THE EFFECT OF BILLBOARD CONTENT ON THE ELECTABILITY OF FEMALE MAYORAL CANDIDATES IN KENDARI CITY IN 2024

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ABSTRACT. This study aims to analyze the effect of billboard content on the electability of female mayoral candidates in the 2024 Kendari City Regional Head Elections (Pilkada). The main issue underlying this study is the fact that every Pilkada in Kendari City always features female candidates, but they repeatedly experience defeat despite conducting political campaigns through various outdoor media, including billboards. The method used is a descriptive quantitative approach with simple random sampling technique and a total of 123 respondents. The independent variable in this study is billboard content, while the dependent variable is candidate electability. Data were collected through a five-point Likert scale questionnaire and analyzed using simple linear regression with the help of SPSS version 26. The results showed that billboard content had a positive and significant effect on the electability of female candidates (H_a accepted and H_0 rejected), with a value of R = 0.471, R^2 = 0.222, and significance p = 0.000. This means that 22.2% of the variation in candidate electability is explained by the quality of billboard content, especially in terms of visual aspects, social messages, and gender issues. These findings prove that billboards are still an effective campaign medium in enhancing the image and electability of female candidates at the local level. This finding confirms that billboards still have a strategic function in local political communication because they are able to build image, assert the political identity of candidates, and convey social and gender issues that are relevant to the political goals of female candidates. This study implies that optimizing billboard content can contribute to increasing the political competitiveness of women in electoral contests at the regional level.

Keywords: Billboard; Political communication; Electability; Female candidates; Regional elections.

INTRODUCTION

In the context of regional elections (*Pilkada*), campaign materials play an important role in shaping public perception and voting behavior. One of the most dominant forms of campaign material is billboards, which serve not only as a medium of information, but also as an effective means of visual communication in building the image, identity, and electability of candidates. Billboards as outdoor media play a role in attracting public attention through a combination of visuals, symbols, and political messages designed to create a certain impression of the candidate (Khatami, 2021). Their existence in local politics shows that conventional visual communication strategies remain relevant and are still trusted to strengthen the candidate's closeness to voters.

In political communication studies, billboards serve as propaganda instruments designed to shape public opinion and create a positive image of a candidate. Ellul in Nimmo (2000) states that political propaganda is a form of communication that is systematically planned to mobilize public support through the use of symbols, narratives, and persuasion techniques such as labeling, testimonials from public figures, or calls to follow the trend. In the context of regional elections, the messages conveyed on billboards utilize this strategy to reinforce the candidate's identity, foster trust, and build emotional closeness with voters. This process takes place through social dynamics as described by Berger & Luckmann (1990), namely through the stages of externalization, objectification, and internalization of political meanings disseminated through the media.

The influence of billboards in shaping public perception can also be understood through the theories of agenda setting, priming, and framing. Agenda setting theory explains that the media, including billboards as outdoor media, can determine the issues that are considered important by the public through the emphasis of certain information (McCombs, Shaw and Weaver, 2014). When billboards consistently display certain attributes such as candidate photos or campaign slogans, these elements become more memorable to voters. In the next stage, priming plays a role when the spotlight on certain information influences the public's assessment standards for candidates (Iyengar and Kinder, 1987). This means that billboards not only increase voters' memory of candidates but also shape the aspects that the public uses to assess their competence.

Framing theory provides further explanation of how the messages constructed in billboards influence the way the public understands political reality. According to Mateus (2020), framing is a constructivist approach that not only focuses on highlighting information but also emphasizes the process of constructing meaning through the

selection of specific symbols, words, and narratives. This process allows voters to understand candidates within a certain frame, for example, as strong female leaders, agents of change, or figures who are close to the lower classes. Mateus asserts that framing operates as a social process that connects the conveyance of meaning by the media with the political culture that exists in society. In the 2024 Kendari regional elections, billboards of female candidates that display messages of gender equality, economic empowerment, or certain ethnic identities have the potential to shape social constructs that normalize female leadership and influence the way voters associate gender issues with the suitability of candidates.

Billboards are also an influential medium for candidate electability, especially for female candidates who still face structural and cultural challenges in politics. Electability itself is the level of electability of a person based on public perception of their credibility, image, and political appeal (Putra, 2020). A person can be said to have high electability if they are widely known for their positive image and receive strong social and political support. However, public perceptions of women's abilities in politics are often still overshadowed by gender stereotypes and traditional values that place women in the domestic sphere (Wahyudi, 2019). These obstacles include limited structural, economic, and educational access, as well as a lack of support from political parties (Kollo, 2017).

To overcome this representation gap, the state, through Law No. 12 of 2003, has set a 30% quota for women's representation in politics. This affirmative policy opens up wider opportunities for women to participate in the democratic process. However, in practice, the fulfillment of this quota is often merely a formality and has not been fully effective in improving the political position of women (Priandi and Roisah, 2019). Therefore, effective political communication strategies, such as the use of billboards with targeted content, are important instruments for increasing the popularity and electability of female candidates at the local level.

In the 2024 Kendari City Regional Election, three prominent female figures emerged, namely Siska Karina Imran (SKI), Sitya Giona Nur Alam, and Nirna Lachmuddin. All three actively used billboards as their main campaign tool to introduce themselves, present their vision and mission, and strengthen their political image among the community. SKI highlighted her bureaucratic experience and professionalism as a medical worker; Giona showcased her political family background

and role as a businesswoman; while Nirna emphasized her collaborative program through the slogan "*Kendari Menyala*" (Kendari Lights Up). This phenomenon shows how billboards are used not only as a promotional tool, but also as a form of political image construction for women in the local context.

However, empirical studies linking billboard content and the electability of female candidates in regional elections are still limited. Most previous studies have focused more on general political communication strategies without quantitatively examining how elements of billboard content—such as propaganda language, ethnic symbols, educational qualifications, visual design, supporting parties, and candidate pairs—affect the electability of women. This research gap indicates the need for studies that quantitatively examine the influence of billboard content on the electability of female candidates at the regional level.

The novelty of this study lies in its quantitative analysis measuring the specific contribution of billboard content elements to the electability of female mayoral candidates in the 2024 Kendari regional elections. Previous studies such as Husai et al. (2025), and Ramadhan (2022) have indeed shown that outdoor media has an influence on voter perceptions, but they have not directly assessed how visual components such as images, slogans, gender messages, and symbolic attributes contribute to the electability of female candidates. This study fills this gap by offering empirical evidence on the measurable relationship between billboard content and voter political preferences in a local context relevant to gender representation issues.

Based on this description, the research hypotheses are H_0: There is no influence of billboard content on the electability of female mayoral candidates in Kendari City in 2024, and H_a: There is an influence of billboard content on the electability of female mayoral candidates in Kendari City in 2024. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of billboard content on the electability of female mayoral candidates in Kendari City in 2024.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive quantitative method to analyze the effect of billboard content on the electability of female mayoral candidates in the 2024 Kendari City Regional Head Elections (*Pilkada*).

The research was conducted in four subdistricts with the highest number of Permanent Voter Lists

(DPT) in Kendari City, namely Puuwatu, Poasia, West Kendari, and Baruga subdistricts. The selection of these locations was based on the representativeness of voters who had a high level of participation in local political contests.

The research population included all Kendari City residents registered as permanent voters in the 2024 elections, totaling 238,205 people (Senong, 2024). Due to the large size of the research population and several limitations faced by the researchers, they decided to draw samples using the Taro Yamane or Slovin formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{N}{N.d^2 + 1}$$

Explanation:
N = population size
N = sample size
e = margin of error (taken as 9% (0.09), therefore,

$$n = \frac{238.205}{238.205(0,09)^2 + 1}$$

= 123,392

This study consists of two main variables: the independent variable (X), which is billboard content, and the dependent variable (Y), which is the electability of female mayoral candidates. The billboard content variable is measured through six indicators, namely: (1) propaganda language, (2) ethnic or clan identity, (3) educational qualifications, (4) visual design, (5) supporting party, and (6) candidate pair. Meanwhile, the candidate electability variable is measured through two dimensions, namely perceptions of elected candidates and unelected candidates.

The data collection instrument used a closed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). Before use, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability through a trial involving 30 respondents outside the main sample. The validity test results showed that of the 15 statements on the billboard content variable, 13 items were declared valid with a calculated r value > 0.361. Meanwhile, on the candidate electability variable, 12 of the 15 items were declared valid.

The reliability test results using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient showed a high level of consistency, with a value of 0.940 for the billboard content variable and 0.962 for the candidate electability variable, both exceeding the threshold of 0.6 (Sugiyono, 2009). This indicates that all research instruments are reliable and suitable for use in primary data collection.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and simple linear regression analysis with the help of SPSS version 26 software. Descriptive analysis was used to describe the distribution of respondent data, while simple linear regression was used to test the effect of billboard content variables on the electability of female mayoral candidates.

Decisions were made by comparing the empirical F value and the theoretical F value at a significance level of 0.05. If the empirical F > theoretical F, then H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected, which means that billboard content has a significant influence on the electability of female mayoral candidates.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study clearly show that billboard content has a positive and significant effect on the electability of female mayoral candidates in Kendari City in the 2024 Election (H_a is accepted and H_0 is rejected). Empirically, simple linear regression analysis proves that the billboard content variable plays an important role in influencing the level of recognition and support for female candidates. In other words, the results of this study support the initial hypothesis that the quality and design of billboard content are directly correlated with the electability of candidates.

Statistical Analysis of the Influence of Billboard Content

The results of the simple linear regression test show that billboard content (X) has a regression coefficient of 0.480, with a t-value of 2.976 and a significance of 0.000 (<0.05). The constant value of 19.745 indicates that before the influence of billboard content was taken into account, the candidate's electability was already at a positive base value. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.471 indicates a positive relationship between billboard content and candidate electability, while the coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.222 means that 22.2% of the variation in candidate electability is explained by billboard content, while the remaining 77.8% is influenced by other factors such as social networks, interpersonal communication, or online media. (Table 1).

These findings show that improvements in the quality and visual strategy of billboards significantly increase a candidate's chances of being elected. The significance value ($p < 0.05$) confirms that this relationship is not merely coincidental, but rather a real and statistically measurable effect. These findings are consistent with the research by Husain

et al. (2025), which found that billboard content contributed 5.8% to the increase in candidate electability in regional political contests. Similar results were also reported by Ramadhan (2022), who confirmed that outdoor media, especially billboards, continue to have a significant effect on shaping public perception, particularly through the visual and symbolic power they convey.

Table 1. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis of Billboard Content on the Electability of Female Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Candidates in Kendari City in 2024

Variable	Regression Coefficient (b)	t calculated (db=121)	t sig
Billboard Content (X)	0,480	2,976	0,000
Constant (a)	19,745		
Regression Coefficient (R)	0,471		
R Square	0,222		
F sig	0,000		

Source: Processed primary data, 2024.

Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained through the Hypodermic Needle Theory, in which media messages are considered to have a direct and strong effect on passive audiences (Lasswell, 1927). In this context, billboards as outdoor media function as "hypodermic needles" that channel political messages directly into public consciousness. In the same context, Ramadhan (2022) shows that the direct effect of outdoor media in political campaigns occurs because audiences are often in a passive position and are repeatedly exposed to visual messages. This explains why strong and repetitive messages such as political billboards are able to influence voter preferences without the need for deep rational elaboration. Candidate images, colors, slogans, and gender symbols become visual stimuli that shape public perceptions of female candidates.

Descriptive Findings on Public Perceptions of Billboard Content

To understand how the public responds to visual elements and messages in billboards, a descriptive analysis of 13 aspects of perception was conducted. The results show that the public responded positively to strategic elements such as the placement of candidate numbers (78.23% agreed), candidate images (73.39% agreed), and large billboard sizes (70.97% agreed).

These elements were proven to make it easier for the public to recognize and remember candidates.

In addition, campaign slogans and social messages such as "Happy International Women's

Day" also received a high positive response (79.84%), demonstrating the effectiveness of social and gender issues in attracting public attention.

Table 2. Descriptive Findings on Public Perceptions of Billboard Content for Female Mayoral Candidates in Kendari City (2024)

No.	Aspects Assessed	Dominant Response	Key Interpretation
1	Recognition of Siska Karina Imran	89% positive	Siska is the most recognized by the public.
2	Recognition of Giona Nur Alam	80% positive	Giona is fairly well known.
3	Recognition of Nirna Lachmuddin	70% positive	Nirna's recognition level is moderate.
4	Relevance of Siska's program "Clean and Green Kendari"	78% positive	The environmental program is seen as relevant.
5	Effectiveness of Giona's program "Digital Creative Economy"	52% neutral	Giona's program is viewed as less effective.
6	Support for Nirna's program "Women's MSME Partnership"	50% neutral	Neutral responses dominate.
7	Support for female leadership (Siska)	70% positive	Strong support for Siska's leadership.
8	Support for female leadership (Giona)	60% neutral	Public support for Giona tends to be neutral.
9	Support for female leadership (Nirna)	59% neutral	Public attitudes toward Nirna are moderate.
10	Siska's statement "Women Are Not Property"	69% positive	Siska's message is strong and pro-gender.
11	Giona's pro-women statement	59% neutral	Giona's gender message is not yet strong.
12	Nirna's pro-women statement	61% neutral	Nirna's message is perceived as neutral and less prominent.

Source: Primary data processed by researchers, 2024.

Descriptive Findings on Candidate Electability

Furthermore, the results of the study on perceptions of candidate electability show that female candidates in Kendari City have a high level of recognition among voters.

A total of 89.52% of respondents recognized Siska Karina Imran, 80.64% recognized Giona Nur Alam, and 69.84% recognized Nirna Lachmuddin. These findings indicate that billboard content plays an important role in strengthening the image and increasing public awareness of female candidates.

However, the influence of each candidate differs depending on the message and relevance of the issues raised.

For example, Siska's "Clean and Green Kendari" program is considered relevant to the needs of the community (78.22% positive), while Giona's "Digital Creative Economy" program and Nirna's

"Women's MSME Partnership" program received more moderate responses, with a predominance of neutral responses.

Table 3. Descriptive Findings on the Electability of Female Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Candidates in Kendari City (2024)

No.	Aspects Assessed	Dominant Response	Key Interpretation
1	Recognition of Siska Karina Imran	89% positive	Siska is the most recognized by the public.
2	Recognition of Giona Nur Alam	80% positive	Giona is fairly well known.
3	Recognition of Nirna Lachmuddin	70% positive	Nirna is recognized at a moderate level.
4	Relevance of Siska's program "Clean and Green Kendari"	78% positive	The environmental program is considered relevant.
5	Effectiveness of Giona's program "Digital Creative Economy"	51% neutral	Giona's program is viewed as less effective.
6	Support for Nirna's program "Women's MSME Partnership"	50% neutral	Responses to Nirna's program are mostly neutral.
7	Support for female leadership (Siska)	70% positive	High support for Siska's leadership.
8	Support for female leadership (Giona)	60% neutral	Support for Giona tends to be neutral.
9	Support for female leadership (Nirna)	59% neutral	Public attitudes toward Nirna are moderate.
10	Siska's statement "Women Are Not Property"	69% positive	Siska's message is considered strong and pro-gender.
11	Giona's pro-women statement	58% neutral	Giona's gender message is not yet strong.
12	Nirna's pro-women statement	61% neutral	Nirna's message is perceived as neutral and less prominent.

Source: Primary data processed by researchers, 2024.

The Influence of Billboard Content on Electability

Based on the results of statistical analysis conducted in this study, it was found that billboard content has a significant effect on the electability of female candidates in the Kendari regional elections. This is evidenced by a coefficient of determination (R Square) value of 0.222 or 22.20%, which shows that the billboard content variable is able to explain 22.20% of the candidate electability variable.

In addition, other statistical test results show that partially, the billboard content variable has a positive and significant effect on the electability of candidates, with a significance level of 0.000. The regression coefficient value of 0.471 indicates that every one unit increase in the quality of billboard content has the potential to increase the electability of candidates by 47.10%.

Data from the regression analysis table shows that effective billboard content strategies can directly influence voters' perceptions and decisions. In this context, well-designed billboard content is able to convey political messages clearly, attractively, and relevantly to social issues, such as women's empowerment and gender issues, which are the focus of female candidates' campaigns in Kendari. This is consistent with previous research findings which state that the visualization of political messages through billboards is an important factor in shaping public opinion and increasing candidate electability.

From a statistical perspective, we can see that billboards are not only a medium for information, but also a tool of persuasion that can strengthen the positive image of candidates. With attractive visual designs and content that matches the aspirations of the community, billboards can change passive perceptions and trigger active support from voters.

Overall, the data obtained shows that billboard content has a real and significant influence on the success of female candidates in gaining public support in Kendari. Therefore, effective management and preparation of billboard content is one of the main strategies that needs to be considered in political campaigns in order to increase the chances of candidates being elected.

Positive Correlation between Billboard Content and Electability

The results of a simple correlation analysis show a correlation coefficient value of 0.471. This value indicates a fairly strong positive relationship between the quality of billboard content and the level of success or electability of mayoral and deputy mayoral candidates in Kendari. The higher the quality and effectiveness of the billboard content, the greater the candidate's chances of gaining public support.

A correlation coefficient of 0.471 means that improving the quality of billboard content, such as presenting attractive messages, clear images, and highlighting important issues such as women's empowerment and social justice, will have a direct impact on increasing the candidate's chances of being elected. This relationship is quite significant, considering that this value is close to 0.5, which indicates a fairly strong relationship between the two variables.

In addition, supporting data also shows that the majority of respondents agree or strongly agree with the positive influence of billboard content on improving the image and recognition of candidates. For example, in response to the influence of candidate images and messages of women's empowerment on billboards, a high percentage of respondents gave positive responses. This confirms that the quality

of the content and visuals on billboards directly influences public perception and their decision to vote.

Thus, it can be concluded that the success of female candidates' campaigns in Kendari does not only depend on other factors such as distance and digital media, but is also greatly influenced by the quality of billboard content. Improving the visual aspects and content of messages will statistically increase positive relationships and the strength of public support for candidates, thereby increasing their chances of winning in political contests.

Practically speaking, these results emphasize the importance of effective and attractive billboard content creation strategies as one of the key factors supporting campaign success, in addition to other aspects that play a role in the voter decision-making process.

Significance of Billboard Content Influence

The statistical test results from this study clearly show that the influence of billboard content on the electability of candidates for mayor and deputy mayor of Kendari is statistically significant, with a significance value (p-value) of 0.000. This p-value is well below the alpha limit of 0.05, indicating that the relationship found is not coincidental and has a high level of confidence.

This statistical test includes t-test and F-test analyses, which show that the billboard content variable has a partial and simultaneous significant effect on the candidate electability variable. In particular, the t-test results show that billboard content has a significant individual influence on people's choices ($p < 0.05$). Similarly, the F-test confirms that, overall, the billboard content variable contributes significantly to the candidate electability variable.

Statistically, these results reinforce the initial hypothesis that billboard content is an important and effective factor in political campaign strategies. The visual messages and content conveyed through billboards, such as the candidate's self-image, slogans, symbols, and alignment with social and gender issues, play an important role in directly shaping public perception. This is in line with the concept of the syringe theory, in which media messages can quickly and directly influence the opinions and political decisions of passive audiences.

Furthermore, descriptive data from respondents shows that the majority of the public feels that billboard content greatly influences their memory of candidate identities and their attention to the messages conveyed. This indicates that the existence and quality of billboard content statistically and empirically have a real and significant effect on the political communication process and on determining voter choice.

Therefore, it can be concluded that the influence of billboard content on candidate electability is not only theoretical but also proven through statistical analysis showing a very small p-value and a high level of significance. These findings emphasize the importance of serious attention to the design, content, and message of billboards as an integral part of a successful political campaign strategy in Kendari.

The Role of Visuals and Message Content in Political Campaign

Lively, clear, and attractive visualizations of candidates are one of the most important elements in campaign billboard content, which has been proven to increase public recall of candidate images. Data shows that 73.39% of respondents agree, and 19.35% strongly agree, that candidate images on billboards help them remember the candidates. This confirms the important role of candidate face or image visualization as a strategic element in building visual recognition and familiarity, in line with visual communication and perception psychology theories which state that strong and vivid visuals can increase audience memory and positive associations with the message being conveyed.

In addition to image visualization, the message content conveyed in billboards also has a major influence in attracting attention and reinforcing political messages. Data shows that elements such as slogans, nicknames, and symbols used in billboards are able to attract significant public attention. For example, based on the data, 71.77% of respondents agreed that the slogans or nicknames of candidate pairs were able to attract their attention to the billboards, and also from previous data, 66.94% of respondents considered that displaying the candidate's title and educational background could attract public attention.

The use of slogans that are attractive, memorable, and represent the character or vision of the candidate has been proven to effectively reinforce political messages and increase public attention to the content of billboards. The data also shows that the ethnic/clan identity displayed on billboards received a positive response from most of the public, although not all, indicating that complete and relevant message content can increase voters' emotional attachment and attention. Similarly, the symbols used aim to visually reinforce the candidate's image and vision, which is empirically recognized as having a positive influence on public attention and perception

Overall, data from several indicators and survey results support that vivid image visualization and strategically structured message content (such as slogans, nicknames, symbols, and candidate identity) play an important role in the success of political campaigns. They not only help the public to remember and recognize candidates, but also reinforce the appeal and political messages they want to convey, in line with visual communication theory and perception psychology, which states that attractive visuals and relevant messages can effectively influence voters' decisions and attitudes.

Social and Gender Issues in Billboard Content

Billboard content that highlights women's empowerment and gender equality issues has been proven to have a positive influence in shaping public perception and increasing the appeal of candidates. The data shows that 58.87% of respondents agreed and 20.97% strongly agreed with Giona Nur Alam's billboard message stating that Giona is a leader who truly supports women, indicating that the majority of the public accepts and welcomes the gender issues raised.

In addition, respondents also showed considerable interest in Nirna's message emphasizing that women must participate in the economy of Kendari, with 30.65% agreeing and 12.10% strongly agreeing. Although the percentage of strongly agree was lower, this still indicates that the issues of women's empowerment and gender equality are important elements that are able to attract public attention and influence their attitudes towards candidates who raise these issues. These findings are in line with the research by Husain et al. (2025), which highlights the importance of packaging social messages in political advertisements, especially when it comes to the representation of women. Their results show that messages that emphasize the values of equality and women's empowerment tend to increase the emotional acceptance of female voters and strengthen the candidate's image as a pro-gender figure.

The use of social and gender issues in billboard content serves as an effective strategy in increasing candidate engagement and appeal, especially among communities that are increasingly aware and concerned about social equality and justice. This data confirms that social and gender issues are not just narratives, but also factors that can strengthen a candidate's image and increase their electability in regional elections. In this context, billboards not only function as a visual communication tool, but also as a political instrument that shapes voter orientation and preferences through the delivery of relevant social and gender narratives. The presence of messages about women's empowerment, equality, and women's roles in the public sphere not only strengthens the candidate's image, but also operates in the electoral political arena as a strategy to shift dominant norms and expand the support base. Billboards become a medium that articulates the political representation of women, thereby influencing public perceptions of their suitability as leaders. Through the highlighting of values, identities, and gender issues, political communication in billboards contributes to the formation of the local political agenda and influences the dynamics of electoral competition. Thus, billboards play a strategic role in connecting visual messages with the process of establishing the political legitimacy of female candidates at the local level.

The Role of Outdoor Media in Political Campaigns

Despite the rapid development of digital media and social media, data from this study shows that billboards as outdoor media still play an important and effective role in the political communication process. This is confirmed by the results of the study, which show that billboard content can increase the recognition and positive image of candidate, especially among people who still rely heavily on outdoor media for political information.

The success of billboards in supporting campaigns can be seen from their influence on the level of recognition and acceptance of messages by the public. For example, 76.61% of respondents considered that the names of candidates displayed on billboards helped them remember the candidates' identities, while 70.97% of respondents stated that the large size of billboards made it easier to pay attention to the messages conveyed. In addition, the strategic placement of billboards was proven to attract the attention of 64.52% of respondents, showing that the correct placement of billboards greatly influences the effectiveness of visual communication.

Furthermore, within the framework of the needle theory, which states that media messages can quickly influence the perceptions of a passive society, the data also shows that the visualization of political messages through billboards, including images of candidates, slogans, symbols, and social issues such as women's empowerment, can directly and broadly shape voters' opinions and attitudes. The high positive response to the visualization of gender issues and women's empowerment proves that this outdoor media is effective in delivering messages directly to a wide audience, even in the midst of a developing digital era.

Overall, the above data confirms that outdoor media, especially billboards, remain a powerful and relevant instrument in political campaigns. Visual messages that are conveyed directly and are able to reach a wide audience can influence their passive perceptions, effectively introduce candidates, and increase the competitiveness of candidates in a society that does not yet fully rely on digital media as the main source of political information.

Practical Implications in Campaign Strategy

The results of the study show that the effective use of billboards depends not only on the existence of the media, but also on the quality of the content and the right placement strategy. Billboard content that displays socially and gender-relevant messages, such as support for women's empowerment and other social issues, has been proven to attract public attention and influence their perceptions of candidates. For example, in the billboard content of the candidates for mayor and deputy mayor of Kendari, the emphasis on gender issues and women's empowerment had a positive impact on improving the image and electability of female candidates (22.20%), confirming the importance of tailoring messages to issues that resonate with voters.

In addition to content, strategic billboard placement also plays an important role. Data shows that the majority of respondents (64.52%) agree that the appropriate placement of billboards in crowded and easily accessible areas greatly affects the effectiveness of the message. Proper placement will ensure that the visual message is seen by as many people as possible and increase the chances of the message being understood directly and widely.

Furthermore, adjusting visual messages to the characteristics of the target audience is very important to increase the effectiveness of the campaign. For example, billboard content that highlights the candidate's self-image and educational background, as well as the supporting party, can make it easier for the public to remember the candidate's identity and understand the political context. According to visual communication theory, messages that are relevant and tailored to the characteristics of the audience can evoke emotional resonance and increase memory, which in turn can boost the candidate's electability.

In practical terms, campaign strategies should focus on developing high-quality content that is socially and gender-relevant, as well as placing billboards in strategic locations that can reach a wide audience. The use of attractive visuals and messages that are tailored to the needs of the target audience will maximize the impact of the campaign message, strengthen the candidate's image, and increase the chances of victory in the election.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that billboard content has a significant influence in increasing the recognition and electability of regional head candidates, especially through attractive visuals, social and gender relevance, and strategic placement. The messages conveyed in billboards, such as the candidate's self-image, gender issues, and catchy slogans, are able to shape public perception and influence their attitudes towards the candidates concerned. Although the level of influence is not statistically significant, the effectiveness of billboards as an outdoor campaign medium remains important and relevant in political communication strategies, especially in the context of a society that is not yet fully dependent on digital media. In the future, this research can be developed by exploring visual innovations and more effective billboard placement strategies to reach more specific target voters and strengthen the overall effectiveness of the campaign.

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