

## PERSONAL POLITICAL BRANDING FOR ELECTABILITY BOOST: THE EVIDENCE FROM MILLENNIAL LOCAL LEADERS IN WEST SUMATERA

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**ABSTRACT.** *Today, creating a personal political brand is essential for regional heads to increase electability ahead of regional elections. This research explores how elected millennial regional heads create, develop, and communicate their political brands to increase their electability in West Sumatera, Indonesia. The authors used an exploratory approach and data collection through primary data obtained from semi-structured interviews and surveys using questionnaires. Secondary data includes journals, online newspapers, the official website of the General Elections Commission (KPU), the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), and social media. This research also used a quasi-qualitative design that goes through several stages, starting with exploring the research problem to confirm a new theory. Here, we show that they created personal political brands through the legacy and experiences of families and regional leaders. They also take several stages in building a personal political brand, namely conducting introspective investigations and evaluations through brand mantras offline and online traces. Later, their involvement in several organizations also became a determinant of political branding. The final stage in building this personal political brand is to evaluate the existing brand. Therefore, this research can be a reference for candidates for regional heads and legislators who are building their political brands. Given the limitations of this study, the authors suggest conducting follow-up research from another point of view of the political brand and its political marketing strategy.*

**Keywords:** *Political branding; personal political branding; electability; local leaders; millennial leader.*

**ABSTRAK.** Dewasa ini, menciptakan sebuah merek politik pribadi merupakan hal penting dilakukan oleh kepala daerah dalam meningkatkan elektabilitas menjelang pemilihan kepala daerah. Penelitian ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana kepala daerah milenial terpilih menciptakan, mengembangkan, dan mengkomunikasikan merek politik mereka untuk meningkatkan elektabilitas mereka di Sumatera Barat, Indonesia. Penulis menggunakan pendekatan eksploratif dan pengumpulan data melalui data primer yang diperoleh dari wawancara semi-terstruktur dan survei dengan menggunakan kuesioner. Data sekunder terdiri dari jurnal, surat kabar online, situs resmi Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU), Badan Pusat Statistik (BPS) dan media sosial. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kuasi-kualitatif yang melalui beberapa tahapan dimulai dengan mengeksplorasi masalah penelitian hingga mengonfirmasi teori baru. Di sini kami menunjukkan, merek politik pribadi diciptakan melalui warisan dan pengalaman dari keluarga dan para pemimpin daerah itu sendiri. Mereka juga melakukan beberapa tahapan dalam membangun merek politik pribadi, yaitu melakukan investigasi dan evaluasi mawas diri melalui mantra merek, jejak *offline*, dan jejak *online*. Kemudian, keterlibatan mereka dalam beberapa organisasi juga menjadi penentu merek politik. Tahap terakhir dalam membangun merek politik pribadi ini adalah dengan melakukan evaluasi akhir terhadap merek yang ada. Oleh karena itu, penelitian ini dapat menjadi referensi bagi para calon kepala daerah dan anggota legislatif dalam membangun merek politik pribadi mereka. Dengan adanya keterbatasan dalam penelitian ini, penulis menyarankan untuk melakukan penelitian lanjutan dari sudut pandang lain dari merek politik dan strategi pemasaran politiknya.

**Kata kunci:** Merek politik; merek politik pribadi; elektabilitas; kepala daerah; kepala daerah milenial.

### INTRODUCTION

The Simultaneous local leaders elections in West Sumatera in 2020 consisted of gubernatorial and local head elections in 13 districts and cities. (KPU, 2020). Although the implementation of local head elections can run smoothly by implementing a health protocol, the performance of local head elections during the COVID-19 pandemic faces various challenges compared to the previous five years. They start from the campaign stage and move to voting at the polling station. So strategic steps are needed to optimize the series of activities, not only for the Election Commission and the Election Supervisory Agency as the organizer of the local head election but also carried

out by candidates for local heads who will participate in the election.

The millennial generations dominated the results of holding simultaneous gubernatorial and local head elections in West Sumatera Province in 2020. West Sumatera is one of Indonesia's provinces with the highest number of millennial local leaders, beating the East Java province. (Situmorang, 2021) The leader of the millennial generation is the generation born at the ratio of 1980 to 2000 and referred to as Generation Y (Budiati et al., 2018, p. 14). The characteristics of the millennial generation are increased use and familiarity with communication, media, and digital technologies such as the Internet and smartphones (Sarwono & Bernarto, 2020, p. 733) millennial has become an important element

for human resources to meet industry 4.0. However, it is not clear how older leadership behaves on this generation and what impact they have on organizational performance. Thus, this paper focuses on investigating the effect of openness on millennial employee style on leadership effectiveness and its impact on 4.0 organizational performance. Survey is conducted on 224 millennial employees working in various companies in Indonesia. Data are analyzed using Smart-PLS 3.0 based on structural equation modeling (SEM). Because technological advances raised it, millennials have creative, informative, passionate, and productive traits (Budiati et al., 2018, p. 18), so these characteristics will encourage the realization of adaptive, emergent, connected, responsive, and collaborative leadership, problem-solving, interdisciplinarity, teamwork, initiative, communicative, innovative, adaptive, flexibility and self-management (Kelly, 2019; Kipper et al., 2021) the chapter examines the evolution of modern organisational leadership from the perspective of four pillars of learning (behaviourism, cognitivism, constructivism, and connectivism).

The results of the local election of 13 districts and cities in 2020 in West Sumatera show that there are three local heads and five deputy local heads from the millennial generation. Previously, in the 2018 Padang Panjang mayoral, the local election was also elected mayor of the millennial generation. The total is now nine leaders from the millennial generation who are currently governing in several districts and cities in West Sumatera (Situmorang, 2021). Based on the data (Situmorang, 2021), the local head and deputy head are selected based on simultaneous local head elections in West Sumatera Province, aged 33-40 years. The local heads and deputy heads of elected regions have backgrounds from people in business, politicians, and bureaucrats. Still, most of them come from people in the company and politicians with experience in undergraduate to doctorate education. It also indicates that millennials also have better qualities in terms of education. This generation is also interested in continuing education to a higher level because they realize education is a top priority (Budiati et al., 2018, p. 16).

The election of the millennial generation led to West Sumatera because of the increasing number of millennials in West Sumatera. Based on the monthly report of socio-economic data of West Sumatera Province in February 2022, the number of millennials (generation Y) in West Sumatera reached 24.25%. This number is the second-highest after Generation Z at 30.56% (BPS Sumbar, 2022, p. 104). The percentage of millennials in Indonesia is around 25.87%, the second-highest number after Generation Z at 27.94%. The high ratio of the

number of millennials impacts the implementation of government leadership. Millennials' tendency to choose millennial leaders also has characteristics and behaviors similar to millennial voters as psychological and rational voters towards social change (Zachara, 2020, p. 243). So, placing millennials in the political power structure is very important in exploring the leadership mechanism. (Zachara, 2020, p. 242). It can dismiss the notion that millennials have minimal experience managing government because their notes come from young people who have just joined the administration.

The democratic climate in Indonesia opens opportunities for candidates for local heads competitively to build a political image to generate the trust of their constituents to reach a high level of electability, without exception with local head candidates from the millennial generation. Building a political image during the COVID-19 pandemic presents challenges for candidates in carrying out campaigns by implementing health protocols and reducing face-to-face duration as stipulated in The General Election Commission Regulation No. 13 of 2020.

In building a political image, a local head candidate needs to devise an effective strategy for marketing his characteristics, initiatives, political ideas, and work programs to create a positive image and build the trust of his constituents. Political branding can create political imagery as part of political marketing (Pich & Newman, 2020, p. 1). Branding in politics is similar to branding in trade but not identic. Branding at a fundamental level is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design. (Downer, 2016, pp. 9–10) causing the pole inequality relations between men and women. Therefore, in this study wanted to dismantle the detail view of some theories, both social and feminist about gender relations in the family. Each of these theories (structural functional, conflict and feminist. Branding in politics is a specific characteristic that distinguishes one candidate from another. It has a functional appeal to attract the hearts of its constituents with its authenticity so that the public can connect emotionally and rationally with the candidate. Building personal branding is the first step in creating political branding. In essence, political and personal branding is knowledge for consumers (Smith, 2009, p. 211) because personal political branding can be a self-reference tool that facilitates consumption decisions (Smith, 2009, p. 211). In addition, the brand personality of a political party can depend more on the leader's character. (Rutter et al., 2018, p. 207)

Research on political branding as part of this political marketing strategy consists of several perspectives: economic, political brand perspective,

relational, political brand perspective, political brand community perspective, political brand personality perspective, voter-centric political brand perspective, and cultural-political brand perspective. (Winther Nielsen, 2017, p. 25). This research focuses on the political brand personality perspective because there have not been many studies discussing the political brand personality perspective, especially for millennial executive leaders. Previous studies have only focused on all candidates' political brand personality perspectives (Armannsdottir et al., 2020; Guzmán et al., 2015; Parker, 2012; Rutter et al., 2018; Smith, 2009). As shown in the picture below, most researchers only discuss political branding in elections.

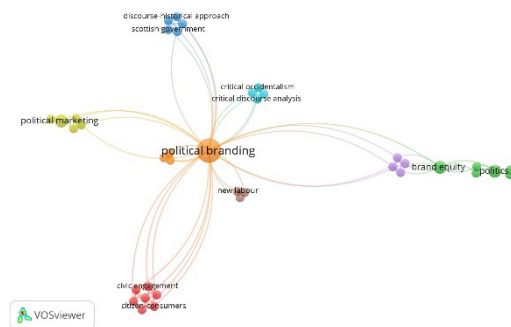


Figure 1. VOSViewer mapping

A search based on the Scopus database on articles published in the last ten years (2014-2024) with title, abstract, and keyword found no results in the keywords “personal political branding” or “personal political branding” AND “election.” However, the keywords “political branding” AND “election” were found in 18 journal articles, and none were related to personal political branding, as shown above. So, the conclusion is that the research on personal political branding is relatively new. In addition, there is a tendency for voters in Indonesia to orientate on personality compared to party identity perspective. So this is what makes researchers very interested in doing this research.

Amid the turmoil of the tendency of Indonesian people to choose leaders from the millennial generation, this research describes the political brand personality strategy carried out by millennial executive leaders in building their electability. For example, West Sumatera is a province with the most millennial organizational leaders in Indonesia, based on the results of simultaneous local head elections in 2020. This research can also be a preference and guide for millennials who will run in executive and legislative head elections contests to determine strategic steps to build their electability through personal branding. This research is essential to implement because it follows the challenges of current political communication that require candidates to determine

their brand in realizing electability during elections. This study investigates how local millennials' heads and deputy heads create, build, and communicate their political branding to make electability in local legislation in West Sumatera.

## METHOD

This study aims to explore and explain the personal political branding of millennial executive leaders in West Sumatera. Qualitative research constructs social reality and cultural meaning and focuses on interactive processes and events (Neuman, 2014, p. 17). At the same time, the case study examines the features of several cases in the form of individuals, groups, organizations, movements, and events. The case data is detailed, broad, and varied and can focus on one point or specific time duration (Neuman, 2014, p. 42). The data was from primary data and secondary data. The researcher collected preliminary data through semi-structured interviews and a survey using questionnaires to 50 informants with open-format questions. Hence, the informants were free to answer in their content and style (Walliman, 2011, p. 98). Still, the secondary data consists of journal articles, online newspapers, and the official websites of KPU and BPS. The informants' determination used purposive sampling. Purposive sampling can be an appropriate sampling technique, as this paper aimed to explore personal political brands. The informants include an elected millennial regent and mayor, local election voters in West Sumatera, and a candidate success team. Every informant answered the questions using an open format answer (Walliman, 2011, p. 99).

The researchers used a Quasi-Qualitative Design (QQD). The following steps are : (Bungin, 2020, pp. 180–183):

1. The first is searching for the problem. In this initial stage, researchers explore research problems through various discussions, observations, or the exploration of multiple journals and literature.
2. The second is doing a literature review. At this stage, researchers focus on exploring various literature reviews of predetermined problems.
3. The third is the founding gap. This stage is critical in determining the position of researchers in a study globally.
4. The fourth is constructing a hypothesis—hypotheses used in quasi-qualitative research when in data collection.
5. The fifth is planning data sources. This plan can formulate data collection strategies that facilitate researchers in the field and avoid difficulties.
6. The sixth is constructing data collection methods. At this stage, the researcher plans what data is



needed and what techniques and sources can help reveal the data.

7. The seventh is using a theoretical framework. In this stage, researchers use theory as an analytical tool to collect data in the field according to the problems that develop during the research.
8. The eighth is data collection. In this stage, researchers use data triangulation to collect credible data. So, in this stage, the research entirely used qualitative procedures.
9. The ninth is to keep a diary, transcript, coding, themes, categorization, and memos. While in the field, researchers also make diaries, transcripts of data and interview results, do manual coding, build themes and categorization, and create manual memos. This stage is the stage of ejaculation of quasi-qualitative research.
10. The tenth is trying to find new sources of information. This qualitative research is not satisfied only with the result during the data collection. Instead, researchers are constantly trying to come up with new sources of information that might yield different information.
11. The eleventh is triangulation. Researchers also triangulate to test the validity of the data.
12. The twelfth is constructing theory. In quasi-qualitative, researchers will build theories based on data findings in the field as a result of work during research before confirming the theory.
13. The thirteenth is the confirmation theory. At this stage, research that has produced a new theory confirms the theory used in this study, namely the old theory that led to research, critique, and built parts that can close the gaps found in the review literature at the beginning of the study.
14. The last is constructing a new theory. In this stage, the results of theory confirmation can cause researchers to revise the theory. Therefore, this theory revision builds new theories that belong to researchers' or researchers' perspectives.

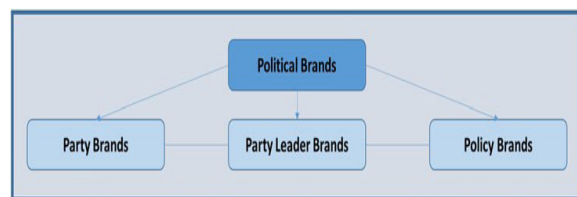
Based on these steps, the quasi-qualitative was relevant to answering the research problem of building political and personal branding through electability for executive millennial leaders in West Sumatera.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The understanding of political branding comes from an extension of research conducted in the non-profit sector, where citizens or voters in the political market can be seen in the same context as consumers in the commercial. (Pich & Newman, 2020, p. 3). Currently, branding is not limited to companies or commercial products; it has been used to build

personal political branding. Personal branding is also about creating a larger image and understanding the unique combination of rational and emotional attributes such as skills, values, and passions. Using and utilizing these attributes to differentiate yourself will guide career decisions in serving society. So, personal branding strategies are essential for long-term success in politics. (Omojola, 2008, p. 129).

For a successful political brand, the built brand must be given context, see the vision and goals related to community expectations, and make a positive difference in society. A candidate must have an authentic personality and know the pluses and minuses of exploring the brand. When communicating with the public, a candidate must ensure that the communication built matches the brand. The content created does not cause miscommunication to influence opinions, attitudes, and behavior (Freelon & Wells, 2020, p. 6). A candidate must be consistent in various activities and not abandon his political brand. The building of political branding consists of several elements that are interconnected with each other, as found in Figure 2 below:

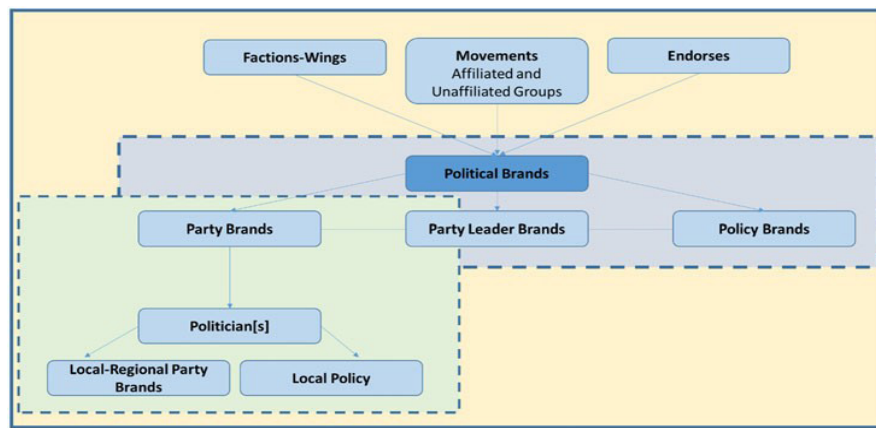


(Pich & Newman, 2020, p. 3)

**Figure 2. The political brand trinity**

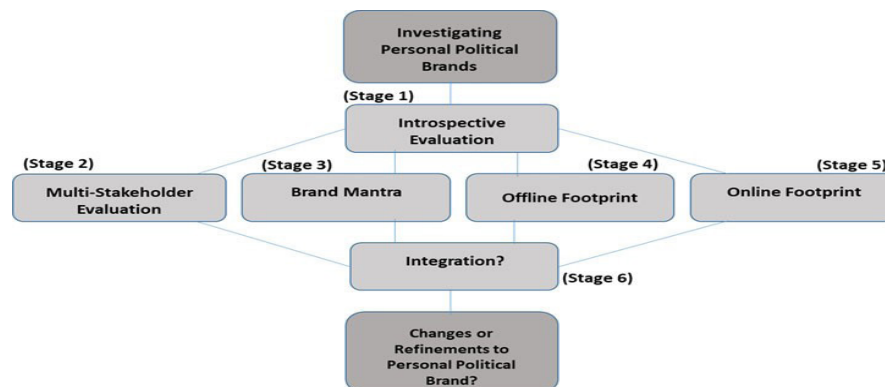
Figure 2 shows that collaboration between party brands, party leader brands, and policy brands is called the political brand trinity in building a political brand. This relationship appears when a candidate manages to construct a political image well. It can increase people's intention to choose the candidate and his political party if the message, policies, and campaigns are relevant and appealing to the voters. (Pich & Newman, 2020, p. 5). Each part of the political brand trinity consists of the elements of the environment, as shown below in Figure 3.

Figure 3 explains that party politicians build political brands through party brands at the regional level, and mission visions realized through regional policies can be different from party policies. So, when local guidelines follow community expectations, they encourage realizing political brands. In addition, there are also sub-political brands that can be affiliated or not affiliated with certain political groups, movements, or forms of support. Figure 3 also explains how important the role of a politician is in building his political brand through a political brand personality perspective. Personality political branding will encourage candidate electability in a local election.



(Pich &amp; Newman, 2020, p. 8)

Figure 3. The political branding environment



(Philbrick &amp; Cleveland, 2015, pp. 183–187)

Figure 4. Six stages of evaluating personal political brands

Personal branding is about how others perceive you because, in essence, everyone has their brand, whether they know it or not. After all, how others see them forms a perception that others have towards you. The management of Personal branding must be strategic, consistent, and effective. Personal branding combines attributes, values, drivers, strengths, and passions that distinguish the unique promise from peers. Personal branding will identify, clarify, and communicate a person to his environment so as not only to cause perception but also the value contributed to the environment. (Philbrick & Cleveland, 2015, pp. 182–183)

From a political brand personality perspective, the voters see political parties with human personality traits. Some are young, fun, trendy, but others are old-fashioned, credible, and hardworking. The political brand personality perspective emphasizes that voters perceive political parties through human-like characteristics. (Winther Nielsen, 2017, p. 14). The six stages developed by (Philbrick & Cleveland, 2015, pp. 183–187) will evaluate political brand personality, such as in Figure 4 below.

Based on Figure 4, the following are six stages that politicians must follow in building political and personal branding:

1. The first stage is an investigation stage where personal political branding tries to understand their position and ideology before, present, and future.
2. The second stage assesses the current understanding of their political branding from various stakeholder points of view.
3. The third stage ensures that the personal political branding has a clear, unique mantra and vision.
4. The fourth stage investigates the current and desired physical (offline) traces to develop the identity selected by constituents.
5. The fifth stage focused on exploring the presence of politicians in the current online footprint.
6. The sixth stage is the assessment stage of all integrated and aligned steps. If not aligned, politicians can develop a strategic plan to improve their political branding to align with constituents' expectations. In this stage, politicians must monitor their target market, competitors, and communication tactics to build long-term relationships with their members. (Armannsdottir et al., 2020, p. 8). Based on the results of interviews and the questioner's result against informants obtained the following memos in Figure 5:

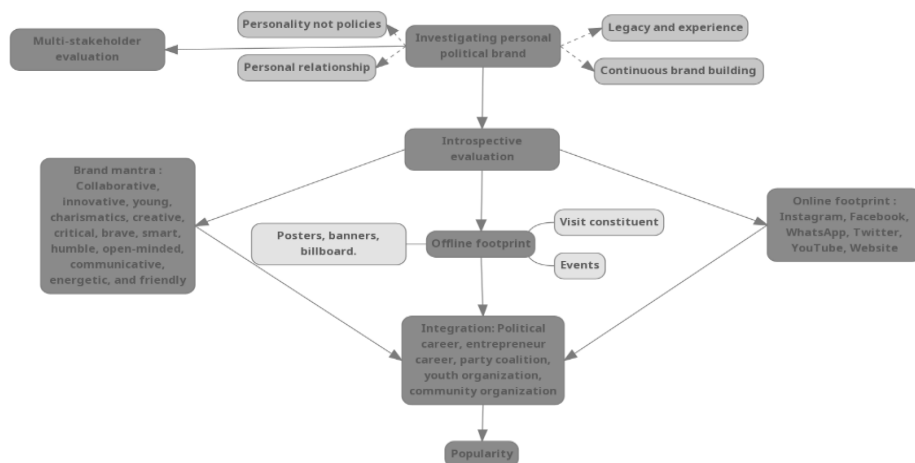


Figure 5. The memos of an introspective evaluation framework for personal political branding developed by (Philbrick & Cleveland 2015) and (Pich et al., 2020)

Based on Figure 5, The elected millennial regional leaders have fulfilled the steps of forming personal branding (Philbrick & Cleveland, 2015) and (Pich et al., 2020) while the explanation is as follows:

**1. The first** stage is the investigation and identification of political branding. At this stage, the regional head/deputy head of this region does several things.

a. Legacy and experience.

Legacy and experience will be the background and reason for the nomination of the local head and regional representative. Based on the study, some of the elected local leaders came from families of businessmen, politicians, indigenous figures, religious figures (clerics), and educated people. The candidate and their families have been influential people in the region and West Sumatera for a long time. So, this becomes the reason why the public knows them.

In addition, in terms of experience, based on the study, most local heads and deputy heads of millennial regions are still relatively new to joining politics. These local heads and deputy local heads are politicians, prosperous businessmen, lawyers, and successful bureaucrats. Some of them have a traditional honorary title called "*Datuak*." Although some of them are new to joining politics, they can increase their popularity reasonably quickly so that the people in their constituencies can know them. It is also due to legacy support, their activeness in social media, and active participation in political parties, social community organizations, and youth organizations such as the Indonesian Youth National Committee, Karang Taruna, Pancasila Youth, and Young Indonesian Entrepreneurs.

b. Continuous brand building.

Building a political brand cannot be done quickly and suddenly. The political brand built must be sustainable and oriented for the long term.

It takes eighteen months to two years before polling day to make a reputation that contributes to personal identity (Pich et al., 2020, p. 9) as the optimal time to create a political presence among constituents. Based on the study, the candidate must build a consistent narrative about its robustness, vision, and mission and disseminate it with print and online media.

c. Personality is not policy.

The political brand awakened to the local head and deputy head of the millennial region looks more at the personality characteristics and sturdiness of the candidate. People in the area see more personal qualities than their political parties. Personality is much more important than policies. Because generally focused policies only become part of the political brand after the general election. In this case, only the incumbent can convey the policy achievements in the previous period, for new candidates can't present the policy achievements. Some will only make policies that they will carry through the vision and mission conveyed during the campaign. So, in this case, the new candidate is essential to communicate their values. After being elected, they realize their political achievements can become part of their brand identity.

In this study, the author found the success of incumbent policy achievements in the past period in arranging the government bureaucracy into their political brand when campaigning for the nomination at the next stage. In contrast, policies that have not been achieved or implemented optimally in the first period will target the next performance achievement if elected in the next period. So, assuming that the task has not been done maximally in the first period of his leadership, they will convince constituents to re-elect him in the next period to achieve and maximize the performance and policies prepared. It will be found rarely in new candidates unless the candidate already has a good track record and contributes to influencing

policies outside the government. (Pich et al., 2020, p. 11)

d. Personal relationship

Personal relationships are essential in building political and personal branding, creating emotional closeness between politicians, constituents, friends, family, and other politicians. Based on the results of research, young souls in the millennial generation cause them to be sociable, feel close and familiar with their constituents, and are even so close they memorize the names of their members. They can communicate well with their constituents and adapt to society's conditions and culture. It causes people not to hesitate when they want to share information with them.

They intensively surveyed the community before creating a personal relationship to see their electability predictions. It is essential to determine the next step in building their political branding. This survey will be a reference in determining the micro-targeting campaign that will direct who the particular segment is and how to persuade voters and get more votes from their constituents compared to other candidates. Based on the research results, this personal relationship they have built is long enough, and some even did it before running for local head and deputy local head, coupled with the achievements and successes they have achieved before.

Some important themes in this stage, namely legacy, experience, continuous brand building, personality is not policies, and personal relationships, will go through the evaluation stage by stakeholders involved in building this political and personal branding. As the initial stage in determining the political brand, this stage will get more input from relevant stakeholders before continuing with the introspective evaluation stage. Among others, stakeholders can consist of a successful team of candidate couples, families, and political consultants used by the candidate couple in building their political brand. The candidate head and deputy local head will go public by creating a brand mantra online and offline footprint at the reflective evaluation stage.

**2. The second stage** is the introspective evaluation.

This second stage is advanced and carried out after the evaluation stage by stakeholders and consists of 3 (three) indicators: brand mantra, online footprint, and offline footprint. The description is as follows:

- a. Brand Mantra. The brand concept must align with modern politics so that political brands are not simply transferred from party to voter (Scammell, 2015, p. 16) but must have a brand mantra. Brand mantras are unique words that distinguish a

brand's characteristics from other brands. So that this brand mantra can give confidence in constituents to choose the candidate, this brand mantra consists of identity creation (values, key issues, ideology), authentic personality, and personal characteristics. In the study, researchers asked informants to write 3 (three) words that describe the brand mantra of this millennial local's head and deputy's head. Some words are obtained that represent this mantra brand, namely: collaborative, innovative, young, charismatics, creative, critical, brave, intelligent, humble, open-minded, communicative, energetic, and friendly, coupled with the icon "it's time for the young to lead" The words became the brand mantra that distinguishes from regional heads and deputy regional heads of generation x and baby boom generations in West Sumatera.

- b. Offline footprint. The offline impression is essential for a candidate. Offline print establishes communication and interaction between the candidate and the community. That way, the public can know the figure of the candidate instantly. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, this activity is limited to health protocol to avoid spreading the COVID-19 virus. Based on the study results, some offline activities were meeting constituents, posters, banners, and billboards, brainstorming on print media, and attending social community activities. The explanations are:

- a) Visiting constituents aims to absorb aspirations and complaints from the community. The candidates did this activity before the campaign until a few days before the vote. In this case, the candidate for local head also conveys his vision and mission when elected as head and deputy local head, visiting constituents. They also bring some provision assistance to underprivileged communities. This activity is carried out regularly within a specific time in the areas in their micro-targeting campaign. The presence of candidates to meet constituents is essential for the community's future so that they can get to know and even feel close to their prospective leaders. Meeting constituents can be an opportunity for candidates for local heads and deputies to spread their brand spells and convince the public to choose the candidate.
- b) Posters, banners, and billboards are print media that spread from almost every city corner to the village. Some displayed billboards presented to the public during the campaign would get to know the candidate.



The spread of posters, banners, and billboards allows candidates to be known and build their brand, especially for people who do not actively use social media. For local candidates who are young and not yet well known in the community, it is necessary to prepare creative billboards to attract the community's attention. Before the onslaught of social media campaigns, billboards were one of the most widely used means of candidates.

- c) They attended and held social, religious, entrepreneurial, artistic, and cultural activities. In this activity, the candidate follows a series of activities at the invitation of the event committee or holds certain events. In fulfilling the committee's invitation, the candidate is usually asked to be a resource and speaker, especially in entrepreneurial activities, because most come from successful entrepreneurs. Their presence as resource persons motivates the community, especially young people, to build a business to create jobs. In addition, candidates already part of the government bureaucracy are usually asked to fill out events with leadership themes, informal situations such as webinars and non-formal discussions, casual discussions, and hanging out.
- c. Online footprint. Along with the increasing use of mobile phones and the rapid development of social media, the online impression is the most effective means of publishing a series of offline footprint activities by candidates. The public can know the political image without looking directly at the field. Today, social media is a platform that facilitates communication between candidates and their communities so that people from various regions and parts of the world can monitor and observe the candidate's activities. Social media became a communication channel for candidates during the election campaign. Social media can change the dynamics of setting the political agenda because social media is a relevant channel for political communication, expanding the number and types of actors that make up the agenda and expanding the public's reach by political actors (Gilardi et al., 2021, p. 5) potentially, they have increased the capacity of various kinds of actors to shape the agenda. We study this question in the Swiss context by examining the connections between three agendas: the traditional media agenda, the social media agenda of parties, and the social media agenda of politicians. Specifically, we validate and apply supervised machine learning classifiers to categorize 2.78 million articles published in

84 newspapers, 6,500 tweets posted on official party accounts, and 210,000 tweets posted by politicians on their own accounts from January 2018 until December 2019. We first use the classifier to measure the salience of the four most relevant issues of the period: the environment, Europe, gender equality, and immigration. Then, using a vector autoregression (VAR. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, and YouTube are the social media platforms used. Social media such as Facebook and Twitter allow candidates to reach voters, mobilize supporters, and influence the public agenda directly (Stier et al., 2018, p. 50). It also advertises and trades political ideas and candidates by political parties (Falasca et al., 2019, p. 6). In addition, candidates' profiles as potential leaders will tend to grow in line with their media exposure. (López-García & Pavía, 2019, p. 7)

3. **The third stage** is the integration carried out by the candidate in building its political brand. At this stage, some candidates are participating in various organizations. Based on the study results, before being elected as heads and deputy local heads, they had joined several organizations such as political parties and political party coalitions, Indonesian business associations, youth organizations such as the Indonesian Youth National Committee, and other social community organizations.
4. **In the fourth stage**, after going through the three steps, candidates for regional heads and deputy regional heads again evaluated the series of their brands from the formation of brand mantras, offline footprints, and online footprints to integrate with various organizations. Brand evaluation is essential to determine how effective and successful the brand is. Does it need to be replaced or continued? The feedback obtained from constituents allows candidates to evolve for the better. This brand will form popularity for the candidate to be known to the public. When the popularity can be very liked and follows the community's expectations, it will give rise to likeability. It impacts electability, namely the level of candidate electability in implementing local head elections, as shown in Figure 6 below.



**Figure 6. The process of political branding to build electability**

Figure 6 above shows the relationship between popularity, likeability, and electability. Electability



forming depends on the presence of the highest brand equity. Each party wins the electoral vote, and candidates with the most substantial brand equity can finally win the general election (Parker, 2012, p. 223) brand awareness, associations, perceived quality, and loyalty. It also applies to local heads and deputies elected from this millennial generation in West Sumatera.

Based on the study results, the electability of heads and deputy heads of elected regions is relatively high. When contesting, the election of the local leader consists of many candidate pairs or is only followed by 2 (two) pairs of candidates. Political and personal brand building has gone through stages (Philbrick & Cleveland, 2015)(Pich et al., 2020). So that they can create, build, and communicate their political branding and increase electability in local legislation in West Sumatera.

Based on the election results for 2020, the following table shows the percentage of votes for each regional head and deputy regional head.

**Table 1. Election votes for heads and deputy local heads of the millennial generation in West Sumatera in 2020 local elections**

No.	Name	Percentage of victory	Information
1.	Candidate pair A	32,4 %	The four pairs of candidates followed this local election
2.	Candidate pair B	63,6%	The two pairs of candidates followed this local election
3.	Candidate pair C	25,1%	The five pairs of candidates followed this local election
4.	Candidate pair D	39,6 %	The four pairs of candidates followed this local election
5.	Candidate pair E	44,4 %	The three pairs of candidates followed this local election
6.	Candidate pair F	57,2%	The three pairs of candidates followed this local election
7.	Candidate pair G	31,2%	The four pairs of candidates followed this local election
8.	Candidate pair H	42,4%	The four pairs of candidates followed this local election
9.	Candidate pair I	35,2%	The four pairs of candidates followed this local election

Source : (KPU, 2020)

The table above explains the electability of elected heads and deputy local heads is relatively high compared to other candidates who participated in the election of regional leaders in the area. Some areas are only followed by two candidates, while more than two candidate pairs follow others. There

are even up to five candidate pairs. More than two candidate pairs followed the local head election, having diverse electability ranging from 25.1% to 57.2%.

## CONCLUSION

In looking at political branding, there are consists of 6 (six) perspectives (Winther Nielsen, 2017, p. 25). Personal political branding is one perspective in political branding. Personal political branding is essential for every candidate for head and deputy local head, especially in Indonesia, because voters in Indonesia tend to look more at the characteristics of the candidate's strength than the supporting party and policies made. Excellent and effective personal political branding will be able to create high electability. However, in designing, building, and communicating personal political branding, it is necessary to go through various stages that begin with investigating personal political branding and conducting introspective evaluations of the brand mantra, offline footprint, and online footprint. The next step is to integrate by joining various organizations. All these stages must evaluate whether this political brand is still relevant, following community expectations, or needs improvement with other more attractive brands.

In this case, the brand mantra created by the head of the millennial region will be slightly different from the brand mantra created by the local head of Generation X and the baby boom, so this is what can convince the public to choose the regional leader of this millennial generation. In the next stage, political brands also focus on the integration and participation of candidates in various organizational activities. The candidate himself and the stakeholders involved in building the brand will continually evaluate these stages to determine whether the existing political brand is still relevant to the current situation. A good brand creates the emergence of likeability in the community. It also impacts the candidate's electability. The regional heads and deputy heads of elected millennials in West Sumatera Province, through the 2020 provincial head election, have implemented the stages in building electability through personal political branding with a different brand mantra from other candidates. So they can obtain a high level of electability.

With the limitations in this study, the author strongly suggests the sustainability of research on political branding for millennial heads and deputy local heads, especially further studies in this West Sumatera Province. Furthermore, research can be conducted on political branding from 5 (five) other perspectives of political branding. Future research can evaluate the

personal political branding of heads and deputy local heads of millennial regions to see the sustainability of the political brand built at the time as a candidate after occupying the local head positions of deputy regional head. In addition, political branding is part of political marketing through political marketing strategies for building electability for a broader scope.

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