

## The Power of Demographic Profiling in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election

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**ABSTRACT:** This article discusses how demographic profiling played a crucial role in the victory of a pair of candidates in the Indonesian presidential election contest. Prabowo Subianto (PS), a retired general who had previously lost three times in a row in presidential elections, finally won in 2024 with more than 58% of the voters. PS's campaign strategy included pairing with a young running mate from the millennial generation, which helped them achieve a landslide victory compared to the other two pairs of contestants. This article uses secondary data analysis to explain how demographic segmentation was used in the campaign strategies that led to their success. The findings of this study contribute to the existing literature on the importance of marketing concepts in political activities, as suggested by O'Cass (1996), Preko et al. (2020), and Kotler (1999). Additionally, this study questions the arguments made by Bene et al. (2023) about the strategic role of social media in political marketing activities, particularly in the Indonesian context.

**KEYWORDS:** branding, demographic profile, generation, presidential election, political marketing

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has conducted 13 legislative general elections and 5 direct presidential elections since its independence in 1945. The first election was held on September 29, 1955, and elected representatives to parliament for 78 million residents, out of which 43.1 million registered voters participated, reaching more than 87 percent. In 2004, Indonesia held its first direct presidential election during the 9th general election, which was a historic moment for the country. In subsequent elections, both legislative members and the president and vice president have been elected simultaneously. The number of voters has increased with each election, with the last election in 2024 having more than 200 million registered voters, making it one of the largest elections in the world. The 2024 elections were held on February 14, 2024, and PS as President candidate and Gibran Rakabuming Raka (GRR) as Vice President candidate, emerged victorious with an impressive more than 58 percent of the votes. With a population of around 280 million people, the KPU determined that 204.8 million people were registered as voters, and the PS-GRR duo won the presidential election in just one round, as they controlled more than 50% of the voters' votes.

In the 2024 Indonesian General Election, there were three pairs of presidential and vice-presidential candidates, consisting of 17 political parties. The dynamics of this election were unique compared to previous ones. First, the presidential candidate who emerged victorious had previously lost in three consecutive presidential elections. For instance, in 2009, PS ran as the vice-presidential candidate alongside Megawati Soekarno Putri but lost. In 2014, he contested as the presidential candidate, accompanied by Hatta Rajasa as the vice-president, but also lost. In the 2019 elections, he ran as the presidential candidate accompanied by Sandiaga Uno, but lost again. Finally, in the 2024 elections, PS advanced for the fourth time as the presidential candidate and emerged victorious.

Second, Gibran Rakabuming Raka (GRR), who is the son of the current president, has put himself forward as a vice presidential candidate for the first time and has received a highly convincing vote. With his experience as a major in the city of Solo, he is supported by the Advanced Indonesia Coalition, which is made up of 10 political parties with a combined total vote in parliament of over 40%. By running alongside PS as a presidential candidate, they were able to obtain the most votes in the home province of Ganjar Pranowo (GP) in Central Java and East Java, in addition to winning almost 95% of all provinces in Indonesia.

Third, after the polling station closed, several quick count institutions reported that the PS-GRR (the no. 2 candidate pair) had received more than 52% of the votes. This trend continued even three weeks after the election, with it leading by over 58%. This means that the PS and GRR candidates acquired twice as many votes as the other two pairs combined. Despite concerns over potential fraud, it is clear that the PS-GRR pair had a significantly larger vote acquisition compared to their competitors.

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It is interesting to note that a person named PS was later able to win the presidential election contest after more than ten years. In the aftermath of the 1998 riots, Indonesia underwent a reformation that led to PS being accused of several human rights violations during the New Order era (1966-1998). Due to the unsafe political climate, he had to move to Jordan and stayed there temporarily. However, in the last decade and particularly in the weeks leading up to the general election, public support for PS to become president has increased despite some people bringing up his involvement in human rights issues in the country.

### II. METHOD

Through a literature review, this article concludes that the widespread acceptance of a potential national leader can be attributed to various factors such as the implementation of political strategies, financial backing, engagement of influential individuals, and utilization of campaign tactics based on political marketing principles. The data was gathered using a qualitative research approach, using information from digital media reports and publications from reputable research institutions. The analysis was based on reports published between June 1, 2023, and March 5, 2024, obtained from online media sources and other relevant data publications.

### III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### a. Political Marketing in Practice

Political marketing refers to the variety of communication strategies employed by political candidates during electoral campaigns (Baines, P.R. et al., 2002) to influence voter behavior. These strategies are related to the use of soundbites, political media, rationality, and emotion, and are based on the Rational Choice Theory (Preko, et.al., 2020). The concept of political marketing gained academic attention in the 1970s and continues to be a topic of discussion in marketing. Nowadays, more sophisticated techniques such as media advertising are used to supply political information to voters, which they use to make informed decisions.

Political marketing has been utilized in many presidential or parliamentary election campaigns across the globe. (O'Cass, 1996; Butler, et al., 2015; Preko, et al., 2020) It considers the wider community, especially voters, as a political market. The market's political decisions can be influenced by proper marketing strategies. (Butler and Collins 1994) Through exposure to new information and facts, ideological or public political preferences can turn into practical considerations that are believed to be true or comforting. Political marketing plays a crucial role in this regard.

Donald Trump's successful campaign in the 2016 election was attributed to his political strategy, which involved the use of a sophisticated marketing technique known as political neuromarketing. (Hegazi, 2021) This technique involves the use of neuropsychological and neuroscientific methods in a political context to understand and influence voter behavior. The main goal of political neuromarketing is to gain a deeper understanding of what influences voters in their political decisions and how political messages can be structured to be more effective in influencing their thoughts and behavior. By understanding how the brain responds to political stimuli, political consultants can design more effective campaign strategies by selecting more influential messages to achieve their political goals.

Political marketing involves preparing and executing a strategy based on segmentation. One of the most critical aspects of this strategy is the demographic profile. Research has shown that the demographic structure of a population is strongly correlated with election results. In the book "Global Political Demography: The Politics of Population Change" by Achim Goerres and Pieter Vanhuysse (Bashford, 2022), the authors explain that changes in population structure are a significant factor in political considerations at both the meso and macro levels. In Malaysia, research conducted by Dettman et al. (2023) found a significant relationship between demographic variables and voting behavior. Furthermore, Jan Leighley and Jonathan Nagler (2014) conducted research on the influence of demographic changes in the United States from 1972 to 2008 on voter participation and presidential candidate preferences.

#### b. Demographic Profiling

Cohort analysis is a term in demography that refers to the study of population behavior based on particular groups that share the same year of birth and are tracked over specific time intervals (Kumar, K. D. et al., 2023; Rughinis, C., & Huma, B., 2015). Each generation experiences life events at roughly the same time, and they are shaped by the social, cultural, and environmental conditions of their era, which can lead to different aspirations and preferences. These variations are referred to as generations or "genes" and are created by changes in the physical, social, and cultural environment.

The KPU determined the Permanent Voter List (DPT) in July 2023, which included 204,807,222 eligible voters. This number indicates a significant number of Indonesian residents who have the right to vote on February 14, 2024. Around 74 percent of the Indonesian population has the right to vote, and they belong to various socio-demographic groups. The millennial generation, also known as Generation Y, born between 1981 and 1996, is the largest voting group, constituting approximately 32.3 percent of all voters. The next largest voting group is Generation X, born between 1964 and 1980, with 28.3 percent, followed by Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2007, with 21.1 percent. Although Generation Z currently comprises the

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majority of the Indonesian population (27 percent nationally), not all of them have the right to vote in the 2024 election. Additionally, voters aged 60 years and over constitute 18.3 percent of the total number of voters.

It's worth noting that the number of elderly voters is only slightly lower than that of GenZ, and they tend to have a higher election participation rate than younger generations. If we divide voters into two groups, young voters (Millennial generation plus GenZ) and senior voters (Generation X plus elderly), the ratio is 53 percent for young voters and 47 percent for senior voters. There are still more young voters than senior voters, but there are some interesting differences in the composition of young and senior voters in the three largest voting provinces: West Java, East Java, and Central Java. In West Java, the number of young voters exceeds that of senior voters by about 3 million. In contrast, in East Java, the number of senior voters is greater than that of young voters. Meanwhile, in Central Java, the number of both groups of voters is relatively balanced.

Generation X refers to the population born between 1965 and 1976. Their children can be classified into two groups - Millennials (Gen Y) and Generation Z. Millennials are individuals born between 1977 and 1994, while Gen Z comprises those born between 1995 and 2010. Most Millennials and all Gen Z were born and raised in a world where the internet and mobile devices have become a necessity and a way of life. They are the first generation that has never experienced a world without the internet. They are accustomed to using digital devices such as laptops, smartphones, and tablets, and are familiar with various technological advancements.

Both the GenZ and the previous generation share the same attitude when it comes to respecting different ethnic, tribal, cultural, and religious backgrounds, according to McDonald and Melissa Deckman (2023). There are multiple reasons that explain this phenomenon (Harmadi, 2022a). Firstly, during the time when GenZ parents were growing up and getting married, population mobility between regions was high due to the advancements in national transportation and communication systems. As a result, intermarriage between social groups became a common occurrence, and many GenZ individuals have parents from diverse socio-cultural backgrounds. Secondly, with the internet, GenZ can easily access information on various topics outside of their daily environment, including life in different countries and cultural diversity. This has led GenZ to become more open-minded and appreciative of differences. For GenZ, values do not align with identity politics based on specific tribes, ethnicities, or religions.

Similar to millennials, GenZ also heavily rely on social media for communication (Cheng, et al., 2024) and spend more time on gadgets compared to previous generations. Growing up in the digital era, this generation is accustomed to engaging in online activities on a regular basis. Being "digital natives," GenZ primarily use social media on various platforms that differ from those used by their predecessors. Some of them may use older social media platforms only to communicate with their parents, teachers, professors or superiors. Unlike their parents, Gen Y and Gen Z seldom use Facebook as a means of socializing. Studies indicate that GenZ prefers to keep their identities private (Seemiller, C., & Grace, M., 2017), which is why social media platforms that promote openness are less popular among them.

Gen Z has a similar tendency to Gen Y when it comes to being practical and considering financial aspects in decision-making. This is due to the increasingly complex and competitive situation faced by Gen Z, as the population continues to grow while resources become more limited, resulting in heightened competition. Gen Z must be able to earn high incomes to keep up with the ever-increasing cost of living. As a result, short-term profits are often more attractive than abstract future rewards. The allure of immediate financial gain outweighs the pleasure of more intangible benefits. (De Witte, M., 2023; Nanayakkara, 2023).

It is important to take into account not only the age and generational composition of a population but also their educational background. According to the 2020 Indonesia Population Census data completed in 2022, the majority of potential voters for the 2024 election have a low level of education. Nearly 60% of voters have a maximum education level of junior high school. In communities where the majority of voters have a low level of education, campaigning on issues other than welfare tends to be less effective. Low-educated voters tend to prefer candidates they are already familiar with. In this case, PS, a presidential candidate who has previously contested in three presidential elections, has the advantage of being better known to voters. The vice presidential candidate of GRR is the son of President Jokowi, and is immensely popular with high levels of public trust. This is similar to political dynasties in the United States (Hess, 2015) or in the British Parliament (Coppenele B.V., 2017).

## IV. PRESIDENTIAL CONTESTATION

The 2024 presidential election is characterized by the participation of three demographic generations, namely generations X, Y, and Z, each with their unique traits. Two presidential candidates, Anies Rasyid Baswedan (ARB) and Ganjar Pranowo (GP), belong to Generation X. According to the 2020 Population Census conducted by Statistics Indonesia, the proportion of GenZ (born from 1997 to 2012) in the Indonesian population stands at 27.94%, surpassing the previous generation, Generation Y (born from 1981 to 1996), which accounts for 25.87% of the population. Meanwhile, the proportion of Generation X (born from 1964 to 1980) in Indonesia's population is 21.88%.

The 2024 presidential election marked by the huge involvement of three demographic generations who have their own characteristics; generations X, Y and Z. Two of the presidential candidates, Anies Rasyid Baswedan (ARB) and Ganjar Pranowo (GP), belong to Generation X, while Prabowo Subianto (PS) is from the previous generation (baby boomer). According to the 2020 Population Census conducted by Statistics Indonesia, out of Indonesia's 270.2 million population, 27.94 percent belong to

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the GenZ category, which includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012. This number is higher than the proportion of Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) at 25.87 percent, and Generation X (born between 1964 and 1980) at 21.88 percent of the total population.

It's important to note that not all GenZ residents were eligible to vote in the 2024 presidential election. Only those born between 1997 and 2006, and a small number born in 2007, were eligible, making a total of 47.5 million voters. Some of these voters were exercising their right to vote for the first time. Based on the Indonesian population projection data for 2020-2050 (which is based on the 2020 Population Census), it's projected that by the time of the 2024 elections, there will be around 205.3 million people who are aged 17 years and over (which is a requirement to become a voter, along with being/having been married). Of these, 23.1 percent will be GenZ voters. Assuming that GenY is a transition from GenX to GenZ and if it is assumed that half of them are oriented to the same orientation as GenZ, then the proportion of constituents oriented towards GenZ is more than 31% of the total voters. In other words, the competition for votes using a conventional approach between 3 contestants with each getting the same number of votes, then each pair of candidates will get additional votes ranging from only 20%.

The General Election Commission has set the campaign period for the presidential candidates of the Republic of Indonesia for the 2024-2029 period from November 28, 2023 to February 10, 2024. As a result, the political marketing positioning of the three pairs of contestants has become more visible. However, on October 3, almost two months earlier, after the Nasdem party announced ARB as its presidential candidate, he revealed his campaign positioning by declaring the tagline "change". Prabowo Subianto (PS) has consistently advocated for "continuity" as the central theme of his policies since declaring himself as a presidential candidate. On the other hand, Ganjar Pranowo (GP) was announced as a presidential candidate by his party on April 21, 2024. GP has been in a position of responsibility/silence, refraining from criticizing the current government and not vocalizing any plans for change until the official campaign period.

On September 2, 2023, the National Awakening Party (NAP/PKB) announced that its general chairman, Muhaimin Iskandar (MI), would be running alongside the presidential candidate ARB as the vice-presidential candidate. This decision angered the Democratic Party, who had been in power from 2004 to 2014. They were upset because their own general chairman, Agus Harimurti Yudhoyono (AHY), had been previously considered as a strong candidate to run with ARB, but was ultimately overlooked. As a result, the Democratic Party withdrew from their coalition with ARB and instead joined forces with PS.

On October 21, 2023, a Constitutional Court (MK) ruling shocked the political landscape in the country. The court granted a lawsuit from a student in Solo to appoint Gibran Rakabuming Raka (GRR) - President Joko Widodo's eldest son - as a vice presidential candidate. The political atmosphere in the country became increasingly tense when this decision was announced by PS. The biggest surprise in the political landscape was the impact on the Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) - the existing ruling party. They have always claimed that President Joko Widodo is a party and PDIP official who would act and follow the party's agenda. However, recent developments have surpassed everyone's expectations. President Joko Widodo, who was believed by many as being loyal to the party, proposed his son GRR as the vice-presidential candidate. This fact shows that President Joko Widodo has his own strategy by breaking away from PDIP, which had supported him until now.

After carefully considering various developments, PDIP has finally selected Machfud MD (MMD), the Coordinating Minister for Political, Legal and Human Rights, as the vice president to accompany the GP. Three pairs of presidential-vice presidential candidates have been announced, with ARB as the presidential candidate pair number 01 consistently focusing on the theme of change. PS as the presidential candidate number 02 has firmly stated that they will "continue" with the current policies. Meanwhile, the campaign theme of GP as the presidential candidate 03, which was initially unfocused after October 23, has shifted towards a positioning similar to candidate pair 01 and taken a position opposite to the existing president as well as candidate pair 02.

## V. COMPETITION FOR VOTES

Candidate pair 02 has a significant advantage during their campaign period due to the support of the current president. This support is also psycho-social in nature. Firman Noor (2024) in his writing had predicted that pair 02 would win the presidential election. The reason is because of strong support of the current president and the power of the bureaucracy. In January 2024, about 2 weeks before the presidential election, the Indonesian Survey Institute released that the level of public satisfaction with President Jokowi reached 80.6%. With the tagline "continuity", this is a strong power for pair 02 to win the presidential election. It should be understood that the rules in Indonesia prohibit the bureaucracy from favoring certain candidates. Therefore, the election supervisory body (Bawaslu) in Indonesia had to ensure that there were no violation of the neutrality of civil servants (bureaucracy) during the whole process of election.

PS conducted a political campaign by promoting themselves as a political product to gain appreciation and votes in the election. This tactic is in line with the principles of political marketing, which require creativity to secure more votes than competitors. As a retired Army General from special elite forces in Indonesia known for having a stubborn character and formal person, PS presented a contradictory image to the public. Namely as a person who is slightly fat, smiles easily and has a cute childish attitude in various media and campaign visualizations - "gemoy". Political branding strategies like this (Farhan & Nor

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Asiah Omar, 2023) have a positive impact on the voting behavior of Gen Y and Gen Z. The strategy implemented is in line with the study of Preko, et al. (2020) in Ghana revealed that soundbites, political media, rationality, and emotion positively influence voter behavior. Furthermore, the leadership of political parties requires brand authenticity as a defender of the party policy platform and brand authority to command the organization and implement the policies as advocated. (Speed, et al 2015)

Candidate pair 02 focuses on optimizing support from the millennial generation (Y) and generation Z, comprising around 54% of the population. These young people's social lives are heavily dependent on the digital world, and they no longer consume traditional mass media like newspapers, magazines, television or radio. Although GRR falls under this demographic, PS, the presidential candidate, presents itself cleverly by personifying "young people" who are cute and adorable.

PS and GRR succeeded in utilizing social media which became a reference for Gen Y and Gen Z as was done by Ferdinand Marcos Jr. when winning the 2022 elections in the Philippines (MENDOZA, M. E. H. (2022) The contest for presidential candidates from these two countries seems to have succeeded in taking advantage of the new culture that has become a trend among young people who are the main voters in the general elections.

According to a report from CNN Indonesia on 4th February 2024, candidate pair 02 received the highest number of interactions on TikTok prior to the final presidential election debate on Sunday, 4th February. This information was revealed by social media analyst Drone Emprit, who monitored the period from 1st to 3rd February. The number of interactions between PS-GRR on TikTok reached 89.9 million, or 46 percent. This figure exceeded the number of interactions between candidate pair 01 ARB-MI and candidate pair 03 GP-MMD. The number of interactions for GP-MMD was 56.3 million, or 29 percent, while ARB-MI received 51.2 million interactions, or 26 percent. "Candidate pair 02 received high interaction, and this was not just from accounts with millions of followers. The key to their success was the production of light and encouraging content that touched the hearts of the viewers," said Ismail Fahmi, founder of Drone Emprit, in his upload on X (formerly Twitter).

In Drone Emprit's research on TikTok from January 21 to February 3 2024, candidate pair number 01 occupied the top position in terms of the amount of their content on TikTok, namely 3,611 uploads. Meanwhile, candidate pair 02 PS-GRR is below it with 2,741 contents. Meanwhile, serial number 03 is 2,473. "Based on this data, the share of voices is obtained: Candidate pair 01: 41 percent, Candidate pair 02: 31 percent, Candidate pair 03: 28 percent," as expressed by Twitter @ismailfahmi, on Sunday (4/2/2024). Despite getting the most content, the AMIN (01) candidate pair is the opposite when seen from the volume of interactions on TikTok which is calculated from the total number of likes, comments, shares and views. Pair 02 occupies the top position with total interactions reaching 1.7 billion. GP-MMD is below it with a total of 780 million interactions. Meanwhile, ARB-MI only got 700 million interactions on TikTok. Thus, their respective percentages are: candidate pair 02 = 53 percent, candidate pair 03 = 25 percent, and candidate pair 01 is 22 percent. " (Suara.com)

Moreover, candidate pair 02 had a successful campaign gimmick that coincided with their ability to recruit high-profile influencers who have become role models on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram. At least 10 influencers with tens of millions of followers each have openly provided support for candidate pair 02, bringing the total number of followers to over 150 million people. Assuming that 80% of these followers have voting rights, there are approximately 120 million followers. If we estimate that 50% of these followers are the same across all three social media platforms, then the number of prospective partner 02's followers comes out to be around 60 million people. According to estimates, out of the 204.8 million registered voters in the 2024 election, around 85% exercised their right to vote, which means the number of voters was around 173.5 million people. Out of the total voters, 35% of the millennial generation and Gen-Z voted for candidate pair 02. This figure aligns with the results of Kompas Research and Development (14 February 2024), which stated that 65.9% of Gen Z aged 26 years and under chose PS-GRR. To secure more than half of the total voters, pair 02 needs to engage in additional political activities to gain more votes, requiring only an additional 20 votes.

The three couples in the election campaign utilized digital media creatively to release a lot of content. However, candidate pair 03 appeared to be lagging behind in developing their creativity in digital media. They were late to develop their positioning in the campaign theme. Additionally, Jokowi's departure from the party while carrying candidate 03 had a significant impact on the incumbent party, causing them to lose a large number of votes. As a result, the GP figure and the representation of the incumbent party were not strong enough to make candidate pair 03 the winner. They only received around 16% of the total voter votes.

## VI. DISCUSSION

There are at least three strategic issues related to the 2024 presidential election in Indonesia. Firstly, more than 50% of the voters are from the Gen Y and Gen Z age groups. Therefore, optimizing their participation would have a significant impact on the acquisition of votes.

Second, PS-GRR's victory with appropriate political marketing succeeded in accommodating the culture of GenZ and Gen Y. Referring to the argument of anthropologist Margaret Mead (1970), there are 3 types of knowledge transfer processes between generations: (a) post-figurative cultures where the previous generation (parents) teaching (transferring knowledge) to the younger generation (children) about how to face the future, (b) configurative cultures, where children's knowledge comes from their parents and also their peer group (friends). Meanwhile (c) prefigurative cultures are applied when environmental changes occur

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very quickly, parents actually learn from their children. The knowledge that parents have is not enough to equip the next generation.

Considering the rapidly changing environmental conditions at this time, the concept of prefigurative culture is more appropriate to use. All contestants in the 2024 presidential election held a dialogue with GenZ about current challenges and future solutions. Rapid changes result in the future being very different from the past. The faster the change, the greater the potential for generation gaps, hampering development performance. Prabowo-Gibran's success in capturing GenZ preferences is one of the keys to victory.

Third, GenY and GenZ tend to choose to study and dialogue with their peer group to share experiences, knowledge, and various other individual aspirations. (Harmadi, 2022b) Considering that these two generations are very intensive in using social media, the learning peer group (friends) has been expanded to include learning from figures in cyberspace. It is not surprising that the PS and GRR pair actively involve influencers and use the right gimmick to attract GenY and GenZ as their main constituents.

The 2024 Indonesian presidential election stands out from previous experiences in many ways. Despite some controversies, there are unique features such as the number and composition of voters, contestant backgrounds, and marketing strategies. In summary, an effective political marketing strategy has emerged, which aims to optimize vote acquisition from the largest constituents by segmenting them based on age and educational groups, then exploiting their psychological sentiments.

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