

# Impression Management Strategy Through Emotional Expression of 2024 Presidential Candidates on the KPU RI YouTube Channel

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## Abstract

This research aims to analyze the impression management strategies of the three 2024 Presidential Candidates in the third Presidential debate as seen from nonverbal language, namely microexpressions (facial expressions) and gestures. The third debate held by the Indonesian KPU was held on January 7, 2024. The third debate raised the topics of protection, international relations, security, foreign policy, geopolitics, and globalization. The Presidential Candidate Debate aims to make it easier for the public to understand the vision, mission, and work program of each Presidential Candidate. Therefore, it is necessary to analyze the impression conveyed and the nonverbal language used by each candidate in front of the public to build a positive image. This research uses quantitative descriptive content analysis. Measurements regarding impression management strategies are carried out by looking at emotional behavior (Johnson et al., 2016), gestures (Eunson, 2015), microexpressions (Dubey & Singh, 2019), gestures, and microexpressions of pride and interest (Sauter, 2017) Regarding the data results, this research has eliminated strategies for implementing impression management. This research found that the three 2024 Presidential Candidates in the third debate showed the most ingratiation impression management strategy which was also paired with other strategies such as Anies Baswedan showing ingratiation – self-promotion, Prabowo Subianto showing ingratiation – intimidation, and Ganjar Pranowo showing ingratiation – exemplification.

**Keywords:** impression management strategies; emotional expressions; political public relations; 2024 presidential candidate debate.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

According to Merriam Budiardjo (1982), political communication serves as one of the functions of political parties in channeling diverse public opinions and aspirations, organizing them into structured advocacy for political policies (Universitas Pattimura, 2019). The process of achieving these political objectives is facilitated through the role of public relations in the political domain, known as political public relations. The practice of political public relations fosters communication that establishes mutual understanding and goodwill, which are the primary focus of political public relations, between the internal and external publics within a political environment (Goldwin, 2019). In an era of politics dominated by public opinion, image management and representational ability have become inevitable. Political actors are required to engage in persuasion and interaction to attract public participation. Political public relations is regarded as a management process utilized by an organization or political actor to achieve political objectives through communication and actions aimed at influencing, building, and maintaining relationships and reputations with the public to support their mission and attain their goals (Kioussis et al., 2019). A defining characteristic of political public relations is its integration of communication and action. This relates to its role in strategic management, where contributions to political public relations through communication can take the form of press releases, media interviews, and speeches (Kioussis et al., 2019). In his book "The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life," Erving Goffman (1959) posits that individuals, referred to as actors, present themselves both verbally and nonverbally to others with whom they interact. Leary & Kowalsky (1990) further explain that impression management serves a specific purpose: the desire to be perceived as attractive, competent, moral, dangerous, or authoritative.

Essentially, impression management concerns the tools and symbols employed to construct a particular persona, aiming to influence how others perceive and respond to an individual. Consequently, the impression management established by an organization initially determines the reputation it develops (Goldwin, 2019). Conceptually, impression management is applicable to public relations as it encompasses three key aspects: relationships, identification, and image. It is undeniable that in any interaction, individuals strive to build relationships, identify their counterparts, and create a positive impression (Goldwin, 2019). Regarding research on impression management, Jones & Pittman (1982) developed a broad taxonomy to capture various impression management behaviors. They identified five theoretical classifications of commonly used impression management strategies: ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication.

Ingratiation involves an individual using flattery to be perceived favorably by observers, typically employed when one wishes to be seen as pleasant or amicable. Intimidation entails an individual utilizing power to instill fear, thereby being perceived as formidable by observers. This strategy is often employed to project strength and control over a situation. Self-promotion involves individuals showcasing their abilities or achievements to appear competent in the eyes of observers. This strategy is implemented by highlighting accomplishments, contributions to others, and various accolades received. Exemplification entails individuals demonstrating self-sacrifice or exceeding their duties to be perceived as dedicated. Supplication involves individuals presenting their weaknesses or shortcomings to appear incapable in the eyes of observers, often portraying themselves as victims of a crisis (Kriyantono, 2014).

Jones & Pittman's taxonomy was further developed by Genevieve Johnson, Jennifer A. Griffith, and Ronald M. Buckley in their study titled "A New Model of Impression Management: Emotions in the 'Black Box' of Organizational Persuasion." This research proposed that the communicative nature of impression management provides a framework for understanding the mechanisms driving impression management behaviors and their outcomes. Johnson et al. (2016) theoretically expanded upon how nonverbal cues contribute to the success of impression management strategies, explaining the diverse information conveyed during impression management efforts and its applications. Johnson (2016) demonstrated the emergence of emotions within impression management strategies.

For instance, ingratiation, which involves using flattery to gain favor, is associated with happiness—an emotion arising from well-being and satisfaction (ingratiation-happy). Intimidation, where individuals utilize power to instill fear, is linked to anger—an affective state that motivates action, such as warning, intimidating, or confronting perceived threats (intimidation-anger). Self-promotion, in which individuals highlight their competencies and achievements, correlates with pride—a positive, self-conscious emotion triggered by goal attainment and regarded as instrumental in enhancing social status (Sauter, 2017) (self-promotion-pride). Exemplification, where individuals engage in self-sacrifice or exceed their duties to be perceived as dedicated, is associated with interest—an emotion driving curiosity and exploration, often considered a primary affect (Sauter, 2017) (exemplification-enthusiasm/optimism/interest). Supplication, in which individuals present their weaknesses to appear incapable, is linked to sadness—an emotion arising from loss, failure, complex interpersonal relationships, or diminished control (supplication-sadness).

Emotion, as conceptualized by Plutchik (1980), is a homeostatic behavioral process and a fundamental signaling system. Emotion is a state of turmoil, a disruption of equilibrium characterized by strong and irregular responses to stimuli (Fridaylita, 2021). There are numerous types of emotions; broadly, six core emotions are categorized into 34 universal emotions, namely anger, surprise, disgust, happiness, sadness, and fear (Ekman, 2004).

Emotional expressions generally encompass actions that occur privately (e.g., swearing in pain), spontaneous emotional expressions (e.g., bowing when feeling ashamed), and strategic communication (e.g., complimenting someone before providing criticism) (Guerrero, 1996). In nonverbal communication, emotions are most significantly conveyed through facial expressions (Ekman, 2004), alongside body cues (gestures) (Guerrero, 1996). This study examines nonverbal communication's emotional expressions, particularly kinesics (posture and body gestures) and microexpressions. Gestures constitute a form of nonverbal communication involving body movements that convey specific messages, either as substitutes for verbal messages or in conjunction with them. Additionally, gestures involve nonverbal communication through hand, finger, arm, and body movements to deliver messages (Sutanto, 2023). Microexpressions are defined as facial expressions that appear very briefly (1/15-1/25 seconds) and can reveal a person's true hidden emotions (Ekman, 2004).

For politicians in the contemporary era, image-building and presentation are crucial. The projected image should reflect honesty, sincerity, and attentiveness toward the public (Pease & Pease, 2006). Such an image can be established through emotional engagement in communication, as emotions enhance message delivery, increase credibility, and foster trust between the communicator and the audience (Sutanto, 2023). Nonverbal

communication is a critical aspect of communication, particularly in expressing emotions. Albert Mehrabian (1971) concluded that the trustworthiness of spoken communication is derived 7% from verbal language, 38% from vocal tone, and 55% from facial expressions (Pease & Pease, 2006). Scholars in interpersonal communication studies assert that 70% of human communication is nonverbal, leaving only 30% as verbal communication (Nuraflah et al., 2019).

The government must establish and maintain a positive public image to ensure effective governance. This can be achieved through effective communication between the government and society, leading to mutual understanding and public support (Alvin, 2020). The General Elections Commission (KPU) has designated three pairs of presidential and vice-presidential candidates for the 2024 elections: Anies Rasyid Baswedan-Muhaimin Iskandar, Ganjar Pranowo-Mahfud MD, and Prabowo Subianto-Gibran Rakabuming Raka (Komisi Pemilihan Umum, 2023). One crucial stage for these candidates is the debate. The 2024 Presidential and Vice-Presidential Debates are scheduled to be held five times: Tuesday, December 12, 2023; Friday, December 22, 2023; Sunday, January 7, 2024; Sunday, January 21, 2024; and Sunday, February 4, 2024, each addressing various topics.

The third Presidential Debate lasted 2 hours and 54 minutes and was broadcast on the KPU Indonesia YouTube channel. During this debate, each presidential candidate presented their views on specific topics. The debate lasted 150 minutes, divided into 120 minutes of argumentation and 30 minutes for advertisements. This third debate garnered significant attention from researchers due to the confrontational exchanges between the three candidates, where they challenged each other's perspectives and arguments. Notably, this debate received the highest viewership among the three debates, reaching 3.4 million views (CNN Indonesia, 2024). The third presidential debate covered topics related to defense, security, international relations, globalization, foreign policy, and geopolitics (Arsika, 2024).

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Political Public Relations**

According to Andrew Heywood, politics can be understood as the art of governance, governmental affairs, compromise and consensus, as well as power dynamics (Universitas Pattimura, 2019). According to Merriam Budiardjo (1982), political communication serves as one of the functions of political parties in channeling diverse public opinions and aspirations, organizing them to be advocated as political policies (Universitas Pattimura, 2019). Political public relations constitute a specialized area of public relations within the political sphere, establishing a strong interconnection between political communication and public relations. The process of achieving political objectives is facilitated through the role of public relations in politics, known as political public relations. Through the practice of political public relations, communication is fostered to build mutual understanding and goodwill, which serve as the primary focus of political public relations, bridging internal and external publics within the political environment (Goldwin, 2019).

### **2.2 Verbal and Nonverbal Communication**

Verbal communication refers to the use of words, whether spoken or written. It is the most commonly employed form of communication in human interactions, serving to express emotions, thoughts, ideas, facts, data, and information, as well as to explain, exchange feelings and ideas, engage in debates, and resolve conflicts (Kurniati, 2015).

Nonverbal communication, on the other hand, is the process of conveying messages without the use of words, including facial expressions, hand gestures, body movements, and other nonverbal cues (Nuraflah et al., 2019). According to Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter, nonverbal communication encompasses all stimuli (excluding verbal stimuli) within a communication setting, which individuals generate and their use of the environment, possessing potential message value for both sender and receiver. This definition includes both intentional and unintentional behaviors as integral components of the overall communication process, as individuals frequently transmit nonverbal messages without realizing their significance to others (Mulyana, 2008).

### **2.3 Emotional Expression in Nonverbal Communication**

Emotion, as conceptualized by Plutchik (1980), is defined as a homeostatic behavioral process and a fundamental signaling system. Emotion represents a turbulent state, characterized by an imbalance in responses

that are intense and irregular in reaction to stimuli (Fridaylita, 2021). Emotion is inherently difficult to define, as it is generally understood more through personal experience than through observation (Guerrero, 1996).

There are various types of emotions, with six primary emotions classified as universal: anger, surprise, disgust, happiness, sadness, and fear. Emotional expression can be conveyed both verbally and nonverbally, as it refers to how individuals communicate their emotional experiences through verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Sutanto, 2023). In nonverbal communication, emotions are most significantly expressed through facial expressions (Ekman, 2004) and body cues, such as gestures (Guerrero, 1996).

## **2.4 Impression Management Strategies**

Impression management is the process by which individuals attempt to shape how others perceive them and how they perceive themselves. It involves a deliberate effort to act in a controlled manner that creates a specific impression of oneself. According to Myers (1987), impression management refers to self-expression in various forms aimed at making others view one favorably or creating an impression suitable for a particular objective. Similarly, Delamater and Myers (2014) describe impression management as the effort to control the image one constructs of oneself during social interactions (Widya & Ingarianti, 2013).

## **2.5 Emotional Expression in Impression Management Strategies**

A study titled "A New Model of Impression Management: Emotions in the 'Black Box' of Organizational Persuasion" by Genevieve Johnson, Jennifer A. Griffith, and Ronald M. Buckley (2016) theoretically explores how nonverbal cues contribute to the success of impression management strategies. This study examines how various types of information are conveyed during impression management efforts, as well as the influence of nonverbal behavior (emotional display) alongside verbal communication in impression management strategies (Johnson et al., 2016). Johnson's (2016) research highlights the role of emotions in impression management strategies, identifying specific emotional associations: ingratiation with happiness, intimidation with anger, self-promotion with pride, exemplification with enthusiasm, optimism, or interest, and supplication with sadness.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The research employed in this study is quantitative descriptive research. Quantitative research is based on positivist philosophy, used to examine specific populations or samples, with data collection conducted through research instruments. The data analysis process is quantitative and statistical, aimed at testing predetermined hypotheses (Sutanto, 2023). This study seeks to identify impression management strategies demonstrated through nonverbal communication in the third 2024 Presidential Debate video.

The research method utilized is quantitative content analysis, which involves systematically, objectively, and quantitatively analyzing the content of messages or communication (Ahmad, 2018). The researcher selected content analysis as the method to formulate impression management strategies through verbal communication and emotional expressions, specifically focusing on microexpressions and gestures observed in the third 2024 Presidential Debate video recording.

The research subjects are all recorded scenes from the third Presidential Debate, which took place on February 4, 2024. Meanwhile, the research object is impression management strategies, identified through nonverbal communication, based on the theory of Johnson et al. (2016). The population in this study consists of five recorded videos of the Presidential and Vice Presidential Debates, held between December 12, 2023, and February 4, 2024, as broadcasted on the YouTube channel of the General Elections Commission of Indonesia (KPU RI), each with an approximate duration of three hours. The study employs total sampling, where the entire population is included as the sample. The sample in this study consists of one sample, namely the third Presidential Debate, which has a duration of 2 hours and 54 minutes and has been segmented into 501 video clips, each lasting 10 seconds or less.

The primary data source for this study is the recording of the third 2024 Presidential Debate, which illustrates impression management strategies. The secondary data sources include books, journals, and articles related to the theories applied in this study.

## **4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **4.1. Result**

Validity testing in this analysis is crucial, as it serves as the foundation for a robust research study. Validity ensures that the measurement instrument used by the researcher is accurate (valid) and, consequently,

guarantees that the research findings are derived from precise measurements. A measurement instrument is considered valid if it truly measures what it is intended to measure (Krippendorff, 2019).

In this study, the researcher employs face validity, which assesses how well the measurement instrument clearly and logically represents information and correlates with existing data (Krippendorff, 2019). To establish this, the researcher conducted a review of books and journals published by scientific communities relevant to the field of study. The findings confirm that all sub-indicators of emotional expression, gestures, and microexpressions serve as valid measurement instruments.

The measurement instruments for emotional expressions through gestures—happiness, anger, and sadness—are derived from the book *Communicating in the 21st Century*, 4th Edition (Eunson, 2015). Meanwhile, the measurement instruments for emotional expressions through gestures and microexpressions—pride and interest—are based on the journal article *The Nonverbal Communication of Positive Emotions: An Emotion Family Approach* by Disa A. Sauter (Sauter, 2017). Furthermore, the measurement instruments for emotional expressions through microexpressions—happiness, anger, and sadness—are supported by the journal article *Automatic Emotion Recognition Using Facial Expression: A Review* by Monika Dubey and Prof. Lokesh Singh (Dubey & Singh, 2019).

Data is considered reliable when it produces consistent conclusions, regardless of the conditions under which it is collected (Krippendorff, 2019). The measurement instrument used in this study is a coding sheet, which has been adapted from the theory of emotional expression demonstrated through nonverbal communication (gestures and microexpressions) within the impression management strategy framework proposed by Johnson (2016). Reliability is assessed using Krippendorff’s alpha coefficient, which indicates inter-coder agreement. The reliability coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, where 0 signifies no agreement, and 1 represents perfect reliability. According to Krippendorff (2019), reliability is categorized into three levels:

$$\alpha = 1 - \frac{D_o}{D_e} = 1 - \frac{\text{Average}_{\text{metric}} \delta_{ek}^2 \text{ within all units}}{\text{Average}_{\text{metric}} \delta_{ek}^2 \text{ within all data}}$$

- α = Krippendorff’s alpha coefficient
- Do = Observed disagreement
- De = Expected disagreement due to chance
- Below 0.667 : Not reliable
- 0.667 to 0.8 : Moderate reliability
- Above 0.8 : Highly reliable

**Table 1.** Reliability Test

Impression	Emotion	Sub Indicator Expression		Sub Indicator Gesture	
Ingratiation	Happiness	MH1	0,875	GH1	0,914
		MH2	1	GH2	0,731
		MH3	0,813	GH3	0,853
		MH4	0,792		
		MH5	1		
Intimidation	Anger	MA1	0,848	GA1	0,824
		MA2	0,813	GA2	0,891
		MA3	1	GA3	0,769
		MA4	1	GA4	1
				GA5	1
				GA6	0,818
Self-Presentation	Pride	MP1	0,842	GP1	0,875
		MP2	0,837	GP2	0,780
				GP3	1
Exemplification	Interest	MI1	1	GI1	0,873
		MI2	0,798	GI2	0,761
		MI3	0,749		
		MI4	0,752		
		MI5	0,756		
Supplication	Sadness	MS1	1	GS1	1
		MS2	1	GS2	1
		MS3	1	GS3	1
				GS4	1
				GS5	1

Additionally, Neuendorf (2017) suggests that at least 10% of the total population of study units should be tested for reliability. To ensure reliability, the researcher enlisted the assistance of an additional coder, who contributed to the observation recording process and provided a comparative perception of the sample, thereby minimizing the researcher's subjectivity (Krippendorff, 2019). In this study, Angela Audrey Sutanto was selected as coder 2. She is a graduate of Petra Christian University, majoring in Communication Science (Class of 2019), and has previously conducted research on public communication and nonverbal communication, particularly facial expressions and gestures. Additionally, she has experience in content analysis, having used this method for her publication titled "Emotional Expression of Public Communication Post COVID-19 Era in Educational Context"

The researcher (coder 1) and coder 2 coded 50 samples, each containing descriptions of emotional expressions exhibited through nonverbal gestures and microexpressions, drawn from a total population of 501 study units (approximately 10% of the dataset) (Eriyanto, 2011). To calculate reliability, the researcher used the JASP program from the University of Amsterdam, which automatically computed the reliability of each sub-indicator. The results of this calculation are presented in Table 1.

Explanation of gesture categorization (G):

1. Ingratiation:
  - GH1 (Happiness Gesture 1): Body posture upright and facing the audience
  - GH2 (Happiness Gesture 2): Shoulders straight
  - GH3 (Happiness Gesture 3): Hands raised upwards
2. Intimidation:
  - GA1 (Anger Gesture 1): Body posture straight and stiff
  - GA2 (Anger Gesture 2): Shoulders rise
  - GA3 (Anger Gesture 3): Clenched fist
  - GA4 (Anger Gesture 4): Hands crossed
  - GA5 (Anger Gesture 5): Both hands are placed on waist
  - GA6 (Anger Gesture 6): Hand pointing at something
3. Self-Promotion:
  - GP1 (Pride Gesture 1): Head back or slightly tilted
  - GP2 (Pride Gesture 2): Wide body posture
  - GP3 (Pride Gesture 3): Hands on hips or raised above head
4. Exemplification:
  - GI1 (Interest Gesture 1): Body leans forward
  - GI2 (Interest Gesture 2): Head movement facing straight ahead
5. Supplication:
  - GS1 (Sadness Gesture 1): Bowed body posture and weak
  - GS2 (Sadness Gesture 2): Shoulders droop
  - GS3 (Sadness Gesture 3): Head down
  - GS4 (Sadness Gesture 4): Hands placed covering face
  - GS5 (Sadness Gesture 5): Hands hang in front of the body

Explanation of microexpression categorization (M):

1. Ingratiation:
  - MH1 (Happiness Microexpression 1): Make eye contact constantly
  - MH2 (Happiness Microexpression 2): Mouth open and teeth visible
  - MH3 (Happiness Microexpression 3): The corners of the lips rise to the top
  - MH4 (Happiness Microexpression 4): Cheeks lifted
  - MH5 (Happiness Microexpression 5): Wrinkles all around the eyes
2. Intimidation:
  - MA1 (Anger Microexpression 1): Eyebrows drawn straight down
  - MA2 (Anger Microexpression 2): Eyes look sharp
  - MA3 (Anger Microexpression 3): rolling eyes
  - MA4 (Anger Microexpression 4): Lips tightly closed
3. Self-Promotion:
  - MP1 (Pride Microexpression 1): Direct and focused gaze
  - MP2 (Pride Microexpression 2): Smiling lips or asymmetrical smile
4. Exemplification:

- MI1 (Interest Microexpression 1): Lips open
  - MI2 (Interest Microexpression 2): Eyelids tense (closed or open)
  - MI3 (Interest Microexpression 3): Chin raised
  - MI4 (Interest Microexpression 4): Lips pressed with raised eyebrows
  - MI5 (Interest Microexpression 5): Smiling
5. Supplication:
- MS1 (Sadness Microexpression 1): The corners of the eyebrows are down a little and then lifted
  - MS2 (Sadness Microexpression 2): Eyes closed for a long time
  - MS3 (Sadness Microexpression 3): The corners of the lips are pulled down

The impression management strategies examined in this study include ingratiation, intimidation, self-promotion, exemplification, and supplication.

- Ingratiation is a strategy used to create an impression of being likable by the public.
- Intimidation is a strategy employed to establish an impression of being formidable and intimidating to the public.
- Self-promotion is a strategy aimed at fostering an impression of competence in the eyes of the public.
- Exemplification is a strategy used to cultivate an impression of dedication before the public.
- Supplication is a strategy applied to generate an impression of weakness, deficiency, and incapability in the public’s perception.

The following section presents the findings and analysis derived from the study. M indicates Microexpression and G indicates Gesture.

**Table 2.** Impression Management Based of Non-Verbal Cues of Gesture and Microexpression

Figure	Ingratiation		Intimidation		Self-Promotion		Exemplification		Supplication	
	M	G	M	G	M	G	M	G	M	G
Anies	140	130	15	12	51	47	4	4	0	0
Prabowo	113	115	46	61	20	19	1	1	0	0
Ganjar	136	118	32	34	14	14	15	13	0	0

The third presidential debate is divided into four segments:

1. Vision, Mission, and Work Program Presentation – Each candidate presents their vision, mission, and work programs.
2. In-depth Discussion of Vision, Mission, and Work Programs – Panelists ask candidates about topics including foreign policy, geopolitics, globalization, international relations, security, and defense. Candidates can respond to panelists’ questions and provide final statements.
3. Candidate Question and Answer Session – Candidates engage in a structured exchange, posing and responding to questions.
4. Closing Statements – Each candidate delivers a two-minute closing statement.

#### 4.1.1 Discussion

##### 4.1.1.1. First Segment

During the first segment, each candidate was given four minutes to present their vision, mission, and work programs. A coding analysis of 72 video clips was conducted to assess impression management strategies. The dominant strategy used was ingratiation, as all candidates sought to create a positive public perception. Ingratiation is effective in gaining voter support, as individuals tend to favor those who share their views or express approval (Eliot, 2013). However, ingratiation can also lead to the ingratiation’s dilemma, where the strategy is perceived as manipulative rather than genuine (Jones & Pittman, 1982).

In this debate:

- Anies Baswedan exhibited signs of the ingratiation’s dilemma, as his verbal statements and nonverbal expressions did not fully align. His remarks implicitly criticized the Ministry of Defense, led by candidate number 02, Prabowo.
  - o Positive Effect: Ingratiation can make a political figure appear relatable and likable, increasing public support.

- o Negative Effect: If perceived as insincere or strategic manipulation, it may undermine trust in the candidate.
- Prabowo Subianto displayed intimidation the most, characterized by anger, an expression typically associated with the intimidation strategy (Eliot, 2013). His facial expressions and gestures were affected by Anies' prior statements, leading to visible nervousness, increased blinking, and efforts to regain composure.
  - o Positive Effect: Intimidation can establish authority and dominance, positioning a candidate as a strong leader.
  - o Negative Effect: Excessive use of intimidation can make a candidate appear aggressive, potentially alienating voters who prefer a diplomatic approach.
- Anies also predominantly employed self-promotion, which, while similar to intimidation in its desire for respect and competence, is distinguished by an emphasis on personal achievements and ideas (Johnson et al., 2016).
  - o Positive Effect: Self-promotion enhances credibility and showcases a candidate's experience and accomplishments.
  - o Negative Effect: Overuse of self-promotion can come across as arrogant or boastful, reducing emotional connection with voters.
- Ganjar Pranowo demonstrated the most exemplification, a strategy that conveys high dedication and a clear commitment to innovation (Balkan & Soran, 2013).
  - o Positive Effect: Exemplification presents a candidate as morally upright, hardworking, and dedicated, appealing to voters who value ethical leadership.
  - o Negative Effect: If overemphasized, exemplification may create unrealistic expectations or make a candidate appear self-righteous rather than pragmatic.

Nonverbal communication including body language, facial expressions, and tone of voice complements verbal messages, enhancing sincerity, enthusiasm, and commitment to a candidate's vision. Political public relations strategies involve managing information flow, media relations, and narrative building to maintain a positive public image (Tomic & Grbavac, 2016). The strategic application of impression management can strengthen a political actor's influence, but if misapplied or overused, it may also negatively impact voter perception.

#### **4.1.1.2. Second Segment**

The second segment involved an in-depth discussion of vision, mission, and work programs, where candidates answered panelists' questions on defense, foreign relations, security, politics, and globalization. A coding analysis of 197 video clips was conducted to assess impression management strategies. Once again, ingratiation emerged as the most frequently used strategy, as candidates sought to align with public interests (Balkan & Soran, 2013). Facial expressions and gestures played a crucial role in dominating the conversation (Pease & Pease, 2006).

In this debate:

- Prabowo Subianto consistently exhibited intimidation, emphasizing Indonesia's need for strength and global respect.
  - o Positive Effect: This strategy reinforces strong leadership and decisiveness, which can appeal to voters who value firm and authoritative leadership.
  - o Negative Effect: Excessive intimidation may alienate voters, making the candidate appear overly aggressive or authoritarian rather than diplomatic.
- Anies Baswedan employed self-promotion, although some of his statements were inconsistent with this strategy.
  - o Positive Effect: Self-promotion allows a candidate to showcase their experience, competence, and achievements, strengthening credibility among voters.
  - o Negative Effect: If self-promotion is overused or inconsistent, it may create doubts about the candidate's authenticity, making them appear overly boastful or lacking in substance.
- Ganjar Pranowo demonstrated exemplification, presenting himself as a morally upright leader, committed to following and enforcing legal frameworks (Long, 2017).
  - o Positive Effect: Exemplification builds an image of a principled and responsible leader, appealing to voters prioritizing ethical governance and policy integrity.
  - o Negative Effect: Overuse of exemplification may result in unrealistic expectations, making the candidate appear idealistic rather than pragmatic.

The findings from this segment highlight the importance of nonverbal communication and impression management in political debates. While intimidation can assert dominance, self-promotion can build credibility, and exemplification can project moral integrity, their effectiveness depends on how they are perceived by the public. A strategic balance between these approaches is essential for maintaining a strong yet relatable political image.

#### 4.1.1.3 Third Segment

The third segment focused on candidate interactions, allowing them to question and challenge each other. A coding analysis of 193 video clips was conducted to assess impression management strategies. Ingratiation remained the most frequently observed strategy, as candidates sought recognition and acceptance (Dunn, 2018). They had to respond strategically to dominate the discussion through nonverbal cues (Pease & Pease, 2006).

In this debate:

- Prabowo Subianto continued to exhibit intimidation, reaffirming his belief that Indonesia must be strong and respected.
  - Positive Effect: Intimidation can project strength, authority, and decisiveness, reinforcing an image of firm leadership.
  - Negative Effect: Excessive intimidation can create a fear-based perception, making the candidate seem overly aggressive or confrontational, which may alienate voters who favor collaborative leadership.
- Anies Baswedan displayed self-promotion, though some of his statements lacked alignment with this strategy.
  - Positive Effect: Self-promotion allows candidates to highlight their achievements and policy expertise, enhancing credibility among voters.
  - Negative Effect: If inconsistent or exaggerated, self-promotion can create doubts about authenticity, making the candidate appear self-serving rather than solution-oriented.
- Ganjar Pranowo exemplified his commitment to Indonesia's welfare and legal integrity (Long, 2017).
  - Positive Effect: Exemplification builds an image of dedication, morality, and responsibility, appealing to voters prioritizing ethical governance and national development.
  - Negative Effect: If overemphasized, exemplification may lead to unrealistic expectations, making the candidate appear idealistic rather than pragmatic.

The third segment highlights how strategic use of impression management shapes public perception in political debates. While intimidation asserts dominance, self-promotion builds credibility, and exemplification fosters trust, their effectiveness depends on context and audience reception. A balanced application of these strategies is essential for candidates to maintain a persuasive and relatable political persona.

#### 4.1.1.4 Fourth Segment

The fourth and final segments of the debate provided each candidate with two minutes to deliver their closing statements. A coding analysis of 39 video clips revealed that ingratiation was the most frequently used strategy among all candidates, as they aimed to leave a positive final impression (Seiter & Weger, 2020). Since this was their last opportunity to connect with voters, the candidates strategically applied impression management techniques to reinforce their public image and political stance (Pease & Pease, 2006). Across all candidates, the application of impression management strategies had both positive and negative implications:

- Ingratiation was commonly used to enhance likability and public approval.
  - Positive Effect: It fosters a sense of connection and relatability, making candidates more appealing to voters.
  - Negative Effect: If perceived as inauthentic or excessive, it can lead to skepticism about genuine intentions.
- Self-promotion was utilized to reinforce competence and qualifications.
  - Positive Effect: It strengthens credibility and confidence, helping candidates establish authority.
  - Negative Effect: Overuse may create an impression of arrogance, making the candidate appear self-centered rather than relatable.
- Intimidation, while less commonly employed, was used to assert dominance and strength.
  - Positive Effect: It can enhance perceptions of decisiveness and leadership.
  - Negative Effect: If misapplied, it can make a candidate appear stubborn or overly aggressive, alienating voters who prefer a diplomatic approach.

The findings from this segment highlight how strategic impression management plays a crucial role in shaping the final perception of candidates. While ingratiation fosters likability, self-promotion builds credibility, and intimidation asserts strength, their effectiveness depends on how they are balanced and perceived by the audience. Candidates must ensure that their closing statements project confidence, relatability, and leadership without compromising authenticity.

The analysis, which focused on microexpressions (facial expressions) and gestures, revealed that the most frequently utilized strategy by all candidates was ingratiation. This strategy was often accompanied by other impression management approaches, forming unique combinations:

1. Ingratiation (>75%)

Ingratiation was the most dominant strategy, appearing in 77.6% of microexpression and 72.5% of gestures. This reflects the central role of likability and rapport-building, with nonverbal cues such as smiles, eye contact, and open posture reinforcing credibility and trust. Most frequent candidate: Anies Baswedan (140 microexpressions and 130 gestures).

2. Intimidation (~20%)

Intimidation accounted for 18.6% of microexpressions and 21.4% of gestures, making it the second most frequent strategy. Anger-related cues, such as clenched fists, stiff posture, and sharp eye contact, projected authority and control, showing the importance of power displays in political communication. Most frequent candidate: Prabowo Subianto (46 microexpressions and 61 gestures).

3. Self-Promotion (~16%)

Self-promotion appeared in 17.0% of microexpressions and 16.0% of gestures. Pride-related expressions, including confident posture, wide stance, and focused gaze, emphasized competence and achievement, reinforcing the image of capability. Most frequent candidate: Anies Baswedan (51 microexpressions and 47 gestures).

4. Exemplification (~4%)

Exemplification was relatively rare, comprising 4.0% of microexpressions and 3.6% of gestures. Interest-related cues, such as leaning forward and attentive facial expressions, conveyed sincerity and dedication, highlighting moral responsibility despite limited frequency. Most frequent candidate: Ganjar Pranowo (15 microexpressions and 13 gestures).

5. Supplication (0%)

Supplication was absent, with 0% of microexpressions and gestures recorded.

This study confirms that impression management is a crucial element in political communication, particularly in high-stakes debates where candidates must strategically construct their public personas. The results indicate that nonverbal communication, including gestures and facial expressions, plays a vital role in reinforcing a candidate's verbal messages and influencing public perception.

Furthermore, the elimination of the supplication strategy in this study suggests that none of the candidates attempted to appear weak or dependent, as such an approach may not align with the leadership image expected in a presidential election.

Furthermore, the application of impression management based on nonverbal cues are:

1. Ingratiation – Seeking to be liked by the audience.

- o Definition: A strategy used to enhance likability by agreeing with public values, showing warmth, or aligning with voters' interests (Seiter & Weger, 2020).
- o Application in the Debate: All candidates employed ingratiation to strengthen their public image and build emotional connections with voters.
- o Effects:
  - Positive: Creates a relatable and favorable impression, fostering stronger public support.
  - Negative: If perceived as inauthentic or overly strategic, it may diminish credibility and reduce trust.

2. Intimidation – Projecting strength and dominance.

- o Definition: A strategy used to assert authority, power, and control, often accompanied by strong verbal language and assertive body language (Seiter & Weger, 2020).
- o Application in the Debate: Anies Baswedan was the only candidate who exhibited intimidation, using it to assert dominance and challenge his opponents.
- o Effects:
  - Positive: Reinforces confidence, strength, and decisiveness, appealing to voters who value strong leadership.
  - Negative: If overused, intimidation can be perceived as stubborn, aggressive, or confrontational, alienating moderate or undecided voters.

3. Self-Promotion – Highlighting personal achievements and competence.
  - o Definition: A strategy focused on emphasizing personal accomplishments, expertise, and leadership capabilities to strengthen credibility (Metts & Grohskopf, 2008).
  - o Application in the Debate: Anies Baswedan led in self-promotion, using it to reinforce his qualifications and policy plans.
  - o Effects:
    - Positive: Enhances public confidence in a candidate's experience and expertise.
    - Negative: Excessive self-promotion can come across as arrogant or self-centered, making a candidate appear disconnected from voter concerns.
4. Exemplification – Demonstrating dedication and integrity.
  - o Definition: A strategy used to present oneself as a hardworking, morally upright, and dedicated leader (Balkan & Soran, 2013).
  - o Application in the Debate: Although not as dominant in this segment, candidates may have subtly employed exemplification by reinforcing their commitment to public service and ethical governance.
  - o Effects:
    - Positive: Enhances voter trust and admiration, positioning the candidate as a role model.
    - Negative: Overuse may create unrealistic expectations, making a candidate appear idealistic rather than practical.
5. Supplication – Appearing vulnerable to gain sympathy.
  - o Definition: A strategy where an individual presents themselves as weak, struggling, or in need of support to evoke public sympathy (Jones & Pittman, 1982).
  - o Application in the Debate: None of the candidates employed supplication, as political leaders typically avoid appearing vulnerable or dependent, particularly in a high-stakes presidential debate.
  - o Effects:
    - Positive: Can humanize a candidate, making them appear relatable and empathetic.
    - Negative: May undermine public confidence, making the candidate seem incapable of strong leadership.

The analysis reveals that ingratiation was the most frequently utilized strategy among all three candidates. However, distinct combinations of impression management strategies emerged:

1. Anies Baswedan predominantly employed self-promotion, aiming to emphasize his achievements and competence, while also incorporating ingratiation to connect with the public.
2. Prabowo Subianto demonstrated intimidation the most, utilizing authoritative expressions to project strength and leadership, often paired with ingratiation to maintain a balance.
3. Ganjar Pranowo frequently used exemplification, portraying himself as a dedicated and morally upright leader, while also applying ingratiation to engage with the audience.

This study shows that impression management is an important part of political communication during presidential debates. By observing nonverbal emotional expressions in the third 2024 presidential debate on the KPU RI YouTube channel, this research found that candidates used gestures, facial expressions, and body language to shape how they were seen by the public. These nonverbal behaviors helped support what the candidates said verbally and influenced audience perception.

One important finding is that ingratiation was used by all candidates. This means that all candidates tried to appear friendly and likable. They did this by smiling, nodding, and using open body gestures. This strategy helps candidates feel closer to the audience and creates a positive impression. However, if ingratiation is used too often or seems forced, people may feel that the candidate is not sincere. Therefore, ingratiation can be effective, but it also has risks. Each candidate also showed a different style of impression management. Anies Baswedan mostly used self-promotion. He often emphasized his experience, ideas, and abilities. His calm expressions and clear gestures supported the image of a capable and prepared leader. When combined with ingratiation, this strategy helped him appear both smart and approachable. However, too much self-promotion may make a candidate seem distant from ordinary people.

Prabowo Subianto mainly used intimidation. His strong posture, serious facial expressions, and firm eye contact showed authority and confidence. This strategy can attract voters who want a strong leader. However, intimidation can also seem aggressive if it is not controlled. Prabowo balanced this strategy by also using ingratiation, which helped reduce the negative impression of being too dominant. Ganjar Pranowo is most often used for exemplification. He showed calm behavior and consistent emotional control. This helped create an image of honesty, dedication, and moral responsibility. This strategy can increase public trust and make a

leader appear ethical. However, exemplification alone may not be enough in a debate, especially when strong arguments and clear positions are expected. Another important finding is that none of the candidates used supplication strategy. They did not show weakness or ask for sympathy. This suggests that in presidential debates, leaders are expected to appear strong and confident. Showing vulnerability could reduce public trust and make a candidate appear unfit for leadership.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Impression management in political debates is a dynamic and multimodal process, where nonverbal emotional expressions play a crucial role in reinforcing verbal messages and shaping voter perceptions. The most compelling insight from this study is that effectiveness does not lie in the use of a single strategy but in the strategic calibration and combination of multiple impression management tactics. As political communication increasingly unfolds in digitally mediated spaces, the ability to manage impressions through subtle emotional and nonverbal cues becomes a critical component of modern political leadership.

Nonverbal communication plays an important role in political impression management during presidential debates. Facial expressions, body movements, and gestures do more than support spoken words; they help shape how political messages are understood by voters. Through nonverbal behavior, candidates can show confidence, authority, or friendliness, which strengthens their overall public image. The findings suggest that self-promotion is effective when used to highlight competence and leadership ability. However, when it is used too often or without clear supporting evidence, it can lead to public doubt. Public may become skeptical if claims appear exaggerated or disconnected from real policy outcomes. This shows that self-promotion needs to be balanced with substance. Intimidation can also be useful in projecting strength and decisiveness, especially for voters who prefer firm leadership. At the same time, excessive intimidation may be seen as aggressive or domineering, which can harm a candidate's image. This strategy therefore requires careful control. Among the strategies observed, ingratiation appears to be the most flexible and widely used. By displaying warmth and emotional alignment, candidates can build closeness with the audience and maintain positive engagement. Overall, this study highlights the importance of balancing different impression management strategies. Political candidates who successfully combine verbal and nonverbal communication are more likely to present a persuasive and credible public image in a mediated political setting.

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