Authenticity or Image-Making? A Critical Discourse Analysis of KDM's Political Persona on Social Media

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Abstract

This study investigates how Kang Dedi Mulyadi (KDM) constructs his political identity on social media through emotional storytelling and cultural symbolism. Using a qualitative descriptive method and Fairclough's three-dimensional Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), this research analyzes two purposively selected YouTube videos and corresponding public comments. The analysis focuses on textual choices, discursive practices, and socio-cultural contexts to explore how KDM's identity is performed and received. Findings show that KDM consistently uses Sundanese language, informal speech, and acts of empathy to portray himself as a caring and approachable leader. Public responses reflect trust, emotional engagement, and cultural pride, indicating that his digital persona resonates with grassroots audiences. This study highlights how emotional narratives and local cultural elements can foster political legitimacy and trust in non-Western digital contexts. Limitations include platform bias and limited data scope. Future research should apply cross-platform and mixed-method approaches to examine broader patterns in digital political identity-making.

Keywords: *political identity, digital media, critical discourse analysis*

Introduction

Nowadays, social media has changed the way politicians build their image. If they used to be known through speeches or news on TV, now they form their political identity through words and stories on platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, or YouTube. In Indonesia, this change occurred because people are finding it increasingly difficult to trust politicians. A report by (KPH UMY, 2023) shows that trust in government in the recent past in Indonesia has decreased through ongoing corruption allegations and abuse of power. These have undermined state institutions' legitimacy and opened up opportunities for other ways of political communication and self-expression. The erosion of public trust creates a significant gap between politicians and citizens, where conventional communication fails to establish credibility or emotional connection. In this climate of scepticism, digital platforms become not only tools for self-promotion, but also alternative spaces where political figures attempt to rebuild their image through strategies that appear more personal, culturally grounded, and emotionally resonant. This opens a critical question on whether such digital performances reflect authentic political values or serve as calculated efforts to manage public perception.

This has motivated a majority of politicians to turn to the Internet using social media in an effort to rebrand them and regain public trust. Social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and YouTube are now strategic positions from which to broadcast intimacy, emotion, and authenticity that break down the boundaries between daily life and political self.

In line with these, the role of social media as a location of strategic identity work becomes increasingly pivotal. It is a space where politicians create good public personas

through presenting themselves in terms that appear more intimate and proximate to citizens. The political has become personal, and the outcome is public performances of familiarity, care, and authenticity. As (Sajjad, F. et al, 2017) argue, social media is a powerful space for the creation and representation of political identity. Political players use such spaces to represent their ideologies and identities and, through this, remake social realities through discourse.

Based on the author's observation, the case of Kang Dedi Mulyadi (KDM) in Indonesia illustrates how political identity can be strategically constructed through sustained digital engagement . KDM constructs his political identity through continuous presence in digital media. KDM's YouTube channel has 7.4 million subscribers with a large following on TikTok and Facebook. The emotion-packed interactions with marginalized communities, including street vendors, scavengers, and homeless children, are mostly in Sundanese while touching on local issues. Through relatable storytelling and a polished use of video, these narratives depict him as a leader who has his roots, is compassionate and carries a certain accessibility.

Local framing gives political entities the chance to form close emotional ties and impression with people. Talking about issues important locally lets politicians ignore partisan differences and appeal to more voters outside the main political parties. Politicians in districts where the race is close realize that reaching out to constituents locally helps them form a strong bond with people and improves their assessment in Congress (Munis, B. K. Burke, 2023).

This dynamic is not limited to Western democracies. In Indonesia, for instance, KDM's continuous implementation of this quality is so widespread that he is dubbed the "Gubernur Konten" or "The Content Governor" (Kompas, 2025), because he is seen as a relatable figure in a time of distrust of political elites. KDM is someone who is both a traditionalist in culture and a fan of digital media, using the strengths of both local identity and emotions on the internet. Thus, KDM provides important evidence on how political authenticity is shown in Indonesia through both formal and informal media.

However, this strategic appeal to emotion also raises important questions about whether such digital acts are genuine. As a response to these shifts, questions about KDM's sincerity within digital presentation have emerged as a central concern in contemporary political debate. Even though anecdotal evidence is that there are likely to be some audiences who will be distrustful of his emotive narrative and acts of benevolence, empirical data do not exist by which to investigate whether such gestures represent an expression of genuine political values or a component of an image-management strategy. (tidak ada sumber karena ini dari author)

Currently, the tension between being authentic and image management is at the core of digital political communication (Manning et., al., 2017) telah ditambahkan sumber. The purpose of this study is to probe whether KDM's projection as a sensitive and trusting leader is a reflection of his political values or a calculated project for electoral purposes. It is thus imperative to conduct an analysis of how language and discourse strategies are used to create political credibility and influence perception; a systematic reveal that is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA).

This study argues that while public statements exist, no academic research has empirically examined whether KDM's online persona is genuine or part of a broader political agenda. The research aims to explore how digital storytelling facilitates trust and identity construction amid widespread distrust of politicians. Emotional appeal is understood here as a key element in digital storytelling, involving techniques like

building emotional connections based on universal human values to strengthen audience relationships.

Even as public claims hinted at the sincerity of KDM's virtual self, no empirical scholarly study has hitherto examined whether or not this self-existed or was part of a broader political agenda. This current research aims to fill the gap by investigating how digital storytelling (DST) facilitates trust and identity construction in an environment dominated by distrust of politicians. Past studies quote the achievement of emotional digital storytelling in a case like this. Emotional appeal is a critical element of DST since it allows for the creation of impactful content that individuals can identify with. This is observed through using personal stories and emotive storytelling in creating bridges with individuals (Thorbjørnsrud, 2024).

Although previous research, such as (Martella, Antonio; Roncarolo, 2022), has evaluated the competition and mobilization strategies of political leaders during election campaigns on social media, their focal interest remains short-term campaign length and specific political alignments in Western democracies. Their research highlights how politicians like Giorgia Meloni captured the media and public discourse during periods of political crises, but they do not extend to the extent of examining how political identities and narratives are framed in an enduring and honest manner outside of election periods.

The comparative study of (Bene, M., Magin, M., & Haßler, 2024) contributes to the existing knowledge of the communication of political issues in various countries but nevertheless remains focused on issue-oriented campaigning and does not particularly consider the long-term processes of political identity formation in hybrid media systems and in conditions of reduced public trust, as in Indonesia.

This creates a significant research gap: the lack of empirical studies that further comprehensively investigate the role of social media in the construction and maintenance of the political identity and trust among the population over the years, specifically, the use of emotionally evocative and locally embedded communications strategies by the politicians. This study fills that gap with the analysis of the figure of Kang Dedi Mulyadi, an Indonesian politician that appeals to local cultural values and digital populism to create a relatable and emotionally appealing image of a politician.

Thus, this research provides a contribution to digital political communication through introducing a novel way of constructing political identity in an continuous, authentic, and contextual manner in the social media age specifically within the unique and evolving democratic context of Indonesia.

The research gap is filled by researching how Kang Dedi Mulyadi's digital existence sustains the construction of political identity and public trust beyond the election process. It critically assesses whether his mediated persona serves as a reflection of 'real' political values or as a performance that extends a populist communication. Political identity refers to the narrative one constructs about oneself. This story is one about themselves which contains the past, present and future (Gentry, 2018). This multifaceted and dynamic phenomenon influences the lens through which politics is perceived and acted upon. It is not simply a question of ideological alignment, but rather a configuration based on emotional and symbolic elements. These elements are naturally embedded in communication and are processes that can be formed in any interaction. According to (Clackson, 2015) the political identity can form across languages and cultures. It happens through continuous storytelling.

This identity is manifested in daily practices that create, receive, reinterpret and adapt narratives to their socio-political experiences. Social media is not static, but

dynamic. It is not merely one thing; instead, it constitutes a negotiated presence in interactive digital spaces (Groth, 2019). It is therefore a public narrative that's socially constructed and subject to audience feedback. Following this finding, the present research examines how Kang Dedi Mulyadi (KDM) constructs his political identity and gains public trust via social media narrative. With an examination of his long-term online existence, the research seeks to build how KDM constructs his political identity and manages public trust in the context of growing demands for authenticity and digital populism scepticism.

In order to discover these dynamics, the study employs Norman Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework which allows for exploration of discursive strategies KDM employs. According to Fairclough, discourse is social practice. It is not just language in use. We use it to refer to the social world. CDA connects discourse to power, cognition, as well as ideology; it also shows tensions between public discourse and their contexts (Bacchini, 2017). According to (Fairclough, 1995) there are three-dimensional model—textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice—helps in the complete analysis of political communication.

The textual dimension looks at the different levels of language that reveal how the language choices made by a text construct authority, make meaning, and persuade. For example, political actors often impose imperatives and transitivity processes to command the lead. Political imperative is not a simple command but also a persuasive tool that mobilizes the pragmatic competence of the audience and orients it towards the speaker intentions as in the rhetoric instruments of the speeches of President El-Sisi (Khafaga, 2023).

Discourse practice consists of how text is produced, distributed and consumed. This includes how the text generates meaning through intertextuality as well as audience engagement. This is particularly relevant within online spaces where KDM subsists. (Zhang, 2023) shows that indirect speech, modality and narrative framing can be intentionally utilized in terms of how audiences perceive sincerity, authority and intent.

Social practice dimension places discourse in broader social and cultural contexts and examines the way stories validate or complicate dominant ideologies, power relations and norms. This layer will allow the analysis to recognize how media presence interacts with wider political realities such as populism, trust, and representation. Existing literature has shown that political narratives tend to reflect social change and ideological tensions. The contents of the KDM can also show a close nexus to this, specifically examining how media discourse is held accountable for normalizing or subverting populist ideologies in the greater political environment (Krzyzanowski, M., & Tucker, 2018).

The integration of (Fairclough, 1995) Telah Ditambahkan Dan Diperjelas three-dimensional model, which consists of textual analysis, discursive practice, and social practice, makes CDA an effective instrument for studying the connection among discourse, identity, and power in the online political communication of KDM. This model offers a comprehensive framework for examining how language, power, and ideology intersect in discourse. The first dimension, textual analysis, focuses on the linguistic features of texts, such as word choice, syntax, and rhetorical structures—to uncover how meaning and ideology are embedded in language. The second, discursive practice, examines the processes of text production, distribution, and consumption, highlighting how discourse is shaped by institutional contexts and interpreted by audiences. The third, social practice, situates discourse within broader socio-political structures,

exploring how language reflects and reproduces power relations, cultural norms, and ideological struggles. These three dimensions are interrelated: texts carry ideological meaning, discursive practices mediate how texts are constructed and received, and social practices provide the structural conditions that influence and are influenced by discourse. Together, they allow for a critical investigation of how political identities are discursively constructed and legitimized within specific socio-cultural contexts.

Accordingly, this study addresses the following research questions: How does Kang Dedi Mulyadi build his social and political identity on social media? What discursive strategies does Kang Dedi Mulyadi use to create closeness with the public? To what extent is his representation a reflection of authenticity or a form of image-making?

The main goal of this study is to examine how Kang Dedi Mulyadi creates and strengthens his political identity using communication techniques on social media platforms. It looks at the ways he demonstrates genuineness and shapes how people view him, not just during elections.

This study contributes to reveal how political identity and trust are constructed through language on social media, particularly in the Indonesian context. In practice, it helps politicians, journalists and political strategists understand how telling sincere and passionate stories impacts the way the public views leaders now that trust is on the decline. It supports media awareness among the audience by identifying real representations from carefully built public images. CDA helps students and teachers in education by providing examples and insight into analysing political statements, showing its importance in communication, political science and discourse studies

Method

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach within Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) framework to explore Kang Dedi Mulyadi's (KDM) discourse strategies in constructing political identity and public trust on digital media. Qualitative description emphasizes rich, close-to-data portrayals of participants' perspectives (Hall, S., & Liebenberg, 2024), while CDA interprets language as a social practice embedded in ideology and power (Bacchini, 2017).

The study uses two purposively selected online videos from KDM's YouTube social media platforms, published before and after the 2024 election, namely, the pre-election year (2024) and post-election consolidation year (2025). These types of videos were used to probe shifts in discourse strategies, political symbolism, and cultural narratives typical of these critical political moments.

Besides, the study used purposive sampling with focus on videos that have high rural community participation, Sundanese cultural icons, and moral-populist discourse based on themes of cultural proximity, symbolism, and populism (Mammen, S., & Sano, 2012). The sample allows us to analyze how discourse reacts to the election dynamics and subsequent political developments that ensue.

Complementary evidence was derived from formal public responses to these videos to register reception and polarized judgments of KDM's image, enabling multi-dimensional reception analysis. Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model is employed in the study: textual analysis (images and language), discursive practice (interpretation and production), and social practice (ideological context) (Fairclough, 1995).. Inductive thematic coding identified discursive trends such as "symbolic closeness," "moralized leadership," and "ritualized simplicity" (McLean, 2023).

To enhance the validity and legitimacy of the findings, triangulation was applied by merging video material, public statements, and relevant scholarly literature (Creswell, 2013; Heale, R., & Forbes, 2013). Triangulation provides richness to the analysis since it provides a multi-dimensional understanding of KDM's online political discourse and the reception thereof during the research period.

Results
Data 1
Data 1 presents a selected interaction between Kang Dedi Mulyadi (KDM) and an 80-year-old vegetable seller, captured in the video titled *Selesai Nonton Wayang | KDM Kagumi Nenek Usia 80 Tahun | Jalan ke Pasar Jualan Sayur*, uploaded on January 14, 2024, which has approximately 500 thousand views and 3,500 comments. The video, accessible at https://youtu.be/RNngO-N8OQY?si=bzGO2hdfFl4pNj3t, documents a late-night encounter following a traditional wayang performance, where KDM warmly engages with the elderly woman in Sundanese. This interaction highlight's themes of empathy, respect, and cultural intimacy, exemplifying the discursive strategies KDM uses to construct a political identity grounded in closeness to marginalized communities and demonstrating his leadership style through genuine, relatable storytelling.

Textual Dimension (Textual Analysis)
The conversation employs informal and familiar everyday Sundanese language, revealing emotional closeness between KDM and the elderly woman. Affectionate greetings such as "mak… bade kamana?" and "ema dagang dimana?" create a relaxed and warm atmosphere. KDM's use of caring metaphors, for instance "mani bersih badana" while gently rubbing the grandmother's back, conveys care and warmth. The repeated utterance of "alim" by the grandmother and KDM's responses like "ayu, jajap" emphasize mutual respect and affection. Additionally, KDM uses simple and accessible language, for example when asking "sabaraha bungkus sadayana, cobi etang?" to express intimacy and sincerity in communication. In line with (Fairclough, 1995), these linguistic choices—word selection, sentence structure, and style—reflect an ideology of leadership that is close to the people, approachable, and empathetic.

Discursive Practice Dimension
This interaction is produced and disseminated digitally as part of KDM's political communication strategy aimed at building an image of a leader who is close to and caring for ordinary people. KDM demonstrates concrete actions, such as declaring "abdi bade meser!" to emphasize his commitment to help. Such interactions are designed to be perceived by the public as evidence of authenticity and emotional closeness. Furthermore, KDM's informal transaction and assistance to the grandmother serve as tangible proof of his care. According to (Fairclough, 1995), discursive practice encompasses the production, distribution, and consumption of texts that shape meanings and influence social perceptions.

Social Practice Dimension
The interaction reflects Sundanese socio-cultural norms and values that emphasize respect, togetherness, and social responsibility. KDM's humility is evident when he refuses to let the grandmother kiss his hand, instead inviting her to kiss his shoulder, demonstrating social ethics and equality. The grandmother's expression "ah, loba-loba teuing" when receiving assistance illustrates local norms of modesty and politeness.

Additionally, the fact that the grandmother continues selling vegetables at the age of 80 highlights the community's social and economic realities, reinforcing the narrative of a leadership that is caring and close to the people. As (Fairclough, 1995) explains, the social practice dimension links discourse to broader socio-political contexts, including power relations and cultural values.

Data 2

Data 2 presents an interaction between Kang Dedi Mulyadi (KDM) and a paralyzed elderly man, captured in the video titled *Meski Alami Kelumpuhan Akibat Kecelakaan Kerja - Ki Ade Tetap Bekerja Jadi Kuli Babat*, uploaded on January 14, 2024, with approximately 500 thousand views and 3,500 comments. The video was recorded during KDM's tenure as Governor of West Java and shows him having lunch at a Padang restaurant after visiting a senior high school. During the visit, KDM instructs his assistant to find the elderly man, who had previously been seen crawling by the roadside in the rain. The assistant locates the man and KDM calls to check on his condition, later inviting him to join at the restaurant. The two then sit and engage in a warm, intimate, and sympathetic conversation in Sundanese, highlighting KDM's empathetic leadership style and close connection with marginalized community members. The video can be accessed at https://youtu.be/PESsCquZnZk?si=epMULIuclgBQZqo5.

Textual Dimension (Textual Analysis)

In line with (Fairclough, 1995) framework, the textual dimension highlights how the use of informal, compassionate language constructs meaning. KDM and the elderly man communicate through Sundanese in a respectful yet emotionally intimate tone. KDM's choice of simple, empathetic language and expressions like "sanes menta-menta" and "hiji korsi roda" reflect humility and human dignity. The decision to use the pseudonym "Haji Udin" is a deliberate textual strategy—by obscuring his identity, KDM removes hierarchical barriers and allows for a genuine, non-intimidating interaction. This aligns with Fairclough's idea that language use reflects ideological positioning: in this case, compassion and egalitarianism in leadership.

Discursive Practice Dimension

This encounter is framed and distributed as a public discourse of care. As (Fairclough, 1995) suggests, discursive practices involve the production, dissemination, and consumption of text. KDM's video is carefully curated to portray moral integrity, social empathy, and active listening. The informal narrative format allows the public to witness not just a symbolic gesture, but an emotionally grounded political act. The name change to "Haji Udin" functions as a discursive maneuver to bridge emotional gaps and redefine power relations through solidarity rather than authority. Viewers consume this discourse as evidence of authentic leadership grounded in everyday struggles.

Social Practice Dimension

The interaction reflects broader socio-cultural structures that value humility, kinship, and reciprocal solidarity. KDM's symbolic gestures, sharing a meal, listening intently, and promising assistance resonate with local norms of leadership as service. His conduct also exposes systemic failures, lack of support for disabled workers, absence of social safety nets—and offers a counter-image of political care. As (Fairclough, 1995) asserts, social practices embedded in discourse both shape and are shaped by power relations. Here, KDM's approach subverts dominant political discourses by emphasizing

personal engagement over bureaucratic detachment, reinforcing his image as a grassroots leader.

Discussion

The study finds that Kang Dedi Mulyadi (KDM) constructs his political identity on social media by blending digital emotional narrative and local culture-based populist discourse. This research adopts Norman Fairclough's (1995) three-dimensional model of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)—which comprises the analysis of text, discursive practices, and social practices—as its primary theoretical framework. Fairclough's model is particularly suitable because it elucidates how language functions as a social practice that constructs and reproduces power relations and ideological meanings. The research positions KDM's media discourse as a site where language, power, and ideology intersect in the dynamic formation of political persona. The study finds that KDM's political image is not static but a negotiated dynamic identity based on the varied levels of trust by the public.

At the textual level, KDM's language shows deliberate deployment of imagery and words to humanize the political leader. According to Fairclough (1995), textual analysis reveals how lexical choices, metaphors, and narrative structures embed ideological stances in language use. The deployment of Sundanese words, emotive lexis, and visual narratives with marginalized groups portrays KDM as a humane leader who is strongly rooted in his society. This aligns with the theory that political identity is ideological, yet emotional and symbolic. As opposed to short-term digital campaigns usually argued in Western circles, KDM employs a long-term strategy of identity establishment based on cultural proximity and affective identification. Language choice and visual elements reaffirm an ethical connection with the public based on familiarity, trusting them beyond the realm of official policy debate.

On the level of discursive practice, audience interaction plays a very important role in co-constructing political meaning. Fairclough (1995) highlights that discursive practices involve the production, distribution, and consumption of texts, all of which contribute to the construction of social realities. In line with (Groth, 2019) "negotiated presence," authenticity is not defined by KDM but also supported by the public. Commendatory comments are a sign of embracing his moral figure, which indicates a relation of trust established over extensive online interactions.

At the practice level of society, KDM's rhetoric works in response to the overall crisis of political trust throughout Indonesia, commonly explained in terms of corruption and elite disconnection. Fairclough's social practice dimension draws attention to how discourse both shapes and is shaped by broader social structures and power relations. By manipulating Sundanese values, affective appeal, and visible performances of care, KDM practices an emotional populism which makes attempts to fill the gap of trust. Compared to the uncertainty in most populist strategies between image management and actual expression, KDM's online political performance shows a very high level of congruence between his true expression and public image. His style is notable for its sensed authenticity and congruence, and with minimal tension created between image management and actual self-presentation.

The name "Gubernur Konten" signifies the refashioning of political legitimacy in the information age. This reflects Fairclough's argument that political authority is no longer solely maintained by formal institutions but increasingly enacted through everyday communicative interactions and mediated discourse. Political authority is no

longer founded on formal institutions but is enacted through mundane interaction, affective storytelling, and ongoing online activism. Performative speech such as this one can consolidate as well as challenge dominant ideologies depending on mass reception and interpretation.

In short, the study verifies that political identity in the digital media era is a complex construction linguistically constructed, technologically mediated, and socially co-constructed in interaction with the public. Digital emotional narrative transcends a successful rhetorical tool; it is an iterative process of identity construction shaped by interactive public engagement. Audiences' engagement via comments even more powerfully indicates that political meaning is no longer controlled by politicians but the result of on-going negotiation in participatory media spaces.

This research fills a gap in the literature because it puts in the spotlight how emotional-political narratives operate beyond election periods and in non-Western digital cultural contexts, providing empirical evidence of performance, contestation, and reworking of trust and authenticity on social media. Shortcomings include dependence on two purposively selected videos that do not necessarily depict all of KDM's digital communication strategy. Dependence on publicly available comments also introduces risk of algorithmic abuse or performative action bias. The blending of the cultural symbols and local sayings in context can also impact the overall generalizability of the findings.

Follow-up research needs to expand the number of political figures and regions and cultures included and investigate cross-platform approaches to uncover comparative patterns of digital populism. Research is also encouraged to investigate the emotional impact of digital storytelling through interviews, surveys, or experimental methods to augment qualitative findings with quantitative measures of trust and public participation.

Conclusion

This study critically examined Kang Dedi Mulyadi's (KDM) political identity construction on social media using a multidimensional discourse analysis framework grounded in Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). The findings demonstrate that KDM effectively integrates emotional digital narratives with cultural symbolism, producing a political persona that resonates authentically with his audience and navigates complex power relations embedded in political communication.

Unlike typical populist internet campaigning that often betrays tension between strategic image management and genuine self-presentation, KDM's communication is notably coherent and perceived as truthful by his followers. Such harmony sustains a new form of political legitimacy enacted through emotive engagement, cultural connectedness, and the strategic use of local language and symbols that respond effectively to endemic trust deficits and political alienation in Indonesian politics. This challenges common critiques of populism as purely manipulative or superficial by revealing a nuanced performance of authenticity and relational leadership.

Despite these strengths, the research acknowledges inherent limitations. It draws on purposively selected videos and publicly available comments, which introduces content selection bias and platform-specific algorithmic influences. The study's cultural context—deeply rooted in Sundanese values and West Javanese local culture—may also restrict the transferability of findings to different political landscapes or digital

environments where cultural meanings and digital engagement patterns vary significantly.

Nonetheless, this research contributes significantly to the scholarly conversation by providing empirical evidence on how emotional-political storytelling operates beyond the temporality of election campaigns and within non-Western digital cultural contexts. It extends theoretical debates on authenticity, populism, and trust negotiation in online political communication, highlighting how these processes are mediated linguistically and culturally to shape political identities and public engagement.

In light of the critical importance of these findings, future studies are encouraged to expand the scope by including a broader spectrum of political figures across various geographical and cultural settings to assess the generalizability of such digital populist strategies. Employing cross-platform comparative analyses will further illuminate how different social media ecologies influence the construction and reception of political identity, as different platforms may afford or constrain various forms of emotional storytelling and audience interaction.

Moreover, adopting mixed-method approaches—including qualitative interviews, surveys, and experimental designs—would allow researchers to measure the emotional impact and trust dynamics generated by digital political narratives more robustly. Quantitative data would complement qualitative discourse analyses by providing statistical evidence of audience responses and the effectiveness of emotional engagement strategies, deepening the understanding of the mechanisms behind political persuasion and identification in digital media.

Such expanded research efforts would provide vital insights for political practitioners aiming to engage democratically and authentically with the public, offering guidance on how to cultivate trust and legitimacy in increasingly mediated and fragmented political landscapes. Furthermore, it could inform policy debates on digital communication ethics, the regulation of online political content, and strategies to combat misinformation while fostering inclusive political participation.

Ultimately, this study underscores the significance of viewing political identity construction as a dynamic, iterative process shaped by interactive public discourse and cultural embeddedness in the digital age. It calls for continued interdisciplinary scholarship that bridges linguistic analysis, political communication, and cultural studies to better understand the evolving role of social media in contemporary politics.

Acknowledgment

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