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ONLINE MEDIA FRAMING OF FEMALE GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATES' REPUTATION IN THE 2024 EAST JAVA GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION, INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election marks a significant moment in the development of local politics in Indonesia, particularly with the emergence of three female gubernatorial candidates: Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Tri Rismaharini, and Luluk Nur Hamidah. Their presence not only reflects the growing influence of women in politics but also signals a shift in the dynamics of political competition that has traditionally been male-dominated. In line with the increasing representation of women in the political arena, this study aims to analyze how social media platforms frame the reputations of these three female candidates in East Java. Using a qualitative approach and Entman's framing analysis model, this research explores how media narratives shape public perception by highlighting gender issues, candidate competence, and the nuances of local political dynamics. The study provides insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by female candidates in confronting media bias throughout the electoral process and offers recommendations for more equitable and balanced media coverage within the context of women's political participation.

INTRODUCTION

Women's representation in the political arena in Indonesia has continued to develop significantly. According to the most recent population census, the number of women in Indonesia has reached 101,625,816, accounting for approximately 51% of the total population (Sudarsono, 2024). Despite outnumbering men in terms of population, women are still frequently placed in secondary positions across various aspects of life, including politics. The gender-based division of labor has served as the foundation for gender stratification, where women are predominantly assigned to domestic roles, while men occupy the public sphere. As a result, domestic work is often perceived as less valuable and economically insignificant (Khotimah, 2009). Consequently, numerous movements have emerged to raise women's awareness of these inequalities, particularly in challenging patriarchal practices deeply rooted in societal culture. Although gender stigma and patriarchal norms continue to pose significant barriers, Indonesian women today have greater opportunities to engage in politics and governance.

The 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election serves as a significant milestone in this ongoing progress, marked by the emergence of three female candidates: Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Tri Rismaharini, and Luluk Nur Hamidah. These prominent figures demonstrate that women are increasingly being recognized as serious contenders in political contests, competing on equal footing with their male counterparts. This development reflects a positive shift in public attitudes toward women's leadership capabilities and indicates a growing level of public trust in female leaders. However, despite the increasing presence of women in the political sphere, substantial challenges remain—particularly in the realm of building a strong and credible reputation on social media platforms. The candidacies of these three women raise important questions about how they navigate such challenges and the extent to which they employ strategic communication to capture voters' attention (Buchari, 2014).

Online media, as one of the primary sources of information in the digital era, plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion about political candidates. Media framing the way news content is structured and presented can significantly

influence how the public perceives, evaluates, and responds to female candidates. News coverage often goes beyond reporting candidates' programs and visions; it frequently incorporates personal narratives that can either enhance or undermine their reputations. In many cases, female candidates are subjected to biased framing, such as an emphasis on gender stereotypes, family-related issues, or physical appearance—factors that distract from their competence and policy agendas. In East Java, female candidates face a dual challenge: first, they must compete against male contenders with strong political backing; second, they must contend with online media narratives that are not always favorable or objective in representing their candidacies.

In this context, it's essential to understand how online media framing shapes the reputations of female candidates, both in terms of their electability and public perception. This study aims to analyze the online media framing of female gubernatorial candidates in East Java during the 2024 regional election. Using Robert N. Entman's framing analysis model, the research explores media coverage patterns, including the issues highlighted, moral evaluations presented, and proposed solutions offered by the media. Through this analysis, the study seeks not only to uncover biases in media reporting but also to provide insights into more effective political communication strategies for female candidates. The findings are expected to contribute to the academic literature on media framing in politics and serve as a practical reference for media practitioners, candidates, and voters in fostering a more inclusive and equitable political climate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Edelman (as cited in Vanie et al., 2024), framing analysis is a tool that offers a logical framework for understanding the most common ways of interpreting reality including events, actors, discourses, and more. Framing operates through the construction of perceived socio-political realities and functions as a methodological approach in mass media analysis, alongside content analysis and semiotic analysis. Although framing is often associated with mass media, it can also be applied to internal organizational media, such as books or websites (Kriyantono, 2020, p. 210).

Framing is an analytical approach used to examine how the media constructs reality (Dwita et. al., 2023). It is a method of presenting reality in which the truth about an event is not conveyed in its entirety, but rather subtly segmented by omitting or downplaying certain aspects through the use of specific terms with particular connotations.

Framing is an approach used to understand the perspective or viewpoint adopted by journalists when selecting issues and constructing news stories. This perspective influences decisions about which facts are highlighted, which elements are emphasized or overlooked, and the overall direction or narrative that the reporting seeks to convey. In simple terms, framing analysis can be understood as a method for examining how the media shapes public perception of reality–including events, actors, groups, or specific stakeholders. This framing occurs through a process of construction, in which social realities are interpreted and assigned specific meanings by the media. In the context of gender in politics and the media, women often face unique challenges due to gender stereotypes perpetuated by media representations (Ross & Carter, 2011).

Research by Falk (2013) shows that the media often portray female candidates as less competent on issues such as the economy or national security compared to their male counterparts. Instead, women candidates tend to receive more coverage on topics related to family and morality. In the Indonesian context, Nurhalimah (2020) found that media framing of female candidates in local elections (Pilkada) tends to emphasize personal attributes over their vision and policy platforms. This reinforces gender bias and undermines the ability of female candidates to build a public image as competent leaders. Similarly, Edo's (2023) study revealed that coverage by Kompas.com and Detik.com typically portrays female candidates as popular figures who attempt to gain sympathy through appearances, the use of feminine-coded items, and visits to strategically symbolic locations. Although East Java has a high level of political participation, the representation of women in political leadership remains low (Suryadi, 2018).

In the context of gubernatorial elections, local media often play a significant role in shaping public perception of candidates. A study by Prasetyo (2022)

indicates that local media in East Java tend to focus more on the political affiliations of candidates rather than their visions, with gender issues emerging as a key factor in framing the news. For instance, CNN Indonesia reports that female candidate Luluk Nur Hamidah claimed to have gained significant social media support, particularly from women in the Jombang district, who expressed their admiration for her when she visited the area. Voaindonesia.com highlights that Khofifah Indar Parawansa, the incumbent governor, has led East Java since 2019. She is known as a figure with extensive government experience, having served as Minister of Social Affairs, and enjoys the backing of 15 political parties. Meanwhile, Tempo.com portrays Tri Rismaharini as a wise and firm leader, emphasizing her experience as the former Mayor of Surabaya. Thus, online news coverage tends to focus more on the reputations of female candidates in East Java, often delving into trivial aspects of their personal lives. These narratives and the way they are framed can significantly affect their stability, public image, vision, and political programs, reinforcing gender biases in media coverage of female political leaders.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a qualitative approach, collecting data through literature review and mass media analysis. The research focuses on news articles published in both local and national online media outlets, including CNN Indonesia, Voalndonesia, Tempo.com, and other media that cover the representation of East Java gubernatorial candidates, examining how they leverage the media to enhance their reputations in the lead-up to the 2024 gubernatorial election. The study utilizes framing analysis, a textual analysis method within the constructivist paradigm. Framing analysis is an approach used to examine communication phenomena, particularly in the analysis of media texts (Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

The framing analysis model by Robert N. Entman is used in this study because his approach is particularly suitable for addressing the issues explored in this research, namely the phenomenon of political news and political communication. Entman's model allows for the identification of the underlying power dynamics within the texts of political communication/news (Entman, 2010). The initial phase of this study involves conducting a qualitative textual analysis to identify the content

of the news that will be examined as the primary data for the framing analysis based on the model adopted by the researcher.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Communication Reputation of Female Governor Candidates in East Java 2024

The 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election (Pilgub) presents a new dynamic with the emergence of three female candidates: Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Tri Rismaharini, and Luluk Nur Hamidah (Naif, Nov/06/2024). These three candidates not only reflect progress in the representation of women in politics but also demonstrate the growing strength of women in leadership, competing on equal terms with male candidates (Amaliyah, Sep/02/2024). In an increasingly open political stage, their communication reputation becomes a crucial element that influences their electability and public acceptance. Their presence in the political arena marks a significant shift in regional political dynamics, where women are playing a more prominent role as key actors capable of competing with male candidates. Each candidate is supported by political parties that play a crucial role in strengthening their position and competitiveness (Aco, Aug/30/2024).

Khofifah Indar Parawansa, who is running alongside Emil Elestianto Dardak as the gubernatorial and vice-gubernatorial candidate pair, has secured the support of 15 political parties. This makes them the candidates with the most political backing in this gubernatorial election. Major parties endorsing their candidacy include: the National Mandate Party (PAN), the Great Indonesia Movement Party (Gerindra), the Golkar Party, the Democratic Party, the United Development Party (PPP), and NasDem. In addition, they also receive support from the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI), the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the Perindo Party, the Labor Party, the Gelora Party, the Crescent Star Party (PBB), the National Awakening Party (PKN), the Garuda Party, and the Prima Party (though the Prima Party did not pass the verification process).

With such broad support from various political parties, Khofifah and Emil possess significant political strength to compete in the political contest, along with a distinct appeal to voters in East Java, as presented in the following table.

Table 1. Political power of Khofifah and Emil

Position	Governor of East Java (Incumbent)
Candidate	Emil Elestianto Dardak
Electability	61,2%

Source: Data, 2024

Khofifah has an excellent communication reputation. Her recognition rate stands at 92.7%, and her favorability among voters is 89.4%. Her experience as the former Minister of Social Affairs and as a two-term Governor of East Java gives her strong credibility. Khofifah frequently employs a "motherly" narrative and is committed to serving the community across various social strata, which makes her communication feel approachable and empathetic.

In contrast, the candidate pair of Tri Rismaharini, who currently serves as the Minister of Social Affairs, is running alongside K.H. Zahrul Azhar Asad (Gus Hans) as the vice-gubernatorial candidate. Risma has received support from the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP), the Hanura Party, and the Ummat Party.

PDIP, as a major party with significant influence in East Java, provides substantial legitimacy and support for this pair. Risma's popularity, known for her tenure as the former Mayor of Surabaya, as well as her ability to manage a complex city government, enhances her appeal among voters. The support from PDIP further strengthens her position as a competent and experienced candidate.

Table 2. Political power of Risma and Gus Hans

Position	Former Mayor of Surabaya, Minister of	
	Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia	
Candidate	Zahrul Azhar Asumta (Gus Hans)	
Electability	26%	

Source: Data, 2024

The communication reputation of the candidate pair of Risma is known for her strong and courageous leadership. Her recognition rate stands at 62.8%, while her favorability rate reaches 87.6%. Her communication reputation is built on her openness to the public and her responsive approach to issues in Surabaya. Risma frequently employs a direct approach (blusukan), reflecting her strong desire to listen to the aspirations of the people firsthand.

Meanwhile, the candidate pair of Luluk Nur Hamidah, a member of the Indonesian Parliament (DPR RI) from the National Awakening Party (PKB), is running alongside Lukmanul Khakim as the vice-gubernatorial candidate. Although this pair is supported by only one party, PKB, the party has a strong voter base in East Java, particularly among the Nahdliyin community affiliated with Nahdlatul Ulama (NU). This provides Luluk and Lukmanul Khakim with a unique advantage in garnering support from the religious community. The main challenge for this pair is to build a competitive standing against Khofifah and Risma, who are supported by larger political parties.

Table 3. Political power of Luluk and Lukmanul

Position	Member of DPR RI
Candidate	Lulmanul Khakim
Electability	2,2%

Source: Data, 2024

The support of political parties for Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Tri Rismaharini, and Luluk Nur Hamidah serves as a crucial factor in strengthening their positions in the 2024 East Java gubernatorial election. Although the level of party support varies among the three candidates, they collectively demonstrate that women hold a significant place in the local political arena. Through effective communication strategies and strong backing from their respective political parties, these candidates have the potential to attract voter attention and achieve success in the upcoming election. Their success will largely depend on their ability to reach constituents with relevant messages and to respond effectively to current issues faced by society.

Luluk remains relatively unknown to the public, with a recognition rate of only 6.6% and a favorability rating of 49.5%. As a newcomer to the East Java political scene, she faces significant challenges in establishing her communication reputation. However, by prioritizing gender issues, women's empowerment, and children's rights as the core themes of her campaign communication, she presents a unique appeal—particularly if these messages are effectively disseminated to the public.

The communication reputations of the three female gubernatorial candidates play a significant role in determining the outcome of the East Java gubernatorial election. Several key aspects that shape their communication reputations can be seen in the table below.

Table 4. Communication reputation of three East Java 2024 gumbernur candidates

Context	Explanation		
Political experience	Khofifah and Risma have extensive track records in		
	government, which enhances voter trust in them. This		
	experience provides them with a strong foundation to		
	communicate their programs effectively.		
Social and political	Khofifah excels in terms of her extensive political network,		
networks	with support from 15 political parties backing her		
	candidacy. This provides her with the ability to reach a		
	broader segment of the public through various available		
	communication channels.		
Use of social media	All three candidates utilize social media as a primary		
	communication platform to reach younger voters. Khofifah		
	frequently uses social media to promote pro-people		
	programs, Risma emphasizes her concern for marginalized		
	communities, while Luluk focuses on disseminating values		
	of gender equality and women's empowerment.		
Personal and	The communication strategies employed by the candidates		
emotional	tend to prioritize emotional approaches to foster closeness		
approach	with voters. Khofifah relies on a maternal image, Risma		

emphasizes a firm yet compassionate leadership style, while						
Luluk	highlights	social	values	and	advocacy	for
marginalized groups.						

Source: Data analysis, 2024

The presence of three female gubernatorial candidates in the 2024 East Java election demonstrates that women can compete equally and even more strongly in a political arena historically dominated by men. Communication reputation serves as a crucial key in shaping public perception and enhancing their electability.

Table 5. Comparison of communication reputation

Khofifah	Risma	Luluk
Leads in terms of	Although trailing Khofifah	She still needs to work
communication	in electability, Risma	hard in building her
reputation, with proven	possesses strong	communication
experience and effective	communication skills,	reputation, but has the
approaches.	supported by a solid	potential to create
	voter base and a proven	breakthroughs with a
	track record.	more inclusive strategy
		focused on gender
		issues.

Source: Data analysis, 2024

National media outlets such as CNN Indonesia, Voa Indonesia, and Tempo.com highlight the importance of female representation in leadership. The presence of these three candidates is seen as a step forward in advocating for gender equality. Below is the online media framing related to the coverage of female candidates in East Java.

Table 6. National media framing of the three female candidates

National media	Explanation	Date of publication
CNN Indonesia	Luluk Nur Hamidah claims to have	23/11/2024
	gained an advantage on social media	
	thanks to the support of mothers,	

	explaining that many have fallen in	
	love with her persona when she	
	visited Jombang Regency.	
VOA Indonesia	It was mentioned that Khofifah Indar	30/09/2024
	Parawansa is the incumbent	
	governor, having led East Java since	
	2019. She is known as a figure with	
	extensive experience in government,	
	serving as the Minister of Social	
	Affairs and supported by 15 political	
	parties.	
Tempo.com	Tempo.com reported on Tri	22/11/2024
	Rismaharini, portraying her as a wise	
	and firm leader, and highlighting that	
	she had previously served as the	
	Mayor of Surabaya.	

Source: Data analysis, 2024

Titi Anggraini (2024), an electoral expert from the University of Indonesia, stated that the candidacy of women at the provincial level is a new milestone that reflects the politics of gender equality between men and women. It also reflects the increase in the Gender Development Index (GDI) in East Java, which is higher than the national average. Furthermore, public perceptions and future expectations can change views on women's capabilities in leadership positions. They not only represent women's voices but also strive to bring inclusive and equitable policy changes for all women in politics, with hopes that more women leaders will emerge in the future, including in the upcoming presidential election.

4.2 Communication strategies used by candidate pairs

The 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election (Pilgub) is an important event that highlights the political communication power of three female candidates: Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Tri Rismaharini, and Luluk Nur Hamidah. They employ various communication strategies carefully designed to attract attention and support from

the public. These strategies reflect the increasingly open political dynamics for women, while also affirming that female leadership can compete with men in the regional political contest. The strategies employed by the three candidates are explained below.

1. Push marketing strategy

Push marketing strategies aim to reach voters directly and personally through more intensive interactions (Silalahi, 2024). Some of the approaches used include:

- a. Door-to-door visits, where the gubernatorial candidates make efforts to greet the community directly from house to house. Through this approach, they can build personal relationships, convey their vision and programs more closely, and listen directly to the aspirations of voters.
- b. In addition, the candidates often attend large meetings and community events, such as religious activities and social events. Their presence at these events helps increase visibility and strengthen their image as leaders who care.
- c. Social service activities are also carried out by the gubernatorial candidates as a way to demonstrate their concern for local issues and to build emotional connections with the community.

2. Pull marketing strategy

Pull marketing strategies focus more on creating a positive image that attracts the public's interest to voluntarily support the candidates. In this context, the candidates utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to disseminate information about their campaign programs and interact with young voters. The demographic shift towards a millennial-dominated electorate makes the use of social media an important strategy for reaching a wider audience (Muhazir, 2020).

Additionally, the candidates use advertisements and publications through both print and digital media to convey their vision, mission, and flagship programs. The distribution of pamphlets, brochures, and engaging campaign videos also forms part of their efforts to raise public awareness. Discussion forums and open meetings with the public are often held to explain the programs in more detail and provide voters with an opportunity to ask questions and engage directly with the gubernatorial candidates.

3. Personal branding

Building a strong self-image is a key strategy in political communication. Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Tri Rismaharini rely on their track records as leaders at the national level to demonstrate credibility and competence. Khofifah, who previously served as the Minister of Social Affairs and the Governor of East Java, and Risma, known as the Mayor of Surabaya and the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, use their achievements and experiences to build public trust. The use of public figures such as religious leaders, community leaders, or celebrities in campaigns is also employed to strengthen appeal and provide additional momentum for their campaigns among the broader public (Moekahar, 2021).

4. Adjustment to current issues

Quick responses to relevant social issues are an important element in their communication strategy. One of the issues raised is concern for women and family matters. Highlighting issues related to women's welfare, children's rights, and social protection is part of a communication strategy aimed at attracting the attention of female voter segments. By focusing on the recovery of the economy and public health post-pandemic, these female gubernatorial candidates seek to create a strong emotional connection with voters and convince them that the leadership they offer is capable of addressing the challenges faced by society (Alim, 2024).

The communication strategies implemented by Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Tri Rismaharini, and Luluk Nur Hamidah demonstrate a well-planned and comprehensive approach to attracting public attention in the 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election. The combination of push and pull marketing strategies, along with the development of strong personal branding, forms the main foundation for these three female candidates in building their reputation and support. Their success will largely depend on the effectiveness of their communication, which must reach and be relevant to voters, as well as their ability

to respond to current issues faced by society. Thus, communication strategy becomes the key that enables them to compete equally with male candidates in this competitive political contest.

CONCLUSION

This study highlights that the reputation and communication strategies employed by Khofifah Indar Parawansa, Tri Rismaharini, and Luluk Nur Hamidah play a significant role in determining their electability in the 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election. Each candidate has a different approach to building their image and relationship with voters, tailored to their strengths, experience, and political support base. Khofifah Indar Parawansa, as the incumbent candidate, leverages broad political support and a maternal narrative to strengthen her position in the eyes of the public. Tri Rismaharini, known for her firm leadership style, uses her reputation as the former Mayor of Surabaya and Minister of Social Affairs to gain voters' sympathy. Meanwhile, Luluk Nur Hamidah, despite having more limited party support, attempts to build her communication reputation through a more inclusive approach focused on social issues.

The communication strategies implemented include a combination of push marketing, pull marketing, personal branding, as well as adaptation to current issues, such as women's welfare and children's rights. All three candidates also utilize digital platforms to expand the reach of their communication, particularly in attracting young voters. This study concludes that the success of political campaigns in the 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election is highly determined by each candidate's ability to build an effective communication reputation, adapt to the local socio-political context, and respond to the needs and aspirations of the public. The presence of these three female candidates not only enriches the political dynamics of East Java but also demonstrates the great potential of women in leading and contributing to the political arena, which has traditionally been dominated by men.

This study still has limitations in terms of exploring the deeper level through success teams (timses) on how they promote their candidate to the public. Therefore, future research could examine this aspect to assess the level of

communication reputation built to strengthen the reputations of the candidates in the electoral process.

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