

## GIBRAN RAKABUMING RAKA'S IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AS A MUSLIM DURING THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CAMPAIGN THROUGH THE INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT @gibran\_rakabuming

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines Gibran Rakabuming Raka's impression management strategy through Instagram during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign. As the youngest vice presidential candidate and President Jokowi's son, Gibran strategically leveraged @gibran\_rakabuming platform to build an image as a dynamic young Muslim leader who was close to the people. Using a qualitative approach with the method of cultural anthropology, this study focuses on two main aspects: Gibran's impression management strategy as a young Muslim and da'wah messages through Islamic symbols in its content. The results showed that Gibran applied three main impression management tactics: ingratiation to build a likable impression, self-promotion to promote self-ability, and exemplification to show positive behavior. Interestingly, Gibran avoided the strategies of supplication and intimidation, choosing a completely positive and constructive approach. The analysis of Islamic symbols in his uploads during the campaign shows the strategic use of religious elements as a medium for da'wah. Fashion symbols (cocoa shirts, sarongs, peci, turbans) represent the simplicity and identity of Indonesian Muslims, while action symbols (kissing the hands of ulama, bowing down) reflect the morality of respect. The symbol of the place (mosque, Islamic boarding school) shows an attitude of appreciation for the crucial places for Muslims, the temporal symbol (the celebration of special days) shows that this overall strategy serves to build an emotional connection with Muslim voters and provide religious validation in the Indonesian political context.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The Impression management is an impression management strategy carried out by individuals or groups to create self-image desired in the eyes of the public. This impression management strategy seeks to present a positive impression as branding in front of the public (Wijaya I A, 2022). In this modern era, the presence of social media that is popular among the public has made it easier to implement strategies impression management. Social media platforms play a dual role as a communication and media tool to introduce personal identity to a wide audience through the sharing of activities in the form of photos and videos. This content sharing activity functions as a bridge of communication between individuals and the public, as well as shaping self-perception and reputation through uploaded visual content.

Strategy impression management It has become an important instrument in the campaigns of presidential and vice presidential candidates to gain public support and obtain maximum votes in general elections. Campaign activities are standard practices carried out by election contestants to introduce visions, missions, and programs to the public. Gibran Rakabuming Raka is one of the vice presidential candidates who uses social media platforms in his campaign strategy. The politician and businessman who was born on October 1, 1987 was successfully elected as the vice president of Indonesia. Before serving as vice president, he led the City of Surakarta from February 26, 2021 to July 19, 2024. As the eldest son of President Joko Widodo, Gibran won the position of vice president to accompany Prabowo Subianto in the 2024 Presidential Election (wikipedia, n.d.).

With a background as a culinary entrepreneur and Mayor of Solo, Gibran has a unique experience as a young politician. Through his account, he regularly shares various activities that reflect his capacity to lead and interact with various levels of society (Marenta, 2023). As the youngest vice presidential candidate in Indonesian history, Gibran faces the challenge of proving his capabilities at a relatively young age. Through Instagram, he consistently builds a narrative about his competencies and vision, as well as creates two-way engagement with the public through comment interaction and polling features (Marenta, 2023).

As a young Muslim, Gibran applied an impression management strategy to manage the public's perception of him, not only from the aspect of physical appearance but also attitude, behavior, and way of interacting. He uses social media and public platforms to demonstrate Islamic values such as honesty, caring, and empathy through active involvement in social activities and initiatives that benefit the community, thereby building a positive image that reflects Islamic principles.

This phenomenon is interesting to study because it shows changes in political communication in the digital era, where political figures like Gibran can interact directly with the public without relying on traditional media such as radio, television, magazines, and newspapers. Gibran's impression management strategy on Instagram represents the adaptation of the political world to contemporary media dynamics and the tendency of voters to be increasingly oriented towards digital platforms.

This study analyzes the impression management strategy applied by Gibran Rakabuming Raka in shaping his perception as a Muslim through his personal Instagram account. This research also explores the da'wah messages conveyed by Gibran through the use of Islamic symbols in his personal Instagram content throughout the 2024 Presidential Election campaign period.

## 2. METHODS

In this study, the author uses a type of qualitative research that is descriptive. This research also uses a cultural anthropological approach, considering Gibran Rakabuming Raka's unique position as a resident and former official of the Mayor of Solo placing him in a significant Javanese cultural context, considering that Solo is the epicenter of Javanese culture. The data in this study was obtained from Gibran's account on @gibran\_rakabuming's Instagram account during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Profile of Gibran Rakabuming Raka

Gibran Rakabuming Raka is the son of Joko Widodo and Iriana who was born in Solo on October 1, 1987. Together with Kahiyang Ayu and Kaesang Pangarep, they are three brothers. After returning to Indonesia in 2010 after studying for almost 8 years abroad, Gibran started his career by establishing a catering business called Chili Pari.

Gibran was successful with his culinary business, he was then trusted to serve as the General Chairman of the Association of Indonesian Food Service Companies (APJBI) of Solo City. Gibran developed his business further by establishing the House of Knowledge. House of Knowledge focuses on English language training for Chilean Pari's freelance caterers. Gibran and his younger brother Kaesang Pangarep also developed other culinary businesses by establishing Markobar Cafe in Solo which offers various types of martabak.

Gibran ventured into the technology field by founding Icolor, an Apple product repair service. His political journey began when he and his companion, Teguh Prakosa, joined as members of the PDI-P in July 2019. Both then received the party's blessing to run as candidates Mayor of Surakarta in the 2020 election. At its peak, on February 26, 2021, Gibran Rakabuming was officially inaugurated as the Mayor of Surakarta (Marenta, 2023).

At the end of 2022, Gibran was promoted as a 2024 vice presidential candidate even though he did not meet the age requirement of 40 years. After the Constitutional Court issued a controversial ruling on the exemption of the age limit, Gibran officially became Prabowo Subianto's vice presidential candidate. In the February 14, 2024 election, the quick count shows that the Prabowo-Gibran pair is ahead with 57%, outperforming Anies-Muhaimin (27%) and Ganjar-Mahfud (16%).(wikipedia, n.d.).

#### 3.2 Strategi Impression Management

in this way, Goffman likens the impression management user to an actor performing in front of an audience. In his view, individuals actively regulate their behavior and appearance in order to create a certain image in front of others, which serves to establish the desired social identity. Viewed through the perspective of impression management, Goffman analogizes social life as a stage performance with the individual acting as the actor (Fauzi, 2015).

Goffman also argues that individuals not only seek to gain acceptance from others, but also seek to build a desired social identity through impression management. Impression management is not only used on a social scale, but also on a political scale (Satrio, 2017). A political communicator will show his image in front of the public with his strategy. As a result, the public will know him and know his vision, mission, programs, and ideas. When a political communicator is known by the public and gains trust, then political goals such as gaining support and gaining votes will be achieved easily. Therefore, it can be understood that impression management allows a political communicator to shape his or her image while building a closer relationship with the audience to gain trust and support.

Jones and Pittman measure impression management strategies by grouping them into five forms: ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication (Prayogo et al., 2024):

##### a) Ingratiation

Ingratiation is one of the impression management strategies applied by individuals so that they are accepted by the audience. Some of the characteristics that are commonly used in Ingratiation strategies are as follows (Saptanti, 2020):

1. Showing a friendly and pleasant attitude
2. Showing a humorous side
3. Strive for reliability
4. Showing the positives that exist in you

## 5. Showing *physical attractiveness*

### b) Intimidation

Intimidation is an impression management strategy that creates the impression that an individual is dangerous, scary, or full of power. Some of the characteristics used in this strategy include (Lasmawan & Yudhistira, 2023):

1. Conveying abilities and achievements as a leader
2. Highlight skills and expertise
3. Showing optimism at work
4. Demonstrate supportive past experiences

### c) Self-promotion

Self-promotion is one of the impression management strategies used by individuals to create a skilled, competent, and appreciative self-image (Siedharta et al., 2017). Some of the characteristics of a self-promotion strategy include:

1. Conveying abilities and achievements as a leader
2. Highlight skills and expertise
3. Showing optimism at work
4. Demonstrate supportive past experiences

### d) Exemplification

Exemplification is one of the strategies of individuals to project themselves as someone with morality, integrity. This strategy aims to create the impression that the individual is an exemplary person, by highlighting positive behaviors and characteristics that are considered ideal by the audience (Mukmin & Hasyim, 2021). Some of the characteristics in this strategy include:

1. Showing *self-denial*
2. Helping others (*helping*)
3. Showing perseverance and persistence (*militancy*)

### e) Supplication

Supplication is one of the impression management strategies used by individuals to create the impression of themselves as weak, needy, or dependent on others (Purworini, 2023). Some of the characteristics shown in this strategy include:

1. Showing his attitude of weakness at work (*Self-deprecation*)
2. *Entreaties for help*

To support the research, the authors also use symbol theory. This is because impression management is very closely related to symbols to form an impression in front of the audience. The theory of symbols according to F.W Dillistone quoted by Laksmi Kusuma explains that symbols are an effective medium to expand vision and enrich the human imagination (Wardani, 2015).

## 3.3. Gibran Rakabuming Raka's Impression Management

Gibran Rakabuming Raka has an Instagram account with the username @gibran\_rakabuming. The account has 6.5 million followers with 5,159 uploads, where each upload has an average number of *viewers, likes, and comments* of up to thousands. Based on the researchers' observations, the 2024 Presidential Election (Pilpres) campaign activities on @gibran\_rakabuming Instagram account began on January 4, 2024. Gibran Rakabuming Raka uses Instagram as a means to construct his political image, where one of the aspects highlighted is his identity as a Muslim. The following is a management strategy for Gibran's impression as a Muslim during the 2024 Presidential Election Campaign:

### A. Ingratiation

In Instagram social media uploads, Gibran often applies tactics *ingratiation* to form a positive image as a Muslim during the 2024 presidential election campaign. In the December 24, 2023 upload, Gibran, who at that time served as the Mayor of Solo, made a Christmas greeting video to Christians in the city of Solo (Madya, n.d.). His upload shows an inclusive attitude by ensuring security and freedom for all people who carry out worship on their respective holidays.

The *ingratiation* strategy is also seen in the upload about the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, where Gibran shows the positive impact of mosque construction on economic improvement, employment, and strengthening the attractiveness of visits as a new religious tourism destination in the city of Solo. This approach shows Gibran's ability to balance the interests of various community groups.

Video meme "*Hi kids*" who use familiar language to position themselves as a father figure who is close to children, deliberately designed to attract the attention of social media users. A similar approach was also seen when he captured the moment of playing futsal sarongs with young Gus-Gus of an Islamic boarding school in Cirebon, wearing a sarong and a jersey shirt with the name of the back "*Samsul*" which is a popular nickname for Gibran (Mahendra, n.d.). The caption of this post depicts Gibran's youthful side by using anime terms that the younger generation loves, showing his efforts to connect with various segments of society through relevant language and cultural references.

Gibran applied a consistent *ingratiation* strategy in various campaign moments, such as when discussing with the Maluku Traditional Kings in Ambon, where he displayed a humble attitude, was a good listener, and showed concern for community problems. A similar tactic was also seen during the campaign in Banyuwangi when he kissed KH's hand. Masykur Ali and when prayed by Kyai Suyuti Toha, as well as the moment of kissing Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X's hand to ask for permission to campaign in Yogyakarta. The gesture of kissing the hand reflects a form of respect and recognition of the position of a higher or older person, while also building an image as a humble Muslim leader and respecting local cultural traditions.

Gibran also applies *ingratiation* tactics through participation in religious activities such as Kendal Bersholawat, Kebumen Bersholawat, as well as Istighotsah and Joint Prayer events held with the community and volunteers. Consistently, Gibran uses this strategy on his social media to build a positive image as an inclusive Muslim, embracing diversity, respecting local traditions and culture, and following Islamic values, while positioning himself close to the younger generation through relaxed and familiar language during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign.

## **B. Self Promotion**

Gibran implemented a strategic *self-promotion* strategy during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign by combining it with *ingratiation* or *exemplification* tactics. In the video upload of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, he combined *ingratiation* tactics with *self-promotion* by displaying statistical data on the increase in mosque visitors since it was officially opened. This data is used to show his leadership ability to manage large-scale projects and attract tourists, while building a positive image as a competent leader.

Self-promotion *tactics* are also seen in the "Hi kids" meme video where Gibran publicizes himself as an enthusiastic figure to go higher and has a vision to continue beneficial programs, demonstrating his abilities as a Muslim leader who cares about the future. During a campaign visit to Ambon and discussions with the Maluku Indigenous Kings, Gibran positioned himself as a capable leader candidate by demonstrating knowledge of Maluku's regional development issues, including development equalization, opening up new access, improving connectivity, and downstreaming fisheries that highlight his intellectual capacity in understanding complex problems.

Self-promotion *tactics* are also seen in the upload of photos of Gibran's discussion with the Village Kyai at the Ibnu Sina Islamic Boarding School Banyuwangi, with the caption "*Halaqoh with thousands of village Kyai*" and the phrase "*very happy*" which portrays Gibran as a competent figure, close to the ulama, has a wide network among Islamic boarding schools, and is positively received by the religious community. A similar strategy was also applied in the upload of video reels of Gibran's

campaign moment accompanied by Kyai Suyuti Toha, showing the support and legitimacy of prominent religious figures.

Grebeg Sudiro's poster upload, describing his leadership role in managing Solo's cultural diversity through the caption "*cultural acculturation*" and "*a warm atmosphere of tolerance*." A similar tactic can be seen in the upload of a photo of Gibran eating a banana with the caption "*nutritional intake*" which links the moment to the MBG (Free Nutritious Meals) campaign program, as well as a photo of kissing Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X's hand in the Javanese language Krama Inggil which portrays himself as a figure who is close to Javanese culture, has integrity, and understands the socio-cultural context of the community.

Gibran Rakabuming Raka's self-promotion *strategy* during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign on Instagram has interrelated strategic goals. As a young vice presidential candidate, he uses Instagram to build a personal image that is suitable for millennial and Gen Z voters who are active users of social media. This strategy allows him to communicate the vision and programs of the presidential and vice presidential candidates in a relaxed and easy-to-digest style, different from conventional political communication, while allowing direct communication without the intermediaries of conventional media so that he can control the narrative and image that he wants to build during the campaign period.

### C. Exemplification

The exemplification tactics carried out by Gibran during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign period are usually combined with other tactics such as ingratiation, self-promotion or supplication. In the reel video upload of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, Gibran combines ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification strategies. Seen in terms of exemplification, this mosque is presented as a symbol of Indonesia-UAE cooperation and proof of Gibran's ability to build international relations and realize impressive large projects. In this case, the theme of tolerance and intercultural friendship is used to shape Gibran's image as a leader who can manage diversity and diplomatic relations.

Gibran's campaign moment in Banyuwangi with Kyai Suyuti Toha also used the exemplification strategy combined with the self-promotion strategy. From the point of view of exemplification, Gibran presents himself as a leader who values spirituality and moral principles. The goal is to build the perception that he is a leader with integrity who deserves trust. A similar strategy was also used in the poster upload of Grebeg Sudiro Solo with the aim of portraying himself as a Muslim leader who upholds tolerance and cultural diversity in the city of Solo.

In the upload of the moment of Kendal Bersholawat and Kebumen Bersholawat, Gibran combines exemplification tactics with ingratiation. In terms of exemplification, Gibran portrays himself as a leader figure who upholds religious values and respects Islamic guidance. Likewise, at the moment of Gibran's visit to several Islamic boarding schools, he also showed respect for religious educational institutions and the role of scholars. The same tactics were used in the uploading of posters of Isra' Mi'raj activities, the selection of important moments in Islam and the presence of prominent Muslim figures portraying the figure of Gibran who has moral integrity and exemplary in Islamic values. This tactic was reinforced with the caption "The best prayers for the Indonesian nation" which showed Gibran's concern for the welfare of the Indonesian nation.

Overall, Gibran uses the exemplification strategy to provide real evidence of his leadership abilities even though he is still relatively young. Gibran also wants to convince the community by showing his success during his time as a regional leader. In addition, of course, Gibran wants to build emotional closeness with voters using examples or examples that are in accordance with the times.

## 3.4. Analysis of Islamic Symbols in @gibran\_rakabuming Uploads

### A. Fashion Symbols

The @gibran\_rakabuming Instagram account often shares Gibran's campaign journey which often visits Islamic educational institutions such as Islamic boarding schools and attends religious

activities with Indonesian Islamic figures, where in these activities Gibran consistently displays his Muslim identity through the choice of clothes he wears. On various campaign occasions, Gibran was seen wearing typical Muslim clothes such as white cocoa shirts and black peci in the "Hi Kids" meme video (January 4, 2024), a sarong combined with a jersey with the number 2 jersey and the name "Samsul" while playing futsal with the Gus in Tuparev, Cirebon, as well as a blue shirt combined with trousers, turbans, and peci when campaigning in Jember and visiting the Ibnu Sina Islamic Boarding School to meet KH. Masykur Ali.

In various Islamic religious events, Gibran consistently displays his Muslim identity through a uniform choice of clothing, namely wearing a blue shirt combined with black trousers and black peci when attending the Kendal Bersholawat, Kebumen Bersholawat, and Istighotsah events, while in the posters and events of Isra' Mi'raj, Gibran appears wearing a white cocoa shirt combined with black trousers and black peci, in line with other Islamic figures such as Habib Ali Zainal Abidin Assegaf and the Governor of East Java Hj. Khofifah Indar Parawangsa who also wore white Muslim clothes.

The Muslim clothes used by Gibran have a strong symbolic meaning in Indonesian Islamic culture, where the cocoa shirt which is an adaptation of Chinese culture represents faith, Islamic values, simplicity and humility, the sarong as a traditional Malay-Javanese clothing that symbolizes simplicity, humility, obedience to Allah, and flexibility in carrying out religious teachings (especially in the world of Islamic boarding schools), peci as a symbol of Indonesian Muslim culture and traditions that It has also become a symbol of nationalism since the Soekarno era to unite various levels of society, as well as a turban which, although not a religious obligation, is considered a symbol of piety, respect, and a marker of certain religious status in Indonesia.

#### **B. Action Symbols**

In addition to the clothing symbol, Gibran also displays action symbols that represent his Muslim identity through the act of kissing hands when meeting prominent figures such as KH. Masykur Ali, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, and Habib Ali Zainal Abidin, where this action is a symbol of respect and affection for elders, teachers, or community leaders as well as recognition of their roles, services, and knowledge, and in the context of Islamic boarding schools or educational institutions, these actions are interpreted as a symbolic representation of the process of seeking and receiving knowledge as well as efforts to obtain blessings from someone who has higher knowledge.

Gibran also displays other action symbols that represent his Muslim identity, namely bowing down in front of older people as a symbol of manners and appreciation which is a hereditary cultural heritage of Indonesia such as the tradition of "sungkem" in Javanese culture, as well as eating with a sitting position that follows the ethics and habits of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH where according to the agreement of the scholars the sitting position is preferred because it shows humility, patience, courtesy, and gratitude for food as a gift from God, although there is no absolute prohibition against eating while standing in special situations.

The act of kissing hands, bowing down in front of older people, and eating while sitting displayed by Gibran contains da'wah messages in the form of respect and affection for parents and scholars, humility and manners in socializing, as well as maintaining manners and manners according to the sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad PBUH, so that these actions are not only traditions but also function as a means of moral education and da'wah that strengthen the social and spiritual relationships of the people Islam.

#### **C. Place Symbols**

Gibran often displays the symbol of places in the form of Islamic boarding schools and mosques in his uploads, where he often visits Islamic boarding schools to stay in touch with scholars and meet the surrounding community, and explained the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque in Solo as a symbol of tolerance and friendship across Indonesia-UAE cultures that gives a new color in the religious tourism sector, considering that mosques for Muslims are sacred places that function not only as places of worship but also as a center for religious activities, learning, and social interaction that combines spiritual, intellectual, and humanitarian values, while Islamic

boarding schools play a role as a center for education, da'wah, and community empowerment which together with mosques become a spiritual and intellectual foundation for Indonesian Muslims in strengthening faith and science.

The da'wah message from the uploads of mosques and Islamic boarding schools in Gibran's account during the overall campaign is to encourage the transformation of Islamic education that is adaptive to technology and the development of the times, strengthen the independence of Islamic boarding schools, and make mosques a center for da'wah, brotherhood, and the development of people with character and competitiveness in the modern era.

#### **D. Temporal Symbol**

Gibran used temporal symbols in the form of special days such as celebrations or holidays that have religious symbolic meaning in his uploads during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign, such as when uploading a poster of Grebeg Sudiro Solo on January 11, 2024 which represents Chinese New Year traditions and the acculturation of Javanese-Chinese culture in Sudiroprajan, Solo, with the aim of showing a harmonious cultural mix, tangible evidence that various cultures can live in harmony and peace together. an example of tolerance between different community groups, as well as showing his identity as a Solo person and his commitment to traditional Indonesian culture as the Mayor.

Gibran uploaded the atmosphere of the commemoration of the Prophet Muhammad's Isra' Mi'raj on February 8, 2024 as a form of respect and recognition of sacred events in Islam, which contains the message that he values the spiritual and religious values of Muslims, builds connections with the Muslim community, shows partiality in religious activities, and affirms his identity as a leader who pays attention to the aspect of spirituality in the life of the nation as a political communication strategy to strengthen the support base of the majority Muslim group in Indonesia, with the message of da'wah in the form of an invitation to take spiritual wisdom from the Isra' Mi'raj event in daily life, get closer to Allah SWT through worship, especially prayer as a pillar of religion, increase obedience, strengthen faith, and take lessons about patience and fortitude in facing the trials of life as exemplified by the Prophet Muhammad PBUH.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the analysis, the management of Gibran's impression as a Muslim in the 2024 Presidential Election uses three main strategies: ingratiation, self-promotion, and exemplification which are applied separately or in combination to build a positive image. Gibran does not use the strategies of supplication (asking for mercy by showing weakness) and intimidation (threatening or coercing the will). This shows that Gibran chooses a positive approach and builds rapport with the audience rather than a strategy that has the potential to create a negative impression.

Based on the analysis that has been carried out on Islamic symbols in the uploads of @gibran\_rakabuming Instagram account, it can be concluded that the use of these religious symbols contains a strategic da'wah message in the context of modern political communication. First, the Second, the action symbol. Third, the use of Islamic symbols in social media serves as a political communication strategy to build an emotional connection with Muslim voters and provide religious validation in the Indonesian political context.



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