

Bibliometric Insights into Digital Marketing Strategies for Political Campaigns in Indonesia

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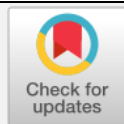
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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine in depth the influence of digital marketing in political campaigns in Indonesia. This research departs from the gap between the theoretical potential of digital marketing, widely discussed in the global literature, and its empirical application, which remains limited in the Indonesian political context. The contemporary political dynamics in Indonesia are increasingly dependent on information technology and social media, making this study both relevant and urgent. The research method uses qualitative bibliometric analysis with primary data obtained from the Scopus database. The data were processed in RStudio and filtered according to the PRISMA protocol, yielding 58 journal articles that were systematically analyzed. The results show that digital marketing strategies, particularly through social media, data-driven micro-targeting, and creative content, have shifted the paradigm of political campaigns from traditional approaches to more personalized, interactive, and measurable interactions. The trend analysis also reveals the evolution of research focus, from the initial platform adoption stage to more complex strategies, involving artificial intelligence, digital ethical issues, and platform governance. The study concludes that digital marketing has transformed the Indonesian political campaign landscape, making it more dynamic. However, its effectiveness still requires support in the form of increasing people's digital literacy, protective regulations, and follow-up research using a mixed-methods approach to empirically measure causal

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impacts. This research contributes to the development of digital political marketing literature while providing practical implications for political actors and policymakers in Indonesia.

Keywords: *Digital Marketing Strategy; Indonesia; Political Campaign; Political Effectiveness; Social Media*

1. Introduction

Digital marketing has become an important bridge between political candidates and constituents, enabling more personal, direct, and interactive communication. In the Indonesian context, social media has emerged as a central arena for shaping public opinion, facilitating political dialogue, and disseminating campaign messages to diverse segments of society. Studies on recent Indonesian electoral dynamics indicate that social media functions not only as a communication channel but also as an instrument for constructing political narratives that may influence voter perceptions and behavior (Ahmad & Pathak, 2024; Ate et al., 2025). However, despite the growing use of social media and digital campaign strategies, the extent to which these strategies shape actual voter behavior remains insufficiently understood (Moekahar et al., 2022).

Previous studies have shown that digital platforms have altered the pattern of interaction between candidates and voters in Indonesian elections. For example, research on the 2019 election demonstrated that the strategic use of social media contributed to more direct engagement between political actors and voters and had the potential to increase candidate electability (Hidayat et al., 2019). Similarly, studies on political communication during the 2024 presidential debate emphasized the importance of social media in shaping public discourse and expanding the reach of political information (Saraswati, 2018; Siti Maryam et al., 2022). These findings suggest that digital marketing in political campaigns is not merely a technical communication tool but also a strategic mechanism for building visibility, credibility, and political influence.

Nevertheless, the development of political digital marketing in Indonesia also presents several challenges. The increasing penetration of social media has intensified the risk of hoaxes, disinformation, and political polarization. Algorithmic personalization may create echo chambers that reinforce existing political preferences and limit exposure to alternative viewpoints. In addition, the digital literacy gap remains a critical issue, particularly in regions with unequal access to digital infrastructure. These conditions require a stronger public capacity to critically receive, evaluate, and filter political information in digital spaces. Empirical findings by Nuraliah et al. (2025) show that the increasing use of social media in regions such as North Aceh has shifted campaign practices from traditional door-to-door methods to more efficient, digitally mediated strategies. This transformation indicates that digital campaign practices are increasingly relevant, although their effectiveness remains uneven across regions and voter groups.

The main purpose of this study is to examine the influence of digital marketing strategies on the effectiveness of political campaigns in Indonesia. The urgency of this research stems from the need to fill existing knowledge gaps in the application of digital marketing concepts in contemporary political campaigns. Several studies have indicated that political parties in Indonesia have not fully adopted optimal digital marketing techniques (Muslim & Nurjaman, 2024). This suggests limitations in both the conceptual understanding and practical implementation of digital marketing within the political sphere. In this context, digital marketing

in politics refers to the application of digital marketing principles, concepts, and tools to achieve specific political objectives (Haedar, 2023; Tuten et al., 2020). The development of information technology has also shifted the campaign paradigm from conventional methods, such as print advertisements and television broadcasts, toward more interactive, segmented, and data-driven digital media. Chester and Montgomery (2017) emphasized that digital technologies in political campaigns can increase voter engagement and strengthen small-donor fundraising capacity.

This study adopts a bibliometric approach to analyze digital marketing strategies in relation to the effectiveness of political campaigns in Indonesia. The research gap addressed in this study concerns the limited number of comprehensive studies that systematically map and measure the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies in the Indonesian political context. Most previous studies have focused on specific aspects of digital campaigning without sufficiently connecting digital strategies to voter perceptions, levels of digital engagement, and their actual implications for political outcomes. This condition reveals a discrepancy between theoretical expectations regarding the role of digital marketing in political campaigns and empirical findings on how such strategies operate in practice. It also highlights methodological limitations in capturing the complex interaction between digital technology, voter behavior, and political processes.

Based on this gap, this study formulates the following research question: What digital marketing strategies contribute to the effectiveness of political campaigns in Indonesia? The theoretical contribution of this study lies in its multidimensional integration of digital marketing strategies, Indonesian political dynamics, and technological development through bibliometric analysis. This approach is expected to enrich the literature on the relationship between political communication and digital technology. Practically, this study provides data-driven recommendations for political parties, campaign consultants, and policymakers in designing digital marketing strategies that are more effective, adaptive, and relevant to increasing voter engagement and improving political campaign outcomes in Indonesia.

2. Literature Review

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has significantly transformed the landscape of political campaigns, positioning digital marketing as a central instrument in contemporary political communication. A growing body of literature has examined how digital platforms, data-driven strategies, and interactive media reshape the relationship between political actors and voters. Digital political marketing is no longer limited to the dissemination of information; rather, it encompasses strategic engagement, voter targeting, political branding, and behavioral influence through increasingly sophisticated technological tools.

Existing studies demonstrate that social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and other digital channels, function as primary vehicles for political messaging. These platforms enable political candidates and parties to communicate directly with voters in more personalized and interactive ways. This development has encouraged the emergence of two-way communication models, in which voters are not merely passive recipients of campaign messages but active participants in political discourse. As a result, political campaigns have become more dynamic, adaptive, and responsive to public sentiment.

The literature also highlights the growing use of advanced technologies, including artificial intelligence, big data analytics, machine learning, and algorithmic targeting, to optimize campaign strategies. These technologies allow political actors to analyze voter preferences, segment audiences, predict behavioral tendencies, and deliver targeted messages. Micro-targeting strategies, for instance, have been widely discussed as powerful instruments for influencing voter behavior because they enable campaign messages to be tailored to specific

demographic, geographic, and psychographic profiles (Chester & Montgomery, 2017; de la Puente et al., 2025; Howard, 2005). In this sense, digital political marketing operates not only as a communication strategy but also as a data-driven mechanism for shaping political preferences and mobilizing voters.

In addition to technological dimensions, previous studies emphasize the importance of emotional framing, political branding, digital storytelling, and visual communication in shaping voter perceptions. The integration of visual content, linguistic strategies, and platform-specific communication styles influences how political messages are received, interpreted, and circulated. Studies on digital posters, blogs, and social media campaigns show that political image construction is closely related to the aesthetic, linguistic, and symbolic features of digital content (Casaló et al., 2008; Meutia et al., 2025; Rahyadi & Aras, 2020). This indicates that digital political marketing operates at technological, psychological, and sociocultural levels.

Despite these developments, the literature also identifies several challenges associated with digital political marketing. Issues such as misinformation, data privacy, algorithmic bias, platform regulation, and unequal digital literacy remain critical concerns in contemporary political campaigns. The complexity of interaction among political actors, digital platforms, media institutions, voters, and regulatory authorities creates a dynamic ecosystem that requires continuous adaptation and evaluation. Trappel et al. (2024), for example, emphasized that the rise of digital platforms in political communication has created new regulatory challenges. Similarly, studies on digital campaign ecosystems show that campaign effectiveness is shaped not only by technological capacity but also by institutional, social, and political contexts (Kübler et al., 2025; Yarchi et al., 2017).

Table 1 presents a synthesis of selected previous studies on digital political marketing. The table summarizes key findings and research focuses across different contexts, showing the diversity of approaches used to examine the relationship between digital technologies and political campaign effectiveness.

Table 1. Digital Political Marketing in Political Campaigns

Author(s) and Year	Title	Key Findings	Focus Area
Rosário et al. (2025)	Digital political marketing: Challenges and opportunities	Digital technology enhances voter engagement and participation through interactive platforms.	Digital marketing strategies
Meutia et al. (2025)	A critical discourse analysis of English digital posters of pre-presidential candidates in Indonesia	Linguistic features and visual aesthetics significantly shape political image and voter perception.	Instagram campaign analysis
Sanofi et al. (2025)	Multi-platform campaigning: Web 2.0 adoption in Indonesia's elections	Demographic factors influence platform selection, while Facebook remains dominant in campaign communication.	Social media strategy

Author(s) and Year	Title	Key Findings	Focus Area
Maulana et al. (2025)	Knowledge structure of political marketing	Scholarly attention to branding, segmentation, and campaign management has increased.	Bibliometric analysis
Khairiza and Kusumasari (2020)	Political marketing in Indonesia: Palm oil campaign	Multi-actor involvement, including government and non-governmental organizations, shapes digital political narratives.	Social network analysis
de la Puente et al. (2025)	Micro-targeting effectiveness in elections	Targeted messaging significantly increases voter participation rates.	Micro-targeting strategy
Chester and Montgomery (2017)	Digital commercialization of politics	Programmatic and micro-targeted advertising influence voter decision-making.	Political advertising
Bouranta (2025)	Political marketing and voter behavior	Emotional appeals and segmentation strategies shape voter attitudes.	Voter behavior analysis
Howard (2005)	Digital media in political campaigns	Data mining enhances strategic decision-making in campaigns.	Digital technology role
Rahyadi and Aras (2020)	Trump's digital campaign	The integration of websites and social media strengthens campaign outreach.	Case study, United States
Casaló et al. (2008)	Blogs in political branding	Blogs facilitate direct interaction and strengthen political branding.	Online engagement
Brodnax and Sapiezynski (2022)	Digital advertising evolution in the 2020 United States election	Strategic digital advertising placement improves campaign visibility and reach.	Digital advertising
Younus et al. (2024)	Digital campaign in Pakistan	Digital mobilization strategies significantly affect electoral participation.	Case study, Pakistan

Author(s) and Year	Title	Key Findings	Focus Area
Sernani et al. (2025)	Machine learning in political campaigns	Machine learning enhances campaign performance analysis and prediction.	Artificial intelligence in campaigns
Eskiadi and Panagiotou (2025)	Social media impact on elections	Social media platforms play a significant role in shaping voter behavior.	Social media influence
Tavares et al. (2025)	Political marketing and opinion formation	Digital networks influence the formation of public opinion.	Opinion formation
Kübler et al. (2025)	Dynamics of political marketing	Complex interactions among actors form a dynamic digital campaign ecosystem.	Digital ecosystem
Leppäniemi et al. (2010)	Targeting young voters	Interactive campaigns effectively engage younger voter segments.	Youth engagement
Trappel et al. (2024)	Policy response to digital platforms	Regulatory challenges emerge in digital political communication.	Digital governance
Yarchi et al. (2017)	Online campaigns and election results	Investment in digital campaigns correlates with electoral success.	Campaign effectiveness

Source: Processed by the author (2026).

Based on the literature presented in Table 1, digital political marketing has evolved into a central component of modern campaign strategies in various political contexts. The reviewed studies consistently show that social media, micro-targeted advertising, blogging platforms, machine learning, and data analytics contribute to voter engagement, public opinion formation, campaign visibility, and electoral mobilization. Evidence from contexts including the United States, Indonesia, Pakistan, Finland, Portugal, Israel, and other countries indicates that audience segmentation, emotional framing, interactive communication, and personalized digital media can influence voter participation and campaign outcomes.

However, the literature also demonstrates that the effectiveness of digital political marketing cannot be understood only through technological adoption. Campaign effectiveness is shaped by the interaction between political actors, voters, media institutions, platform algorithms, regulatory environments, and broader sociopolitical conditions. Therefore, digital political marketing should be viewed as a multidimensional process that combines technological capacity, communication strategy, political branding, voter psychology, and institutional governance.

The novelty of this study lies in its attempt to integrate digital marketing strategies, social media platforms, data-driven campaign techniques, and Indonesia’s political dynamics within a bibliometric framework. Unlike previous studies that tend to focus on specific platforms, individual case studies, or isolated dimensions of campaign communication, this study provides

a broader mapping of the intellectual structure and thematic development of digital marketing strategies in political campaigns. This approach is important because existing studies have not adequately measured or synthesized the extent to which digital marketing contributes to campaign effectiveness, particularly in relation to voter perceptions, digital engagement, and political outcomes in Indonesia.

The main problem addressed in this study is the gap between theoretical expectations regarding the strategic role of digital marketing in political campaigns and empirical realities in the Indonesian political context. Although digital marketing is widely assumed to increase voter engagement and campaign effectiveness, there is limited systematic evidence on how these strategies are conceptualized, measured, and developed in the existing academic literature. Based on this gap, this study formulates the following research question: What digital marketing strategies contribute to the effectiveness of political campaigns in Indonesia?

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Sampling and Data Collection Strategy

This study employed a bibliometric approach, using the Scopus database as the main data source. Scopus was selected because it provides broad coverage of international publications, standardized indexing quality, and relatively complete bibliographic metadata, including author information, institutional affiliation, publication year, source title, keywords, abstracts, citations, and references.

The sampling strategy used was purposive, selecting documents relevant to the focus of this study. The inclusion criteria covered scientific articles that discussed digital marketing, political campaign strategies, political communication, social media, and the Indonesian political context. The publication period was limited to 2010–2025 to capture the development of digital political marketing literature over the last fifteen years. The search process was conducted using structured keywords, including “digital marketing,” “political campaign,” “political marketing,” “social media,” and “Indonesia,” combined with Boolean operators such as AND and OR to broaden and refine the search results.

Documents that were irrelevant to the research topic, duplicates, or categorized as editorials, short notes, book reviews, conference summaries, or non-academic publications were excluded from the dataset. The selection process was carried out in several stages: database searching, title and abstract screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion. Manual verification was also conducted to ensure that the selected documents were substantively related to the research focus. Based on this process, 58 articles met the inclusion criteria and were included in the final dataset. The article selection process followed the PRISMA protocol to ensure transparency, replicability, and methodological rigor.

3.2 Measurement Instruments

The main instruments used in this study were bibliometric analysis tools, namely VOSviewer and Bibliometrix through the R package. Microsoft Excel was also used to organize, clean, and tabulate the metadata before further analysis. These instruments were selected because they are widely used in bibliometric studies and allow systematic mapping of publication patterns, citation structures, keyword networks, and collaboration relationships.

The variables measured in this study included the following:

- 1) Publication productivity, including the number of articles per year, distribution of authors, source titles, and institutional affiliations.

- 2) Keyword analysis, including the identification of dominant keywords, thematic trends, and conceptual relationships among research topics.
- 3) Citation analysis, including citation frequency, influential authors, influential journals, and co-citation patterns.
- 4) Network analysis, including co-authorship, co-citation, and co-word analysis, to identify collaboration patterns and thematic research clusters.

The validity of the measurement process was maintained through the application of internationally recognized bibliometric procedures and the use of metadata directly obtained from the Scopus database. Reliability was strengthened through data cleaning, duplicate checking, cross-verification between VOSviewer and Bibliometrix, and consistency testing of the analytical outputs. The use of PRISMA further enhanced transparency in the data selection process and ensured that the final dataset aligned with the research objectives.

3.3 Analytical Procedures

The analytical procedure was carried out in three main stages. The first stage was a descriptive bibliometric analysis that aimed to map publication trends, annual scientific productivity, leading authors, institutional affiliations, journals, and frequently used keywords. This stage provided an overview of the development of research on digital marketing strategies and political campaigns in Indonesia.

The second stage was network analysis. This stage involved co-authorship analysis, co-citation analysis, and co-word analysis. Co-authorship analysis was used to identify collaboration patterns among researchers and institutions. Co-citation analysis was used to examine the intellectual structure of the field by identifying authors, documents, or journals that were frequently cited together. Co-word analysis was used to map conceptual relationships among keywords and to identify dominant thematic clusters within the literature.

The third stage was thematic trend analysis. This analysis was conducted to identify the evolution of research themes in digital marketing for political campaigns. Particular attention was given to emerging topics such as social media strategy, voter engagement, digital campaign effectiveness, artificial intelligence, digital ethics, political micro-targeting, and platform governance. This stage enabled the study to trace how the literature has developed from early adoption of digital platforms to more complex, data-driven campaign strategies.

3.4 Data Reliability and Analytical Consistency

Because this study used a bibliometric design, statistical assumption testing in the conventional quantitative sense was not the main analytical requirement. Instead, the quality of the analysis was ensured through data reliability checks and analytical consistency procedures. Several steps were taken to strengthen the dataset's reliability and the robustness of the results.

First, the metadata exported from Scopus were checked to identify duplicate records, incomplete bibliographic information, and inconsistencies in author names, keywords, and source titles. Second, keyword standardization was conducted to merge similar terms, spelling variations, and synonymous expressions, enabling the co-word analysis to produce a more accurate thematic map. Third, the results generated by VOSviewer and Bibliometrix were compared to ensure consistency in publication trends, citation patterns, and network structures. Fourth, cluster stability was examined by reviewing the coherence of thematic clusters and ensuring that each cluster reflected meaningful conceptual relationships.

These procedures allowed the study to produce reliable bibliometric mapping and to identify the intellectual structure, thematic development, and emerging research trends in the field. This methodological design provides a systematic overview of how digital marketing strategies have been studied in relation to the effectiveness of political campaigns in Indonesia.

4. Results and Discussion

Digital marketing plays an important role in enhancing political campaigns in Indonesia, particularly through the strategic use of social media and various digital platforms. Ahead of Indonesian elections, the importance of building a strong, consistent online presence cannot be overstated, as digital spaces have become increasingly central arenas for political communication and voter engagement. The rapid evolution of digital marketing tactics has fundamentally transformed how political candidates interact with voters, reflecting a broader shift in political communication practices toward interactivity, personalization, and direct engagement (Kleinnijenhuis & Hoof, 2019; Herasimenka et al., 2023).

One of the primary advantages of digital marketing in political campaigns lies in its capacity to facilitate direct communication between candidates and voters. Unlike traditional mass media channels, such as television and radio, which tend to operate through one-way communication models, digital platforms enable reciprocal and real-time interactions. Research demonstrates that social media has become a crucial tool for political parties and candidates to disseminate campaign messages directly to voters without relying on traditional media gatekeepers, which often lack the immediacy and interactive affordances of digital environments (Widayat et al., 2022). This direct communication not only enhances message reach but also allows candidates to tailor content strategically to specific voter segments and political identities (Chester & Montgomery, 2017).

Furthermore, digital platforms foster participatory political environments by enabling feedback, discussion, and symbolic interaction between political actors and citizens. Such environments contribute to the construction of political identities and strengthen relational ties between candidates and voters, thereby reinforcing trust and perceived responsiveness. The interactive nature of digital campaigning supports dialogical communication practices, allowing voters to actively engage with campaign narratives rather than remain passive recipients of information (Theocharis & Jungherr, 2021). In the Indonesian and broader Southeast Asian context, where electoral competition increasingly unfolds online, digital communication has become a critical mechanism for mobilization, opinion formation, and political contestation (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2020; García Carrizo, 2023).

4.1 The Role of Digital Marketing

Digital marketing has undergone a significant transformation in Indonesian political campaigns in Indonesia, where technology and social media are not merely additional tools but central components of political communication strategies. Social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter have revolutionized the way politicians interact with voters, especially younger generations. Candidates can now convey messages more directly, personally, and measurably through attention-grabbing visual content (Widhiasthini, 2020; Aminulloh et al., 2022). This transformation has shifted the focus from traditional approaches based on face-to-face meetings and conventional media to more dynamic strategies that use viral elements and influencer engagement (Baulch, Matamoros-Fernández, et al., 2024; Saraswati, 2018).

The phenomenon of viral content on social media has become an important tool for rapidly and widely disseminating information. Based on research on the 2019 election, memes and user-

generated content contributed substantially to public opinion mobilization and influence (Aminulloh et al., 2022). Short TikTok videos, for example, allow voters to engage with political narratives in a lighter yet effective way (Ruslan et al., 2023). Data-driven micro-targeting in digital marketing has transformed how political campaigns reach and influence voters with unprecedented precision. By collecting and analyzing personal data, online behavior, and user preferences on social media and other digital platforms, campaigns can create highly relevant, specific messages for various demographic segments, including age, geographic location, interests, and media consumption habits.

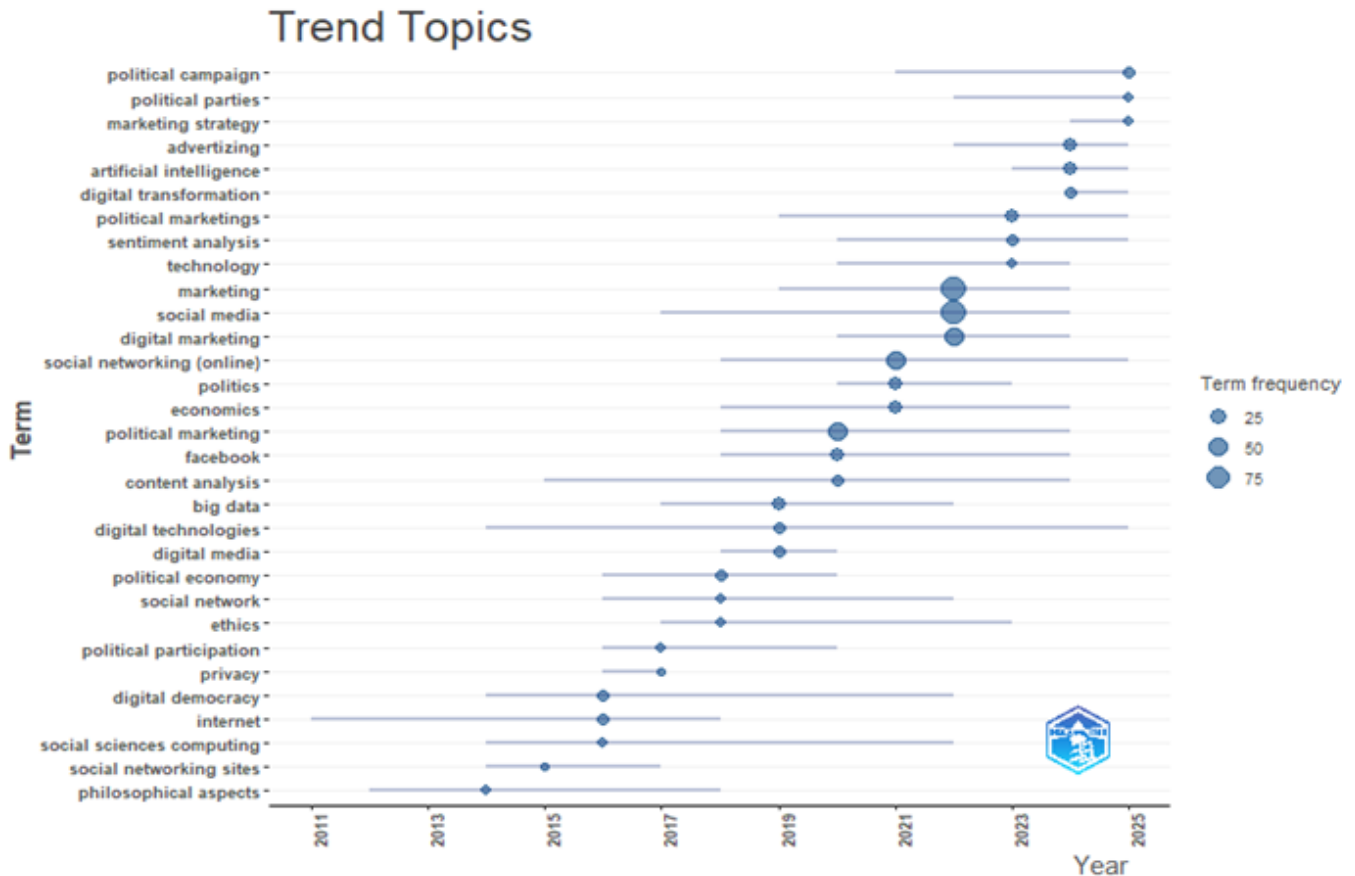


Figure 1. Digital Marketing Trending Topic
 Source: Application by RStudio (2025)

Figure 1, which presents an analysis of topic trends from 2010 to 2025, reveals a fundamental evolution in political digital marketing. There is a shift from simple adoption of social media and technology, such as Facebook and big data, toward a more complex approach that emphasizes scalable strategies, digital platform governance policies, and sustainable political narrative-building. In this context, digital marketing is at the core of campaign strategy, serving as an active driver that shapes the political landscape, especially in countries with highly digitalized voters, where expertise in managing digital campaigns can be decisive for electoral victory.

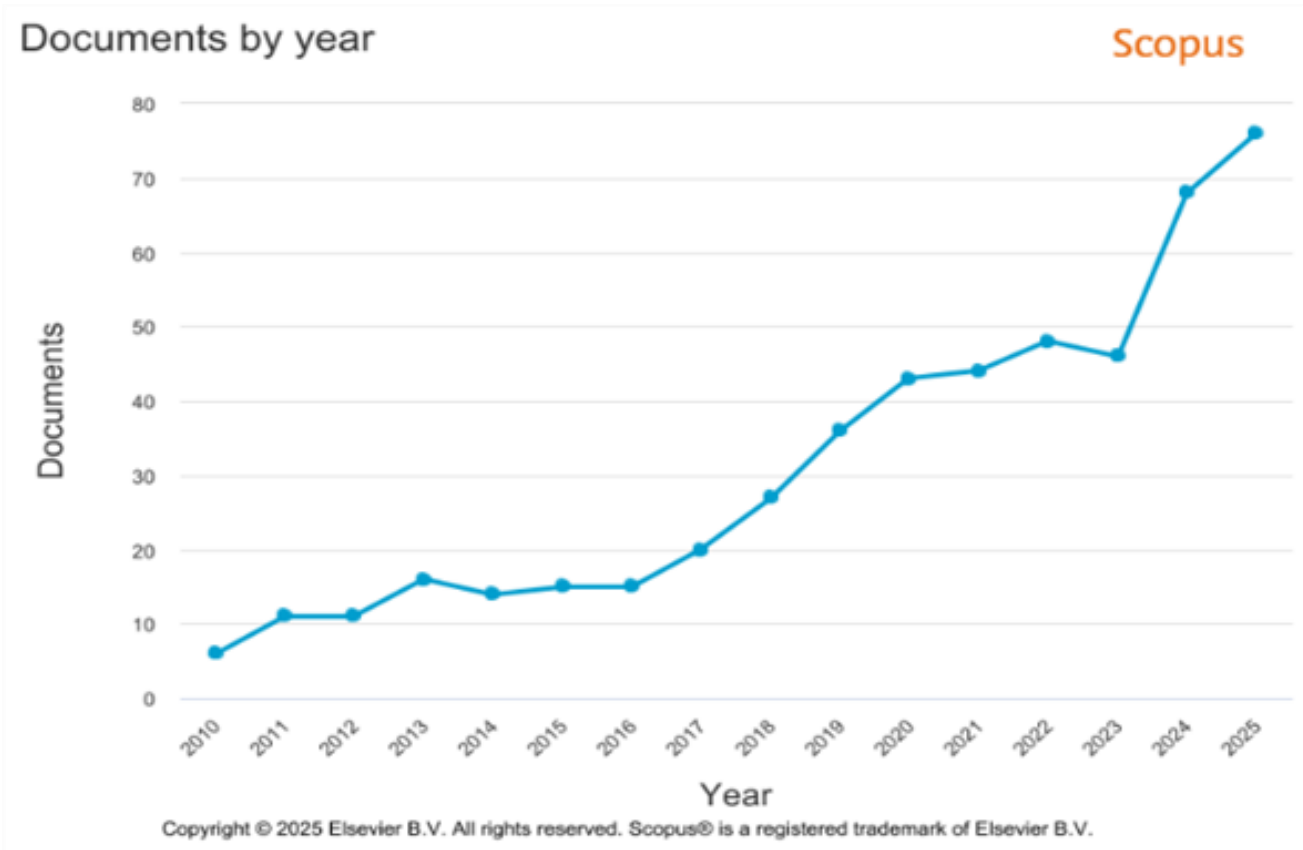


Figure 2. Publication Trends Toward Digital Marketing by Year
Source: Processed by the author from the Scopus database (2025)

Figure 2 shows a clear upward trend in scientific publications on digital marketing, indicating the growing academic relevance of this field. In the early phase, publication output remained relatively stable, reflecting the initial recognition of digital marketing as an emerging research area. A substantial increase in publication volume was observed in subsequent years, signaling the consolidation and maturation of digital marketing research alongside accelerated digital transformation across economic, political, and social domains (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Ghorbani et al., 2022). The findings further indicate that, within political campaigns, social media functions not only as a message dissemination channel but also as an interactive platform that facilitates voter engagement and feedback. Consistent with earlier observations, interactions on platforms such as Twitter enable political actors to test and refine campaign messages, fostering deeper dialogue with voters (Beers, 2014). This shift reflects a transition from mass media-centered campaigning to platform-based digital campaigning characterized by data-driven strategies and online targeting (Borz & Francesco, 2024; Erfort, 2024).

The use of social media by political parties is not only about delivering messages but also about providing opportunities for voters to provide input. Beers noted that interactions on platforms such as Twitter allow for more in-depth dialogue between parties and voters by testing different messaging strategies to capture voters' attention (Beers, 2014; Ronald & Charles, 2009). In this context, the dynamics of politicization in digital spaces reflect a significant shift in how candidates communicate and interact with the public, a shift previously dominated by conventional mass media. Political campaigns depend not only on disseminating information but also on creating an atmosphere in which voters feel engaged and connected to candidates. A study by Hafidh et al. found that innovations in digital marketing, such as socially responsible

approaches and the use of new technologies, play an important role in shaping voter opinion (Hafidh et al., 2024). Therefore, each interaction on digital platforms can increase political support and strengthen the emotional connection between candidates and voters, underscoring the importance of digital marketing in political campaigns in Indonesia. There are five figures on the digital marketing co-emergence network for political campaigns.



Figure 3. Digital Marketing Co-Emergence Network for Political Campaigns
 Source: Processed by the author from word cloud analysis (2025)

As shown in Figure 3 and Table 2, based on data processing in RStudio and secondary data, the authors identified that research on digital marketing is significantly related to several key themes. The RStudio analysis shows that from 2010 to 2025, research in Cluster 1 was often associated with social media, social networks, digital marketing, and political marketing.

Table 2. Digital Marketing Co-Emergence Network for Political Campaigns

Word	Group
Social Media, Social Networking, Digital Marketing, Political Marketing, Marketing Strategy, Content Analytics, Digital Platforms, Social Media Platforms, and Digital Democracy	1
Digital Transformation, Social Networking, Advertising, Economics, Artificial Intelligence, and Government	2

Source: Processed by the author from word cloud analysis (2025)

4.2 The Role of Social Media in Political Campaigns

Social media has undergone a significant transformation from an mere interpersonal communication medium to a strategic instrument in global political contestation. In developing countries, social media serves as a key channel for raising political awareness, mobilizing support bases, and strengthening interactive communication between candidates and voters. The

interactive nature of social media distinguishes it from traditional media such as television and radio, which tend to be one-way and less responsive to the dynamics of public participation. Several studies confirm that social media can drive social change by providing a discursive space that enables voters to engage directly in political conversations (Udanor et al., 2016; Abdulla, 2023). Studies show that in Nigeria's 2011 and 2015 elections, social media was used not only to mobilize support but also to monitor the electoral process. These findings show that social media plays a role in political transparency and accountability.

Empirical research in various contexts also shows that social media can be instrumental not only for mobilization but also for monitoring and contesting electoral processes, an argument consistent with growing findings that digital campaigning outcomes often depend on how platform dynamics interact with existing political structures and media systems (Abboud et al., 2024). Similar dynamics have been observed in parts of the Arab world, where social media has been framed as a catalyst for rapid information diffusion, mass coordination, and solidarity building during political upheavals (Venus et al., 2024; Abdulla, 2023).

In Indonesia, the role of social media in political campaigns has been in the spotlight since the 2014 election (Widayat et al., 2022), and more recent work highlights how platformization, including WhatsApp-centered campaigning and memetic persuasion, reconfigures persuasion routes and voter targeting in the Indonesian electoral arena (Baulch et al., 2022). Among young people, social media can foster political interest and participation in election-related discussions (Jitsaeng & Tuamsuk, 2022), and evidence from youth samples in developing countries also indicates a measurable relationship between social media use and political participation (Alodat & Al-qora, 2023).

Among young people, social media has helped foster political interest and involvement in election-related discussions (Jitsaeng & Tuamsuk, 2022). Recent developments show that the role of social media in political campaigns is increasingly sophisticated and personalized. By leveraging big data analytics and artificial intelligence, campaign teams can target specific voter segments with highly targeted messages tailored to their digital profiles. This micro-targeting technique shifts the campaign paradigm from a mass approach to an individual approach. In Indonesia, this practice became increasingly visible in the 2019 election and is expected to become more dominant in future elections. Going forward, the challenge is to create regulations that protect voter data privacy and prevent large-scale manipulation of public opinion while maintaining space for freedom of expression and healthy digital democratic dynamics. There are five figures on the most popular social media platforms in Indonesia (Saheb et al., 2024).

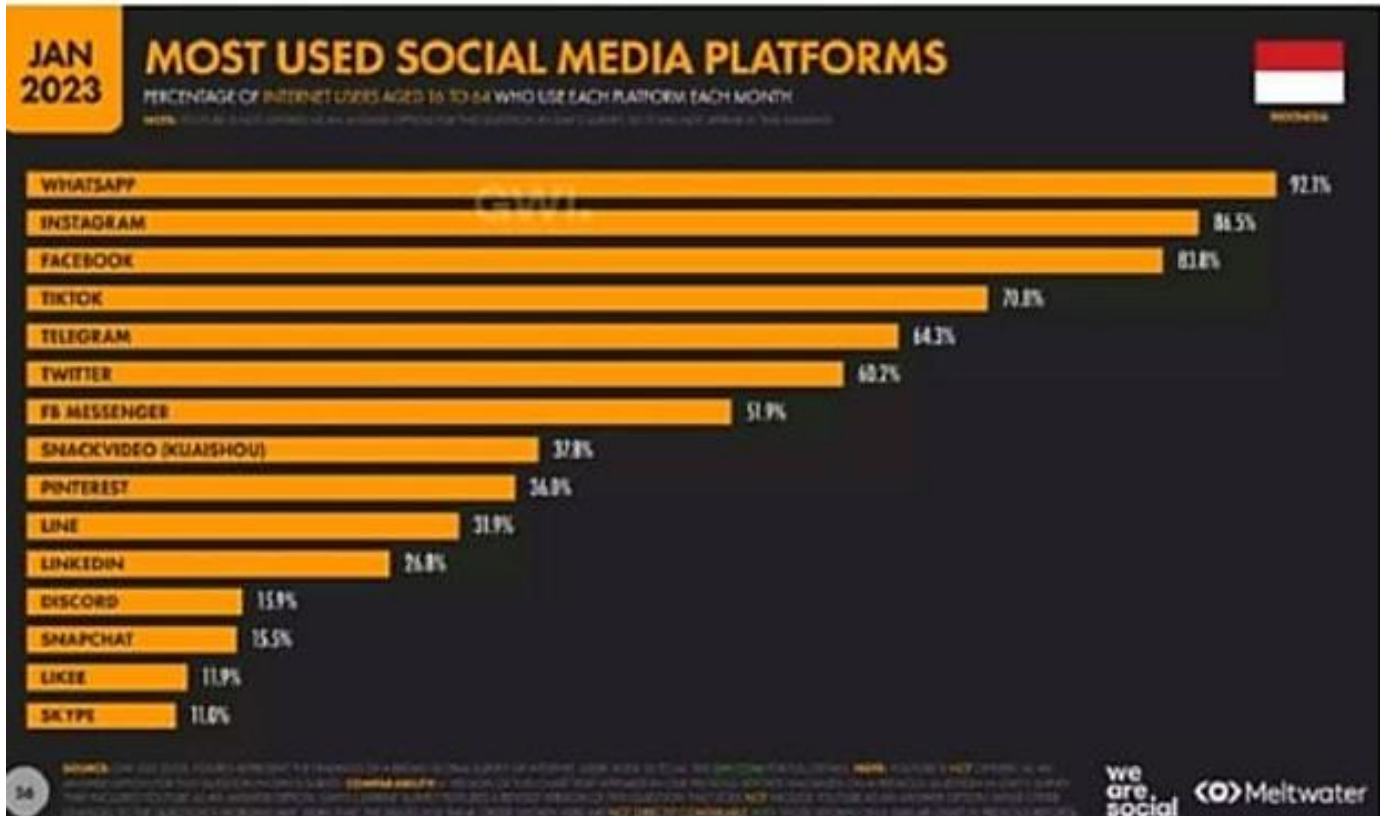


Figure 4. The Most Popular Social Media Platforms in Indonesia

Source: Processed by the author (2025)

Based on Figure 4, which presents January 2023 survey data, it can be concluded that instant messaging applications and visual content-sharing platforms dominate the most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia. WhatsApp ranks highest, with a usage percentage of 91.1%, confirming its dominance as a daily communication platform in both personal and group contexts among Indonesian internet users. Instagram ranks second, with 88.5%, reflecting strong public interest in sharing visual content such as photos, short videos, and other creative materials through features such as Feed, Stories, and Reels. Meanwhile, Facebook continues to show significant resilience, with a 86.1% share, indicating that this formerly dominant platform remains relevant, especially in its role as a community hub, discussion platform, and cross-generational social interaction space. Outside the three main platforms, TikTok also recorded a relatively high usage percentage of 77.1%, showing the rapid adoption of short-form video content among younger generations and young adults in Indonesia. At a more moderate level, Telegram and Twitter/X reached 66.2% and 55.1%, respectively. Telegram is widely used as a platform for interest-based communities and information exchange, while Twitter/X remains a hub for real-time conversations and news updates. On the other hand, LinkedIn, as a professional networking platform, recorded a lower percentage of 33.1%, in line with its more segmented use for networking and career development.

4.3 Effectiveness of Political Campaigns

The effectiveness of political campaigns in Indonesia increasingly depends on the strategic adoption of digital marketing practices that keep pace with technological change and shifting patterns of internet use. The rapid rise of internet penetration and the intensification of social media engagement have reconfigured campaigning from predominantly traditional modes to

data-driven digital approaches, expanding message reach while enabling sustained two-way interaction between candidates and voters (Araújo et al., 2020; Chhabra et al., 2023). In this context, campaign messages grounded in constructive, positive narratives are more likely to foster favorable candidate imagery and shape public interpretations of salient issues, particularly when amplified through algorithmically curated attention environments (Pfetsch, 2023). Moreover, user-generated interactions captured through likes, shares, comments, and conversational threads offer behavioral signals that can be systematically examined through content analysis and computational methods to infer audience preferences, issue priorities, and engagement trajectories (Theocharis & Jungherr, 2021; Vliegenthart et al., 2024). Such insights are increasingly central to designing adaptive campaign strategies that are more targeted, persuasive, and resource efficient, consistent with evidence that interaction-derived data can support the rapid recalibration of messaging and channel choices (Ulfa et al., 2020; Saraswati, 2018).

Recent work further emphasizes the importance of analyzing online political discourse and netizens' interactivity as key indicators for assessing public responses to digital campaigning (Sanjaya & Nasvian, 2024). Candidate announcements often trigger bursts of online deliberation, affective responses, and networked diffusion, yielding a dynamic snapshot of public opinion that can be used to optimize subsequent campaign decisions (Nahid et al., 2024; Kübler et al., 2025). Accordingly, political campaigning through social media requires not only persuasive content design but also strong analytical capacity to process platform data using social media analytics, sentiment analysis, and computational communication (Narayana et al., 2023; Pratama et al., 2021; Younus et al., 2024). This capability becomes particularly relevant as parties increasingly rely on platform-based advertising infrastructures and voter-targeting strategies, which vary across organizational resources and competitive contexts (Erfort, 2024), while raising governance and legitimacy concerns that motivate regulatory responses and policy debates regarding transparency and accountability (Borz & Francesco, 2024; Bär & Pierri, 2024).

Finally, evidence on digital-based campaign monitoring indicates that platform metrics and discourse features can support both quantitative and qualitative evaluations of voter engagement and message resonance (Banurea, 2023). Monitoring engagement volumes, interaction patterns, and sentiment polarity enables campaign actors to evaluate narrative effectiveness and tailor political messages to better align with audience concerns, thereby strengthening persuasive impact and emotional connection with voters (Lazuarni et al., 2024). At the same time, the increasing sophistication of data-driven campaigning underscores emerging risks related to manipulative personalization, micro-targeting, and synthetic media, which demand improved detection capacities and ethical safeguards in contemporary electoral communication.

In the 2013–2016 phase, campaigns became more data-driven by incorporating big data analytics and psychographic profiling inspired by experiences from India, enabling more precise voter segmentation and message personalization (Kleinnijenhuis & Hoof, 2019; Theocharis & Jungherr, 2021). The 2017–2020 period marked Indonesia's growing global visibility, alongside Brazil, through the intensive use of messaging applications such as WhatsApp and Telegram for mass mobilization and grassroots coordination (Baulch, Fernández, et al., 2024; Rachimoellah et al., 2024).

In the most recent phase, from 2021 to 2024, digital political marketing in Indonesia has shown increasing maturity, characterized by the use of artificial intelligence, short-video platforms such as TikTok, and growing attention to regulatory and ethical issues. Collaboration with the Philippines in developing youth-oriented, creative content further illustrates this shift (Enli & Skogerbø, 2022; Bennett, 2012; Decker, 2025). Overall, the international collaboration network indicates that Indonesia has moved beyond policy imitation toward a co-innovator role

in digital political marketing among developing democracies (Abboud et al., 2024; Younus et al., 2024).

5. Conclusion

Digital marketing has been shown to transform the dynamics of political campaigns in Indonesia through social media-based strategies, microtargeting, and creative content development, resulting in more personalized, interactive, and measurable political interactions. Trend analysis indicates growing involvement in artificial intelligence, digital ethics, and platform management, expanding the role of digital marketing as an instrument for shaping public opinion within a democratic ecosystem.

This study has several limitations, including a limited data set restricted to Scopus-indexed articles, a methodological approach confined to qualitative bibliometric analysis, and a narrow focus on the Indonesian political context. Further research is recommended to use mixed-methods approaches to more deeply measure causal impacts, expand data sources by including local literature and non-indexed publications, and explore issues related to digital literacy, data protection regulations, and the ethics of using artificial intelligence in political campaigns.

The theoretical implication of this study lies in strengthening the study of political communication by positioning digital marketing as a factor that shapes public opinion. The practical implication is reflected in this study's contribution as input for political actors and policymakers in designing effective and ethical campaign strategies. The social implication lies in the need to improve public digital literacy so that voters can assess political information critically. Therefore, the optimization of digital marketing is expected not only to increase the effectiveness of political communication but also to strengthen the quality of democracy in Indonesia.

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7. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

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