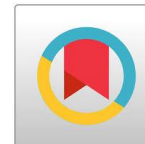


**Corruption and Elections: Abdul Khoir's Political Image-Building Strategies to Gain Votes in Electoral District 5 of Depok City in the 2024 Legislative Election**



**Korupsi dan Pemilihan Umum: Strategi Pencitraan Politik Abdul Khoir dalam Memperoleh Suara di Dapil 5 Kota Depok Pada Pemilu Legislatif 2024**

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	
<p><b>Keywords</b>                      Political Imaging;                      2024 Legislative Election,                      Personal Branding;                      Corruption;</p>	<p><b>ABSTRACT</b>                      This study discusses Abdul Khoir's political image strategy in attracting potential voters in the 2024 Legislative Election contest. This study aims to explain the efforts of candidate Abdul Khoir who succeeded in building a political image that is oriented towards solutions, caring, and close to the community despite facing past stigmas related to him as a former convict in a corruption case. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method to understand political phenomena through data collection in the form of documentation, literature studies, interviews, and observations. To explain the phenomenon of Abdul Khoir's success in gaining votes, the researcher uses the theory of political strategy and the concept of personal branding. The research findings explain that Abdul Khoir's political image strategy is carried out conventionally and unconventionally. The conventional method is carried out by Abdul Khoir through real actions such as improving public facilities needed by constituents. The unconventional method is carried out by strengthening personal branding as a credible, adaptive, and consistent figure by utilizing modern social media such as TikTok. Both image strategies succeeded in convincing voters in Electoral District 5 of Depok City to vote for Abdul Khoir and he succeeded of becoming a member of the Depok City DPRD for the 2024-2029 period.</p>
<p><b>Kata Kunci</b>                      Pencitraan Politik;                      Pemilu Legislatif 2024;                      Personal Branding;                      Korupsi;</p>	<p><b>ABSTRAK</b>                      Penelitian ini membahas tentang strategi pencitraan politik Abdul Khoir dalam menarik calon pemilih pada kontestasi Pemilu Legislatif 2024. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan upaya calon Abdul Khoir yang berhasil membangun citra politik yang berorientasi pada solusi, peduli, dan dekat dengan masyarakat meskipun menghadapi stigma masa lalu yang terkait dirinya sebagai mantan narapidana kasus korupsi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif untuk memahami fenomena politik melalui pengumpulan data berupa dokumentasi, studi pustaka dan wawancara serta observasi. Untuk menjelaskan fenomena keberhasilan Abdul Khoir dalam memperoleh suara maka peneliti menggunakan teori strategi politik dan konsep personal branding. Temuan penelitian menjelaskan bahwa strategi pencitraan politik Abdul Khoir dilakukan secara konvensional dan non-konvensional. Metode konvensional dilakukan Abdul Khoir melalui tindakan nyata seperti memperbaiki fasilitas umum yang dibutuhkan oleh konstituen. Sedangkan metode non-konvensional dilakukan dengan memperkuat personal branding sebagai sosok yang kredibel, adaptif dan konsisten dengan memanfaatkan media sosial modern seperti TikTok. Kedua strategi pencitraan tersebut berhasil meyakinkan pemilih di Daerah Pemilihan 5 Kota Depok untuk memilih Abdul Khoir dan berhasil menjadi anggota DPRD Kota Depok periode 2024-2029.</p>
<p><b>Article History</b>                      Send 17<sup>th</sup> December 2024                      Review 29<sup>th</sup> December 2024                      Accepted 30<sup>th</sup> December 2024</p>	<p>Copyright ©2024 <i>Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora)</i>                      This is an open access article under the <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> license.                      Akses artikel terbuka dengan model <a href="#">CC-BY-NC-SA</a> sebagai lisensinya.</p>



## **Introduction**

Allegations of corruption by candidates running in elections have little impact on voters (S Welch, 1980). Corrupt behavior or records of corruption committed by candidates in election contests do not have a significant impact in influencing voters in determining their choice (Anderson, C. J., & Tverdova, Y. V., 2003). On the other hand, voters can tolerate corrupt behavior both by political parties and candidates (De Vries, C.E. and Solaz, H., 2017). Voters in democratic countries view corruption by public officials as a form of deviation in the political system. However, corruption in countries with presidential systems does not have a real impact on voters in determining their choice in general elections (Krause, S., & Méndez, F., 2009). In the context of voters' acceptance of candidates with corruption records and who will run in the general election, it can be analyzed into two categories, significant and insignificant. In terms of accountability, corruption cases carried out by political parties, candidates and public officials affect the vote acquisition in the general election. This is because information provided by the press changes voters' beliefs about the prevalence of corruption and helps them assess the performance of candidates, political parties and the government (Costas-Pérez, et.al, 2012).

The relationship between corrupt behavior and general elections in Indonesia can be said to be not much different from what happens in other democratic countries. The case of former corruptors Syahri Mulyo and Abdullah Puteh has attracted the attention of the Indonesian people who succeeded in winning political office after being released from prison. In the case of Syahri Mulyo, it can be analyzed that the perception of the Tulungagung community still accepts and does not question the record of corruption committed by the Regent (Dewangkoro, P. A., 2019). Meanwhile, in the case of Abdullah Puteh's victory as a member of the DPD, it also shows that his character as a former governor of Aceh can be forgiven by the community. The Acehnese people have forgotten the corruption case that was carried out by the former governor of Aceh in the corruption case of purchasing 2 helicopters in 2004 (Alfian, M., 2023). These two cases show that the record of corruption committed by public officials running in general elections can be tolerated by the Indonesian people. Voters do not consider corruption cases as political crimes, they consider corruption to be part of government practice and understand when an official is involved in corruption. Voters view emotional closeness as a major factor in why they re-elect candidates who have been involved in corruption (Troisi, R., & Alfano, G., 2022).

Political imaging refers to the process by which candidates craft their public persona to appeal to voters, build trust, and establish a connection with the electorate. In a world where

public perception is increasingly shaped by media and social narratives, personal branding in politics has become a crucial element. Political candidates often rely on strategies like media visibility, personal narratives, and issue-based campaigns to make themselves relatable and trustworthy to voters. These strategies are essential, particularly for candidates with a controversial or tarnished background. In the case of Abdul Khoir, personal branding played a pivotal role in his political strategy. As a former convict, Abdul Khoir faced the significant challenge of overcoming public skepticism and the stigma of his criminal past. Nevertheless, his ability to engage with voters on a personal level and focus on local, concrete issues allowed him to create a distinctive and compelling political image. His strategy emphasizes the critical relationship between public perception and electoral success (F. J. Lestari et al., 2018). This study examines Abdul Khoir's political imaging strategy in attracting potential voters during the 2024 Legislative Election contest. Abdul Khoir, a legislative candidate from the Kebangkitan Bangsa Party (PKB), ran for office in the Electoral District 5 of Depok City, West Java. Utilizing a campaign approach based on personal engagement and local issues, Abdul Khoir successfully secured 9,923 valid votes. This achievement demonstrates the effectiveness of his political imaging strategy, despite widespread negative sentiment toward politicians and political parties involved in corruption scandals (KPU, 2024).

Political imaging is a common strategy used by politicians in elections to influence public perceptions of themselves and the political parties they represent. Today, it is crucial for politicians to build a positive and strong image in the eyes of the public to secure support and votes in elections.(Tanti, 2014). Elections are a political process that play a crucial role in determining the direction of politics, public policy, and national leadership (Aydil & Zuhri, 2023). In the context of democracy, elections are regarded as a tool to measure public trust and support for political candidates and parties. Therefore, political imaging strategies become highly significant in election contests as they can influence voters' perceptions and preferences (Mahendra, Ida, Bagus et al., 2019). In terms of definition, Richard Whittington defines strategy as a field of study that encompasses various theories with diverse assumptions. These theories are applied to understand different phenomena related to strategy. In his article, Whittington identifies four strategic theories, each with unique assumptions explaining strategic events. These four perspectives are the Classical Theory, Evolutionary Theory, Processual Theory, and Systemic Theory. The Classical Theory emphasizes the importance of strategic planning, while the Evolutionary Theory highlights flexibility and cost control. The Processual Theory asserts that strategy is dynamic and often emerges spontaneously through

actions taken. The Systemic Theory views strategy as something linked to sociology and human behavior (Qalbi, 2015).

According to Anwar Arifin in several of his writings, strategy can be defined as a series of conditional decisions made in the present with the aim of achieving future goals. He argues that maintaining a good reputation and strengthening organizational structures in executing political communication are the most appropriate decisions for communicators today to achieve future objectives, such as a positive public image, favorable public opinion, and success in elections (Hidayati, 2021). The American Marketing Association defines a brand as follows: "A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors"(Raihan et al., 2023). Meanwhile, Hermawan Kartajaya, a marketing icon in Indonesia, defines a brand as "an indicator of the value offered to customers or an asset that creates value for customers by strengthening their loyalty" (Hemay & Munandar, 2016). Personal branding, on the other hand, is the process by which a person or their career is perceived as a brand. It involves creating a personal identity that can evoke an emotional response from others regarding the qualities and values held by that individual. Personal branding goes beyond communication; it also entails identifying unique, relevant, and engaging aspects of the individual to enhance their career or business (Maulana, 2023). Personal branding is the process by which an individual creates and maintains an identity that reflects their personal values, with the aim of influencing how others emotionally respond to the qualities and values they offer. According to Timothy P. O'Brien, personal branding involves the formation of a personal identity that can evoke a positive emotional response from others (Mahendra, Ida, Bagus et al., 2019).

The image that does not always represent the true state of something, in this case, Abdul Khoir with the positive image he has built as a former convict in a bribery case, reflects his controversial background. Despite successfully constructing a positive image through his political imaging strategy, it is a novelty to see how a former convict in a bribery case could build a positive image in society, allowing him to be elected as a legislative member in a city with an average length of schooling or *rataan lama sekolah* (RLS) in Depok of 11.58 years in 2021-2023, which is higher than the national average of 8.69 years, as reported by BPS in 2022 (BPS, 2023).

Research on political imaging strategies in electoral contests is highly urgent for several reasons. First, political imaging has a significant impact on election outcomes. The image built by politicians can influence voters' perceptions, trust levels, and ultimately affect their voting

decisions (Raihan et al., 2023). Second, the relevance to the democratic aspects that form the foundation of the political system. Elections are one of the main pillars of a democratic system, and voters who have a good understanding of political imaging strategies can make more informed and intelligent decisions when choosing their leaders (Maulana, 2023). Third, the growing influence of social media in shaping public opinion. Politicians actively use social media to build their image, making it crucial to understand effective political imaging strategies in the context of social media (Agung & Ramdhani, 2024). Finally, the contribution to political research that can provide a better understanding of politics and public policy. This research can offer new insights into how politicians influence voters and build a strong image in the context of elections. Therefore, research on political imaging strategies has significant relevance in the context of democracy and political decision-making (Hidayati, 2021).

The researcher uses a literature review through previous studies to understand similar research relevant to the author's study. The literature review can include theses, journals, dissertations, and other scholarly works. There are several studies that are relevant to this research that researchers can use as references to explain this political phenomenon. First, titled "Ridwan Kamil's Campaign Strategy on Instagram" by Fadhilah Juwita Lestari, Shany Pebrianti, and Aceng Ruhendi Syaifullah, published in the Journal of Indonesian Language and Literature Education, Volume 13, Issue 2, 2018. This study examines Ridwan Kamil's campaign strategy as a candidate for governor of West Java on Instagram, using a linguistic approach. The results show that Ridwan Kamil utilized assertive speech acts, politeness strategies based on maxim of respect, and the glittering generality propaganda strategy in his campaign. The image he aimed to build through Instagram was one of high integrity, wisdom, approachability, and noble aspirations (F. J. Lestari et al., 2018).

The second study by Ahmad Nurul Hakim, titled "Analysis of the Use of Social Media as a Communication Tool and Self-Imaging by Ridwan Kamil," was conducted in the Islamic Communication and Broadcasting Program, Faculty of Da'wah and Communication, UIN Walisongo Semarang. This study examines Ridwan Kamil's use of social media as a communication tool and for self-imaging. As a prominent figure in Indonesia who is active on social media, Ridwan Kamil uses platforms like Instagram not only for communication but also to build a positive image of himself. The research highlights that social media, such as Instagram, can be used to disseminate content covering the user's daily life, including that of political figures. By using social media, Ridwan Kamil successfully changed the public's negative perception of him and was able to respond quickly to the desires and aspirations of the community. The study concludes that Ridwan Kamil's use of social media as a

communication and political imaging tool was successful, creating a positive image in the public's view (Nurul & Im, 2022).

The third study, titled "Winning Strategy of Jokowi and Ma'ruf Amin in the 2019 Presidential Election through Political Imaging," by Tasya Maurhena Pusparimba, Yusa Djuyandi, and Ratnia Solihah, focuses on the winning strategy of the Jokowi and Ma'ruf Amin presidential candidate pair in the 2019 election, particularly in the context of political imaging. Using the theory of Newman and Shet, the study identifies strategies of reinforcement, rationalization, persuasion, and confrontation used by the candidate pair. Through a qualitative descriptive research method with in-depth interviews and literature review, the study finds that Jokowi and Ma'ruf Amin employed various strategic tactics to create an image as down-to-earth, honest candidates with a social-democratic ideology. They also aimed to present an image aligned with their target priorities, where Jokowi and Ma'ruf were expected to lead Indonesia towards progress. The results of the study indicate that political imaging strategies can be a key element in winning a presidential election, with their ability to influence voter perceptions in line with the messages the candidates wish to convey (Pusparimba et al., 2021).

The fourth study, written by Nadya Naruwinda and Dr. Nanang Indra Kurniawan, titled "Analysis of the Political Image Formation Strategy by the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) through Twitter Social Media during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Indonesia," uses political marketing theory and content analysis methods. The study finds that PSI uses content production in the form of Twitter tweets as its main strategy for shaping its political image. PSI also applies political marketing principles, such as segmenting, targeting, and positioning, in image formation. The content analysis of PSI's Twitter tweets reveals three dominant themes: opposition to the Jakarta provincial government, support for the national government, and insights about the party. This research is expected to enrich studies on social media content analysis and provide input for political parties in building their image (Mahendra, Ida, Bagus et al., 2019).

The candidacy of Abdul Khoir for the 2024 legislative election in Depok City has raised many questions among the public. A youth leader from Depok City, Nurshalat, claimed that Abdul Khoir's candidacy involved negligence or even fraud during the verification process by the General Election Commission or Komisi Pemilihan Umum (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Institution or Badan Pengawas Pemilu (Bawaslu) of Depok City. According to him, Abdul Khoir did not meet several requirements set out in the KPU Regulation No. 31 of 2018 on the candidacy of former convicts. This raised suspicions of a "behind-the-scenes deal" between Abdul Khoir and the KPU and Bawaslu of Depok City. However, the Chairman of the

KPU of Depok City, Willi Sumarlin, explained that Abdul Khoir had met all the requirements set out in the KPU Regulation No. 10 of 2023. He had completed the five-year period after serving his prison sentence and had submitted all the necessary documents, including a copy of the court ruling. Bawaslu Depok, through its staff member Ichsan Nusapati, also confirmed that Abdul Khoir had not been involved in any legal disputes in the last five years, making his candidacy legally valid.

The phenomenon of Abdul Khoir's success as a member of the City Council in Depok's electoral district 5 is an interesting topic for research, especially in the context of local politics. As a figure with a controversial background, he faces significant challenges due to the negative stigma and public doubts about his credibility. Furthermore, District 5 is known for its relatively high average level of education, which theoretically suggests a critical electorate that would tend to reject candidates with a tarnished track record.

However, the fact that Abdul Khoir managed to gain significant electoral support demonstrates the effectiveness of his political image-building strategy. This strategy not only succeeded in overturning the negative perceptions of the public but also helped build trust, allowing him to become a legitimate representative in the local legislature. This research focuses on how Abdul Khoir developed his personal branding and political communication strategies to create a positive image, making him a viable candidate despite his past as a former convict of corruption. Through this study, it will be evident from the voting results that these strategies were effective in gaining public trust and increasing support for Abdul Khoir.

## **Method**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative method to analyze the political image-building strategy of Abdul Khoir in his candidacy for the legislative seat in Depok City's electoral district 5. The data used in this study consists of both primary and secondary data. Primary data is obtained through in-depth interviews with Abdul Khoir, his campaign team, and his supporters. These interviews are semi-structured, designed to explore information related to the motivations, objectives, and political image-building strategies employed by Abdul Khoir. Meanwhile, secondary data is collected from official documents from the General Election Commission (KPU), particularly data related to the electoral results of candidates in electoral district 5 of Depok City, as well as campaign materials and relevant media reports (A. Lestari et al., 2022).

The data collection process in this study is conducted through a combination of interviews, document analysis, and observation of campaign activities. To ensure the validity

of the data, source triangulation is employed by verifying information from various informants and supporting documents. Methodological triangulation is used by comparing the results of interviews, document analysis, and observations. Additionally, member checking is applied to ensure the alignment of the researcher's interpretations with the statements of the informants. The data collected is then analyzed qualitatively through data reduction, categorization based on specific themes such as campaign strategies and audience responses, and drawing conclusions based on the relationships between these themes. This approach aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the political image-building strategies employed by Abdul Khoir and their impact on the vote acquisition in his electoral district (Haryono, 2023).

The subject of this study is Abdul Khoir, a legislative candidate for the City of Depok Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD), along with his campaign team, who provide insights into the political image-building strategies employed. Primary data is obtained through direct interviews, while secondary data consists of supporting documents. The findings of this study provide new insights into the patterns and strategies implemented, offering relevant recommendations for the development of political strategies in the future. With this approach, the research is expected to answer the research questions comprehensively and contribute to the study of political image-building.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **A. The Views of Supporters, Success Team, and Abdul Khoir on the Issue of Former Corruptors as Legislative Candidates**

#### **1. Supporters of Abdul Khoir**

From the perspective of his supporters, Abdul Khoir is a figure who has built a positive image through tangible programs that have directly benefited the community. One of his supporters mentioned that Abdul Khoir has provided entrepreneurship training to housewives, including herself, who have now successfully developed small businesses in the culinary field. His direct approach to the community, such as open dialogues and visits to local villages, has created a strong sense of trust in him.

In the context of the issue of his past as a former corrupt individual running for office, Abdul Khoir's supporters believe that his integrity, demonstrated through consistent real work and politeness, sets him apart significantly from other candidates. They trust that Abdul Khoir is a reliable figure who is not involved in practices that harm the community (interview results with the success team).



## **2. Abdul Khoir's Success Team**

According to his success team, Abdul Khoir has succeeded in building an image as a leader who is close to the community and sensitive to their needs. The campaign strategy, which utilizes social media, especially TikTok, strengthens his connection with the younger generation, while also showcasing openness and transparency. In facing the issue of being a former corruptor running for office, Abdul Khoir's success team believes that the authenticity and integrity demonstrated by Abdul Khoir can be an attraction for voters. They emphasize that Abdul Khoir's programs, such as the improvement of football fields and economic empowerment, are concrete evidence that he focuses on solutions for the community, rather than just political promises. Additionally, Abdul Khoir's consistency in maintaining good communication with the community is seen as a way to counteract the negative perceptions that often arise about politicians in general (interview results with the success team).

## **3. Abdul Khoir's Perspective on the Issue of Former Corruptors Running for Office**

As a legislative candidate, Abdul Khoir is aware that public trust in politicians is often damaged by issues such as former corruptors running for office. On every occasion, Abdul Khoir strives to demonstrate his commitment to values like honesty, hard work, and concern for others. He openly asserts that his track record as a leader who works for the community serves as proof that he is different from candidates with negative backgrounds. Abdul Khoir believes that the key to winning the hearts of the public is by consistently offering real programs that meet their needs. His transparent and communicative approach, both directly and through social media, is the main strategy for building an image as a clean and reliable leader (interview results with the success team).

In the overall narrative, both his supporters, his success team, and Abdul Khoir himself share the view that real work, integrity, and a personal approach are the key factors in countering the negative sentiment toward politicians, including the issue of former corruptors running for office. Abdul Khoir's consistent image as a caring and solution-oriented leader is a significant distinguishing factor in the eyes of the public (interview results with the success team).

## **B. Analysis of Abdul Khoir's Political Image Strategy Based on Political Strategy Theory**

When examined further, political image-building strategies are structured approaches used by political figures or political parties to shape and influence public perception. This practice integrates impression management, strategic communication, and principles of mass psychology to construct, modify, or reinforce the image of a political subject (Qurotul Putri Riyadi et al., 2024). Essentially, this strategy begins with impression management, where political figures control the image they project, from physical appearance to the choice of issues raised to build a specific narrative. Narrative control is another key component, wherein politicians create emotionally resonant stories to appeal to voters' values and needs, such as tales of success or perseverance (Lubis & Rabbani, 2023).

The effective use of media and modern technology, including television, radio, social media, and digital platforms, is crucial in disseminating messages and solidifying the desired image. In the digital era, big data analysis aids in more accurate voter segmentation and personalized messaging (Aryadillah & Fitriansyah, 2022). Meanwhile, political image-building strategies also require the ability to respond to and adapt to changes in public and media dynamics, with politicians needing to be prepared to modify their approaches based on feedback and shifts in public opinion (F. J. Lestari et al., 2018).

Authenticity and credibility are also essential in political image-building. Although often perceived as manipulative, voters tend to respond more positively to politicians whose image is perceived as authentic. Ultimately, differentiation from political opponents becomes crucial in highly competitive politics, often by emphasizing unique characteristics or policies that distinguish the political subject from their rivals. While political image-building strategies can enhance the success of politicians or parties in securing support and votes, the risks to reputation and the potential for backlash are significant, especially if there is a discrepancy between the constructed image and the reality perceived by the public (Indiana et al., 2022).

#### **a) Positioning**

Abdul Khoir's political branding as a former corruption convict posed a significant challenge for both him and his campaign team in garnering support to secure a seat in the Depok Regional Legislative Council (DPRD). As a figure already well-known in his area, his legal history became a stigma difficult to detach from public perception. This challenge was compounded by the demographics of Depok, particularly in Electoral District 5, which has a highly educated and critical population, particularly towards legislative candidates with controversial backgrounds. However, Abdul Khoir and his team identified these challenges and formulated an appropriate image-building strategy

by emphasizing personal engagement and tangible actions. Leveraging his popularity, he repositioned himself as a solution-oriented, caring figure close to the community through active involvement in social activities and implementing concrete programs with direct impact. This strategy not only neutralized negative perceptions but also successfully built emotional connections and trust with the public, making him a relevant and credible choice despite the existing stigma (interview results with Abdul Khoir).

Abdul Khoir's political imaging strategy demonstrates a strong effort to establish specific positioning in the minds of voters in Depok, especially in Electoral District 5. He positioned himself as a figure who is close to the community, solution-oriented, and attentive to their needs. This is reflected in his participation in various social events, such as the Prophet Muhammad's birthday celebration, national holidays, and women's aerobics sessions. By frequently visiting strategic areas, including regions overlooked by other political parties, Abdul Khoir reinforced the impression of being a leader who is present and ready to help. Concrete programs, such as the renovation of a football field in Kampung Jatijajar and the "12-bus pilgrimage program" for women, added emotional value and strengthened his image as a leader who delivers tangible actions rather than mere political promises (interview results with Abdul Khoir).

From a positioning perspective, this strategy effectively directed public perception to view him as a solution to their problems. By targeting segments of society that feel neglected, such as residents in remote areas or those with limited access to facilities, Abdul Khoir built strong emotional connections. His personal approach and consistency in delivering tangible impacts enabled him to overcome the negative image of his past, earn voters' trust, and secure a seat in the DPRD in this highly competitive electoral district.

#### **b) Memory**

As a former convict, Abdul Khoir understood that rebuilding public trust required a strategic and impactful approach, especially in an overcommunicated society. To address this, he relied on simple yet powerful and tangible messages, such as improving local infrastructure (like football fields) and providing pilgrimage programs with high emotional value. Given his controversial background, these activities served not only to project himself as a caring leader but also as an effort to dispel the negative stigma attached to him. This approach allowed voters to associate Abdul Khoir with being a leader who is "present and helpful" at all times, creating the impression that he is a figure capable of delivering real solutions, despite his tainted track record. This strategy was

crucial in building emotional connections and regaining the trust of a public critical of political integrity (interview results with Abdul Khoir).

The use of TikTok as a primary medium also highlighted Abdul Khoir's effort to create effective memory recall, particularly among young voters. With engaging and concise content formats, TikTok made his political messages easily accessible and memorable to the audience. Additionally, WhatsApp groups served as a communication channel to maintain more personal relationships with voters, while simultaneously acting as a reminder mechanism for his programs. In the context of memory theory, this strategy addressed humans' tendency to act as cognitive misers by delivering simple, relevant, and meaningful messages, making them easier to store and recall. Through a combination of clear positioning and effective message delivery mechanisms, Abdul Khoir's strategy successfully established a strong image as a solution-oriented, caring, and approachable leader, while leaving a lasting positive impression in voters' memories (interview results with Abdul Khoir).

### **C. Analysis of Abdul Khoir's Personal Branding Based on Peter Montoya's Indicators**

Based on several definitions of personal branding that have been explained, this study will utilize Peter Montoya's indicators. According to Montoya, personal branding is similar to a product, whether goods or services, that must be consistently introduced and promoted to the public. Montoya proposes eight key principles that serve as the foundation for building a strong personal brand (Nurbani & Ananda, 2024).

First, Specialization emphasizes the importance of deep focus on a specific expertise, strength, or achievement. By mastering a particular field, one can build a credible reputation among their audience. Second, Leadership highlights the role of a leader in building personal branding, including the ability to inspire, motivate, and provide clear direction. Third, Personality emphasizes uniqueness and authenticity, where effective personal branding must be able to create an emotional connection through honesty and authentic self-expression (Sunarwan & Surlia, 2021).

Fourth, Distinctiveness emphasizes the importance of creating clear differentiation to set oneself apart from others in the same field, making personal branding easily recognizable and memorable. Fifth, Visibility refers to the importance of consistent visibility through active and regular self-promotion, such as through social media or public activities. Sixth, Unity stresses the need for consistency between personal identity and the image to be built, ensuring that personal branding reflects the values that are firmly upheld.

Seven, Persistence is an action or deed that is carried out consistently and continuously with the aim of attracting public attention. Eight, Goodwill or good intention is the person's desire to do good deeds for the good of society (Samatan et al., 2024).

### **1. Specialization**

As a former convict in a corruption case, Abdul Khoir faced a significant challenge in restoring his image in the eyes of the public. However, he successfully built a clear specialization by positioning himself as a figure focused on infrastructure development and community empowerment. His background as an engineering graduate and contractor strengthened his reputation in understanding the physical development needs of his region. Concrete steps, such as the improvement of the football field in Kampung Jatijajar and the equal distribution of infrastructure in remote areas, emphasized his specialization in providing real solutions. With this expertise, he was able to change the public's negative perception, distinguish himself from other politicians, and show that despite his dark past, he could make a tangible contribution to society.

### **2. Leadership**

Abdul Khoir proved his leadership quality by directly engaging with the community to listen to their needs and provide real solutions. As a former convict, he realized that he needed to demonstrate exceptional integrity and commitment to regain the public's trust. By visiting areas that were rarely reached by other politicians and facilitating programs like the 12-bus pilgrimage for mothers, he showcased an inspirational and solution-oriented leadership style. This approach not only demonstrated his commitment to serving the community but also strengthened his image as a leader capable of bringing positive change, despite his controversial past.

### **3. Personality**

Abdul Khoir leveraged his friendly, caring, and authentic personality to build closeness with the community. As a former convict, he understood the importance of creating a positive emotional connection with voters. By actively participating in social activities such as the Prophet's Birthday celebration, national holidays, and mothers' exercise classes, he showed that he was a figure who understood the community's needs and was connected to local culture. This sincerity created an impression that he was a leader who not only relied on promises but also showed up in person to help the community.

### **4. Distinctiveness**

Abdul Khoir's uniqueness lies in his courage to directly engage with the community and focus on concrete programs that are rarely undertaken by other politicians. As a former convict, he understood that conventional approaches might not be enough to change public perception. By improving public facilities such as football fields and using TikTok as a communication medium to reach young voters, he created a noticeable differentiation. This approach showed that he was a modern, adaptive politician capable of providing real solutions, despite his past challenges.

### **5. Visibility**

Abdul Khoir maintained his visibility in the community by attending various social events, visiting remote areas, and being active on social media, especially TikTok. As a former convict, he understood that consistent presence was crucial to rebuilding public trust. His active participation in local events and involvement in WhatsApp community groups reinforced the impression that he was a leader who was always present and ready to help. This strategy ensured that his name remained memorable to voters and his positive image continued to grow.

### **6. Unity**

Abdul Khoir maintained alignment between his actions and the image he wanted to build. As a former convict, he realized that the unity between his personal identity and the programs he implemented was essential to building trust. Programs like the improvement of public facilities and community empowerment reflected the values he stood for: care and real solutions. This consistency created credibility, helping him overcome the negative stigma of his past and build a solid reputation in the eyes of the community.

### **7. Persistence**

Abdul Khoir's political branding was not built overnight. As a former convict, he demonstrated remarkable persistence in building a strong personal brand. He continued to actively attend community events, provide real solutions, and regularly use social media to stay relevant in the eyes of voters. This perseverance became a key factor in overcoming negative stigma and ensuring that he remained the top choice for the community in Depok's Dapil 5.

### **8. Goodwill**

Abdul Khoir utilized various social programs to create goodwill in the community, despite his past as a convicted criminal in a corruption case. Programs like the improvement of football fields and the mothers' pilgrimage showcased his commitment to providing direct benefits to the community. By making a tangible impact, he

successfully transformed negative perceptions into positive support, proving that he was a reliable politician who genuinely cared about the community's needs.

Abdul Khoir succeeded in building a strong personal brand by integrating all the key elements of Peter Montoya's personal branding theory. His specialization in infrastructure development, leadership that is close to the community, authentic personality, and visibility through social media created the image of a solution-oriented, caring, and trustworthy leader. This combination of strategies made Abdul Khoir stand out among his competitors and earn the trust of the community in his region.

## **Conclusion**

Abdul Khoir's political image-building strategy demonstrates a structured approach to managing his reputation amidst the stigma of being a former convict for corruption. With a clear positioning, he presents himself as a problem-solver, a caring individual, and someone closely connected to the community through tangible actions such as improving public facilities and organizing pilgrimage programs that carry emotional significance. These efforts have succeeded in shifting public perception, particularly among the critical electorate in Depok's District 5, known for its high educational level. Additionally, the utilization of social media platforms such as TikTok and WhatsApp groups has proven to be effective in creating strong memory recall among voters, especially the younger generation. This strategy reflects his adaptability to societal dynamics and his use of modern technology to deliver personal and relevant political messages. Abdul Khoir's personal branding effectively incorporates Peter Montoya's principles to craft an authentic and credible image of a politician. By specializing in infrastructure development and community empowerment, he leverages his technical background to offer concrete solutions that enhance public trust. His leadership is evident through his consistent presence in the community, while his approachable and caring personality fosters positive emotional connections.

Through differentiation with unique approaches, such as creative use of TikTok and consistent visibility through social activities, Abdul Khoir has managed to stand out in the competitive political arena. This approach highlights his perseverance and consistency in building a strong personal brand, despite the significant challenges stemming from his past. Future research can focus on exploring personal branding strategies for politicians with controversial backgrounds, particularly in the context of public stigma and the repositioning of political identity. This study may include examining the effectiveness of social media platforms such as TikTok and WhatsApp in shaping the perceptions of young voters, the relationship

between education levels and the acceptance of politicians, as well as the emotional impact of social programs on voter loyalty.

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