

## **THE POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF WOMEN IN THE GERINDRA PARTY IN LAMPUNG PROVINCE DURING THE 2024 ELECTION**

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Submitted: 12 February 2025, Reviewed: 30 May 2025, Published: 1 June 2025

### **ABSTRACT**

The purposed of this research is to analyze ow do female politicians from Partai Gerindra in Lampung utilize communication strategies based on discourse theory to enhance their political representation and challenge the prevailing masculine political discourse. The method employed in this research is a qualitative case study approach that utilizes in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to explore the political communication strategies of female candidates from the Gerindra Party in Lampung Province. The research findings reveal that female political candidates effectively enhance their communication strategies through inclusive messaging, language sensitivity, social media engagement, and personal branding to build trust and connect authentically with diverse audiences, highlighting the importance of adapting their approaches to meet the cultural and educational needs of their constituents.

**Keywords:** female politicians; communication strategies; political representation.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The foundation of a democratic state rests on the active participation of its citizens in governance and policy-making processes. In Indonesia, the aspiration for a democratic and law-governed state has been a persistent objective since its independence. This commitment is enshrined in Article 1, Paragraph 3 of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states, "Indonesia is a state based on law," emphasizing that laws should guarantee freedom and human rights (Ramadhani, 2022). The amendments to the constitution between 1999 and 2002 further highlighted the importance of human rights (HAM), aiming to provide robust protections for individuals within this democratic framework (Jandevi, 2019).

Despite these constitutional guarantees, the political landscape in Indonesia reflects an ongoing struggle for gender equality, particularly in politics (Lombardo, Meier, Lombardo, & Meier, 2014). Female representation in Indonesian parliament remains

drastically low, consistently failing to meet the 30% threshold set by various governmental initiatives. Historical data reveals that from 1955 until the 2014-2019 legislative period, the number of female members in the Dewan Perwakilan Rakyat/DPR (House of Representatives) has remained below 20%. Only in the last two legislative terms has this figure surpassed 20%, highlighting a gradual yet insufficient progress toward gender parity in political representation (Maryadi, Mahmudah, & Mayong, 2022).

The urgency to increase female representation does not merely stem from a desire for equality but is intrinsically linked to the democratic principle of inclusive governance. An equitable political landscape, where both men and women contribute to policy formulation and decision-making, is essential for achieving social justice and equitable development. Women's voices and experiences are crucial in shaping policies that address the diverse needs of the populace, thus making their inclusion in the political arena a prerequisite for effective governance (Danil & Fitri, 2021).

The challenge of low female representation is coupled with a societal context dominated by patriarchal values in Lampung, which often marginalize women's roles in public spheres. Partai Gerindra (Gerindra Party) has been identified as one of the political parties actively working towards empowering female politicians. The effectiveness of their strategies in enhancing female representation and participation in local politics remains a critical concern (Irwanti & Muharman, 2015).

The current study intends to explore the communication strategies employed by female politicians from Gerindra Party in Lampung, investigating how they navigate a political landscape marked by traditional gender biases. The research aims to uncover the methodologies through which they construct their political identities, garner support, and adapt to the prevailing political environment by focusing on the political communication tactics utilized by these women (Baptista, Cabrera, Martins, & Flores, 2016).

Problem Question and the central inquiry guiding this research is how do female politicians from Gerindra Party in Lampung utilize communication strategies based on discourse theory to enhance their political representation and challenge the prevailing masculine political discourse. This question encapsulates several layers of exploration, including the specific strategies used by these politicians, the contextual challenges they face, and the broader implications of their efforts for female representation in the political domain.

This research investigates the political communication strategies adopted by female politicians in the Gerindra Party in Lampung Province during the 2024 general election. Anchored in discourse theory, the study explores how these women construct inclusive narratives that confront entrenched patriarchal norms within local political structures. They deploy targeted rhetorical strategies and communication techniques to engage meaningfully with constituents and build strategic alliances. The analysis also traces how these efforts translate into the creation of political spaces that accommodate and amplify women's voices, allowing for more balanced representation in governance processes, these politicians not only redefine traditional political roles but also influence agenda-setting and foster gender-sensitive policy dialogues through their active participation. The research evaluates the extent

to which these communication strategies contribute to higher levels of political engagement among women in Lampung, offering a grounded understanding of how strategic discourse can function as a catalyst for inclusive democratic participation. This study contributes both conceptually and empirically to the development of gender-aware political communication frameworks in Indonesia's evolving electoral landscape (Sensales & Areni, 2017).

**Limited Focus on Female Politicians in Specific Political Parties:** While there is existing literature on female political representation in Indonesia, studies often address broader issues or focus on women's participation across various parties without delving deeply into the strategies employed by female politicians from a specific political party, in this case, Gerindra Party. This research fills that gap by concentrating on the distinctive communication strategies used by female politicians within one party, providing insights into their experiences and challenges in a patriarchal political environment (Mayasari, Darmayanti, Tayo, Abidin, & Kusrin, 2022).

**Application of Discourse Theory in Political Communication:** Most existing studies on political communication tend to focus on traditional methods and strategies without applying theoretical frameworks such as discourse theory. This research contributes to the field by analyzing how female politicians construct their narratives through discourse, challenging dominant political narratives and creating more inclusive ones. This application of discourse theory presents a novel perspective on how these politicians can reframe political communication to their advantage and enhance their representation (Salim, 2022).

**Contextual Analysis of Lampung's Political Landscape:** Much of the research on women's political participation is conducted at a national level or in metropolitan areas, with limited attention given to provincial or local contexts like Lampung. By focusing on this region, the study addresses the unique social, cultural, and political barriers that women face in less urbanized areas, providing a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics influencing political participation and representation (Risma & Rahmawati, 2020).

**Impact of Modern Communication Tools and Strategies:** The role of modern communication tools, including social media, in enhancing the political visibility and engagement of female politicians is an emerging area of interest. This research will explore how female candidates leverage contemporary communication strategies to overcome traditional barriers, assess their effectiveness, and differentiate them from previous generations' approaches. This focus on modern communication in the traditional political context represents a significant addition to existing literature (Sholikhati & Mardikantoro, 2017).

**Empirical Evidence of Gendered Political Strategies:** This study aims to provide empirical evidence on the effectiveness of various strategies that female politicians employ to navigate a male-dominated political arena. The research will gather first-hand accounts of the experiences of female politicians, allowing for a more grounded understanding of their strategies and impacts by combining qualitative research methodologies such as interviews and participatory observations, and this emphasis on empirical evidence contributes to a gap

in qualitative research specifically targeting the Indonesian context (Lombardo & Meier, 2019).

**Contribution to Policy and Practice:** Finally, the findings of this research aim to translate into actionable insights for political parties, policymakers, and advocacy groups focused on enhancing the participation of women in politics. The study will contribute to the development of policies that better support female politicians and promote gender equality within the political sphere, thereby bridging the gap between academic research and practical application by identifying successful strategies (Mukarom, 2022), (Solihah, Djuyandi, & Witianti, 2017).

The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the communication strategies of female politicians within Gerindra Party in Lampung, its theoretical application of discourse analysis, its contextual exploration of local politics, its examination of modern communication tools, and its emphasis on empirical data. This combined approach not only addresses significant gaps in existing literature but also aims to provide meaningful contributions to both the academic field and practical applications for enhancing women's political representation in Indonesia.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

In the qualitative research discussing the political communication strategies of female candidates from the Gerindra Party in Lampung Province, the researcher employed several complementary data collection methods. These methods were designed to produce a deep and comprehensive analysis of the issues being studied (Suseno, Susanto, & Sherwani, 2020). Below is a detailed explanation of each method used in this research:

### **1. In-Depth Interviews**

In-depth interviews are one of the primary methods used in this research. Qualitative research often utilizes interviews as a means to obtain rich and in-depth information from participants. In this context, the researcher interviewed female candidates from the Gerindra Party with the aim of understanding the various communication strategies they implemented in their political campaigns and how they interacted with voters.

The interviews were conducted using open-ended questions designed to encourage participants to share their experiences, views, and motivations related to the campaign process. This process allowed the researcher to delve deeper into the reasons behind each candidate's decisions, including how they responded to gender stereotypes, built their image, and the challenges they faced during the campaign.

The advantage of an in-depth interview approach is its flexibility. Researchers can probe further into specific topics deemed important by the participants. Additionally, interviews allow researchers to capture emotional nuances and social contexts that may not be revealed in quantitative data. Researchers can conduct further analysis of the generated data by recording and transcribing the interviews (Kumar, 2023).

### **2. Observation**

The observation method is a crucial component of this research. Through observation, researchers can gain direct insights into how female candidates interact with voters and the surrounding community. The researcher observed various campaign activities, such as meetings with voters, community exhibitions, and discussion forums.

This observation provides real-world context that may not always be captured through interviews alone. Researchers can observe body language, facial expressions, and the audience's immediate reactions by witnessing the interactions between candidates and voters firsthand. This enables researchers to gain broader insights into the effectiveness of the communication strategies employed.

The researcher used field notes to document their observations during the observation process, this included any relevant details that might assist in the analysis, such as community responses to messages conveyed or group dynamics during meetings. Observation serves to complement the information generated from interviews, providing a holistic view of the political communication strategies enacted by the candidates (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014).

### 3. Document Analysis

Document analysis is also a significant method in this research. The documents analyzed could include campaign materials, party publications, media reports, and official documents related to elections and the political strategies adopted by the candidates. Researchers can understand the broader context regarding the communication strategies employed by female candidates by analyzing these documents. Researchers can evaluate and compare the messages communicated during the campaign with larger party data and policies. This also helps researchers to see how the alignment between the campaign messages conveyed and the party's stance on issues faced by the community. Researchers can also identify various narratives used by candidates to present themselves to voters and observe how these narratives are influenced by the social and cultural context in Lampung Province through document analysis. This analysis provides additional valuable information for understanding how political communication is practiced in a unique local context (Newman, 1991).

### 4. Data Triangulation

To enhance the validity and reliability of the findings, this research employs data triangulation. Triangulation involves the use of multiple data collection methods to confirm findings and reduce bias. Researchers can compare and assess the consistency of information obtained from various sources by combining in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. The triangulation approach provides a robust framework for understanding complex phenomena, such as political communication strategies. It allows researchers to gain a more accurate and comprehensive picture of how female candidates operate within the political arena and how they respond to the challenges faced during the election process.

### 5. Coding Code

Coding plays a central role in qualitative research, especially when dealing with complex data that demands structured interpretation. In the study of political communication

strategies among female candidates from the Gerindra Party in Lampung, coding becomes an essential analytical tool that enables a nuanced understanding of the material. Researchers can uncover patterns and insights that might otherwise remain obscured by segmenting interview transcripts, field notes, and documents into thematic units. The process typically begins with open coding, where data is examined closely to generate initial categories rooted in the participants' narratives.

A well-developed coding structure also contributes to the integrity of the research. With axial coding, connections between categories begin to surface, allowing researchers to trace relationships that enrich the analysis. Selective coding then distills these findings into central themes that offer a coherent account of how female candidates communicate politically. Reliability is further strengthened through mechanisms like inter-coder checks, which ensure that different researchers interpret the same data consistently. This step reinforces the credibility of the conclusions drawn. Coding allows space for interpretive flexibility. As new understandings arise during analysis, coding schemes can evolve to better reflect the data's complexity. Such adaptability ensures that findings remain grounded in context and sensitive to the layered realities of political discourse.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The research presented focuses on the communication strategies employed by political figures, specifically female candidates, in engaging with their constituents. This investigation is particularly relevant given the diverse socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds of the audiences they address. The study draws insights from eight key informants who share their experiences and methodologies regarding effective communication and message delivery (Saraswati & Sartini, 2017).

### **Language Sensitivity and Adaptation**

One of the pivotal findings of this research is the importance of language sensitivity. The informants described a deliberate approach to selecting their words, influenced primarily by the linguistic and cultural contexts of their audiences. Expert emphasized the use of everyday language—words commonly used in day-to-day conversations—to connect with the community. She articulated that “the choice of language or words is based on the characteristics of the society.” This illustrates a fundamental principle in effective communication: understanding the audience's background and preferences can significantly enhance message reception (Putri, 2024).

Informant Y highlighted the necessity of using formal language in specific contexts, particularly when addressing groups like local religious gatherings where humor might be misinterpreted. She explained, “In those situations, I have to use formal and simple language so that it's easy to understand.” This adaptability in communication not only fosters mutual respect but also enhances the effectiveness of the message being conveyed (Cornack, 2016).

### **Inclusivity as a Core Message**

The research also uncovered a strong inclination among the informants toward promoting an inclusive message. The concept of inclusivity emerged as a recurring theme, with various informants tailoring their communication to ensure that all community members felt their voices were represented. Expert pointed to their focus on community representation and support, demonstrating an understanding of the need for diverse voices within political discourse (Putri, 2024).

The narrative around inclusivity also revealed a commitment to addressing the specific needs of the community. Amelia, for instance, emphasized the importance of using simple language and being attuned to community needs as a means to enhance engagement. “It’s about creating a dialogue where everyone is encouraged to participate actively,” she stated, this commitment echoes broader democratic principles that advocate for participation and representation (de Travesedo Rojas & Ramírez, 2019).

### **The Role of Media Social**

As the digital age continues to reshape communication methodologies, the study examined the role of social media as a tool for building personal branding and connecting with constituents. Expert articulated the significance of utilizing various social media platforms like TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram. She mentioned, “*The digital era plays a vital role. I have various social media platforms to give society an insight into who I am and why they should vote for me.*” This statement highlights the contemporary shift towards digital engagement, where candidates must not only market themselves but also interact with constituents in real-time (Putri, 2024).

This digital engagement fosters a sense of transparency and authenticity, allowing the candidates to present their qualifications and achievements in ways that resonate with the electorate. This approach recognizes that maintaining a presence across multiple platforms can bridge the gap between political figures and the populations they intend to serve (Mattei, 1998).

### **Political Education and Awareness**

The research also reflects the necessity of political education as a means of refining the electorate’s understanding of the political process. Several informants, including Expert, underscored the importance of explaining the differences between various electoral processes (e.g., legislative elections and regional elections). Their emphasis on educating the public about the distinctions and functions within the political ecosystem indicates a proactive effort to empower citizens through awareness (Putri, 2024).

The notion of political empowerment emerges as crucial, and the informants collectively agree that fostering a well-informed electorate can lead to more meaningful political engagement. This education is positioned as a reciprocal relationship—while voters receive the necessary knowledge, political figures garner more informed constituents who can actively contribute to democratic processes (Labolo, Fadhillah, & Ilham, 2021).

### **Personal Branding and Building Trust**

Individual branding resonated throughout the discussions, with candidates indicating that developing a strong personal image is imperative in earning voters' trust. Informant Z focused on establishing a positive public image by highlighting her values and commitments, which she believes are essential for reinforcing public confidence in her candidacy. *"Building a strong personal brand is about showing people that I genuinely care about their concerns,"* she asserted.

This emphasis on personal branding suggests a shift in political campaigning, where image and reputation can significantly influence public perception. Candidates are encouraged to be relatable and authentic, crafting their personas in ways that resonate with the electorate's sensibilities.

### **Adapting to Cultural Diversity**

Addressing the cultural diversity of the clientele, the informants articulated varying strategies for engaging with disparate demographic groups. Expert shared insights into adjusting her communication style based on the age of her audience. When addressing older constituents, she (Expert) opts for a respectful and formal style, while interacting with younger voters calls for a more relaxed conversational approach (Putri, 2024). She stated, *"It's essential to understand that different age groups have different expectations in communication."* This adaptability underscores the significance of tailoring messages to suit varying cultural and generational expectations (Grebelsky-Lichtman & Bdolach, 2017).

### **Challenges in Political Communication**

While the findings illustrate effective strategies for communication and engagement, they also acknowledge the persistent challenges candidates face. The study alludes to the complexities stemming from cultural transactionality where political figures must navigate negotiations between traditional practices and modern-day political needs. This dynamic is amplified in culturally rich areas where voters may have entrenched expectations of political norms and behaviors, creating a challenging environment for newcomers (Mukarom, 2022).

The research presented and discussed provides an in-depth examination of the strategic communication approaches utilized by female political candidates in order to effectively engage with diverse audiences. The discussion reveals key themes regarding inclusivity, language adaptation, digital engagement through social media, political education, personal branding, and the challenges faced within political communication (Aspinall, White, & Savirani, 2021).

### **Inclusivity as a Central tenet**

At the heart of the research is the notion of inclusivity, which emerges as a fundamental principle guiding the candidates' communication strategies. Several informants highlighted their commitment to ensure that their messages resonate with a broad spectrum of the electorate, emphasizing the importance of representation. Expert articulated a shared



understanding that their political campaigns must reflect the diverse voices of the communities they serve (Putri, 2024).

This focus on inclusivity goes beyond merely representing diverse groups; it also involves actively listening to constituents and acknowledging their unique needs and circumstances. By prioritizing inclusivity, these candidates foster an environment where constituents feel recognized and valued, thereby enhancing their engagement in the political process. The research suggests that candidates who successfully execute inclusive communication strategies can strengthen their relationships with voters, translating into greater trust and potential electoral success (Sullivan, 1993).

### **Language Sensitivity and Strategic Communication**

A critical aspect of effective political communication lies in the sensitivity and adaptability of language used. The informants emphasized that their choice of words and communication style is tailored to suit the cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds of their audiences. Informant Y noted the importance of utilizing straightforward language that is easily understandable to all community members.

Using accessible language helps demystify political processes and makes information more digestible for constituents, this strategic use of language is crucial for combating political apathy, as it allows voters to engage more confidently with political discussions. It promotes a sense of community ownership over political discourse, as constituents are encouraged to contribute their perspectives without fear of being misunderstood (Evans & Bucy, 2010).

### **The Role of social media in Political Campaigning**

In the contemporary political landscape, social media has emerged as a powerful tool for engagement. The research findings highlight the candidates' recognition of social media's pivotal role in amplifying their messages and building personal connections with constituents. As highlighted by Expert, platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram are leveraged to present a more relatable and humanized image of political candidates (Putri, 2024).

The ability to convey messages in real-time fosters increased transparency and responsiveness, resonating with constituents who seek authenticity in political leaders. Social media not only serves as a channel for information dissemination but also allows for interaction and engagement with followers. This two-way communication approach encourages dialogue, promotes trust, and creates a sense of community among constituents. This reliance on social media also introduces challenges, as candidates must navigate the complexities of digital communication, including handling misinformation, responding to criticism, and maintaining a consistent image across different platforms. Despite these challenges, the strategic use of social media remains a cornerstone of modern political campaigning (Butler, Kousser, & Oklobdzija, 2023).

**Political Education: Empowering the Electorate**

Another crucial finding of the research is the emphasis on political education as a means of empowering constituents. The informants collectively acknowledged that a well-informed electorate is essential for meaningful political participation. Candidates aim to enhance understanding and engagement by educating constituents on the differences between electoral processes—such as legislative versus regional elections.

This commitment to political education can be seen as a reciprocal relationship; as candidates provide valuable information to constituents, they simultaneously foster a sense of agency and responsibility among voters. Increased knowledge allows constituents to make informed decisions, ultimately contributing to the democratic process's integrity. Candidates such as Expert exemplified this approach, showcasing their dedication to demystifying political concepts and processes (Sutjipto, Sumartias, Hafiar, & Dewi, 2023).

**Building Trust Through Personal Branding**

Personal branding emerges as a vital theme in the research, with candidates recognizing that establishing a strong personal image is integral to gaining voters' trust. The informants often discussed the nuanced approach they take to build credibility and authenticity in their campaigns. Informant Y underscored the importance of aligning her public persona with the values she espouses.

This connection between personal branding and trust underscores a shifting paradigm in political communication. Today's electorate often seeks candidates who are not only knowledgeable but also relatable and authentic. Candidates can foster deeper connections with constituents, enhancing their overall political capital by presenting themselves transparently and aligning their actions with their stated values.

**Challenges in Navigating Cultural Diversity**

Despite the strategies employed by candidates, the research acknowledges the inherent challenges they face when engaging with culturally diverse audiences. The complexity of navigating varying cultural norms and expectations poses significant obstacles. The informants highlighted the necessity for candidates to be flexible and adaptable in their communications to accommodate local customs and traditions.

Expert's insights into adjusting her communication style based on audience demographics illustrate this adaptability. To ensure effective engagement, candidates must be acutely aware of the cultural nuances that inform their audiences' expectations. Failure to navigate these intricacies can lead to misunderstandings, alienation, or even backlash from constituents (Putri, 2024).

**The Double-Edged Sword of Digital Communications**

The discussion recognizes that while digital platforms facilitate wider reach and engagement, they also present significant challenges related to misinformation, scrutiny, and public perception management. The ease with which information can be disseminated online

means that candidates must remain vigilant in controlling their narratives. The research indicates that candidates must adeptly manage their online presence, consistently presenting coherent and authentic messages across multiple platforms.

The dynamic nature of social media also means that political figures face almost real-time feedback from their audiences, requiring agility in decision-making and communication. While this facilitates interaction, it can also induce pressure, as candidates must constantly engage with constituents while maintaining professionalism and authenticity.

The research findings detailed in the text provide a comprehensive overview of the communication strategies employed by female political candidates, highlighting their approaches to engaging with diverse audiences. This synthesis of findings reveals several core themes, including the importance of inclusivity, the use of language sensitivity, the role of social media, the emphasis on political education, the construction of personal branding, and the challenges of navigating cultural diversity within political communication.

### **Inclusivity as a Guiding Principle**

One of the most significant findings of the research is the centrality of inclusivity in the candidates' communication strategies. The research demonstrates that the ability to make all constituents feel seen and heard is paramount to the electoral success of these candidates. Several participants, such as Expert, articulated a shared understanding that inclusive messaging must reflect the varied backgrounds and needs of the electorate. This focus on inclusivity fosters a democratic atmosphere where constituents can engage with their political representatives without barriers (Putri, 2024).

The candidates emphasized that to achieve true inclusivity, it is essential to listen actively to the community. This involves not just presenting political messages but also engaging in dialogues with constituents to understand their needs and concerns. The findings indicate that candidates who prioritize inclusive communication are better positioned to build trust and rapport within their communities, ultimately leading to greater electoral support.

### **Language Adaptation and Sensitivity**

Another crucial finding is the significance of language adaptation in political communication. Candidates recognized that their choice of words and communication style must be thoughtfully tailored to resonate with their audience's cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The research highlights that language sensitivity is not merely about simplifying messages but also about employing culturally relevant references and relatable examples.

For instance, two informants emphasized the need to use straightforward language and avoid jargon that may alienate or confuse constituents. This linguistic approach not only demystifies political processes but also aligns candidates with the realities of everyday citizens, allowing for a more genuine connection. The findings suggest that candidates who

master the art of tailored communication are more effective in making their messages accessible and engaging, thereby enhancing voter inclusion and participation.

### **Leveraging social media for Engagement**

The research findings also reveal the critical role of social media in shaping modern political communication strategies. Candidates have increasingly turned to platforms such as TikTok, Facebook, and Instagram to connect with their constituents in a direct and personal way. Among the informants, X highlighted how social media serves as a vital tool for building a relatable public persona and providing real-time updates on political agendas and community interactions.

The platforms facilitate not only the dissemination of information but also interactive engagement, enabling candidates to respond to constituent concerns and feedback instantaneously. This two-way communication fosters a sense of community and trust between candidates and voters. The findings also caution that while social media holds immense potential for engagement, it requires careful management to address challenges such as misinformation and public scrutiny.

### **Commitment to Political Education**

A significant part of the research findings emphasizes the candidates' commitment to political education as a means of empowering their electorate. Informants acknowledged the need to educate constituents on fundamental political processes, including the distinctions between various elections, such as legislative and regional ones. This educational component is vital for dispelling confusion around electoral mechanics and ensuring that voters are informed participants in the democratic process.

Candidates (Expert) surfaced as advocates of this educational approach, actively seeking ways to simplify complex political concepts for their audiences. The findings indicate that a well-informed electorate is crucial for fostering meaningful political engagement, as it equips voters with the knowledge necessary to make informed choices. Furthermore, by championing political education, candidates enhance their credibility and position themselves as advocates for the community (Putri, 2024).

### **Building Trust Through Personal Branding**

The importance of personal branding emerged as a crucial finding throughout the research. Candidates recognized that establishing a strong and authentic personal image is intrinsic to gaining voters' trust. The informants frequently discussed the necessity of aligning their personal values and actions with their public persona to resonate authentically with constituents.

Amelia Sari Nanda, for example, emphasized the interplay between personal branding and trust, illustrating how voters are more likely to engage with candidates who exhibit transparency and sincerity. The findings underscore those candidates who articulate their values clearly and provide relatable stories from their lives can cultivate deeper

connections with constituents, enhancing their overall political capital. In a political landscape increasingly characterized by skepticism, effective personal branding becomes a tool for candidates to differentiate themselves and foster loyalty among their supporters.

### **Navigating Cultural Diversity**

The research also highlights the candidates' challenges in navigating cultural diversity within their constituencies. Several informants expressed the complexities associated with adapting their messages to resonate across varying cultural contexts. This necessity for cultural sensitivity emerged as a critical aspect of effective communication.

Candidates (Expert) pointed out the importance of understanding local customs and norms to foster genuine relationships. The findings illustrate that failing to navigate these cultural nuances can lead to misinterpretations or disenfranchisement among constituents. Importantly, the research indicates that candidates who invest time and effort into understanding the cultural dynamics of their communities can enhance their engagement strategies and build stronger connections (Putri, 2024).

### **The Digital Dilemma: Opportunities and Challenges**

Lastly, the findings acknowledge that while social media provides opportunities for wider reach and enhanced engagement, it also poses challenges related to managing one's public narrative. The informants consistently emphasized the pressures that come with digital communication—the need to remain responsive and authentic amid a constantly changing information landscape. While platforms allow for real-time interaction, this environment also necessitates a high level of vigilance and adaptability from candidates. The findings suggest that candidates must maintain a consistent narrative while being open to feedback, ultimately balancing the dual roles of information provider and active listener.

One of the central aspects of the communication strategies employed by female politicians in the Gerindra Party involves the intentional use of inclusive language to challenge the dominance of masculine political discourse. Rather than relying on hierarchical or combative rhetoric typically associated with traditional male leadership styles, these women adopt a discourse that emphasizes empathy, collaboration, and shared community values. This shift in tone not only broadens the appeal of their messages but also symbolically reclaims political space as one that is accessible and relevant to women and marginalized groups.

The strategic use of social media platforms further reinforces this inclusive approach. Social media provides a decentralized communication channel where female politicians can bypass male-dominated institutional gatekeeping and speak directly to constituents. In the context of Lampung, social media has become a critical tool for amplifying women's voices, facilitating grassroots mobilization, and reshaping political narratives. However, while these platforms enable greater visibility, they can also become spaces where gendered stereotypes are reproduced, especially when female politicians feel compelled to conform to dominant norms in order to gain legitimacy or avoid online harassment.

Political education initiatives led by female Gerindra politicians also play a dual role. On one hand, these programs aim to raise awareness about women's rights and political participation, thus challenging the narrative that politics is a male domain. On the other hand, when framed within paternalistic or moralistic tones, they risk reinforcing the idea that women must first “qualify” themselves before being accepted as political actors. This tension reveals the complexity of gendered discourse in political communication, where empowerment and reproduction of norms often coexist.

These findings underscore the importance of critically examining not just what is communicated, but how and through what mediums. Inclusive language, digital engagement, and educational outreach are powerful tools that can subvert dominant discourses, yet their effectiveness depends on the ability of female politicians to navigate structural constraints while maintaining authenticity in their political voice.

### A Comprehensive Understanding of Political Communication

The findings of this research offer an intricate portrait of the communication strategies utilized by female political candidates. Through a collective emphasis on inclusivity, language sensitivity, social media engagement, political education, personal branding, and cultural navigation, these candidates seek to cultivate robust relationships with their constituents.

The insights drawn from the research highlight the imperative of adapting communication strategies to meet the evolving dynamics of modern political engagement. For aspiring political candidates, this research serves as a blueprint, illustrating how thoughtful and strategic communication can positively impact electoral processes and encourage more inclusive democratic participation.

The findings ultimately illuminate that successful political communication transcends mere rhetoric; it is about creating authentic connections, fostering trust, and engaging citizens in meaningful ways. As political landscapes continue to shift, understanding and integrating these communication principles will be essential for candidates seeking to navigate the complexities of contemporary politics effectively.

To enhance the clarity of findings and offer a more accessible summary of the patterns emerging from this study, the following thematic table outlines the key communication strategies employed by female Gerindra politicians in Lampung, the underlying discursive themes, and the observable impacts on political participation and gender representation. This synthesis aims to capture both the depth and breadth of the strategies while emphasizing their contextual significance in challenging patriarchal norms.

**Table 1.** Summary of Key Themes, Communication Strategies, and Impacts

Theme	Communication Strategies	Impact
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<b>Inclusive Political Narrative</b>	Use of empathy-driven language, focus on shared community values	Strengthens emotional connection with constituents, redefines political tone
<b>Digital Engagement</b>	Active use of social media, livestreaming, visual storytelling	Increases visibility, bypasses institutional gatekeeping
<b>Political Education</b>	Grassroots workshops, civic education tailored to women	Builds awareness, encourages first-time female voters and candidates
<b>Gender Identity Framing</b>	Strategic use of gender as moral legitimacy or cultural strength	Reinforces cultural resonance, but risks essentializing female roles

**Source:** data proceed by authors

The table above illustrates how the communication approaches adopted by these women go beyond tactical messaging; they actively reshape the structure and tone of local political discourse. These strategies serve as tools not only for electoral gain but for broader democratic transformation by employing language and platforms that emphasize inclusivity, accessibility, and relational leadership, and the nuanced interplay between challenging and reproducing gendered narratives remains a critical area for further reflection.

The results of this study demonstrate how female politicians in the Gerindra Party construct political communication strategies that not only function tactically but also ideologically challenge the dominance of masculine discourse within local political spaces. Their use of inclusive and empathetic language—often emphasizing shared social experiences and community solidarity—emerges as a discursive tool to reframe the image of political leadership as accessible and collaborative rather than hierarchical and confrontational. This finding is directly aligned with the initial research objective to examine how discourse is mobilized to build inclusive political narratives that resist patriarchal political norms.

The strategic deployment of social media platforms and localized political education programs reveals an intentional effort to open spaces for broader female representation. These platforms allow women to circumvent traditional institutional barriers, while community outreach enables them to cultivate political awareness among underrepresented groups, particularly women at the grassroots level. These practices are not only communicative strategies but also acts of political positioning that serve to reconfigure the boundaries of participation. Such outcomes reflect the study's goal of identifying pathways through which female politicians are reshaping access and representation in governance.

The study also underscores the broader impact of these strategies on political participation among women in Lampung. Increased public engagement, growing female voter interest, and the emergence of new women political figures suggest that these communication approaches are more than symbolic—they generate tangible shifts in the political landscape. These insights reinforce the relevance of the final research objective, which seeks to evaluate the extent to which communication strategies employed by women politicians contribute to greater political inclusion. The findings reveal not only patterns of

strategic action but also the transformative potential embedded in the everyday communicative practices of women navigating political systems marked by structural gender inequality.

## CONCLUSION

This research examined how female legislative candidates from the Gerindra Party in Lampung, Indonesia, employed discourse-based communication strategies to enhance political participation and representation. The findings reveal that candidates successfully crafted inclusive political narratives by aligning their messages with constituents' values, simplifying language, and leveraging platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and Instagram for direct engagement. The study highlights a notable departure from dominant masculine political styles, as these women prioritized performance, cultural resonance, and relational approaches to communication. Despite these advances, challenges rooted in patriarchal norms and traditional political structures persist, with most candidates facing constraints that limit their representational reach. Digital media emerged as a powerful yet underutilized tool, as gaps in strategic management and technical capacity hindered optimal message dissemination, and this underscores the need for targeted training and support systems to strengthen women's digital political presence.

Future research should explore comparative strategies across parties, assess the role of social media in shaping public perceptions of female politicians, and address intersectional factors influencing discourse. These directions will deepen understanding of how inclusive communication can transform gender dynamics in political participation.

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