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Cultural Dimensions of Symbols Style and Power Artifactual Communication in Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar Declaration Video

Dimensi Budaya Simbol, Gaya, dan Kekuasaan Komunikasi Artifaktual dalam Video Deklarasi Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar

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Abstract

Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar is a national political figure facing image challenges due to several controversies, such as the "durian cardboard" corruption case, the decline of PKB's votes in the 2009 election, and conflicts with Gus Dur that resurfaced following statements by Yenny Wahid. Ahead of the 2024 presidential election, he seeks to reconstruct his political image through nonverbal communication in his declaration video. This study analyzes the content of the political declaration, the forms of artifactual communication, and positive image building strategies. Using a qualitative approach and Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, the study found that the artifactual communication employed falls under symbolic practices (practical artifacts), which convey emotional information, behavior, and identity differentiation. To build a positive image, a low-fashion strategy is used to portray simplicity, closeness to the people, and cultural ties with *Nahdliyin* voters. This strategy serves as an important tool for constructing political symbols that strengthen identity and effectively gain public sympathy.

Abstrak

Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar adalah tokoh politik nasional yang menghadapi tantangan citra akibat beberapa kontroversi, seperti kasus korupsi "karton durian", penurunan perolehan suara PKB dalam pemilihan umum 2009, dan konflik dengan Gus Dur yang kembali mencuat setelah pernyataan Yenny Wahid. Menjelang pemilihan presiden 2024, ia berupaya membangun kembali citra politiknya melalui komunikasi nonverbal dalam video deklarasinya. Studi ini menganalisis isi deklarasi politik, bentuk-bentuk komunikasi artefaktual, dan strategi membangun citra positif. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dan teori semiotika Ferdinand de Saussure, studi ini menemukan bahwa komunikasi artefaktual yang digunakan termasuk dalam praktik simbolik (artefak praktis), yang menyampaikan informasi emosional, perilaku, dan diferensiasi identitas. Untuk membangun citra positif, strategi busana sederhana digunakan untuk menggambarkan kesederhanaan, kedekatan dengan rakyat, dan ikatan budaya dengan pemilih Nahdliyin. Strategi ini berfungsi sebagai alat penting untuk membangun simbol politik yang memperkuat identitas dan secara efektif mendapatkan simpati publik.

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1. Introduction

Nonverbal communication is a fundamental aspect of the message delivery process, where meaning can be conveyed without the involvement of verbal languagel(Ayuna, 2023). One of the significant forms of nonverbal communication is artifactal communication, which is the delivery of messages through artifacts or visual symbols such as clothing, accessories, cosmetics, hairstyles, and certain cultural attributes (Sinuhaji, 2022). In practice, this communication does not only reflect aesthetic aspects, but also becomes a representation of identity, social affiliation, and cultural values embraced by individuals, including in the context of contemporary politics. Elections as a pillar of democracy have become a global practice in ensuring a peaceful transition of power. In it, the people are given the right to determine the direction of national leadership through free political choices (Nurfadilla & Nurdin, 2024). In this framework, a candidate's self-image becomes a strategic instrument that determines electability. Image is not only formed through verbal narratives and work programs, but also through visual perperitivity that is carefully designed and calculated to build emotional and rational appeal in the eyes of the public.

Mass media, both conventional and digital, have hegemonic power in shaping public opinion of a candidate. The visualization of political figures on various print advertising platforms, television shows, and social media uploads is the main medium in forming first impressions and building long-term perceptions (Heryanto, 2018). On the other hand, the production and distribution of visual messages requires significant financial resources. Candidates with limited funds often rely on alternative communication strategies such as face-to-face campaigns and the use of community-based social media. In an increasingly dynamic political climate, the classic persuasive approach that relies on normative promises is beginning to lose its relevance. Indonesian society today shows a high level of saturation of political rhetoric that is not realized (Yendra, 2022). Therefore, the approach of symbolic communication through artifactal elements is a more effective strategy in reaching the collective emotions of voters. This strategy allows for a more subtle message delivery, but it is able to leave a deep impression in the public's memory.

Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, or known as Cak Imin, is one of the political figures who uses an artificial communication approach in building a political image ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election. Through various media channels, he has published his visualizations

intensively ranging from banners, billboards, to declaration videos spread on social media. The presence of symbols such as peci, sarongs, typical student clothing, and visual backgrounds that imply a religious impression, are important instruments in targeting moderate Islamic-based constituencies, especially Nahdliyin residents. However, Cak Imin's political image cannot be separated from a number of issues that overshadow his political track record. Allegations of involvement in the "durian cardboard" case, a significant decline in PKB's votes in the 2009 election, and open conflicts with the family of the deceased Gus Dur are serious challenges in the image formation process. In this context, artifactal communication plays a role not only in strengthening positive identities, but also as an effort to reconstruct narratives to reclaim public trust through the symbolization of simplicity, religiosity, and historical connection with the pesantren community.

Cak Imin's declaration video is one of the main mediums in the visual communication strategy that he pursues. Every element in the video, ranging from clothing choices, facial expressions, intonation, dominant colors, to the location setting, contains a political message that is symbolically encoded. White clothing, for example, can be read as a representation of the purity of the intention of the pesantren background as a symbol of closeness to Islamic tradition and a serious expression as an affirmation of commitment to national responsibility. All of this is part of a visual narrative designed to shape the audience's perception.

Relevant research was conducted by Siti Aisyah Humairoh Octaviani and Tresna Wiwitan from the Islamic University of Bandung, which discussed artifactal communication as a self image of Fikom Unsiba lecturers (Octaviani & Wiwitan, 2014). The focus of their research was on the six lecturers who were sampled, with an emphasis on how appearance is used to build self-image in an academic context. Meanwhile, this study is different because it analyzes the artifactal communication in the video of the declaration of political figure Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, focusing on only one figure. The similarity lies in the study of artifactal communication as a form of self-representation. Siti and Tresna's research found that lecturers' appearance, such as the choice of clothing and accessories, reflects positive self-concept and builds trust in the social environment. This shows that artificial communication plays an important role in shaping public perceptions of a person's identity.

Anifatul Jannah's research discusses artificial communication in the Instagram status of "ning" students in the pesantren environment, with a focus on visual representation in social media uploads by four active accounts domiciled in East Java (Jannah, 2018). This research is different from the author's study that highlights artifactal communication in the video declaration of political figure Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar. The main difference lies in the object (Instagram vs declaration video) and

the visual approach used. However, both of them examine artifactal communication as a means of forming self-image. The results of Anifatul's research show that the visual upload of "ning" represents a high socio-economic status as a kiai princess, and shows that politeness in digital communication reflects real-life norms in Islamic boarding schools.

Research by Roswita Oktavianti, Septi Winduwati, and Lyda Irena from Tarumanagara University discusses artifactal communication training for high school students (Oktavianti et al., 2020). The results suggest that the concept of artificial communication is not yet widely known among adolescents, particularly adolescent girls, although it is important for building self-image and self-confidence through appearance. This research emphasizes the importance of education about artifactal communication with an interactive and contextual approach, as well as the role of teachers in shaping students' professional appearances. This research is in line with the focus of the author who both examine the artifactal aspects, but differ in the object of the research: Roswita highlights adolescents in the context of education, while this study examines the artifactal communication of a public figure, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, through his declaration video.

2. Method

In order to answer the problem formulation comprehensively, this research is designed with a methodological approach that is planned, systematic, and in accordance with the rules of qualitative research (Wada et al., 2024). The main focus lies in the attempt to describe and interpret the artifact communication displayed by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar in his political declaration video on the YouTube platform. This type of research is qualitative descriptive, with the aim of identifying, interpreting, and understanding the use of artifactual elements in visual political communication. The descriptive approach is used to describe the phenomenon of communication as it is, without making statistical generalizations, but through an in-depth interpretive narrative of the visual symbols that appear in the declaration video.

This study uses a qualitative content analysis approach rooted in the interpretive tradition in communication science. This approach facilitates the study of communication messages implied in visual media, especially in the context of digital media such as YouTube which is part of new media. Content analysis in this context is directed to unravel the meaning behind the candidate's visual representation through artifactual symbols. As a theoretical framework, this study uses Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic theory, which emphasizes the relationship between *signifiers* and *signified* in the sign system (Dayu & Syadli, 2023). The application of this theory allows researchers to uncover the ideological and cultural dimensions of the nonverbal symbols displayed, as well as evaluate how the signs are

constructed to form a particular political image.

In an effort to maintain the validity of the data and avoid excessive subjectivity, the researcher applies triangulation techniques, both triangulation of theories, methods, and sources. This process is carried out by defining patterns of meaning, exploring the interconnectedness between signs, and expanding the understanding of the symbolic context that appears in the video. Triangulation also aims to find possible alternative interpretations to strengthen the results of the analysis (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). This study uses two types of data sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from the video of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration uploaded on the official YouTube channel in 2022. The data was analyzed as the main object in the study because it represented the direct artificial communication in a declarative context.

To obtain a relevant sample, the researcher used the purposive sampling technique, which is the selection of videos based on certain criteria such as the highest number of viewers, the highest number of comments and interactions, and the relevance of the theme to the focus of the research (Lenaini, 2021). From a total of 15 declaration videos available, a number of videos were selected for in-depth analysis according to these criteria. Secondary data in this study was obtained from various supporting literature, such as scientific books, journal articles, academic publications, and reliable online sources. This data is used to strengthen the theoretical context and support the interpretation of the primary data that has been analyzed.

The data collection technique is carried out through the audio-visual documentation method, which involves recording and storing visual elements from the declaration video as the main material for analysis. This documentation includes symbols related to the candidate's physical appearance, cultural attributes, expressions, gestures, colors, and visual backgrounds that are part of the artifactual communication message. Each video is analyzed based on the symbolic elements that appear consistently, with the aim of identifying the structure of the mark as well as its correlation with the political narrative constructed by the candidate. The visual data that has been documented is then systematically processed and transcribed into a narrative form. From a total of 15 declaration videos available, purposive sampling techniques were used to determine the video sample to be analyzed. The selection of the sample was carried out selectively based on several criteria, including the highest number of views, the highest number of likes, the highest number of comments, and the relevance of the theme of the declaration to the purpose and focus of the research. Through this approach, the researcher managed to identify a number of the most representative content for further analysis, especially in the context of the artifact communication displayed in each of the videos.

Tabel 1.1 Konten Video Deklarasi yang Dianalisis

No	Judul Video	Jumlah Penonton	Jumlah like	Jumlah Komentar
1.	LIVE GUS MUHAIMIN FESTIVAL PEKALONGAN | THE NEXT 2024 WITH NEW PALLAPA & JAMRUD	118 Ribu	1,7 Ribu	590 Komentar
2.	GUS MUHAIMIN FESTIVAL | THE NEXT 2024	13 Ribu	971	4.157 Komentar
3.	GUS MUHAIMIN FEST | THE NEXT 2024	8,5 Ribu	866	3.516 Komentar

(Sumber: Olahan Peneliti)

The data analysis process was carried out using the Ferdinand de Saussure semiotic model. This model views signs as a union between signifiers and *signifiers*, which together form meaning (Efendi et al., 2024). In this context, artificial communication is analyzed as a sign system that contains nonverbal political messages, which are conveyed through a visual medium. Observing and recording the relevant video content of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration, transcribing visual elements into the form of written descriptions, classifying data based on artifactal themes, such as clothing, religious symbols, dominant colors, and gestural expressions, performing semiotic interpretation of each symbol to answer the formulation of problems related to form, function, and image construction in artifactal communication. Through this approach, the research is expected to be able to reveal in depth how nonverbal communication strategies are used as a political tool in shaping an image, building public trust, and answering the perceived challenges faced by political figures in the era of digital contestation.

3. Results and Discussion

Artificial Communication

Artificial communication is a form of nonverbal communication that is manifested through physical appearance and the use of certain objects such as clothing, cosmetics, accessories, hairstyles, and other attributes (Istiyanto, 2010). The appearance is not only aesthetic, but also a sign system that communicates a person's identity, social status, and personal attitudes and values. Individuals consciously use these various visual elements to form certain perceptions in social interactions. Through personal clothing and artifacts, other people can form assumptions about a person's personality, profession, and even social background. Furthermore, artificial communication not only represents self-image, but also plays an important role in building public trust and image (Hadiyansyah et al., 2025). In modern society, this phenomenon can be seen through the trend of using cosmetic products, clothing fashion, and body modifications to support appearance. The impressions that arise from appearance often create stereotypes, both positive and negative, depending on the social context and previous experience of interactions. Therefore, artificial communication needs to be understood as an integral part of the communication system that can

influence the meaning of messages broadly in social life.

Clothing as Artificial Communication

Clothing is one of the key elements in artifactal communication that is able to convey messages nonverbally even before the words are spoken. According to Stone, clothing has a function as a conveyor of social signals that are influenced by various factors such as culture, personal experiences, and values that individuals adhere to (Sakinah et al., 2022). Style, color, and way of dressing can reflect a person's identity, social status, and outlook on life. Over time, clothes are chosen not only on the basis of functional needs, but also because of religious considerations, aesthetic value and self-image construction. More than just body armor, clothing serves as a social and cultural symbol that reflects a person's background. Nordholt said that clothing is "our social and cultural skin" because it represents the cultural values inherent in individuals and groups (Tahalea, 2016). In this context, clothing is a form of cultural representation that shows national and ethnic identity, such as the use of gamis in Arabic culture or kebaya and batik in Indonesian culture. Thus, clothing is not only a personal choice, but also an artificial communication medium that is full of social and cultural meaning.

The Relationship of Clothing Artifact Communication to Personality

According to Lawrence B. Rosenfeld and Timothy G. Plax, there are four main aspects that connect clothing as an artificial communication with an individual's personality. First, *clothing consciousness* refers to the suitability of clothing with self-acceptance. Second, exhibitions show an individual's interest in certain attributes of clothing. Third, *practicality* describes the interest in mixing and matching clothing. Fourth, *design* emphasizes attention to clothing design as a form of self-expression. Through clothing, a person can convey a personal identity such as religiosity, assertiveness, modernity, or youthful character. Clothes, houses, vehicles, and other accessories become external symbols that individuals use to build their self-image in front of the public (Hendariningrum & Susilo, 2008).

Furthermore, artifactal communication not only reflects personal identity, but also contains social, cultural, and ideological dimensions. Clothes can represent social roles, group membership, social status, and ideologies (Putra, 2017). For example, the symbolism of fashion in political movements such as the black veil during the Iranian revolution shows how visual artifacts became representations of emancipation and political resistance. In a broader context, artifactal communication helps shape collective perceptions through media, the fashion industry, and symbolic values that are passed down across cultures. Thus, clothing serves not only as a complement to appearance, but also as an ideological medium that reflects the social and political dynamics in modern society.

Artificial Communication as an Identity Construction

According to Idi Subandi Ibrahim, artificial communication plays an important role in the process of identity formation at various stages of community development ranging from traditional, modern, to postmodern society. In pre-modern times, the rules about clothing and symbols of luxury were well established so that clothing directly reflected a person's social status, profession, or rank. In contrast to modern society which opens up a wider space for individuals to explore identity through clothing and appearance. However, this freedom also gives birth to the phenomenon of *identity crisis*, as artificial communication becomes a key benchmark in determining how individuals are perceived and socially accepted. In modern society, fashion and style appear as an ever-changing form of expression, forming new images that influence the perception of progress and self-existence.

In the postmodern era, identity has become increasingly fluid and unstable. The concept of self in this society is considered a pseudo-construction, even only limited to fantasy or illusion. Artifactal communication is no longer seen as an essential representation of identity, but rather as a consumer product used to satisfy the need for recognition and affiliation. As Jacques Lacan argued, the process of identification in this context is not always based on rational choices, but rather on the impulse to be part of a group or to follow a figure who is considered a trendsetter (Adawiyah & Indra, 2023). As a result, visual artifacts such as clothing not only function as a nonverbal communication tool, but also as a symbol of multiple interpretations ranging from self-image to expressions of power, social class, gender, to political and religious beliefs. In the postmodern framework, artificial communication is a reflection of the complexity of social relations and the inequality of power structures in society.

Categories Artifact Communication

In the study of artificial communication, clothing serves as an important medium that represents various aspects of identity and social roles. Gibbins groups the understanding of clothing communication into three main categories. First, fashion skills have to do with the extent to which one's appearance is perceived as attractive, fashionable, and trend-appropriate by others. Second, the socialization aspect shows how clothes reflect the social and gender roles of the wearer, whether they look feminine or masculine. Third, formality describes the level of formal or casual impression of a person's appearance based on the clothes they wear. On the other hand, Reed offers a different approach by dividing the categories of artificial communication based on attitudes and personality characteristics into four main groups.

The first group is High Fashion, which is an individual who highly value symbolic expression through fashion and are willing to allocate large resources to meet these appearance standards. They tend to stay away from religious activities and social issues, but show

involvement in humanitarian projects from a progressive point of view. Second, Low Fashion, consists of individuals who want to still look attractive but adopt a more moderate attitude of modernism. Third, Non Fashion, comes from a low socioeconomic background, has dogmatic tendencies and pragmatic approaches such as Machiavellian attitudes, and is more active in political activities. Lastly, Counter Fashion includes those who are less interested in the symbolism of appearance. This group is characterized as independent, conservative, and tends to be informal, although they still show positive characters such as patience and kindness. These four categories show how clothing choices function not only aesthetically, but also as a reflection of individual values, attitudes, and positions in social structures (Syarafa et al., 2020).

Artifactual Communication Information Dimension

According to Kefgen and Specht, artificial communication through clothing contains three main dimensions, namely emotions, behavior, and differentiation. On the emotional aspect, clothes are not only a covering of the body, but also a medium to express the mood and psychological state of the wearer (Hadiyansyah et al., 2025) Terms like *"Glad Rags"*, *"Widow's Weed"*, and *"Sunday Best"* reflect how clothes can portray happiness, sorrow, and relaxation. In a broader context, clothing is also worn as a symbol of political identity and nationalism. For example, the uniforms of civil servants or the color of typical clothes of political parties (such as PPP green, PDIP red, Golkar yellow) can arouse a sense of nationalism or ideological solidarity. Emotions in this case are not just individual expressions, but also part of the psychosocial order that is organized and connected to the broader social environment.

The second dimension is behavior, where clothing also influences individual actions and social responses of those around them. A concrete example is the assumption that users of Joko Widodo-style communication styles are synonymous with a simple and honest person. In the academic environment, formal attire is associated with professionalism and credibility, so students are more respectful of lecturers who dress neatly. Similarly, uniforms become symbols of certain authority, such as police uniforms that provide social legitimacy for the wearer. When a person wears a uniform, he or she is automatically subject to the norms and expectations of the group. The last dimension, differentiation, shows that clothing also serves to distinguish individuals or groups in society. The identity of student organizations such as PMII, HMI, or IMM, as well as campus affiliations such as UIN, UGM, or UNY, can be recognized through the style of dress. Roach and Eicher's research at Barnard confirms that symbolic clothing reinforces social consensus and strengthens group cohesion. Through this artifactal differentiation, dress communication becomes a means of forming and strengthening cultural identity, both

for internal and external members of the group (Trisnawati, 2011).

Artificial Communication as a Symbol in the World of Politics

In the political realm, artifactal communication plays a strategic role as a nonverbal medium to convey messages, shape perceptions, and strengthen political identity. Political communicators, especially candidates or public figures, often use visual symbols such as clothing, party attributes, and stage decorations to support their verbal messages and build a credible image in the eyes of the public (Heryanto, 2018). The incongruity of appearance with the context of a political event is often considered to injure the message to be conveyed, as external appearance serves as an integral part of political performance. The artifactual symbols displayed, such as clothing colors, party logos, and clothing styles, indirectly depict the values, ethos, and cultural orientation represented by the political figure. This reinforces Hall's view that communication and culture are inseparable, as political visual symbols essentially represent the cultural background and identity of the perpetrator (Arrianie & Si, 2023).

Artificial Communication as Political Branding

In the modern political era, political party identity is no longer solely built through ideology, but also through the image of leaders and branding strategies. Political branding plays a role in shaping public perception of candidates, both in terms of personality and visuals. Artificial elements such as clothing, hairstyles, and gestures are an important part of strategic imagery, as they are able to convey emotional signals and help voters in making decisions. Political branding, as Scammell puts it, positions candidates like products that need to be packaged attractively in order to be accepted by the market, in this case voters (Sutisna & SH, 2024). This practice allows for the creation of an emotional connection between voters and candidates, even with those who were previously apathetic to politics. According to Sandra, the main components of political branding include: personality (social relationships, technological responsiveness, and personal values), appearance (clothing, hair, gestures), and the main message of politics (vision, public support, and political philosophy). In other words, artificial communication becomes an effective tool in building and strengthening a candidate's political brand in the eyes of the public.

Artifactual Communication as a Political Image

Political imagery is closely related to how the public shapes perceptions of certain political parties or figures. Referring to Kotler's theory, image is the result of a series of perceptions, beliefs, and emotions that society has towards an entity, both individual and organization (Shilfani et al., 2025). In the political context, imagery is an important strategy to win public sympathy. Schroder calls it a "target image", which is an image that is expected to appear in people's minds. Artifactual communication supports the

formation of this image by providing a strong first impression through the visual symbols it wears. Political candidates who are not known to the public need to build an image from scratch, while figures who already have a reputation must maintain or restore that image. Both the positive and negative reputations attached to a candidate can have a direct impact on their electability in the future. Therefore, artificial communication strategies must be carefully designed to be able to create a positive, consistent, and convincing impression for the wider community.

Video Analysis of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration

The declaration video conducted by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar displays a concept commonly used by political candidates in conveying messages to the public. Each candidate has their own ideas and creativity that are expressed through verbal and nonverbal messages, while still paying attention to the vision and mission that they want to convey to the community. Verbal messages are usually conveyed through speeches or political orations, while nonverbal messages can be reflected through artificial communication, such as clothing, symbols, visual backgrounds, and delivery styles. In his declaration video, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar presents himself as a nationalist figure, caring for the lower middle class, inspiring, and simple and down-to-earth. He conveyed his campaign message through visits to various regions as a strategy to introduce himself directly ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election. The broadcasts of the declaration vary in duration, ranging from 60 to 240 minutes, featuring communicative efforts with various approaches that touch on the emotional and social aspects of society.

In general, candidates from political parties tend to focus on verbal communication in the form of orations as the main strategy in gaining vote support. However, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar chose a different approach by packaging his declaration through momentum that unites verbal and nonverbal communication. This approach is considered effective to reach the community at large, especially those who are the target voters. In the video, he also presents local entertainment that is able to create emotional closeness with local residents, as well as strengthen his image as a leader who is present in the community. Until the end of 2022, there are three versions of the declaration video that have been uploaded on the YouTube channel, each recording the declaration activities that took place in various regions on the island of Java. To facilitate the analysis process, the three videos were then named as *Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration Video Version 1*, *Version 2*, and *Version 3*. These three are the main materials in this study because they contain elements of artifactual communication that are relevant to the focus of the study.

Video Description of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration Version 1

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The first version of the video setting of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration is located in the Pekalongan area. Based on the information in the broadcast, the declaration video with a duration of 3 hours 54 minutes 46 seconds features the figure of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar as a figure who represents the spirit of nationalism, simplicity, high fighting spirit, and the values of mutual cooperation. Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's love for the homeland, namely Indonesia, is strongly reflected through verbal communication in the form of orations delivered throughout the video. The oration not only described his commitment to the nation, but also showed his direct involvement with the community as a concrete form of the values he brought in his candidacy.

The declaration made by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar also seemed to be presented without any noticeable nuances of luxury. The declaration video presented direct involvement from various parties, especially members of the National Awakening Party (PKB), *Nahdliyin* residents, and local people who participated in enlivening the event. Their presence shows collective support and emotional attachment to the figure of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar. In addition, in the video, he also presents a number of well-known musicians to add to the attractiveness and liveliness of the atmosphere, as well as a nonverbal communication strategy to strengthen closeness with the public.

Forms of Artifact Communication in the Video of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration Version 1

Picture 1.2 Artifaktual Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar Versi 1

Pekalongan| The Next 2024 With New Pallapa & Jamrud

The difference in terminology between "artificial communication" and "communication" linguistically is significant. The word "artifactal" refers to the noun, while "communication" is more often categorized as verbal in everyday practice. However, despite the differences in grammatical categories, the two are closely related in the context of communication science. Every element involved in the communication process is interconnected, including the artifact aspect. Therefore, the discussion in this section will focus on how artificial communication, particularly through physical appearances such as clothing, becomes part of the communication system. As described in the previous section, the appearance of clothing as an artifact of communication has a symbolic function that reflects certain identities, messages, and social positions. Symbols themselves are an essential element in communication

practice (Valentiyo et al., 2025). So, it is not an exaggeration to say that artificial communication is an integral part of communication itself.

As a form of nonverbal communication, artifactal communication functions to convey various information about the individual concerned, in this case Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar. Information conveyed through visual aspects, such as clothing choices, is able to represent character, intentions, and social preferences. Understanding artificial communication is very important because it can reflect the identity of the user. Not only does it understand the symbolism of one's appearance, but it is also important to understand the meaning of the artificial communication displayed by the other party in the communication interaction. By understanding the artifact symbols of the interlocutor or other communication participants, it is possible to gain an understanding of their background, status, or intentions. Therefore, the assessment of the appearance of artifacts is not only from the aspect of material value such as price or brand, but also from the suitability of the social context is important in assessing the effectiveness of communication of public figures such as Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar.

The phenomenon of folk events in Indonesia is greatly influenced by cultural structures and social environments. In religious communities, the form of activities tends to be spiritual such as recitation. In contrast, communities with strong cultural roots tend to bring local arts to their events. In heterogeneous urban areas, the variety of people's events is determined through consensus between communities. The presence of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar in his series of political declarations shows the involvement of various cultural and social backgrounds of the community. Thus, the form of artifactal communication that he displays also adjusts to the characteristics and essence of each event held in these various regions.

In the first version of the declaration video, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar displayed a style of dress that is categorized as *practically style*, which is the tendency of individuals to combine various elements of clothing functionally and casually. The display shows the use of a red shirt combined with a black *trucker* jacket , black trousers, a matching belt, and dark-colored glasses. The composition is not just an aesthetic choice, but also contains a certain social message regarding simplicity, readiness, and a down-to-earth approach. In the context of communication, this choice of dress style reflects the narrative that a candidate wants to build in reaching public sympathy emotionally and visually.

In daily life, the selection of clothing artifacts is greatly influenced by the activities to be carried out, the mood, and the character of the audience to be met. This confirms that artificial communication is a medium of nonverbal message delivery that contains certain social meanings. There is no denying that one's choice of clothing contains a symbolic message that can be interpreted by the audience.

Therefore, for a prospective leader like Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, visual representation is an important part of building a public image. During the campaign period ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election, the figure of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar consistently displayed a visual identity through the use of clothing such as *trucker* jackets, trousers, and matching shoes. This choice of clothing appears consistently in a number of video documentaries that show her interaction with people from various walks of life, while reinforcing the message of simplicity and closeness to the people.

Artifactal communication as a form of nonverbal communication plays an important role in conveying information about an individual's personal identity. In this context, an individual's external appearance can represent various psychological and social aspects of the communicator. For example, as Kefgen and Specht explain, the type of clothing worn can reflect the emotional state of the wearer. Terms such as *Glad Rags*, *Widow's Weed*, and *Sunday Clothes* indicate a link between clothing choices and emotional expression. In this study, the artifactal communication worn by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar showed calm and relaxed emotional nuances, shown through the use of *a trucker jacket*, colored shirt, black trousers, belt, and shoes. This is reflected in the delivery of declarations that are carried out in a polite and calm manner, even accompanied by the recitation of prayers, without excessive or aggressive emotional expressions.

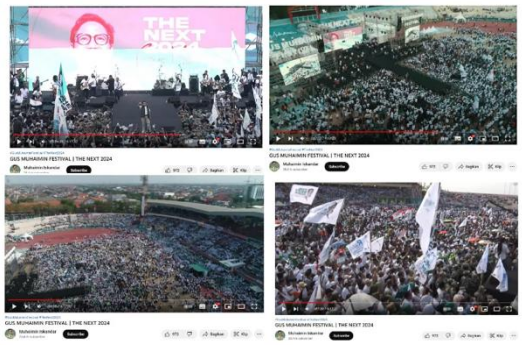
Furthermore, the artificial communication of appearance also has implications for communicative behavior and social interaction. The results of observation of the declaration show that the choice of clothes worn by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar affects his communicative behavior, as well as the interaction between himself and the community. Casual clothing that resembles the style of young people creates an egalitarian and open feel, thus reducing the social distance between communicators and communicators. This suggests that the selection of contextual artificial communication can support the creation of effective communication. On the other hand, the use of artifacts that are too flashy or fancy has the potential to distract the communicator from the main message they want to convey. Thus, understanding the social and psychological context of the audience is very important in the use of artificial communication, considering that the symbols contained in the nonverbal element can be interpreted differently depending on the situation and interpretation of the recipient of the message.

In the framework of social differentiation, artificial communication has an important function in distinguishing individual and group identities. Outward appearance, such as clothing, is a visual indicator that can communicate a person's political, social, or cultural affiliations. In the context of a political campaign, the appearance of clothing can be a strategic tool to distinguish one candidate from another, for example

between figures from PKB, PAN, Gerindra, or PDIP. Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar in this case uses artificial communication to create a distinctive visual identity, while maintaining the impression of simplicity and affordability. The clothes worn tend to be casual, but still show an attempt to differentiate from other public figures. This strategy is intended to build an image as a leader who is close to the people while representing the values of the younger generation.

Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's style of appearance that combines various fashion elements in a casual format reflects the category *of practically*, namely individual efforts to combine types of clothing to create a distinctive identity. In the declaration video, this performance strategy not only displays the side of modernity, but also becomes a symbol of closeness to the younger generation, as reinforced by his statement that "Young people must be given a chance." This performance also strengthens the charismatic image that is relevant to the aspirations of young voters. Thus, artifactal communication as a tool of differentiation does not just function as an aesthetic element, but becomes a symbolic construction of the political identity that is to be communicated during the declaration period of his candidacy towards the 2024 Presidential Election.

Video Description of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration Version 2



Picture 2.1 Gus Muhaimin Festival | The Next 2024

The location for the second version of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration video was at the Gelora Delta Sidoarjo Stadium. Based on information from the analyzed broadcast, the declaration lasting 4 hours 17 minutes 32 seconds displayed the image of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar as a humble figure. This is shown through various nonverbal expressions, especially body gestures that consistently reflect an appreciative attitude, such as gratitude that is repeatedly conveyed to various parties. This gesture reinforces the representation of personal character that appreciates the contributions of others in the context of political declaration events. The majority of participants in the show were members of the National Awakening Party (PKB) and local communities in the area where the declaration was held. The series of activities in the declaration included the delivery of orations and the presentation of visions and missions by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar to the people present. The communication strategy used does not only rely on the verbal aspect, but also relies on emotional closeness through direct involvement and symbols of

simplicity. This aims to build effective communication and strengthen affective relationships between political figures and constituents on the ground.

Forms of Artifact Communication in the Video of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration Version 2

Picture 2.2 Artifaktual Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar Versi 2

Personality is a form of character or individual characteristics that can be displayed consciously or unconsciously, and reflected through various aspects inherent in a person (Fatwikiningsih, 2020). According to Ahmadi, personality has such a broad meaning that to understand it in its entirety it requires grouping into characteristics that can be observed or measured. Through the identification of these characteristics, individuals can recognize their personality more accurately. One of the main characteristics of recognizing personality is the tendency of interest and view towards certain values (Rahman et al., 2022).

One of the tangible manifestations of the direction of these interests and values is reflected in artificial communication, especially in the form of appearance or clothing. Artificial communication is an inseparable element of modern human life, and is even one of the main differentiators between humans and other creatures. In this context, artificial communication is considered effective if it does not contradict social norms and is able to provide comfort to the surrounding environment. Appearance is a reflection of personality that is displayed nonverbally, so the way a person dresses is actually a form of communication about himself to the public. The public also tends to give assessments and awards according to the appearance displayed by the individual.

In the second version of the Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar declaration video located at the Gelora Delta Sidoarjo Stadium, the performance displayed is not much different from the first version of the declaration. The artifactal communication he uses leads to a practical style, which is a style of dress that reflects a young and dynamic character without showing an element of excessive luxury. The concept of practically as described by Rosenfeld and Plax, refers to an individual's preference for creatively combining different types of clothing to form a specific identity. Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, in this case, combines a plain white t-shirt, brown vest, khaki pants, and white shoes in a combination that represents a casual style, but still has integrity. These appearances are strategically used to build an image as a leader who is grounded and close to the community. In the context of political campaigns, artificial communication like this has great potential to be a supporting or inhibiting factor, depending on its

suitability with public expectations and the existing social context.

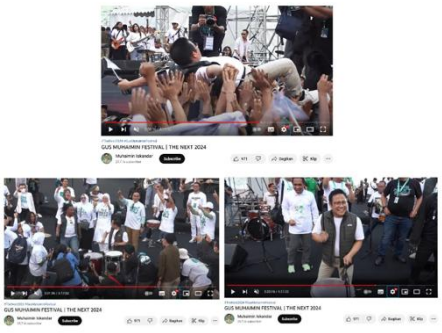
Artificial communication as part of the study of nonverbal communication has an important contribution in conveying information about a person's identity, attitude, and personality through outward appearance or the clothes worn. According to Kefgen and Specht, there are three dimensions of information that can be communicated through clothing, namely emotions, behavior, and differentiation. These three aspects allow clothing to be an effective means of communication in conveying nonverbal messages from a communicator to the communicator.

The emotional dimension in artificial communication includes the expression of feelings through various forms of appearance worn by individuals. Such appearance can indicate a person's mood or emotional attitude. Kefgen and Specht exemplify this form of emotional communication through terms such as *Glad Rags* (cheerful clothes), *Widow's Weed* (mourning clothes), and *Sunday Clothes* (casual clothes typical of the weekend). Based on observations of the second version of the declaration video from Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, the appearance worn, namely plain white t-shirts, brown vests, khaki chinos, and white shoes can be categorized in the form of *Sunday Clothes*. This appearance reflects a calm, relaxed, and non-aggressive emotional feel. This is in line with the way the declaration speech was delivered by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar. There is no high intensity of voice or burning verbal expression as in conventional political orations. On the contrary, verbal communication is delivered with a calm and friendly approach, strengthening his image as a young figure who is relaxed but still communicative. Thus, it can be concluded that artificial communication contributes to shaping and reflecting the emotions that the communicator wants to display to the public.

Artifactal communication is also closely related to the behavioral dimension, as the clothes a person wears in public communication situations can affect both his own behavior and the reaction of the audience. When delivering a message to the masses, in addition to preparing the verbal aspect, a communicator also needs to consider the visual aspect, especially appearance, because appearance can shape the perception of the individual's attitude and behavior in front of the audience. In the second version of the declaration video, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's casual and practical appearance has implications for his behavior during the event. This appearance allows him to be more free and flexible in interacting with the masses. There are no rigid boundaries between communicators and communicators, thus creating a fluid and inclusive atmosphere. The style of dressing that resembles young people in general makes Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar appear more dynamic, full of energy, and expressive.

Some of the behavioral expressions reflected in the video include running around on stage, greeting the crowd directly, beating

drums with musicians, to crowd surfing, which is an activity where someone is lifted and moved over the audience's head in a relay. All of these activities illustrate how casual artificial communication can facilitate energetic interactions and blur the barriers between leaders and society. Therefore, artifactal selection practically functions not only as a visual representation, but also as an instrument for shaping behavioral dynamics in the context of mass communication.



Gambar 2.3 The Actions of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar

Artificial communication plays a significant role in shaping and being influenced by the behavior of its users, and can influence the perception and response of the communicator. The appearance chosen, such as clothing, not only reflects the individual's personality and attitude, but can also shape the individual's own behavior. Conversely, a person's preference for certain types of clothing can also come from his character or behavior. For example, casual dressing tends to show a relaxed and flexible attitude in interacting. In the context of public communication, clothes don't have to be fancy to support effective communication. In fact, extravagance or excessive formality can actually be a distraction that distracts the communicator from the substance of the message. In other words, artifactal communication has an equivalent role to verbal communication in conveying a message, where both must consider the situation and the character of the audience so that there is no misunderstanding or distortion of meaning. If not appropriate, the artifact symbols worn can be interpreted differently and become an obstacle to communication, and even have the potential to backfire on the message delivery process.

One of the important functions of artificial communication is as a differentiation tool, which is to show identity and distinguish certain individuals or groups from others. In a political context, for example, clothing attributes can be a marker of membership or affiliation with a particular party such as PKB, Gerindra, or PDIP. More than that, the choice of clothing style is also a medium of personality expression that is influenced by four dimensions according to Rosenfeld and Timothy G., namely: *clothing consciousness* (suitability of choice with personal taste), *exhibition* (the drive to stand out), *practically* (the interest in exploring clothing combinations), and *design* (pleasure in certain fashion designs). In this case, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar, through his version of the declaration video, uses a *practical approach* in dressing to combine various elements of casual clothing typical of young people as a form of political differentiation. This style not only became a symbol of connection with the younger generation, but also strengthened his

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identity as an alternative figure in the national political arena. His energetic and dynamic appearance, combined with verbal messages such as "young people must be given a chance", underscores his efforts to make artificial communication an image tool as well as a political communication strategy designed to display a differentiating character in the 2024 Presidential Election contest.

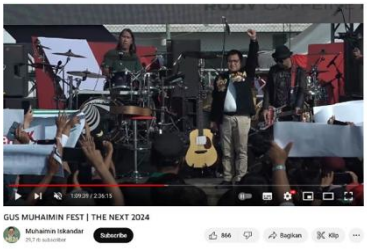
Video Description of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration Version 3

The third version of Abdul

Picture 3.1 Gus Muhaimin Fest | The Next 2024

Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration video is located at Sport Jabar Arcamanik, Bandung City, with a duration of 2 hours 36 minutes 16 seconds. The show featured the image of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar as a humble figure, as seen from the enthusiasm and positive response from various circles of the community present. This shows that the declaration has a wide reach and is able to embrace across social groups. Most of the actors in the video are volunteers from the National Awakening Party (PKB), accompanied by the participation of local people from the areas visited. The declaration activity was packaged in the form of a collaboration between Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar and a number of musicians, which in between was inserted a speech and an explanation of political vision to the audience present.

Forms of Artificial Communication in the Video of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Declaration Version 3



Gambar 3.2 Artifaktual Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar versi 3

Appearance through clothing does not directly communicate, but can be a medium of communication when the audience gives meaning to it. In the context of nonverbal communication, physical appearance such as clothing is included in the category of artifact communication, which is the use of objects as a means of conveying messages. Barnard states that artifactal communication takes place through the arrangement of various artifacts, such as clothing, makeup, and accessories (Irama, 2012). These artifacts function to complement, explain, or reinforce verbal communication messages. In the third version of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration video which is set at Sport Jabar Arcamanik, Bandung, there is a significant difference in the use of artificial communication compared to the previous two versions. In this version, the element of appearance emphasizes the combination of practicality and design values, as Lawrence B. Rosenfeld and Timothy G. Plax posit two of the four main factors in the relationship between

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clothing and personality. Practicality refers to the individual's tendency to combine different types of clothing, while design refers to the individual's attention to the visual and symbolic appearance of the clothes worn.

Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's appearance in the video reflects both aspects. He wears a plain white T-shirt, black trucker jacket, khaki chinos, black shoes, and an occasional black hat. The trucker jacket is equipped with a design of images of the Indonesian archipelago as well as caricatures of traditional masks typical of the archipelago's culture, which reinforces the symbolic aspect of the chosen design. The use of visuals through the medium of images in communication tends to be more effective in conveying meaning compared to text. Images can stand on their own as symbols that are easily recognized and understood by society. Therefore, artifacts in the form of clothing have a high symbolic power and are an important part of nonverbal communication in political contexts.

In the context of artificial communication, Kefgen and Specht put forward three dimensions of information that can be conveyed through clothing, namely emotions, behavior, and differentiation. These dimensions do not appear automatically, but are formed through the appearance and use of certain symbols. First, the emotional dimension. The appearance of clothing can convey the emotions of the communicator. Based on observations of the declaration video, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's appearance reflects relaxed emotions, which in the literature is known as "Sunday Clothes" casual clothes worn while relaxing. The combination of casual clothes she uses supports an informal and friendly atmosphere, without the pressure of judgmental intonation, but rather resembles a casual dialogue between friends. Second, the behavioral dimension. Artificial communication influences the behavior of the wearer as well as the response of the audience. In the video, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's behavior shows a close interaction and is not distant from the community. He actively moves from the stage, approaches residents, and interacts directly, including taking selfies together without showing the formal attitude of a politician running for president. His casual and trendy appearance creates the impression of an energetic and down-to-earth young figure, even though he is no longer relatively young in terms of age. Thus, artifactal communication in the third version of the declaration video is an important strategy in building a personal image and emotional closeness to society, as well as emphasizing political messages through strong nonverbal mediums.

Figure 3.3 Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar Taking a Selfie with the Public

In the context of artificial communication, the dimension of differentiation not only reflects the individual's personality, but also serves as an identity marker that distinguishes a person or group from others. Appearance through certain clothing or accessories can be symbols that explicitly or implicitly convey an individual's affiliation to a group or value. Thus, artifactal communication is able to convey a message of social identity without the need to use verbal language; Simply through visual observation, the audience can recognize the communicator's character or affiliation. This can be seen in the third version of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration video, where he consistently incorporates elements of casual style clothing that are synonymous with young people. The combination of clothes such as plain white t-shirts, black trucker jackets with caricature illustrations typical of Indonesian culture, khaki chinos, black shoes, and black hats are distinctive image forming elements and distinguish themselves from politicians in general. The choice of clothing style produces a strong differentiating effect conveying the message that Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar wants to appear more grounded, close to the younger generation, and free from the formalistic impression that is often attached to political figures. Indirectly, this strategy forms a visual identity that is easily recognizable and inherent in the public memory, as well as a symbolic effort to adapt to popular culture and current trends in society.

Analysis of the Semiotic Meaning and Signs of Ferdinand de Saussure

Construction of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Positive Image through Artifactal Communication in the Declaration Video Version 1

Image is a crucial aspect in efforts to win political competition, including in the 2024 presidential election contest. Both verbal and nonverbal communication have a strategic role in shaping and maintaining a positive image of candidates during the campaign period. One form of nonverbal communication is artificial communication, which is the delivery of messages through elements of appearance, such as clothing. In this context, the performance became a symbolic space used by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar to represent himself in the declarative campaign.

As a political figure who is known for his *pesantren* background and is often called "Gus Muhaimin", the selection of artifactual elements in his appearance cannot be done arbitrarily. He must consider the norms, public expectations, and symbolism inherent in the clothes he wears. This means that each element of the clothing chosen concerns not only personal preferences, but also symbolic strategies in building an image. The results of the researcher's analysis of the first version of the declaration video showed that Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar used a combination of clothes in the form of a pink shirt, black trucker jacket, black pants, and white sneakers. This combination shows a tendency in *the Low Fashion* category, as classified by Reed. *Low*

Fashion describes the artifactual style of individuals who want to appear attractive, be moderate, and think rationally without over-imprisoning.

This performance symbolically shaped the image of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar as an open, simple, humble figure, and close to young people. The moderate attitude reflected in the choice of clothing also represents the character of a leader who is rational and oriented towards the public benefit. His statements in the video, such as "young people should be given a chance," reinforce that position. Furthermore, in Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach, elements of clothing can be categorized as *signifiers*, while the meaning or value contained in them is *signified*. The use of certain colors in clothes such as pink, black, and white also has its own meaning in the construction of the image: The color pink represents happiness and care, which is interpreted as a symbol of the desire to bring prosperity to all levels of society, as he states in the video: "Farmers must be happy, fishermen must be happy." The color black, which is used on jackets and pants, has the meaning of strength and peace. This can be interpreted as a commitment to food and clothing security as well as efforts to create economic and social stability. The white color on the sneakers indicates the impression of Neut reality, cleanliness, and openness to all circles.

Thus, the appearance built by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar through *Low Fashion* not only reflects aesthetic choices, but also becomes a strategic communication medium to form a strong and relevant political identity, especially for the younger generation. This positive image built through artificial communication has significant potential in influencing public perception and increasing electability in national political contestation.

Construction of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Positive Image Through Artifact Communication in the Version 2 Declaration Video

Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar builds a positive image in the second version of the declaration video through an artifactual communication approach that is manifested in his clothing choices. His appearance consisted of a plain white t-shirt, brown vest, khaki chinos, and white sneakers. This combination represents a simple yet attractive style of dressing, which in Reed's classification falls into the *Low Fashion* category. Reed developed four categories to describe artificial communication, attitudes, and personality characteristics. *Low Fashion* is one of those categories, which reflects an individual's desire to look attractive in an inconspicuous way and show a moderate attitude. In this context, artificial communication is a reflection of the character and personality of the user, as well as reflecting the social values that are intended to be conveyed to the public.

In the second version of the declaration video, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar shows an image as an open, rational, humble, and young figure. His casual appearance but still neat and representative is a symbol of identity as a leader who is close to

the people and able to penetrate the boundaries of social segmentation. This identity is strengthened by his political narrative that prioritizes inclusivity and common welfare. Furthermore, Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic approach can be used to analyze the visual elements in Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's performance. In this framework, elements of clothing (white shirts, brown vests, khaki pants, and sneakers) act as *signifiers*, which mark certain concepts or values (*signified*), such as simplicity, openness, and integrity. Her appearance, which is far from an elite impression, becomes a symbolic strategy that emphasizes equality and partiality in the general public, who can use these types of clothing in their daily lives.

From the perspective of color semiotics, the choice of white and brown colors has a strong symbolic meaning, White symbolizes cleanliness and purity. The white T-shirt worn by Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar indicates his commitment to the values of integrity, transparency, and governance free from corrupt practices. Brown**,** both on vests and chinos, reflects simplicity, honesty, and closeness to nature and the social realities of society. This color emphasizes the image of a leader who is honest, thorough in thinking, and prioritizes ethics in carrying out leadership.

The artifactual appearance constructed in this declaration video strengthens the positive image of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar as a figure who can be a new hope for the Indonesian people. Low Fashion's style of dressing not only conveys the message of simplicity, but also becomes an effective nonverbal communication strategy to attract public sympathy, especially from the younger generation. Nonetheless, it is important to note that imagery through artificial communication is only one aspect of political contestation; The real success lies in the ability of leaders to carry out their duties and meet the expectations of the people.

Construction of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's Positive Image Through Artifact Communication in the Version 3 Declaration Video

In the third version of the declaration video, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar builds a positive image through artifactual communication that is reflected in his casual appearance, namely using a plain white t-shirt, a black trucker jacket with a caricature design with an Indonesian culture-themed caricature, and a black snapback hat. The choice of clothing style strengthens the image as a simple figure, close to the people, but still has a strong character and full of cultural symbolism. According to Reed's classification of artificial communication, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's appearance is included in *the category of Low Fashion*, which is a style of dress that displays an attractive and moderate impression without an excessive or formalistic impression. *Low Fashion* is usually used by individuals who want to be seen as an open, rational, and grounded person, the characteristics that are clearly shown in this declaration video.

Artificial communication is believed to reflect the character and values carried by the wearer. In this context, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar presents himself as a figure who embraces the spirit of young people, thinks logically, and is humble. His performance is a form of visual statement that he is ready to lead with an inclusive and adaptive approach to social and cultural dynamics in Indonesia. From Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic perspective, the elements of fashion in this video can be categorized as signifiers, while the meaning or message they contain is called signified. The combination of white and black colors, as well as the visual caricature of Indonesian culture, not only strengthens the visual aspect, but also contains symbolic meanings that are socially and politically relevant.

The color white symbolizes cleanliness and purity, which is associated with the hope of a clean government free from corrupt practices. The color black reflects strength and peace, which can be interpreted as a desire to bring stability and social justice in society. The visual caricature of Indonesian culture on the jacket underlines the importance of preserving cultural values and honoring local artists, musicians, and cultural activists. Overall, the image formed through this artifactual communication shows Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's alignment with cultural values, simplicity, and openness. His presence in this video is a symbol of hope, not only for the younger generation, but also for art and culture actors in the country.

This research contributes to the development of political communication and visual culture studies by revealing how symbolic styles and power representations are constructed through artifactual communication in Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration video. The findings provide deeper insights into how cultural dimensions influence audience perception, political identity, and leadership imagery in digital media contexts. In addition, this study can serve as a reference for future researchers examining political symbolism, multimodal communication, and media representation in contemporary Indonesian politics. Practically, the research also helps political communicators and media practitioners understand the strategic use of visual symbols and cultural narratives in shaping public engagement and political legitimacy.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of research and analysis of three videos of Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's declaration, it can be concluded that political communication built through verbal and non-verbal elements significantly shapes the construction of a positive image in front of the public. First, from the verbal aspect, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar consistently uses the type of statement declaration in the three versions of the video, which aims to convey commitments, hopes, and prayers to the community as a form of spiritual and emotional approach. These statements indicate a symbolic relationship between the leader and the people, which is marked by the

use of religious phrases and joint spiritual invitations (such as the recitation of Al-Fatihah). Second, in the aspect of artifactual communication, Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar's style of appearance is categorized in the form of practically, which contains three main dimensions, namely: emotions, behavior, and differentiation. The emotions displayed through casual appearances represent calmness, closeness to the younger generation, and a non-authoritarian leadership style. The behavior displayed tends to be relaxed, friendly, and open to social interaction. Meanwhile, the differentiation aspect appears in the effort to distinguish himself from other political figures through the choice of clothing that is far from the formal and elite impression. Third, the results of Ferdinand de Saussure's semiotic analysis of low-fashion artifactual communication in the three videos show that Abdul Muhaimin Iskandar has succeeded in building a positive image as an inclusive, egalitarian leader, close to society, and upholding cultural values and diversity. This image is a symbol of people's expectations for a leader who is progressive, open, and young at heart. In addition, his alignment with the arts and culture sectors, as well as the values of social justice articulated in the declaration video, reinforced the representation that he wanted to appear as a leader of all Indonesian people, regardless of religious, social, or cultural backgrounds. Thus, artifactual communication in the political context does not only serve as a visual complement, but also as a strategic tool in the formation of political identity and effective imagery in public spaces, especially in the digital era that demands strong and easily accepted visual representation from various levels of society.

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