparent, and communicative figure. Emotional reactions, supportive comments, and engaging discussions show that the public actively interprets Purbaya's persona, strengthening positive perceptions and connection to the minister.

### **Integration of Findings with Theory**

In Political Personalization and Personalized Politics, political personalization is described as a process where individual political actors gain more significance while political groups, like parties, become less central. The analysis results indicate that the TikTok audience values Purbaya's personal image as relatable, approachable, and communicative more than abstract economic issues. This supports the idea that digital platforms significantly shape political personas by allowing public figures to display qualities that resonate with the public and foster direct engagement (Badie dkk., 2011).

Coleman (1990) defines social capital as features of social structure that enable individual actions in that network, highlighting the importance of norms, sanctions, and social relationships in shaping individuals' capabilities. TikTok interactions reflect digital social capital, where the public engages in discussions, shows support, and reinforces positive views of public figures. Purbaya's empathetic, open, and transparent communication style builds trust and reciprocity, in line with social capital principles (Alfitri, 2023).

The findings demonstrate that personal public engagement builds trust, enhances Purbaya's professional image, and fosters emotional closeness

with the audience. TikTok functions as a digital social space that strengthens public perceptions of political figures through horizontal and participatory interactions, so the theories of political personalization and social capital complement each other in explaining this phenomenon.

## CONCLUSION

This research finds that the political charm Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa on TikTok is constructed based on four dimensions of personalization politics: empathy, transparency, responsiveness and open communication style. Login to access the full article. Through qualitative netnographic analyses, it was found that empathy is the most prominent dimension which is expressed by public in terms of emotional support, trust and perceived close relationship when they interact with content/audience comments/receptive comments.

The rational aspect of transparency increases the professional credibility of Purbaya with how his clear and easy-to-understand explanations on intricate economic conditions, while the emotional one transforms public attitude into bystander's role, which diminishes symbolic distance between state officials and community. The more informal and open the communication, the greater feelings of approachability and relatability.

In conclusion, TikTok operates as a potent digital space for the promotion of political personalization mediated by participatory interaction, in which public figures are portrayed as communicative and trustworthy individuals, socially attached rather than impersonal institutional post-holders.

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