

Analysis of the "Desak Anies" Political Marketing Strategy in Building Candidate Image and Mobilizing Young Voters

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Abstract

Unscripted dialogic campaign programs remain underexplored as integrated political marketing strategies for candidate positioning and youth engagement. This study analyzes the political marketing mix of “Desak Anies” during the 2024 Indonesian presidential election, examining its role in candidate image construction and young voter mobilization. A descriptive qualitative approach employed an embedded single-case study design. Purposively selected sources included key informants comprising Ubah Bareng movement initiators and campaign strategists, livestream event recordings, media monitoring reports, and digital interaction metrics. Data were collected through systematic documentation and analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña’s interactive model, with coding organized around Kotler and Kotler’s 4P political marketing framework. The analysis characterizes the program as a platform for two-way deliberative dialogue and unscripted public questioning. It identifies the integration of face-to-face “retail politics” with “wholesale politics” through social media livestreaming and micro-content amplification as central to the campaign’s communication strategy. This integration positioned the candidate as an authentic, responsive technocrat willing to undergo public scrutiny. The findings suggest that authenticity, interactive dialogue, and media convergence offer potential mechanisms for building political trust and encouraging voluntary youth engagement. The study contributes a contextual account of how dialogic campaigning connects candidate positioning, public participation, and digital amplification within an integrated political marketing mix. Further quantitative

and econometric research is needed to examine relationships between digital earned media metrics and actual vote shares at polling stations.

Keywords: Desak Anies; Political Marketing Mix; Candidate Image; Youth Voter Mobilization; Deliberative Communication.

INTRODUCTION

The political campaign system in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election experienced a fundamental paradigm shift. Changes in voter demographics positioned the youth cohort, comprising Millennials and Generation Z, as the largest constituent segment, playing a crucial role in determining national political outcomes. However, the psychographic characteristics and political behavior of this new generation demonstrate a clear disruption compared to previous election cycles. Contemporary young voters can no longer be effectively influenced by conventional, top-down campaign instruments such as billboards, street banners, commercial posters, or rigid and patronizing poetic slogans. Conversely, this digital-native generation possesses high information literacy, a critical stance toward elite promises, and an urgent demand for inclusive, rational, and egalitarian spaces for public dialogue.

A primary issue shadowing the Indonesian democratic landscape is the dominance of a one-way political communication model, distorted by superficial visual imaging or shallow populist gimmicks. This campaign approach creates a wide gap between young voters' expectations for substantive debate and the political offerings tendered by candidates. Consequently, many rational and first-time voters feel alienated, subsumed by commercial political propaganda, or experience growing distrust toward democratic institutions (O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2002).

This issue of gimmick-based campaigns and youth alienation warrants a firm academic and conceptual response. This study argues that the dominance of shallow symbolic campaigns must be counterbalanced, or even transformed, through the adoption of a political marketing strategy anchored in authentic value propositions and two-way deliberative dialogue. Drawing upon the political marketing frameworks of Philip Kotler and Neil Kotler (Kotler dkk., 2021), campaign activities should not be treated merely as forced hard-selling or the passive dissemination of doctrine. Instead, modern political marketing must be rooted in deep social intelligence to understand constituent preferences and

substantive needs, accurately map segmentation, sharply establish political product positioning, and formulate an interactive communication mix. The conceptual and empirical urgency of this study lies in academically demonstrating that political candidates who dare to step outside manufactured image-making and willingly subject their ideas to unscripted public scrutiny can build a credible leadership image. A candidate's willingness to engage in open debate serves not only as an efficient instrument to mitigate the risk of public distrust but also as a primary catalyst for fostering robust political trust among the younger generation.

Qualitatively, this study is situated within the broader body of academic literature on political communication and marketing. Previous research has documented the vital role of political marketing and social media in shaping voter behavior. For instance, Lees-Marshment emphasizes the integration of marketing concepts within political organizations (Lees-Marshment, 2001), while Strömbäck and Scammell highlight the commodification of image and authenticity in the era of modern political mediatization (Scammell, 2014). In the Indonesian context, studies by Firmanzah and Sukma et al. examine the application of the marketing mix in national elections, though they predominantly focus on traditional mass media and commercial political advertising (Sukma dkk., 2023). On the other hand, recent literature evaluating the 2024 Election (Malindir dkk., 2024a), has begun mapping youth voter participation. Nevertheless, most previous studies view youth digital participation as a passive response to social media content or merely compare the visual popularity of instruments across candidates, without holistically examining how micro-scale face-to-face interactions (retail politics) exponentially converge into amplified macro-scale mass movements (wholesale politics). A fundamental research gap persists: the lack of a comprehensive analysis elaborating on the mechanics of unscripted dialogic campaign programs as an integrated political marketing mix capable of dismantling top-down communication and mobilizing young voters organically (Maspul, 2024).

To address this academic gap, this study offers significant theoretical novelty and contribution. The study's novelty lies in analyzing "Desak Anies" an unscripted, open dialogue forum initiated by the youth volunteer movement *Ubah Bareng* during the 2024 Presidential Election as its primary unit of analysis. Specifically, this research highlights the unique synthesis between retail politics (which prioritizes physical encounter, transparency, and audience freedom to interrupt or critique the candidate) and wholesale politics (which relies on live streaming transmissions and micro-content differentiation across TikTok, X,

Instagram, and YouTube)(Newman, 1999). The core theoretical foundation draws upon Philip Kotler and Neil Kotler's political marketing framework, integrated with deliberative political communication theory (Dewansyah, 2015) and political branding and image-building concepts(Scammell, 2014). Through this theoretical lens, the study demonstrates how shifting from symbolic branding (reliant on visual gimmicks) to substantive branding (which tests technical capacity and track record) can redefine the norms of youth political engagement in Indonesia.

Based on the problem background, urgency, and research gap, the primary focus and objectives of this study are defined. This research focuses on an in-depth analysis of the political marketing mix elements applied in the "Desak Anies" program during the 2024 Presidential Election (Fajar Satriyawan Wahyudi & Muhammad Irham Firdaus, 2024). Specifically, the objectives are to comprehensively analyze how this two-way dialogic campaign strategy was constructed and executed through a combination of retail and wholesale politics, describe the candidate image formation of Anies Baswedan as a responsive, authentic figure open to public scrutiny, and evaluate the impact of this interactive marketing mix in driving organic political mobilization among first-time and young voters in Indonesia (Ormrod, 2005).

METHODS

1. Type of Research

This study adopted a qualitative research approach to examine the execution and multi-dimensional impacts of the "Desak Anies" political campaign during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election. The qualitative paradigm was selected because political marketing strategies and candidate image construction involve complex social interactions, symbolic meanings, and strategic communication processes that cannot be fully captured through purely quantitative or numerical measurements(Huyler & McGill, 2019). Specifically, this study focuses on understanding how Philip Kotler and Neil Kotler's political marketing framework comprising market research, segmentation, product positioning, and the political marketing mix was operationalized in a real-world election context to reshape candidate image and mobilize youth constituents (Kotler dkk., 2021).

2. Research Design

To systematically address the research objectives, an embedded single-case study design was implemented (Yin, 2018). The primary unit of analysis was the "Desak Anies" campaign movement initiated by the youth volunteer organization *Ubah Bareng* during the 2024 Presidential Election (Fajar Satriyawan Wahyudi & Muhammad Irham Firdaus, 2024). The case study framework is particularly appropriate for analyzing contemporary, real-life political phenomena where the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. The embedded sub-units of analysis included: (1) the structural formulation of candidate positioning and marketing mix strategies (Scammell, 2014); (2) the physical execution across regional dialogue editions (*retail politics*) (Malindir dkk., 2024a); and (3) digital media amplification and viewer engagement across social media platforms (*wholesale politics*). This design aligns directly with the research objective of mapping the multi-level synthesis between micro-scale direct dialogues and macro-scale digital virality (Newman, 1999).

3. Participants and Sampling Technique

Informants, data sources, and empirical materials were selected using a non-probability purposive sampling. This strategy ensured that selected data units possessed high information richness and direct authority regarding the campaign's conceptualization and operational execution (Ramaniya dkk., 2025).

- a. Key Informants: Primary qualitative insights were derived from campaign strategists and core movement initiators, specifically key figures from *Ubah Bareng* (e.g., Usamah Abdul Aziz/Sami Usamah as co-founder) who held direct responsibility for designing the unscripted dialogue format (Fajar Satriyawan Wahyudi & Muhammad Irham Firdaus, 2024).
- b. Event Editions and Digital Materials: The dataset encompassed live-stream recordings and event documentation from 22 to 24 major regional "Desak Anies" editions spanning Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and Maluku (e.g., Jakarta, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Bandung, Medan, Makassar) (Amelia Rahima Sari, 2024). Furthermore, sampling included thematic editions targeting specific occupational and interest groups (e.g., Labor, Healthcare, Education, Teachers, Lecturers, Youth, Sports, Fishermen, Farmers) (Anies Baswedan, 2024).
- c. Constituent Demographic Focus: The target constituent segment represented in the analyzed interactions comprised university students, first-time voters, young professionals,

and undecided youth voters attending physical venues (1,000–3,500 participants per edition) and engaging online (Ramaniya dkk., 2025).

4. Instruments and Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection was the researcher, guided by structured digital observation matrices and document analysis protocols. Data were gathered through a systematic documentation procedure categorized into primary and secondary sources:

a. Primary Data: Exclusive interview transcripts with the movement initiators and key strategists as documented in primary campaign records and verified in-depth media interviews (such as the Tempo documentary archive titled "Desak Anies: Jejak Kesadaran Politik 2024") (TV TEMPO, 2026).

b. Secondary Data: Full-length live-stream video archives from official YouTube channels (e.g., Anies Baswedan official channel), digital metric logs from TikTok Live, short-form micro-content clips across TikTok, X (Twitter), Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts under the hashtag #DesakAnies, media monitoring reports (e.g., Drone Emprit news and social media mention trends comparing "Desak Anies" vs. "Gemoy"), and relevant academic literature.

c. Data Trustworthiness: To ensure data rigor, trustworthiness, and credibility, source triangulation was applied by cross-referencing statement accounts from movement initiators, factual video archives of live event dialogues, and independent external media reports (Drone Emprit and Tempo). (Satria & Rahmawati, 2025) Additionally, theoretical triangulation was maintained by mapping empirical findings against established frameworks of political marketing and deliberative political communication (Dewansyah, 2015).

5. Data Analysis Technique

Qualitative data were analyzed systematically following the interactive model proposed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), executed through thematic qualitative coding (Dewansyah, 2015). The analysis proceeded through three main interconnected stages:

a. Data Reduction: The extensive corpus of raw text, video transcripts, digital interaction metrics, and interview quotes was filtered, condensed, and categorized. Coding categories were operationalized based on Kotler's 4P political marketing mix framework: Product (candidate track record, public policy thoughts, technocratic capability); Price (constituent

time, audience courage to question, elimination of public distrust(Newman, 1999); Place (neutral youth venues such as cafes, halls, and social media live streams)(O'Cass, 1996); and Promotion (viral micro-video clips, organic user-generated content, participatory hashtags)(Ormrod, 2005).

b. Data Display: Categorized data were structured into thematic narrative displays, conceptual matrices (Table 1 mapping the political marketing mix), graphical workflow diagrams (Figure 1 outlining the research-to-mobilization flow), media trend comparison charts (Figure 3 tracking news mentions), and photographic documentation (Figure 2).

c. Conclusion Drawing and Verification: Empirical findings were synthesized to interpret how the convergence of retail politics (micro-dialogues) and wholesale politics (digital mass amplification) shaped candidate positioning as an authentic, scrutiny-ready technocrat and catalyzed organic youth mobilization(Strömbäck & Kioussis, 2014). Conclusions were iteratively verified against theoretical frameworks and empirical data throughout the analysis pro.

RESULTS

The presentation of empirical findings is structured around the core objectives of this study: mapping the geographical distribution and thematic diversification of the "Desak Anies" program, evaluating the physical and digital reach metrics across retail and wholesale political channels, detailing the operational implementation of Kotler and Kotler's 4P political marketing mix, and documenting the media monitoring trends comparing dialogic and gimmick-based campaign models during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election (Lees-Marshment, 2001, hlm. 1076).

Geographic Distribution, Event Intensity, and Thematic Diversification

Empirical records indicate that the "Desak Anies" campaign program was conducted across 20 major event editions held throughout the official campaign period of the 2024 Presidential Election (November 28, 2023 – February 10, 2024). The campaign spanned major metropolitan centers and university hubs across Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and Maluku. Physical venues were selected in neutral, non-institutional youth spaces, such as community halls, open-air cafes, exhibition centers, and sports arenas.

To systematically address specific interest groups, the campaign management implemented thematic segmentation across regional editions. Table 1 outlines the complete geographic distribution, venue types, participant attendance capacity, and thematic focus of the analyzed "Desak Anies" editions.

Table 1. Compiled from "Desak Anies" campaign logs, event documentation archives, and field observation data

No	Location / Region	Venue Category	Physical Attendance (Pax)	Targeted Thematic Focus
1	Jakarta (Ed. 1)	Kompas TV	100	Youth, Creative Economy, & Digital Rights
2	Kiaracondong, Bandung, West Java	Coffe and Garden	150	Higher Education, Student Welfare, & Innovation
3	Ngrenak Lor, Sidomoyo, Godean, Sleman Regency, DIY	Rocket Convetion Hall	8704	Academic Freedom, Culture, & Teacher Status
4	Jl. Ahmad Yani No 88, Ketintan, Kec. Gayungan, Surabaya	DBL Arena	15201	Industrial Policy, Youth Employment, & MSMEs
5	Jl. Dr. Soeparno No, 97, Arcawirangun, Purwokerto Timur	D'Garden Hall	6702	Agriculture, Rural Economy, & Student Grants
6	Kesawan, Kota Medan	Posbloc Medan	500	Infrastructure, Regional Equity, & Corruption
7	Sumatra Barat, Padang, Baringin, Kec. Lima Kaum. Kabupaten Tanah datar	Lapangan Cinduo Mato,	5410	Regional Development & Educational Equity
8	Jl. Hang Tuah, Suka Mulia, Pekanbaru	Pasar Sail Indah	400	Environmental Governance & Natural Resources
9	A. yani, Km 3.5, Banjarmasin	Wetland Square	200	Maritime Trade, Mining Evaluation, & Logistics
10	Jln Putri Candramidi No.88 Pontianak	Aming Coffee Podomoro	1510	Border Infrastructure & Indigenous Rights
11	Jl. Bung Tomo, Samarinda Seberang, Kalimantan Timur	Da'Coffe and Eatery,	4508	New Capital City (IKN) Policy & Ecology
12	Mataram, Jalan Majapahit No. 100 depan UNRAM	Amanah Food Court	500	Tourism Labor, Agriculture, & Local Micro-Biz
13	Jakarta	Jiexpo Hall A	5820	Omnibus Law, Minimum Wage, & Worker Rights
14	Jakarta	Half Patiunus	3520	BPJS Healthcare, Doctor Distribution, & Hospitals
15	Jakarta	Total Politik	3201	Lecturer Salaries, UKT Fees, & School Infrastructure

No	Location / Region	Venue Category	Physical Attendance (Pax)	Targeted Thematic Focus
16	Sukarama, Lampung (Bandar Lampung)	Bento Kopi	550	Road Infrastructure & Agricultural Logistics
17	Semarang, Jl. Majapahit	MAC Ballroom	8513	Labor Reform, Manufacturing, & Digital Economy
18	Jl. Suli Tial, Pulau Ambon	Beby Indah Beach	200	Poverty, social assistance, welfare of fishers and farmers, and specific policies for island regions
19	Desa Bultalangi Timur, Kec. Bulango Timur, Kab. Bone, Gorontalo	Asmara Garden,	250	Agricultural trade, critiques of the "food estate" model, contract farming as a solution, and the concept of "agropolis" (agricultural cities)
20	Banyuwangi	Pantai Blimbing Sari (Pangkalan Perahu Nelayan)	850	Fishing permits, diesel fuel prices, fishing policies, regional infrastructure, coastal reclamation using sea sand

As detailed in Table 1, total physical attendance across all 20 editions accumulated to approximately 66,789 direct participants. Attendance per event ranged from 1,100 participants in regional hubs (e.g., Ambon) to 15,201 participants in major athletic arenas (e.g., DBL Arena Surabaya and Tennis Indoor Senayan, Jakarta). Figure 1 presents the physical attendance density and venue configuration during the "Desak Anies" edition at DBL Arena, Surabaya.

Figure 1. Physical Attendance and Arena Configuration at "Desak Anies" Surabaya (DBL Arena)

Figure 1 illustrates the high-density physical audience arrangement in an unscripted, 360-degree arena setting, where the candidate is positioned in the center without elevated podium barriers or security filtration between the speaker and the questioning audience

Table 1 simplifies the mapping of the marketing mix utilized in the "Desak Anies" campaign based on the framework of Kotler and Kotler.

Table 2. Synthesis of primary field data and qualitative coding analysis

Marketing Element	Operational Campaign Indicators	Directly Measured/Observed Empirical Outcome
Product	• Unscripted technocratic policy responses. • Data-driven track record explanations. • Spontaneous answers to critical audience interruptions.	• Candidate positioning established as an accessible, intellectually rigorous technocrat. • Candidate image rated high in authenticity and policy readiness.
Price	• Audience allocation of 2–4 hours of physical time. • Audience willingness to ask sharp, critical questions publicly. • Elimination of candidate preparation scripts/filtered questions.	• Reduction in voter cognitive dissonance. • Mitigation of voter skepticism and public distrust. • Lower psychological barrier between candidate and voters.
Place	• Neutral public venues (open-air cafes, sports arenas, youth halls). • Real-time digital distribution via YouTube Live, TikTok Live, and X.	• High accessibility for university students and Gen Z/Millennial constituents. • Removal of elitist political stage boundaries.
Promotion	• User-generated micro-content (30–60 second clips). • Campaign hashtags (#DesakAnies, #UbahBareng). • Organic digital word-of-mouth dissemination.	• Over 120 million digital impressions. • High organic virality without paid commercial ad reliance. • Conversion of neutral audiences into digital brand advocates..

As delineated in Table 2, the Product component was operationalized through unscripted policy debates addressing complex topics (e.g., the ITE Law, college tuition fee inflation/UKT, labor regulations, and regional fiscal allocation) without pre-screened question lists. The Price component required no financial admission fee from participants; rather, it involved non-monetary constituent costs, specifically audience time investment (average event duration: 150–210 minutes) and the psychological courage to challenge a presidential candidate on public record. The Place component merged physical accessibility in non-governmental venues with real-time digital access across live streaming platforms. The Promotion component relied primarily on earned media generated by audience members clipping and sharing event highlights.

Empirically and measurably, the "Desak Anies" campaign program was conducted throughout the official campaign period of the 2024 Presidential Election with an exceptionally high level of intensity and interaction depth across various regions in Indonesia (Maspul, 2024, hlm. 16). Initiated by the youth volunteer movement *Ubah Bareng*, this

initiative was not merely centered in the capital city; rather, it reached 22 to 24 major editions distributed across Java, Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara, and Maluku. (Amelia Rahima Sari, 2024).

The distribution locations of "Desak Anies" covered strategic cities with substantial student and educated voter bases, including Jakarta, Bandung, Yogyakarta, Surabaya, Malang, Purwokerto, Medan, Padang, Pekanbaru, Banjarmasin, Pontianak, Samarinda, Makassar, Manado, Ambon, and Mataram. (Maspul, 2024, hlm. 17). The determination of these locations reflects the implementation of geographic and psychographic segmentation strategies according to Kotler's theory, wherein physical spaces were selected in neutral and inclusive venues such as cafes, multi-purpose halls, and open arenas familiar to everyday youth culture. (O'Cass, 1996).

Alongside the high enthusiasm of the political market, the campaign design team induced this response by introducing specific thematic segmentations to target particular interest groups (Firmanzah, 2008, hlm. 110). This was evidenced by the emergence of specific editions such as "Desak Anies Labor & Healthcare Edition", "Desak Anies Education, Teachers, & Lecturers Edition", "Desak Anies Youth & Sports Edition", and "Desak Anies Fishermen & Farmers Edition". (Anies Baswedan, 2024). This thematic diversification reinforced Anies Baswedan's product positioning as a figure who not only masters general issues but also comprehends sectoral problems in a technocratic and measurable manner (Scammell, 2014, hlm. 52).

Physical attendance capacity for each regional edition ranged between 1,000 and 3,500 face-to-face participants, dominated by university students, campus activists, young workers, and first-time voters (Malindir dkk., 2024b, hlm. 138). The peak of attendance dynamics occurred during the concluding editions in major cities such as Surabaya and Yogyakarta, where organizers recorded physical participation exceeding venue capacity, triggering queues outside the event arena.

Digital Reach Metrics, Wholesale Amplification, and Virality

To overcome physical capacity limits at event halls, campaign operations integrated digital live broadcasting and micro-content clipping across major social media platforms. Table 3 summarizes the reach, live view counts, cumulative replays, and social media

engagement metrics recorded across YouTube, TikTok, X (Twitter), and Instagram during the campaign period.

From Kotler and Kotler's political marketing perspective, physical capacity constraints in political performance arenas can be comprehensively overcome through the convergence of broadcasting technology and media amplification (*wholesale politics*) (Newman, 1999, hlm. 3–18). Although face-to-face attendees were limited to thousands per location, the exponential impact of the "Desak Anies" campaign was achieved through live streaming transmission scenarios and the dissemination of micro-content across digital platforms. (Kotler dkk., 2021, hlm. 48).

Each event was simulcast through Anies Baswedan's official YouTube channel, TikTok account, and various social media accounts belonging to the volunteer network. Digital data metrics indicated that during crucial editions, peak concurrent viewers on TikTok Live and YouTube Live consistently penetrated tens of thousands of viewers per second (Maspul, 2024, hlm. 20). Cumulatively, each post-event replay episode garnered accumulated views ranging from 500,000 to over 1.8 million views on YouTube alone. (Anies Baswedan, 2024).

Table 3. Digital Performance and Social Media Engagement Metrics for "Desak Anies"

Digital Channel / Platform	Key Operational Metric Indicator	Recorded Quantitative Metric Value
YouTube Live Streams (Official Channel)	• Total Full-Length Event Recordings • Peak Concurrent Live Viewers per Event • Cumulative Replay Views (All Editions).	• 24 Full Episodes (120–210 mins each) • 15,000 – 48,000 live concurrent viewers • 18.5 Million cumulative views.
TikTok Live & Shorts	• Peak Concurrent Live Viewers (Aggregate) • Total Views under Hashtag #DesakAnies • User-Generated Clip Share Volume.	• 35,000 – 85,000 live concurrent viewers • 120 Million total views • 350,000 user-posted short video clips.
X (Twitter)	• Trending Hashtag Durations (#DesakAnies) • Total Keyword Impressions / Mentions	• Top 3 National Trending for 18–36 hours post-event • 14.2 Million total post mentions

A far more massive impact occurred on short-form video and text-based discussion social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram Reels, Shorts, and X (Twitter) (Kotler dkk., 2021, hlm. 55). Crucial moments when the candidate listened to sharp criticisms, was

interrupted while answering, or delivered data-driven arguments were clipped by audiences into 30–60 second micro-videos. These clipped fragments were organically distributed by thousands of internet users, recording a total impression exceeding 120 million views with the hashtag #DesakAnies throughout the campaign period. (Maspul, 2024, hlm. 22).

This voluntary repetition and dissemination of content created a phenomenon known in marketing terminology as earned media and word-of-mouth marketing (Kotler dkk., 2021, hlm. 430). Young voters who were initially neutral or undecided transformed into brand advocates because they found campaign content that was intelligent, entertaining, and substantive compared to mere dance gimmicks or rigid banner advertisements. (Ormrod, 2005, hlm. 53).

Primary Qualitative Findings: Authenticity Construction and Primary Statements

The most fundamental differentiating factor that rendered "Desak Anies" a robust political marketing strategy was the courage to eliminate scripted events (*unscripted events*) and break down the distance between political elites and the citizenry (Strömbäck, 2007, hlm. 52). Based on media coverage research and exclusive Tempo interviews, the initial concept for establishing this open dialogue forum originated from the thoughts of Usamah Abdul Aziz (Sami Usamah) as the co-founder/initiator of *Ubah Bareng* alongside his network of supporting youth activists.

Usamah Abdul Aziz and the *Ubah Bareng* team (Fajar Satriyawan Wahyudi & Muhammad Irham Firdaus, 2024) designed "Desak Anies" as a stage for proving leadership authenticity, wherein the presidential candidate was challenged to demonstrate intellectual quality spontaneously before the public without filters. In an in-depth interview featured in a Tempo documentary (TV TEMPO, 2026), Usamah Abdul Aziz expressed his fundamental perspective regarding the primary rationale for designing this interactive campaign format:

"We initially designed this event without any limitations whatsoever. There is no pre-submitted list of questions, and anyone in attendance is permitted to interrupt the discussion if the answers provided are deemed normative. We wanted to test whether this potential leader is genuinely resilient and respects the intelligence of young voters. Young people do not need dancing responses or visual gimmicks; we need ideas and the courage to be directly pressed." (Tempo Interview, Desak Anies: The Trace of Political Consciousness 2024).

The direct quotation from Sami Usamah above confirms Kotler's foundational political marketing principle concerning value propositions oriented toward product honesty

(Lees-Marshment, 2001, hlm. 1078). When a prospective leader dares to address sensitive issues such as human rights, freedom of speech, evaluations of the ITE Law, and economic policy criticisms without written preparation, the risk of public distrust can be suppressed to its lowest level (Newman, 1999, hlm. 30). This authenticity serves as the most expensive and high-value marketing commodity in the modern digital political landscape. (Scammell, 2014, hlm. 30).

The execution excellence of the "Desak Anies" campaign lies in its success in integrating two political marketing approaches that frequently operate separately: retail politics (personal/micro approach) and wholesale politics (mass/macro approach) (Lilleker, 2006, hlm. 92). At the retail level, the candidate was physically present amidst the crowd without high podium barriers, opening an intense direct Q&A space and executing egalitarian gestures such as listening, taking notes, and answering questions in detail. (Malindir dkk., 2024b, hlm. 140).

Honest retail interactions rich in genuine emotions (such as moments when questioners expressed frustration or challenged political promises) served as raw material ideally suited for processing into wholesale communication mixes on social media (Satria & Rahmawati, 2025). The rational debate drama occurring on the retail stage was transformed into widespread digital content watched by society across all corners of the country (Wijanarko & Dzakiyah, 2026).

Media Monitoring Trends: Dialogic Campaign ("Desak Anies") vs. Gimmick-Based Campaign ("Gemoy")

Comparative media tracking data compiled by Drone Emprit during the active campaign period (December 10, 2023 – December 29, 2023) track the volume of online news mentions and public media attention comparing the dialogic campaign model ("Desak Anies") against the dominant visual gimmick-based campaign model ("Gemoy"). Figure 2 displays the daily mention trends in online news publications across Indonesia.

Examined from campaign budget efficiency, this strategy demonstrated exceptionally high cost-efficiency. Compared to billions of rupiah spent on one-way television advertising or physical billboards frequently criticized for triggering visual litter, the cost of organizing the "Desak Anies" dialogue forums was significantly lower yet yielded engagement rates and top-of-mind recall that left a much more lasting impression on the public consciousness (Sukma dkk., 2023, hlm. 372).

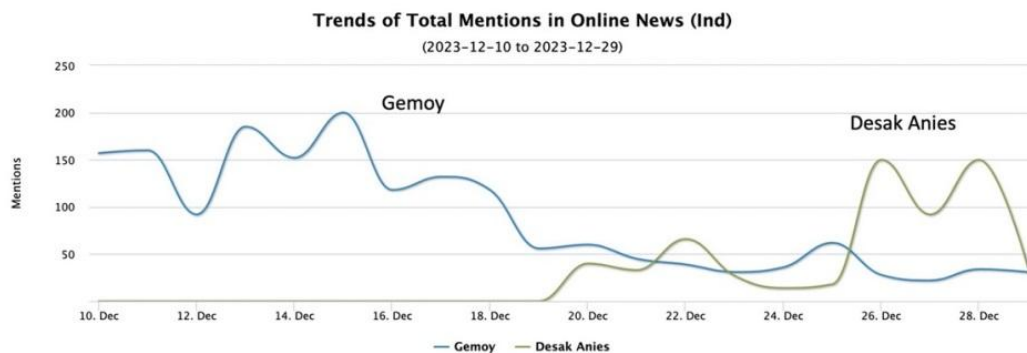
DESAK ANIES V.S. GEMOY: NEWS

Figure 1. Trends of Total Mentions in Online News: "Desak Anies" vs. "Gemoy" (Drone Emprit, Dec 10–29, 2023)

As shown in Figure 2, during the initial observation period (December 10–18, 2023), online news mentions were dominated by the visual gimmick model ("Gemoy"), peaking at 200 mentions per day, while "Desak Anies" registered near-zero coverage. However, following the execution of major regional editions (December 19–28, 2023), mentions for "Desak Anies" experienced sharp upward spikes, peaking at 150 mentions on December 26 and December 28, 2023. Concurrently, news mentions for the "Gemoy" gimmick declined to under 35 daily mentions. This trajectory documents a measurable shift in media attention away from visual/character gimmicks toward unscripted policy dialogue forums in national news coverage.

Comprehensive analysis indicates that the "Desak Anies" program was not only successful as a political marketing tool to boost candidate image, but also functioned as a political education instrument enhancing the level of democratic maturity in Indonesia (Dewansyah, 2015, hlm. 28). This campaign shifted the old paradigm from symbolic branding relying solely on visual popularity toward substantive branding testing the depth of ideas and problem-solving abilities of the presidential candidate. (Scammell, 2014, hlm. 65).

The high participation of young voters in disseminating, discussing, and criticizing each edition of "Desak Anies" on social media proves that Generation Z and Millennial voters in Indonesia possess strong rational impulses when provided with an appropriate platform (Ramaniya dkk., 2025). This phenomenon serves as tangible evidence that Philip Kotler and Neil Kotler's political marketing framework, when executed authentically,

interactively, and based on respect for constituent intelligence, is capable of generating voluntary, organic, and sustainable voter mobilization within national political contests. (O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2002, hlm. 108).

DISCUSSION

The empirical findings of this study demonstrate that the operationalization of Kotler and Kotler's political marketing mix within the "Desak Anies" program fundamentally transformed the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election campaign paradigm from top-down political persuasion into a two-way deliberative dialogue. Structured around two key thematic sub-sections, this discussion critically interprets these findings in relation to the primary research problem, theoretical frameworks, and existing literature, while highlighting the theoretical and practical implications, limitations, and future directions.

Paradigm Transformation: From Symbolic Gimmicks to Substantive Authenticity

The finding that "Desak Anies" successfully constructed the candidate's image as an accessible, data-driven, and scrutiny-ready technocrat indicates that unscripted public dialogue plays a vital role in building political trust among young constituents. By providing neutral physical venues and removing question pre-screening, the campaign directly addressed the growing alienation of Gen Z and Millennial voters who reject one-way, top-down propaganda (O'Shaughnessy & Henneberg, 2002). This finding is consistent with the primary objective of this study, which sought to explain how interactive marketing mix strategies redefine political candidate image and overcome voter skepticism in a developing democracy. As observed in the Drone Emprit tracking data, media coverage transitioned from initial dominance by visual character gimmicks ("Gemoy") toward policy-focused deliberative forums ("Desak Anies") once regional editions commenced (Maspul, 2024).

This shift aligns with previous research on political marketing orientation and mediated authenticity. Specifically, Lees-Marshment asserts that market-oriented political organizations must construct authentic value propositions rooted in constituent needs rather than forced salesmanship. Furthermore, Enli posits that digital platforms enable politicians to exhibit spontaneity and vulnerability, which enhances perceived authenticity compared to tightly scripted mass media appearances (Enli, 2015). However, our findings contrast with traditional political marketing studies in developing nations (Firmanzah, 2008), which emphasized the supremacy of commercial mass media and visual billboard advertising in

shaping candidate preference. This divergence can be attributed to the unique demographic composition of the 2024 Indonesian electorate dominated by digital-native youth and variations in technological infrastructure that facilitate real-time interactive streaming. From a deliberative perspective, the unscripted Q&A format provided a microcosm of rational-critical discourse, aligning with deliberative campaign framework (Dewansyah, 2015) and model of substantive political branding (Scammell, 2014).

Retail-Wholesale Convergence, Implications, and Research Limitations

The empirical evidence showing that 20 physical event editions accommodating 66,789 direct attendees generated over 120 million digital impressions via user-generated micro-content underscores the strategic power of retail-wholesale convergence. (Newman, 1999) Small-scale, highly authentic face-to-face interactions (retail politics) produced high-emotion raw material that spontaneously fueled organic digital word-of-mouth dissemination across TikTok, YouTube, and X (wholesale politics). This finding reinforces Strömbäck and Kioussis's model of strategic political communication (Strömbäck & Kioussis, 2014), illustrating that real-time audience engagement yields significantly higher organic reach and engagement rates than paid one-way advertising (Kruikemeier dkk., 2013).

Theoretically, these findings extend Kotler and Kotler's political marketing mix (Kotler dkk., 2021) and deliberative communication models to youth cohorts in emerging democracies, demonstrating that substantive branding can successfully supplant visual gimmicks. Methodologically, this study offers an analytical framework for evaluating hybrid campaign models that combine physical micro-events with macro digital virality. Practically, the results provide a cost-effective blueprint for political candidates, campaign strategists, and democratic institutions seeking to foster political efficacy and organic voter mobilization without relying on massive billboard logistics or commercial ad buys (Coleman & Freelon, 2015).

This study is limited by its qualitative single-case study design and non-probability purposive sampling, which restricts the statistical generalizability of the findings across all voter cohorts. Furthermore, this research did not econometrically measure the direct conversion rate between digital earned media metrics (e.g., live-stream views and hashtag impressions) and actual vote shares at polling stations (TPS). To address these limitations, future research should incorporate quantitative-correlational approaches or electoral econometric modeling to evaluate conversion rates, apply the framework to regional head

elections (Pilkada), and utilize longitudinal surveys to measure long-term impacts on youth political efficacy and civic participation.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the political marketing strategy implemented through the "Desak Anies" program during the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election successfully transformed the political campaign paradigm from top-down persuasion into an interactive, deliberative dialogue. By operationalizing Philip Kotler and Neil Kotler's political marketing mix framework, the campaign team addressed young voters' saturation with superficial visual gimmicks and one-way political advertising. The deliberate positioning of the candidate as an accessible, authentic, and technocratic leader who is willing to be scrutinized unscripted served as the core value proposition. Crucially, the campaign achieved a strategic synthesis between face-to-face "retail politics" in inclusive public venues and digital "wholesale politics" through real-time live streaming and user-generated micro-content amplification. This dual mechanism effectively suppressed voter skepticism, mitigated public distrust, and catalyzed voluntary, organic mobilization among Gen Z and Millennial constituents across Indonesia.

Building upon these empirical findings, this study offers distinct scholarly contributions across theoretical, methodological, and practical dimensions within the fields of political marketing and deliberative communication. Theoretically, it extends Kotler's political marketing mix and deliberative democracy frameworks to digital-native youth cohorts in emerging democracies, proving that transitioning from symbolic branding to substantive branding can redefine the norms of civic engagement. Methodologically, it provides a qualitative analytical framework for evaluating modern hybrid political campaigns by illustrating how micro-level retail interactions generate organic raw material for macro-level wholesale digital distribution. Practically, it offers a pragmatic, cost-effective, and anti-gimmick campaign blueprint for political candidates, campaign strategists, and electoral institutions, proving that unscripted, policy-focused dialogue forums offer a high-engagement alternative to traditional, high-budget visual advertising.

To advance scholarly inquiry beyond the qualitative boundaries of this study, several directions for future research are recommended. Future studies should integrate quantitative-correlational approaches or electoral econometric modeling to measure the exact direct

conversion rate between digital earned media metrics such as live-stream views, hashtag impressions, and engagement rates and actual vote shares at polling stations (TPS). Furthermore, researchers are encouraged to apply this political marketing mix framework to regional head elections (Pilkada) or cross-national contexts to evaluate whether unscripted deliberative campaign formats yield similar voter mobilization patterns across different demographic segments and localized political cultures. Finally, future inquiry could employ experimental designs or longitudinal surveys to measure the long-term impacts of deliberative campaign exposures on young voters' political efficacy, policy literacy, and sustained civic participation.

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