Strategic Communication and Political Candidate's Image in Digital Campaigns

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Abstract: This research aims to present a comprehensive bibliometric literature evaluation related to research topics that have relevance to political candidate image building during 2000-2023 and the future research of political candidate image building. Data materials were obtained from Google Scholar by filtering 303 articles from 994 data that were successfully recompiled. Data downloading was carried out on January 10th, 2023. The research method was bibliometric, where data was downloaded through the PoP (Publish or Perish) version 8 application. For future research, topics related to globalization, Twitter, blogs, and rhetoric have opportunities to be developed in contemporary political communication studies.

Keywords: bibliometric, digital, image, political candidate, research development

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menyajikan evaluasi literatur bibliometrik yang komprehensif terkait dengan topik penelitian yang memiliki relevansi dengan pembangunan citra kandidat politik selama 2000-2022 dan penelitian mendatang mengenai pembangunan citra kandidat politik. Bahan data diperoleh dari Google Scholar dengan menyaring 303 artikel dari 994 data yang berhasil disusun ulang. Pengunduhan data dilakukan pada tanggal 10 Januari 2023. Metode penelitian adalah bibliometrik, di mana data diunduh melalui aplikasi PoP (Publish or Perish) versi 8. Penelitian mendatang dapat mengembangkan topik terkait globalisasi, Twitter, blog, dan retorika dalam kajian komunikasi politik kontemporer.

Kata Kunci: bibliometric, citra, digital, kandidat politik, pengembangan penelitian

Image construction and politicians have very close relevance (Enli & Skogerbø, 2013, p. 757). Image in the political sphere is a form of contemporary political communication. This means that the image of politicians is crucial in approaching and interacting between politicians and society. In the era of mass media emergence, political image has become dynamic and interesting to watch (Janowski, 2015; Xenos, Vromen, & Loader, 2014).

The emergence of audiovisual media has implications for the formation of increasingly massive politicians' images. Television media provides sufficient space for politicians to display expressions and other nonverbal communication for the desired image construction. Television also complements the needs of politicians to convey their messages through talk show programs and interviews. TV news interviews are an effective medium for

politicians to distribute their messages and selves to a wide audience. At the same time, in TV coverage, both verbal and non-verbal signs, such as costumes or dress code, hairstyle, charisma, body language, even tone of voice, become very important elements in the process of image formation (McNair, 2017, p. 25-30).

Acceptance or rejection of a politician is an emotional decision driven primarily by the personal image of the leader (Tucker et al., 2018). The appearance of politicians in the media, both radio and television are their opportunity to persuade and build an impression on the public so that image construction efforts become efficient when compared to paid image development or political advertisements. Political advertisements, like other advertisements, where politicians are the products marketed in these advertisements, certainly is not cheap. Political advertising in its dynamics has been widely studied both from the aspects of communication, marketing, and politics. It is in this context that the three merge into one perspective and it is even more interesting to observe.

Image building in politics has become increasingly soaring in the era of television as the main source of information. Television provides an arena for politicians to make politics not only as hard news but also to create political celebrities who also entertain, generate connection, divert attention, and direct the masses. An important part of television-driven politics is that political leaders trained to become political celebrities, who must be able to appear in front of television cameras to convey their charisma. This means that successful politicians must have attractive personalities and be able to get along with all social groups. At the same time, they must also be attractive on the TV screen. Choosing the right communication channel allows political actors to reach audiences and have a significant influence on the success of the message and its popularity (Urbaniak, 2019, p. 97).

The presence of social media provides greater space for politicians to personalize (Farkas & Bene, 2021, p. 119). Politicians on social media manifest this personalization in visualized messages. These visual messages become strategic instruments and tools to influence constituents. So far, studies on political communication have focused more on texts than on special approaches, such as visuals. The use of social media in presenting the image of politicians then becomes increasingly massive. The studies that emerged regarding personalization in social media can generally be divided into three categories, namely the focus on voter behavior, media coverage, and politicians' communications. Social media has now become a priority medium for politicians to disseminate information and policies to the wider community (Reveilhac, 2022, p. 101) and is even being used to disseminate knowledge and expertise in a popular way in scientific communication especially during the COVID-19 as well (Sugiono, 2023, p. 97). Furthermore, social media owned by every politician emphasizes that it is important to carry out image

management as an effort to carry out visual communication and self presentation (Bast, 2021, p. 1). Research on image building in the political realm is increasingly showing its dynamics in line with developments in communication technology.

To the best of our knowledge, there is no bibliometric analysis of image building studies that has been performed. The purpose of this study is to fill this void by providing an extensive analysis of the literature related to this study to answer the following questions: First, to find the research topics that have relevance to image building during 2000-2022. Second, to find the future of image building of topics that provide opportunities for further research.

Image is a public representation of political leaders or candidates, political parties and other political actors (Buinitsky & Yakovets, 2019, p. 34). Representations obtained by the audience about political actors and their ways of carrying out public tasks are the meeting point between the messages and the way they display on the one hand and the audience's expectations of these political actors on the other (Dalton & Flanagan, 2017; Denton, Voth, Trent, Friedenberg, 2019). As a construction, image is in the heads or minds of the audience. Even so, image is based on an individual's ability to translate messages and interpret the behavior of politicians, election candidates, and political parties. In addition to the behavior and messages conveyed by these political actors in building the image, another thing that also has an important position is the media coverage of the activities of political leaders and parties, as well as the communication skills and communication style of these political actors.

In principle, political actors can be played by various individuals, such as the military (Palm & Crum, 2019, p. 513), the media (Patterson, 1997, p. 445), religious leaders (Nesterchuk, Trifonov, & Grishin, 2020, p. 357), business people and bureaucrats (Lindsay & Gartzke, 2022, p. 743) and a number of other social attributes (Patterson, 1997; Balkin, 2017). Political actors are individuals who have an orientation to influence the decision making process, through formal political institutions. That is why political actors always display self-image in a variety of interests according to their political goals.

Good political branding is highly correlated with good political character. An individual's political character is also greatly influenced by the background of the activity, expertise and profession he/she is engaged in (Dong, 2020, p. 346). The more dominant the individual character determines the political image you want to display (Moorman, 2020, p. 388).

Humans enter an era of more complex political communication. Conventional media is decreasing its role. Political actors are more individual in using the media (Tshuma, 2021, p. 307; Casero-Ripollés, 2021, p. 1). This situation is called that political communication enters the third phase era, after passing through the first phase of exposure to party propaganda era, the media is non-partisan. The second is the domination of the influence of television media. Third, the proliferation

of the primary forms of communication, as well as the abundance, ubiquity, reach, and rapidity of media, characterize this still emerging phase (Casero-Ripollés, 2021; Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999).

This shift occurred because the socio political environment also experienced major changes. Markers of these changes include, modernization, individualization, secularization, economization, aestheticization, increasing rationalization of all facets of purposive organization and administration, and mediatization—the media moving toward the center of the social process (Larsson, 2021, p. 2744; Priyowidodo, Inggrit, Sari, & Gunawan, 2019, p. 327).

Therefore, if political actors want to be counted on in political contestation in this digital era, they must be able to build self image or advertise themselves optimally (Chen, Feng, Liu, & Tian, 2019, p. 53). The digital era has revolutionized political communication, introducing new dynamics and challenges in the realm of politics and power. Chadwick (2017) examines how how digital technologies have transformed political communication, shaping the interactions between politicians, media, and citizens. Chadwick explores the concept of the hybrid media system, which encompasses both traditional and digital media platforms and their complex interplay. He offers valuable insights into the evolving landscape of political communication in the digital era, highlighting the implications for political processes, public opinion formation, and democratic governance.

Digital era has introduced new opportunities and challenges in crafting and managing the image of political candidates through various such as social media, websites, and online advertisement. Political candidates must carefully craft their visual representation, maintain consistency, foster authenticity, leverage visual storytelling, and navigate the challenges and risks associated with the digital realm. By strategically managing their image, candidates can effectively communicate their messages, engage voters, and ultimately influence electoral outcomes.

Chan, Chen, and Lee (2019) in their study found that in contemporary study's political communication, social media is a catalyst for the emergence of discussions and follow-up studies on deliberative democratization. Chan, Chen, and Lee (2019) confirmed the potential of social media to generate information and deliberative citizenship as well, especially in authoritarian countries where social media has become an important and popular source of information.

The development of digital-based political communication research demands a methodology capable of reading the dynamics of current research. One of them was done by Zhou and Liao (2020) who systematically mapped and described the latest communication developments regarding Artificial Intelligence and Big Data. Zhou and Liao (2020) mapped key sources, disciplines, and keywords based on a bibliometric analysis of 685 articles

from the Web of Science database. The findings show that communication research is divided into three main groups namely *communication and sociology*, *journalism*, and *information and elecommunications*, where *political communication* is among the three main groups.

Related to research on the image of political candidates, several previous studies have developed on visual communication. Farkas and Bene (2021) examined the visual communication of politicians as a form of their image on social media, which were Facebook and Instagram. Farkas and Bene (2021) found that image is often used to personalize communication. While on Facebook the individualization dimension of personalization is more widespread, on Instagram the prevailing dimension is privatization. Referring to the previous research, this research will then map the dynamics of research on managing the image of political candidates as a study that provides a systematic overview of contemporary political communication research in the digitalization era.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach. All scientific articles are taken from the Google Scholar database through the PoP (Publish or Perish) version 8 application, and it is processed with VOSviewer (Visualisation of Similiarities). There are five stages in this research, namely determining keywords, data search, data or article filtering, data validation and data analysis. Determination of keywords by considering the research objectives, namely knowing the study of image building of political candidates in the digital era in publications on Google Scholar. The researchers also noticed that the determination of keywords can be adjusted as desired and keywords that are less relevant can be removed.

Sampling data was taken from the period 2000-2022 on January 10, 2023. Researchers collected 994 articles where the average per author was 1.84 papers. The data was then entered into the Mendeley application, until only 303 published articles were filtered in journals indexed by Scopus and WoS. After
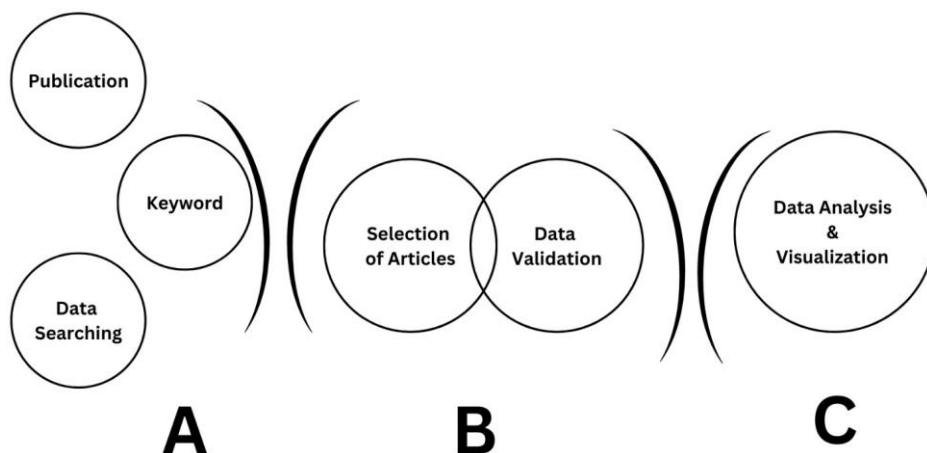
Figure 1 Research Flowchart
Source: Primary Data (2023)

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all the data was identified, the researcher carried out the data visualization process using the VOSviewer application. VOSviewer software can also be used to perform data mining, mapping, and grouping articles taken from database sources (Suwartini, Suwandi, Suyitno, & Rohmadi, 2022; Alcaide–Muñoz, 2017).

The bibliometric approach method used above is to answer research questions regarding the number of publications in the period studied, the countries that contributed the most and the types of publications available and research topics discussed in the research literature. Including the findings identified the status of development and the key trends (de Cavalcante, Coelho, & Bairrada, 2021). Data was taken from Google Scholar to find publications about the image building of political candidates. Bibliometric review is commonly used in scientific disciplines and focuses on the quantitative study of journals, books or other types of written communication (Setyaningsih, Indarti, & Jie, 2018; Chaudhari & Pawar, 2021). The processing results display three types of visualization, namely network visualization, overlay visualization and density visualization.
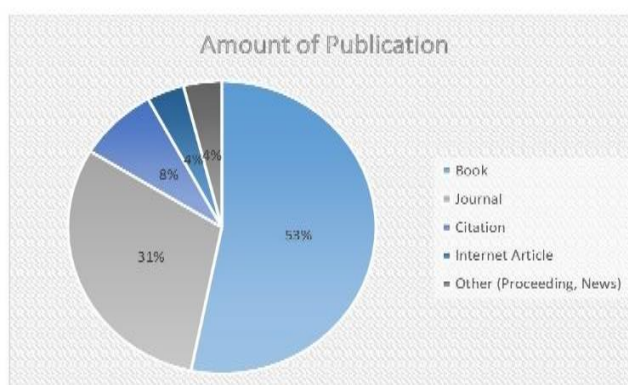
RESULTS

The Research Topics That Have Relevance to Image Building During 2000-2022

The total number of publications on the topic of image building that successfully downloaded via Google Scholar was 994 papers. However, that amount of data is not only in the form of published journal articles, but consists of books, citations, internet articles and proceedings. Specifically for the category of journal articles, there are 303 papers. More details are in Figure 2.

Criteria of Publication

Name	Total
Book	529
Journal	303
Citation	83
Internet Article	39
Other (Proceeding, News)	40
	994

Figure 2 Total of Publications
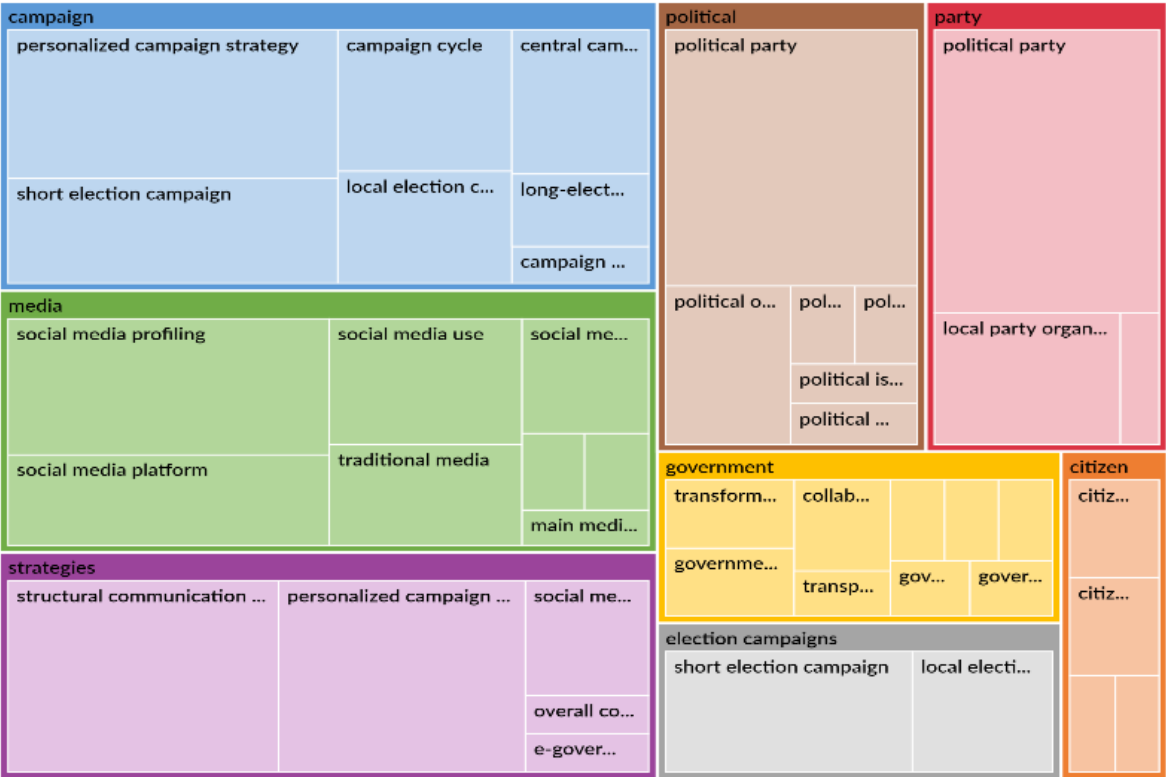Source: Primary data (2023)

Figure 3 Themes Mapping
Source: Primary Data (2023)

Based on the results of data reduction and theme categorization, the 303 articles contain at least six major themes, namely campaign, media, strategies, political, party and government.

Based on VOSviewer's analysis related to the theme of image building of political candidate, the occurrence rate are in Figure 4. Out of the top 20 publications, the occurrence rate is in all articles. When these big themes were broken down into a number of keywords in each article, a number of dominant keywords were found consisting of the words image building, political candidate, effect, digital age, digital technology, social medium.

These keywords reflect that each article has a very different topic emphasis. However, if you pull the thread straight, each of the same keywords is actually used interchangeably in each article. The similarity in the use of keywords can be interpreted in two ways. First, each article has the same message both substantively and artificially. Second, each article has unintentionally constructed complementary relationships. In more detail, see Figure 4.

Furthermore, if viewed from country affiliation, scientific family and publisher, the 303 image building themed articles consist of 10 countries, 11 journal publishers with 12 domains or scientific scope. In more detail, see Figure 5.

The Figure above shows that the USA is the country that studies the most research on the image building of political candidates. After the USA, followed by the UK and the Netherlands. This shows that research on

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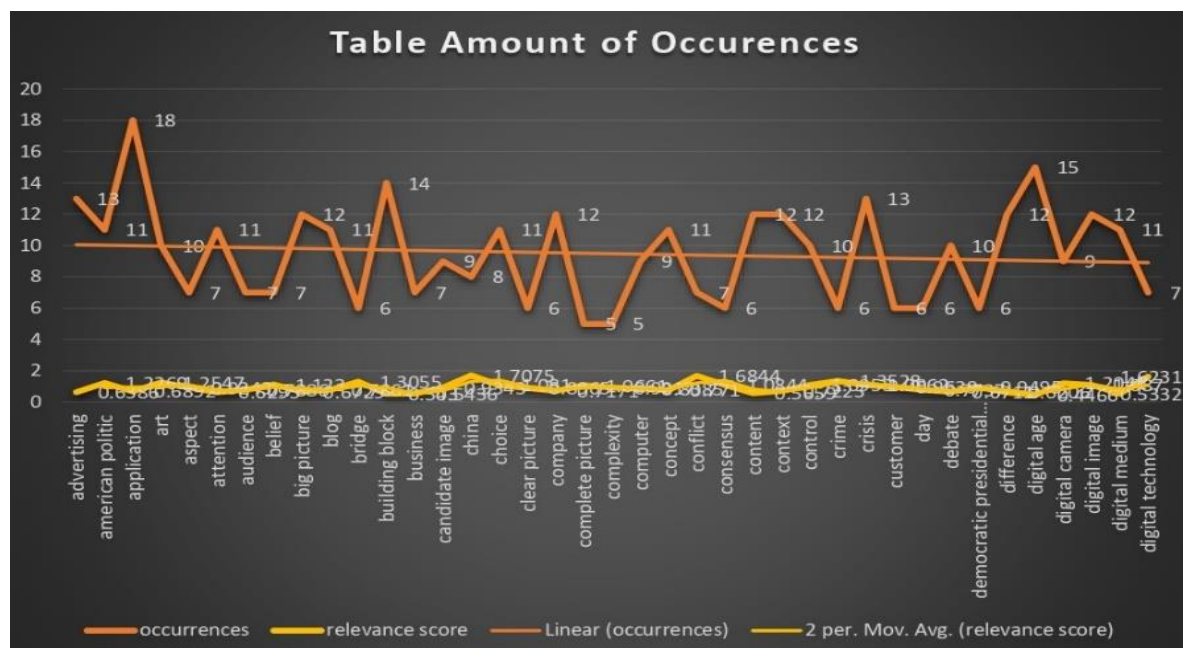
Figure 4 Amount of Occurrences
Source: Primary Data (2023)
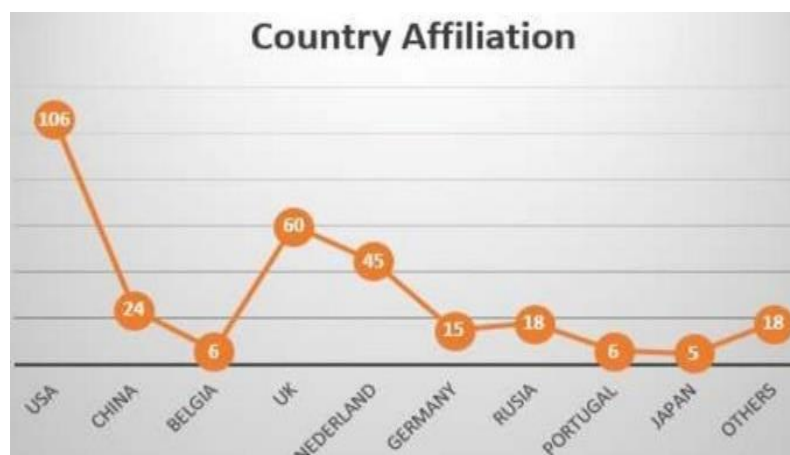
Figure 5 Country Affiliation
Source: Primary Data (2023)

the image building of political candidates is more widely studied in countries that have a democratic culture and media that tend to be well established. Countries in Asia recorded in the image building of political candidate research are China (24 studies) and Japan (5 studies). Other Asia, such as Southeast Asia, is included in the others category (18 studies). This shows that research on image building of political candidates has the potential to continue to develop in Southeast Asia, in line with political dynamics and the use of media, especially social media, which is increasingly prevalent in the Southeast Asian region (Chan, Chen, & Lee, 2019).

Figure 6 shows that many prominent publishers have published studies on the image building of political candidates. Sage is the publisher with the most publications, followed by Elsevier and Welly Online and Springer. Its journals include Political Party, International Journal of Business Communication,

Figure 6 Publisher Affiliation
Source: Primary data (2023)

Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly (Sage), International Economic Review, Advanced Material (Wiley-Blackwell), Digital Geography and Society, Government Information Quarterly (Elsevier) and Journal of Communication, Communication Theory (ICA). While several other journals include Mass Communication and Society, Third World Quarterly (Routledge).

Regarding publication productivity in the last 20 years, it has also fluctuated. This fact explains that the theme of image building consistently colored the content of scientific journals published during that period. A more precise average of publications per year is in the Table 1.

The number of scientific publications regarding the image building of political candidates as shown in the table above tends to be stable; there is no significant decrease or increase. The increase in scientific publications occurred in 2010, 2014 and 2018 while in 2022, it tends to decrease.

Table 1 Publication per Five Years

Year	Total of Publication
2000-2005	72
2006-2010	72
2011-2015	65
2016-2022	94
Total	303

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Figure 7 shows the scope of studies that are relevant to the publication of image
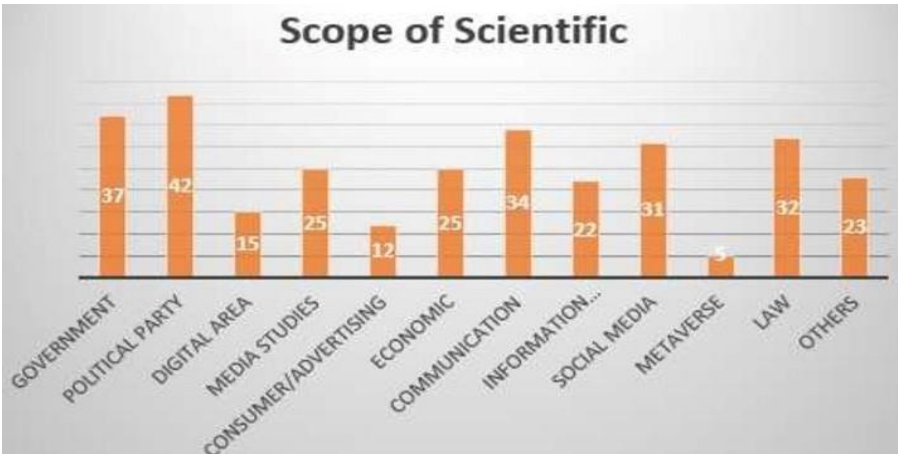

Figure 7 Scope of Science
Source: Primary Data (2023)

building of political candidates, including political parties with 42 articles (14 percent), government with 37 articles (12 percent) and communication with 34 articles (11 percent). Political parties as political machines closely related to political actors who have an interest in image building in order to attract the attention of constituents and achieve popularity. Likewise with the government as a domain where the image building of government actors actively uses the media for imaging and engagement. Research on the image building of political candidates also emphasizes communication as a relevant study. This relates to conveying the image of political actors in general using messages both visually and text or speech.

The section below describes the keyword mapping that is used or has the potential to emerge for future research. Figures 5-7 and Table 1 show the diversity of country affiliations, publisher affiliations, total publications per year and scholarly domains proving that the theme of image building is a concern in many countries, many publishers

and is multidisciplinary in nature. In more detail, each article in each publication contains relatively varied keywords. The mapping of each of these articles can be observed through network visualization (Figure 8) and overlay visualization (Figure 9).

Based on VOSviewer calculations, the picture above shows that there are five groupings related to research on image building, namely red, green, blue, yellow, orange and purple. The categorization shows relevant topics in research on the image building of political candidates. The visualization above shows topics that are relatively not studied much in image building research of political candidates, for example the purple group is about globalization, the yellow is about blogs, the green is about rhetoric and the blue is about Twitter. The grouping of these keywords shows that research on candidate image management is often related to issues of globalization, social media, or new media, as well as the candidate's art of speaking in building relationships with constituents.
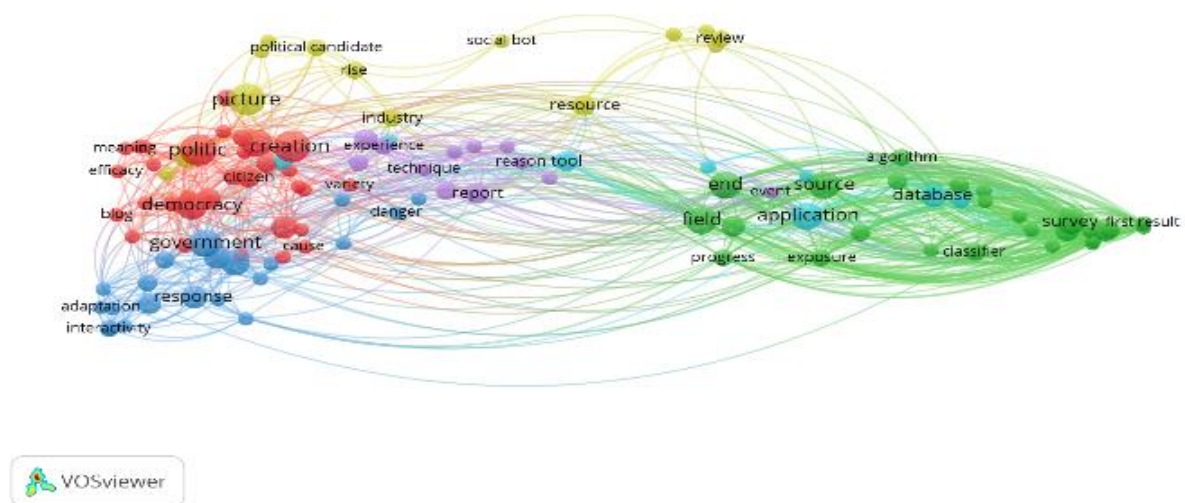
Figure 8 Network Visualization Mapping
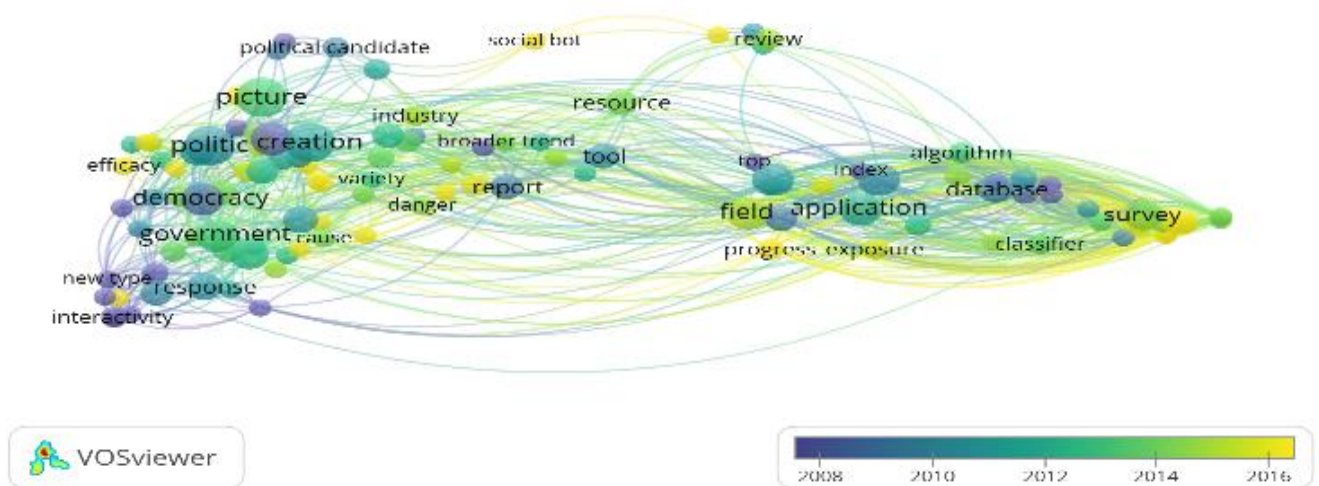Source: Primary Data (2023)

The red group emphasizes the frequency of keywords that are relatively frequently used in research on candidate images, such as democracy, citizens, and creation.

Figure 8 shows that the purple group has a relatively smaller spread of keywords than the other color group. That means there is still a chance for future research to develop available keywords or work with new concepts related to building the political candidate's image. Figure 8 also shows on the yellow group, visible concepts of resources, picture and industry, which are also less explored in research on the image of political candidates. The existing research also fails to associate these concepts with concepts such as democracy, government or citizens as crucial and close to political communication. The blue group is relatively close to the red group, indicating the proximity of concepts related to government, democracy, politics, and response. The network formed in the green group has a network that is visible far away from the other color group. This suggests that the keywords in the green group have distant

or unrelated associations with keyword from other groups.

Figure 8 shows that although there are five color group variations, research on building the image of political candidates is less explored in political communication. The section below will further explain the keywords that are relevant to the periodization of research.

Based on the visualization map above, it was found that research on the image building of political candidates had been conducted from 2008 to 2012. In 2008, topics that were relevant to the study are innovation, the World Wide Web, journalism. In 2009, the topics that emerged were election campaigns, nation building and digital. In 2010 topics such as political image, application and voters had high relevance to image building, while in 2011, relevant topics included relationships, digital age and influence. In 2012, the visualization map showed topics such as social media, marketing and journalism frequently appearing in research.

Figure 9 Overlay Visualization Mapping
Source: Primary Data (2023)

Figure 9 also shows that research on the development and management of political candidate image was much done in 2012 to 2014. In the subsequent period, research on the subject was relatively small. A rapidly evolving and dynamic social media platform offers both an opportunity and a challenge to study the construction of the political candidate's image in greater depth. Social media provides the opportunity for the formation of a high relationship and engagement between candidates and constituents. In this context, research into the image of political candidates can provide insight into how image construction in politics is heavily influenced by the power of technology.

The Future of Image Building of Topics That Provide Opportunities for Further Research

The figure below shows that topics such as effect, digital age, crisis, and knowledge have a lot to do with research on image building of political candidates. On the other hand, topics such as globalization,

Twitter, blogs, and rhetoric are not much involved in research on the image-building of political candidates. This shows that as part of the study of contemporary political communication, research on the image-building of political candidates in its development opens opportunities to explore topics that intersect with Public Relations (PR); Information, Communication and Technology (ICT), and political studies.

Based on the findings above, the theme of image building of a political candidate has a number of very relevant keywords such as political, political party, industry, democracy, government digital era, as well as interactivity. That means that if the article discusses political candidates, it must be related to democracy issues, government issues and several allied themes that complement each other.

The visualization above also emphasizes that, in the digital era, image building for a political candidate cannot be separated from effective and high-quality communication
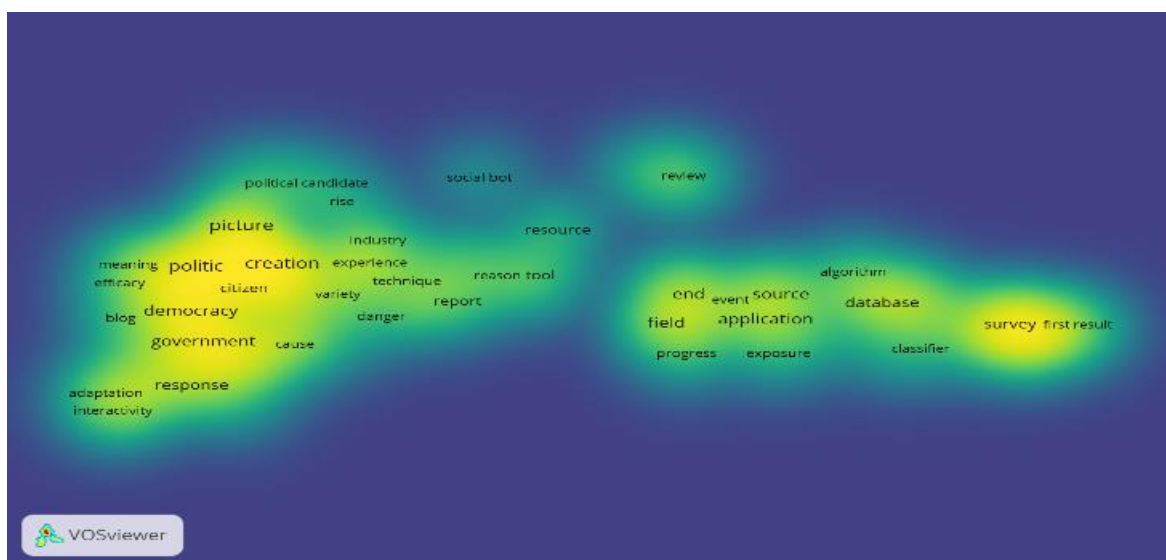
Figure 10 Density Visualization Mapping
Source: Primary Data (2023)

strategies. The terms *picture*, *resources*, *algorithm*, and *interactivity* are connected by lines intersecting with *democracy* and *political candidate*, indicating that these concepts interact and support one another.

Topics such as the construction of politicians' identities, the analysis of social networks in the formation of candidate images, and the comparison of candidates' images on social media have the potential to become future research topics that relate the image formation of political actors with the latest technology. Keywords related to the role of technology and communication in the political context show that communication technology is not just a passive infrastructure but has been integrated with politics and communication. The paradigm that communication technology only transmits messages to audiences has shifted by constructing technology as one of the influencing actors in the political communication context.

In the twenty-year period of publication, these themes have been consistently published in a number of major class journals in the world with reputable publishers, such as Sage, Wiley Online Library, Science Direct/Elsevier. MDPI dan Taylor Francis. Other publishers include Routledge and ICA (International Communication Association). Another interesting fact for future research is if image building is related to several topics such as journalism, activism, citizen, algorithm, progress exposure. Research methods can also use case studies, field research, social bots, data reviews and classifiers.

DISCUSSION

The digital era is characterized by various social media platforms, which creates a considerable challenge for managing the political candidate's image. Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, and LinkedIn have different user specifications and, thus, demand a different communication differentiation of content and strategy. Therefore, political candidates must have a consistent message, but apart from the trigger words, they should be able to adapt the style of communication to the platform nuances. For example, on Facebook, which is a platform for older users, data shows that political candidates in the election campaign are more prone to use longer, more insightful narration. Hence, they provide a more in-depth analysis of the policies or achievements. On the other hand, for a younger user base like TikTok, visual shots and a more informal style are more effective. Here, a candidate's ability to create engaging content through short videos and impactful images is key.

The clear differences in communication styles on each platform encourage campaign teams to understand their audience's characteristics more deeply and the trends of change. One good example is the balance candidates must strike in delivering their messages without going off-topic. If a campaign strategy fails to adapt to the dynamics of each platform, the candidate's image may become fragmented, or worse, fail to resonate with the intended audience. For instance, official political campaigns on Instagram or TikTok may seem too

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stiff for younger users, while being overly casual on LinkedIn can result in a decline in support. The differentiation isn't limited to content, each platform's algorithm, and unique approaches also play a critical role. The success of content on YouTube is based on viewership, whereas Instagram places more weight on visuals and user engagement. Thus, political candidates need to master platform algorithms to create both informative and engaging content (Donthu, Kumar, & Pattnaik, 2020; Feeley, 2008).

The multiple digital platforms also pose challenges for monitoring and handling responses, such as comments, reactions, and political attacks from opponents, all of which pressure campaign teams with limited resources. The nature of the news conveyed through digital media is another crucial aspect to consider. Moreover, using multiple platforms increases the potential for communication crises. Issues or scandals can spread quickly across platforms, making it harder to manage reputational damage.

Finally, the data reveal that personalization and evocatively connecting to potential audience members are significant components of digital-age political communication strategies in a number of the studies. Focusing on WiFi info or some random policy may actually only alienate voters, so candidates share intimate details about their lives (what a day looks like; opinions on gopher holes). Indeed, this strategy is affecting the image of candidates among the public especially

when it comes to trust and establishing them as close and caring in relation to the community. Even current event-centric storylines are frequently produced by vehicles such as Twitter, often serving to improve a candidate's appeal of relevance and connectedness to public matters.

Rather than simply a way to sidestep the media, Twitter has developed as a platform primarily employed by candidates for direct reaction to day-to-day events as many researchers found, reinforcing politician's responsiveness and apparent awareness of public concern. This strategy exposes candidates to hot-button issues as branding opportunities, such as sharing views or solutions on viral and frequent/debatable issues. Research on Twitter messaging in other behind-the-scenes contexts has also found that swift, repetitive communication to address public matters—aimed especially at simple tweets with clear information—can boost the view of candidates as capable leaders who are relevant to the socio-political. Put another way, the analysis indicates that candidates who handle content in line with each platform's unique qualities are more likely to build an image favourable to them because the manner in which they convey their values and constructed identity can change.

Young Voters and the Demand for Authenticity

Research on the image of political candidates in online campaigns is strongly linked to the authenticity demands of young voters, although not many researchers have

investigated young voters. New challenges arise from changes in audience behavior in the digital era; voters are critical viewers who demand authenticity. Voters can leverage technology and access to information to assess whether a candidate's actions align with their rhetoric. Candidates can no longer predict voter behavior or reactions, and political messages are no longer passive content that audiences merely absorb. Voters read everything, record footage, fact-check, and engage in discussions both online and offline. In instances where authenticity is lacking, image management is not simply about creating a facade to cover real actions. Authenticity is crucial, especially for younger generations, such as millennials and Gen Z, who demand it.

Rhetoric filled with empty promises fails to resonate with Gen Z, a generation more interested in creativity and originality than empty words. Candidates who overpromise and underdeliver are often ridiculed by voters. This lack of authenticity can erode voter trust, as campaigns that appear overly targeted or manipulated come across as artificial—leading to a disconnect with voters. With real-time information at their fingertips, voters critically assess candidates' past statements, social media posts, and campaign videos with a single click. Online platforms like Twitter and Reddit also enable voters to share information, compare candidates, and engage in political discussions, facilitating more informed decision-making (Ozcinar, 2021; Verma & Gustafsson, 2020). As

a result, generation Z voters may find it challenging to choose between presidential candidates, as they gravitate towards authenticity. The genuine nature of a candidate's platform can be a decisive factor in convincing—or deterring—this audience from voting.

CONCLUSION

The data findings and discussion above show that international publications related to image building studies of political candidates over the past two decades have tended to be stable. There was no significant increase or decrease. Even so, research on image building from year to year has added variations in terms of themes and scope. Likewise with writers who conduct studies with diverse socio-political and cultural contexts.

This study argues that even though the number of international publications on the image building of political candidates has not increased, they will still be of interest to researchers in the fields of communication, political marketing and political studies themselves. This is because digital media is experiencing massive dynamics and development that then becomes an instrument for political actors to reach the public and increase their popularity. As image for political actors is as important as substance in building relations with constituents, it opens opportunities and potentials to develop research on image building of political candidates. The substance of the message can be conveyed through attractive and positive images,

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considering that images are a crucial part of approaching voters psychologically. However, the findings of this study have limitations in the database used as a reference, namely the collection of data only comes from Google Scholar.

The prospects for future research in political communication, particularly in the area of political candidate image building, are wide open with several key opportunities for development. The results demonstrate that the volume of international publications on political candidate image management has been steady, however some opportunities for more detailed research in a wide range of areas have opened up since the rise of digital media. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok, Twitter and LinkedIn all differ in how they open up new opportunities for presentation of selves by political actors. To better understand current political communication practices, it is important to study the specific methods used by platforms, as well as how they foster trust, create credibility, and reach diverse demographic groups. Additionally, researching ethical considerations, cultural nuances, and audience perceptions across these platforms can help us understand how digital media shapes political identities around the world, making it imperative for academics to stay current with the ever-changing digital environment.

The contextual impact of this on public conception of political candidates' images, is a perceptible agenda for future research. Research might demonstrate differences in the efficacy of cross-platform communication strategies, and how audience interactions on each platform contribute to developing candidate images. In future, intensive research can be carried out on how local culture and socio-political context does affect the image building of political candidate in different countries and in a global scale as well.

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