

Political Communication Strategies of the NasDem Party Through the Indonesian Restoration Movement in Securing Electoral Support in the 2024 General Election in North Sumatra

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Received : October 16, 2025

Revised : October 25, 2025

Published : November 11, 2025

Abstract

This study examines the political communication strategy of the NasDem Party in North Sumatra during the 2024 General Election, focusing on how the Indonesian Restoration Movement (Gerakan Restorasi Indonesia) functioned as a central narrative in shaping voter perception, party identity, and electoral outcomes. Employing a qualitative research approach, the study collected data through in-depth interviews, field observations, and document analysis. The analytical framework is grounded in Stuart Hall's Encoding–Decoding theory, enabling an exploration of how political messages were constructed and interpreted within the socio-cultural context of North Sumatra. The findings indicate that NasDem's communication strategy was institutionalized and implemented through four integrated components: (1) the use of simple and contextually grounded political language, (2) consistent deployment of symbolic political identity, (3) hybrid integration of grassroots mobilization and digital media, and (4) sustained two-way communication with the public. This strategy effectively reduced the cognitive distance between political ideology and everyday life, fostered emotional proximity between the party and voters, and strengthened long-term voter loyalty. The party's stable electoral growth from 2014 to 2024 confirms that sustainable reminder of political success is driven not by campaign intensity alone, but by the continuous institutionalization of culturally resonant, emotionally engaging, and participatory communication practices. This study contributes to political communication scholarship by extending the application of the Encoding–Decoding model to regional Indonesian politics and demonstrating the importance of long-term communication institutionalization in sustaining electoral support and democratic engagement.

Keywords : **Political Communication, NasDem Party, Indonesian Restoration Movement, Encoding–Decoding Theory, Electoral Politics, North Sumatra**

INTRODUCTION

Political communication plays a central role in democratic systems as it functions as a bridge between political parties, the government, and society. Through political communication, political messages, values, and ideas are conveyed to the public to gain political support, shape public opinion, and influence voter behavior. Effective communication strategies enable political parties to construct a positive public image, build emotional closeness with voters, and strengthen electoral loyalty (Mohamed Nour & Kisa, 2024). Previous studies emphasize that personal and community-based communication approaches, such as face-to-face campaigns and social activities, are more effective than formal approaches, particularly in rural areas, as they foster empathy and resonate with local values.(Lock & Davidson, 2024)

Within a democratic framework, political parties serve as key institutions that facilitate public participation, aggregate societal interests, and contribute to the formation of government. They also perform strategic functions such as political recruitment, which significantly determines electoral success and leadership quality (Fitriyah & Nasrulloh, 2025)Consequently, electoral competition becomes a critical arena where political parties test the effectiveness of their organizational strength and communication strategies.(Mardhiah et al., 2022). Indonesia's electoral system has undergone substantial transformation since its first general election in 1955, culminating in the implementation of simultaneous presidential and legislative elections in 2019.

(Wicaksono & Sofyan, 2022) This evolution has not only shaped the distribution of political power but has also influenced campaign strategies and political communication patterns (Mardhiah et al., 2022). In this dynamic context, the NasDem Party (National Democratic Party) has emerged as one of the prominent political actors in Indonesian politics. (Saputra & Ubaidullah, 2021)

Since its establishment, the NasDem Party has consistently promoted the Indonesian Restoration Movement (Gerakan Restorasi Indonesia) as its core political identity. This movement emphasizes political renewal, integrity, and a commitment to “politics without transactional practices,” positioning NasDem as a reform-oriented and progressive political force. The movement has become a major communication instrument for shaping party image and engaging voters, supported by extensive use of social media platforms that enable interactive political engagement and narrative construction in the digital sphere. (Hermawan, 2025). Empirically, NasDem has demonstrated steady electoral growth at the national level. According to data from the General Election Commission of Indonesia (KPU, 2025), NasDem increased its national vote share from 12.66 million votes and 59 parliamentary seats in 2019 to 14.66 million votes and 69 seats in the 2024 election. A similar trend is observed in North Sumatra Province, where NasDem increased its votes from 612,875 in 2019 to 645,210 in 2024 and maintained 12 seats in the Provincial Parliament (DPRD). This stability and incremental growth indicate NasDem’s ability to sustain voter trust and organizational strength at the regional level. (Laila et al., 2022)

However, despite this achievement, NasDem faces increasing competition from major political parties and challenges in expanding its electoral base. Although the party successfully maintained its legislative seats in North Sumatra in 2024, the stagnation in seat growth raises important questions regarding the effectiveness of its political communication strategies, particularly the extent to which the Indonesian Restoration Movement influences voter perceptions and electoral behavior in a culturally diverse society such as North Sumatra. (B. T. C. Putri et al., 2023). To examine this phenomenon, this study employs Stuart Hall’s Encoding Decoding Theory as its analytical framework. This theory posits that political communication is not merely about message transmission (encoding) but also about how messages are interpreted (decoding) by audiences within specific social and cultural contexts (Yamin, 2024). Applying this framework allows the study to analyze how the NasDem Party constructs the meaning of the “Restoration” narrative, how this message is received and interpreted by the people of North Sumatra, and how such interpretations shape party image and electoral support. (Jupriono et al., 2024)

Accordingly, this research aims to analyze the political communication strategies of the NasDem Party through the Indonesian Restoration Movement in the 2024 general election in North Sumatra. Specifically, it seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of these strategies in sustaining electoral support, identify the opportunities and challenges encountered, and contribute to the broader scholarship of political communication by providing empirical insights into the application of encoding–decoding theory in contemporary Indonesian electoral politics. (Kurniawan, 2025). The 2024 General Election in Indonesia marked a crucial phase in the consolidation of democratic practices, particularly in strengthening public political participation and trust in political institutions. In this context, political parties play a decisive role in shaping public perception, mobilizing voter support, and channeling citizens’ aspirations. The increasing complexity of the political environment, intensified by digital media and rapid information flows, has compelled political actors to adopt more structured and adaptive political communication strategies to maintain relevance and competitiveness. Consequently, the effectiveness of political communication has become a central determinant of electoral success. (Anastasya Supriyadi & Nurdin, 2024)

Political communication strategy is fundamentally understood as a systematic process of planning, organizing, and managing messages to ensure that communication objectives are achieved effectively. It involves not only message formulation but also the selection of appropriate

media, communication style, and understanding of audience characteristics in order to build shared meaning between communicators and communicants. Scholars emphasize that communication strategy integrates the communicator, message content, medium, receiver, and expected impact in a cohesive framework, thereby minimizing miscommunication and enhancing persuasive influence. Within political contexts, such strategies are essential for shaping voter attitudes, influencing political behavior, and strengthening public engagement.(Hronešová & Kreiss, 2024). In democratic systems, political participation constitutes the core mechanism through which citizens exercise sovereignty. Politics itself represents an arena of social interaction centered on power, decision-making, and the pursuit of collective welfare.

Through elections, citizens express preferences, evaluate political leadership, and contribute to governance legitimacy. However, public participation is not merely determined by institutional procedures but is strongly influenced by communication practices employed by political parties, including candidate image, emotional appeal, social perception, and exposure to political information.(Ikrambayevna, 2024). Thus, political communication functions as a bridge that connects political actors with society, translating ideological commitments into tangible voter support.(De Bruycker & Rooduijn, 2021). The contemporary political landscape further complicates this process. The rise of digital communication platforms has transformed political messaging into a dynamic, interactive, and highly competitive space. While offering expanded reach and engagement opportunities, digitalization also introduces challenges such as disinformation, polarization, declining public trust, and the erosion of ethical standards in political messaging.(Djuyandi, 2017). Political communication strategies must therefore not only attract attention but also maintain credibility, ethical integrity, and consistency with social realities to avoid cognitive dissonance and political cynicism among voters.(Pratiwi & Murdika, 2024)

Within this framework, the NasDem Party's Indonesian Restoration Movement (Gerakan Restorasi Indonesia) represents a distinctive political branding and communication initiative aimed at projecting reformist values, national renewal, and social inclusivity. In North Sumatra a region characterized by diverse social, cultural, and political dynamics the effectiveness of this movement becomes a compelling case for examining how political communication strategies translate ideological narratives into concrete electoral gains. Understanding how the NasDem Party constructs its political messages, selects communication channels, and engages with local communities offers valuable insights into the mechanisms through which political communication shapes voter behavior and electoral outcomes.(Suryadi et al., 2021). Therefore, this study seeks to analyze the political communication strategies of the NasDem Party through the Indonesian Restoration Movement in securing voter support in the 2024 General Election in North Sumatra. By integrating theoretical perspectives on communication strategy, political participation, and contemporary challenges of political messaging, this research aims to contribute both empirically and conceptually to the broader discourse on political communication in modern democratic societies.(R. P. Putri et al., 2023)

Although extensive studies have examined political communication strategies of political parties in Indonesia, existing research reveals several important limitations. Previous studies tend to focus on individual political figures, campaign techniques, or digital media utilization, rather than on the institutional communication strategy of political parties as an integrated system. Many analyses emphasize voter participation or campaign effectiveness in general elections, but provide limited attention to how ideological movements and political branding are systematically encoded by political parties and interpreted by voters within specific socio-cultural contexts.(Abdullah Mitrin & Tania Dwika Putri, 2022). Moreover, prior research concerning the NasDem Party has predominantly concentrated on national-level dynamics or on specific electoral districts, often highlighting the role of prominent political figures as the primary determinant of electoral success. Consequently, the interaction between party ideology, communication strategy, and voter interpretation at the provincial level particularly in a socially diverse region such as North Sumatra

remains underexplored. Existing literature also tends to overlook how political messages are actively interpreted, negotiated, and re-contextualized by voters, instead treating communication as a linear transmission process.(Abidin & Husnah, 2023)

This study addresses these gaps by offering a context-specific and theory-driven analysis of the NasDem Party's political communication strategy in the 2024 General Election in North Sumatra. It introduces an original contribution by applying Stuart Hall's Encoding Decoding framework to examine how the Indonesian Restoration Movement is not only constructed as a political message by the party, but also how it is interpreted, accepted, negotiated, or resisted by the electorate within local socio-cultural conditions.(Nasrawati & Budianto, 2023). The novelty of this research lies in its integration of ideological political branding, institutional communication strategy, and audience interpretation within a single analytical framework.(Risnawati et al., 2024) Unlike previous studies that primarily measure campaign outputs or participation levels, this study reveals the meaning-making process of political communication and its implications for electoral support. By situating the analysis at the provincial level in North Sumatra, this research also provides new empirical insights into how political communication strategies function in culturally pluralistic societies, thereby enriching the theoretical and practical understanding of contemporary political communication in Indonesia.(Slamet, 2025)

METHODS

This study employs field research, in which data are collected directly from the social setting where the investigated phenomena occur. Field research allows the researcher to observe, interact with, and understand social realities in their natural context (Ruslan, 2004). In this study, the researcher conducted direct observations and interactions in order to explore the political communication strategies of the NasDem Party and examine how these strategies shape public perception and influence voter behavior in the 2024 General Election in North Sumatra. A descriptive qualitative approach is adopted to obtain an in-depth understanding of how political communication is constructed and implemented by the NasDem Party, and how such communication affects citizens' political attitudes and character as voters. Qualitative descriptive research seeks to portray phenomena holistically by examining behaviors, perceptions, and social responses in their natural context. This approach enables the researcher to interpret the meaning of political communication processes, the social dynamics surrounding them, and their impact on voters' political decisions in North Sumatra.

The research was conducted in North Sumatra Province, with primary locations including the Regional Leadership Council (DPD) of the NasDem Party of North Sumatra, several district-level party offices, and community environments where political communication activities were implemented. These locations were selected to capture how the NasDem Party's political communication strategies were constructed and practiced in the field, and how they influenced voters' political orientations in the 2024 election. The research was carried out throughout 2025, following a systematic schedule consisting of proposal preparation, data collection, data analysis, report writing, and completion of the research project.

Research Instruments

In qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument (key instrument) responsible for determining research focus, selecting informants, collecting and analyzing data, interpreting findings, and drawing conclusions. Supporting instruments included interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation tools. Informants were purposively selected based on their relevance to the research objectives and included party leaders, legislative candidates, political observers, election activists, and community representatives. This diverse group of informants enabled the study to obtain comprehensive perspectives on the formulation, implementation, and impact of NasDem's political communication strategies.

Data Sources

The study utilized primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews and non-participant observation of campaign activities, communication practices, and public responses. These data were essential for understanding how political messages were constructed and how they influenced voter preferences in the 2024 election. Secondary data consisted of official documents, party archives, campaign materials, academic literature, media reports, and other relevant written sources that supported the theoretical and empirical framework of the study.

Data Collection Techniques

Three primary data collection methods were employed: observation, interviews, and documentation. Non-participant observation was conducted in party offices, campaign events, public meetings, and community gatherings to examine political communication practices and public responses. The researcher systematically recorded communication activities, interactions between party members and citizens, and observable political behaviors. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main data collection technique. Interviews were conducted with selected informants to explore their experiences, perceptions, and evaluations of NasDem's political communication strategies. All interviews were recorded with the consent of participants to ensure accuracy and reliability. Documentation included collecting internal party documents, campaign reports, meeting minutes, photographs, videos, and media publications to corroborate findings from observation and interviews and to strengthen data validity.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman (2014) interactive model consisting of:

1. Data Condensatio selecting, simplifying, and organizing relevant data related to political communication strategies, campaign practices, and voter responses.
2. Data Display – presenting condensed data in narrative form, tables, and relational diagrams to facilitate interpretation and pattern recognition.
3. Conclusion Drawing and Verification identifying emerging patterns and themes and verifying them through continuous comparison and triangulation of data sources.

This process ensured systematic, rigorous, and credible analysis of qualitative data.

Trustworthiness of Data

To ensure research validity, the study employed several techniques: prolonged engagement, persistent observation, and triangulation. These strategies strengthened data credibility by cross-checking findings across different sources, methods, and time periods, thereby ensuring that conclusions accurately reflected field realities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the political communication strategy of the NasDem Party in North Sumatra during the 2024 General Election was not implemented in an ad hoc or fragmented manner, but was systematically designed, carefully structured, and consistently executed through the ideological framework of the Indonesian Restoration Movement (Gerakan Restorasi Indonesia). This movement functioned as the central narrative guiding the party's communication activities across multiple channels, including grassroots mobilization, direct community engagement, mass media, and digital platforms.

Rather than serving merely as a short-term campaign instrument aimed at securing votes during the election period, the Restoration Movement operated as a comprehensive political narrative that shaped the party's long-term identity and strategic orientation. Through this

narrative, NasDem constructed a coherent political image emphasizing renewal, integrity, and social responsibility. This narrative was continuously communicated to voters, enabling the party to establish strong emotional connections, reinforce ideological consistency, and cultivate public trust. As a result, political communication became an ongoing process of relationship-building between the party and the electorate, extending beyond election cycles.

Empirical electoral data from 2014 to 2024 further confirm the effectiveness of this approach. During this period, NasDem recorded a stable and consistent increase in both vote share and legislative representation, reflecting the success of its communication strategy in sustaining voter loyalty while simultaneously expanding its support base. This upward trend indicates that voters not only responded positively to NasDem's messages during campaign periods, but also internalized the party's values and narratives over time. Consequently, the Restoration-based communication strategy contributed significantly to the consolidation of NasDem's electoral position in North Sumatra by strengthening long-term voter alignment, enhancing party credibility, and reinforcing political engagement within the community.

The electoral data indicate a consistent and significant growth in NasDem's national political strength across three consecutive general elections. In the 2014 election, NasDem secured 8,412,949 votes (6.74%), obtaining 35 seats in the national legislature. This performance increased substantially in 2019, when the party gained 12,661,792 votes (9.05%) and 59 seats, representing both quantitative growth in voter support and qualitative improvement in parliamentary influence. The upward trend continued in the 2024 election, with NasDem achieving 14,660,516 votes (9.66%) and 69 seats, the highest result in the party's history.

This sustained electoral progression demonstrates that NasDem's political success was not the result of temporary campaign momentum or short-term political circumstances. Instead, the data confirm that the party's political communication strategy functioned as an institutionalized and cumulative process. Each election cycle reinforced the effectiveness of the previous one, gradually consolidating NasDem's public credibility, strengthening its organizational legitimacy, and expanding its voter base.

The increasing vote share across elections reflects the electorate's growing trust in NasDem's political messaging, leadership consistency, and ideological orientation embodied in the Indonesian Restoration Movement. As voters repeatedly reaffirmed their support over successive elections, NasDem's communication strategy proved capable of transforming political messaging into durable political loyalty. This long-term consolidation of voter support illustrates that effective political communication, when sustained and coherent, becomes a structural asset that enhances a party's competitiveness and resilience within Indonesia's evolving democratic landscape.

Message Encoding through Simple and Contextual Language

The NasDem Party formulated and delivered its political messages using simple, accessible, and contextually grounded language, a strategy that was repeatedly confirmed by both documentary evidence and field interviews. Party officials, campaign teams, and community leaders consistently emphasized that political messages were intentionally designed to avoid abstract ideological terminology and instead focus on concrete social problems experienced by citizens in their daily lives. The abstract ideological concept of "Restoration" was deliberately translated into tangible everyday issues, including:

1. the condition of road infrastructure,
2. the stability of food prices and access to basic necessities,
3. the improvement of farmers' welfare,
4. community and village development programs.

According to interviews with NasDem campaign coordinators in North Sumatra, this approach was adopted to ensure that political messages remained relevant, understandable, and emotionally resonant for voters from different socio-economic backgrounds. One informant explained that “Restoration must be felt, not just heard; therefore, we always connect it to people’s daily problems.” This confirms that message construction was not incidental, but the result of deliberate strategic planning grounded in local social realities. Community respondents further supported this finding. Many voters interviewed stated that NasDem’s messages were “easy to understand,” “close to people’s lives,” and “different from other parties that speak in complicated political language.” This response demonstrates that NasDem’s encoding strategy successfully reduced the cognitive distance between political ideology and everyday life, thereby creating strong emotional proximity between the party and its voters.

From a theoretical perspective, this empirical pattern corresponds directly with Stuart Hall’s Encoding–Decoding model. NasDem’s communicators constructed messages that were aligned with the socio-cultural framework of the audience, resulting in predominantly dominant–hegemonic readings, where voters interpreted the messages in accordance with the party’s intended meaning with minimal resistance. The convergence between encoding strategies and audience interpretation explains why NasDem’s ideological narrative of Restoration was not only comprehended but also internalized by voters as a meaningful political commitment rather than a mere campaign slogan. The effectiveness of this strategy is reflected in the party’s ability to maintain voter loyalty across multiple election cycles and its steady increase in electoral support, indicating that communication rooted in local experience and emotional relevance can generate durable political trust and long-term political alignment.

Symbolic Politics and Political Representation

NasDem systematically and consistently employed symbolic elements as an integral component of its political communication strategy. The most prominent symbols included:

1. the consistent use of the blue party color,
2. the yellow–blue circular logo, and
3. the slogan “Gerakan Restorasi Indonesia.”

Field observations and interviews with campaign organizers and party cadres in North Sumatra indicate that these symbols were deliberately standardized and reproduced across all levels of political activity, including campaign banners, posters, social media content, community events, party offices, and legislative activities. This uniformity of visual representation ensured that the party’s identity remained immediately recognizable in both physical and digital spaces.

For voters, these symbols functioned as visual anchors of political identity, enabling them to quickly associate NasDem with specific ideological values such as renewal, integrity, and social transformation. Several community respondents noted that the party’s symbols were “easy to remember” and “different from other parties,” reinforcing the role of symbolic communication in building political awareness and memory. The repeated exposure to these symbols across diverse communication channels contributed to ideological coherence, strengthened party recognition, and deepened emotional attachment among supporters. Symbolic consistency also enhanced the party’s credibility by conveying organizational discipline, stability, and seriousness in political engagement. Over successive election cycles, this stable symbolic representation allowed NasDem to maintain a coherent public image, reduce voter uncertainty, and cultivate long-term political loyalty. From a broader perspective, these findings demonstrate that symbolic politics was not merely decorative, but functioned as a strategic instrument of political representation, shaping how voters perceived the party’s values, reliability, and commitment to its ideological mission.

Media Utilization and Digital Engagement

NasDem implemented an integrated political communication model that strategically combined traditional grassroots mobilization with extensive digital engagement. This hybrid approach enabled the party to maintain direct interpersonal relationships with communities while simultaneously expanding its reach through modern communication technologies. The primary digital platforms utilized included Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and TV NasDem, each serving distinct but complementary communication functions. Based on field observations and interviews with NasDem communication teams in North Sumatra, digital media were not treated merely as campaign accessories but as core instruments of political strategy. Instagram and Facebook were primarily used to disseminate political messages, document party activities, and promote candidate visibility, particularly among young and urban voters. YouTube functioned as a platform for longer-form political content, including policy explanations, public speeches, and community program documentation, while TV NasDem served as a mass communication channel that reinforced party narratives at the national and regional levels.

These platforms were strategically designed to facilitate political education by simplifying complex policy ideas and presenting them in visually engaging formats. They also enabled two-way interaction through comments, live discussions, and direct messaging, allowing citizens to express opinions, ask questions, and receive immediate responses from party representatives. This interactive dynamic strengthened the sense of political inclusion and responsiveness perceived by voters. Furthermore, digital engagement significantly increased youth participation, as younger voters were more accessible through online platforms than through conventional campaign events. Several young respondents reported that their first exposure to NasDem's political messages occurred through social media, illustrating the effectiveness of digital channels in expanding the party's support base beyond traditional voter groups.

Importantly, NasDem's digital communication strategy ensured a continuous political presence that extended beyond formal campaign periods. Party activities, community programs, and public statements were consistently shared online, reinforcing message continuity and sustaining public attention. This ongoing engagement prevented the perception of politics as an occasional activity and instead framed it as a constant relationship between the party and society. The integration of offline grassroots activities with online communication created a multi-channel communication ecosystem that significantly expanded message reach, ensured narrative consistency, and strengthened public trust. By enabling real-time interaction between the party and the electorate, NasDem successfully enhanced its credibility, responsiveness, and long-term voter engagement, which in turn contributed to the consolidation of its electoral support in North Sumatra. Rather than relying on hierarchical, top-down messaging, NasDem emphasized dialogical communication, including:

1. public dialogues,
2. community meetings,
3. informal discussions,
4. participatory digital interaction.

This participatory model fostered mutual trust, encouraged political inclusion, and cultivated long-term voter loyalty. By positioning citizens as active participants rather than passive recipients, NasDem successfully embedded its political narrative within community life.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the political communication strategy of the NasDem Party in North Sumatra during the 2024 General Election by situating empirical findings within established theories of political communication. The discussion demonstrates that NasDem's communication practices are not only consistent with theoretical expectations, but also extend and contextualize existing theories within the framework of regional Indonesian politics. (Kulubekova, 2025) Stuart Hall's Encoding–Decoding theory posits that communication is a dynamic process involving the production of meaning (encoding) and the interpretation of meaning (decoding), which is shaped by social, cultural, and ideological contexts. According to Hall, audiences may produce dominant–hegemonic, negotiated, or oppositional readings depending on the alignment between message construction and audience frameworks. (Marzuki, 2020) The findings of this study indicate that NasDem's political communication largely resulted in dominant–hegemonic readings among voters in North Sumatra. This outcome can be attributed to the party's deliberate strategy of encoding political messages using simple, contextual, and culturally resonant language. Rather than presenting abstract ideological concepts, NasDem translated the idea of “Restoration” into tangible social issues such as infrastructure, food security, agricultural welfare, and local development. (Prayitno, 2024)

Empirical interview data reveal that voters perceived NasDem's messages as “easy to understand,” “close to people's lives,” and “different from other parties that use complicated political language.” This perception confirms that the encoding process successfully aligned with the socio-cultural experiences of the audience, minimizing interpretive resistance. In contrast to theoretical assumptions that audiences frequently negotiate or resist political messages, this study demonstrates that contextual relevance and emotional proximity significantly increase the likelihood of dominant decoding. (E Rizky Wulandari, 2021) The use of symbols in political communication has been widely discussed in theories of symbolic interactionism and political branding, which argue that visual and symbolic cues play a crucial role in shaping political identity, memory, and loyalty. Political symbols function not merely as identifiers, but as carriers of ideological meaning and emotional attachment. (Ruth, 2024) The findings of this study corroborate these theoretical perspectives. NasDem's consistent use of party colors, logo, and slogan served as visual anchors of political identity, enabling voters to easily recognize and associate the party with values of renewal and reform. Unlike fragmented symbolic usage observed in some political organizations, NasDem's symbolic consistency across election cycles reinforced ideological coherence and organizational credibility. (Susanto & Restu Rahmawati, 2023)

Field evidence shows that voters remembered NasDem's symbols more easily than those of competing parties, indicating that symbolic repetition strengthened political recall and trust. This finding extends existing theory by demonstrating that symbolic consistency over time, rather than symbolic novelty, is a key factor in sustaining long-term voter loyalty in regional political contexts. (Sahid & Budianto, 2022) Media ecology theory emphasizes that communication technologies shape not only message dissemination but also patterns of political engagement and perception. In the digital era, political communication is increasingly characterized by hybrid systems combining traditional and digital media. This study confirms the relevance of media ecology theory by showing that NasDem adopted an integrated offline online communication ecosystem. Traditional grassroots engagement facilitated interpersonal trust and emotional bonding, while digital platforms expanded reach, particularly among young voters and urban communities. The empirical data indicate that digital platforms were not used merely for broadcasting information, but for interactive political engagement, including dialogue, feedback, and participation. (Sutjipto et al., 2023)

Compared to theoretical assumptions that digital media may lead to superficial engagement, the findings suggest that when digital communication is integrated with offline community presence, it can enhance political trust and sustain long-term engagement. Thus, this study refines

media ecology theory by demonstrating that digital effectiveness depends on its integration with grassroots political practices, especially in culturally diverse regions like North Sumatra. (Febrianto & Devi Purnamasari, 2023) Theories of democratic communication emphasize the importance of dialogical and participatory models, where political actors engage citizens as active participants rather than passive recipients. Such models are believed to foster political trust, inclusion, and legitimacy. The findings show that NasDem's emphasis on public dialogue, community meetings, and participatory digital interaction aligns strongly with these theoretical expectations. Interviews reveal that voters felt "heard" and "respected," which increased their willingness to maintain long-term political support. This supports the argument that two-way communication enhances democratic legitimacy, particularly at the local level. (Ekman & Widholm, 2023) However, this study also extends existing theory by illustrating that participatory communication is most effective when it is institutionalized and continuous, rather than limited to election periods. NasDem's sustained engagement beyond campaign cycles contributed to the stabilization of voter loyalty and electoral outcomes.

Traditional models of electoral behavior often emphasize short-term factors such as campaign intensity, candidate charisma, or political events. While these factors remain relevant, the empirical evidence from this study suggests that long-term institutionalization of political communication plays a more decisive role in sustaining electoral success. The consistent increase in NasDem's vote share and legislative seats from 2014 to 2024 reflects not episodic success, but cumulative political trust built through continuous communication. This finding challenge short-term campaign-centric models by demonstrating that political communication functions as a long-term investment, shaping voter identity and allegiance over time. (Revolusi, 2024)

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the political communication strategy of the NasDem Party in North Sumatra during the 2024 General Election played a central role in maintaining electoral stability and strengthening long-term voter support. Implemented through the framework of the Indonesian Restoration Movement, this strategy functioned not merely as a campaign instrument but as a sustained political narrative shaping party identity and public trust. The findings reveal that NasDem's success was driven by the integration of simple and contextual message encoding, consistent symbolic representation, hybrid utilization of grassroots and digital media, and continuous two-way communication with the public. This integrated approach reduced the distance between political ideology and everyday life, fostered emotional closeness with voters, and transformed political communication into a long-term relationship-building process. The steady growth of NasDem's electoral performance from 2014 to 2024 confirms that sustainable electoral success in regional politics is not achieved through campaign intensity alone, but through the institutionalization of political communication that is culturally grounded, emotionally engaging, and participatory. The study thus contributes to political communication theory by emphasizing the importance of long-term, context-sensitive communication in shaping voter loyalty and democratic engagement.

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