

COMMUNICATION STYLE OF THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

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Abstract. Communication style is sometimes more important than the content of the communication. In the context of a country, a president needs to develop a communication style that suits his personality character in order to contribute to the effectiveness of his government. This study aims to describe the communication styles of three presidential candidates—Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto, and to relate them to the tendencies of each individual's personality type. The method used is analyzing documents of news (from Detik.com, Kompas.com and Republika.go.id) with news samples in December 2023-January 2024 highlighting news items that contain the meaning of communication style. The results show that Anies Baswedan's communication style tends to be Argumentative and Precise, Ganjar Pranowo tends to be Open and Impression leaving, while Prabowo Subianto's communication style tends to be Dominant. Based on the tendency of this communication style, Anies Baswedan's personality tends to reflect the Sanguine type, Ganjar Pranowo tends to be Phlegmatic, while Prabowo Subianto tends to be the Choleric type.

Keywords: Communication Style, Personality, General Election, Communication Behavior

Abstrak. Gaya komunikasi terkadang lebih penting daripada isi komunikasi itu sendiri. Dalam konteks suatu negara, seorang presiden perlu mengembangkan gaya komunikasi yang sesuai dengan karakter kepribadiannya agar dapat berkontribusi terhadap efektivitas pemerintahannya. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan gaya komunikasi tiga calon presiden—Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, dan Prabowo Subianto—serta menghubungkannya dengan kecenderungan tipe kepribadian masing-masing individu. Metode yang digunakan adalah analisis dokumen berita (dari Detik.com, Kompas.com, dan Republika.go.id) dengan sampel berita pada bulan Desember 2023 hingga Januari 2024 yang menyoroti berita-berita yang mengandung makna gaya komunikasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa gaya komunikasi Anies Baswedan cenderung Argumentatif dan Tepat, Ganjar Pranowo cenderung Terbuka dan Meninggalkan Kesan, sementara gaya komunikasi Prabowo Subianto cenderung Dominan. Berdasarkan kecenderungan gaya komunikasi tersebut, kepribadian Anies Baswedan cenderung mencerminkan tipe Sanguinis, Ganjar Pranowo cenderung bertipe Plegmatis, sedangkan Prabowo Subianto cenderung bertipe Koleris.

Kata Kunci: Gaya Komunikasi, Kepribadian, Pemilihan Umum, Perilaku Komunikasi

INTRODUCTION

The 2024 presidential election (Pilpres) is a pivotal moment that shapes Indonesia's trajectory across economic, social, political, cultural and security domains. Through the figures of the presidential/vice-presidential candidates and the political decisions they make, we glimpse the design of Indonesia's future. Thus, the selections of national leaders must reflect high personal competence, integrity, and reliable leadership capacity.

Observing how the presidential and vice-presidential candidates communicate (via media reports) reveals distinct styles of message composition and delivery. Some appear simple and accessible, others systematic and assertive, while others still manifest non-verbal cues of dominance or arrogance. The communication style of each candidate thus emerges as a characteristic of their public persona.

Mass media — print, broadcast and especially online — serve as powerful vehicles for introducing candidates and their programmes to the electorate. Online media provide expansive space and time to convey political imagery and foster public familiarity more flexibly than traditional television. Indeed, studies show how generation Z and millennial voters respond strongly to candidates' social-media communication style (Akbarani & Arliansyah, 2023) and how Instagram content becomes a key arena for image-building in the 2024 campaign (Febrianto & Purnamasari, 2023).

In political leadership contexts, communication style can be more important than mere content. A leader may fully understand the message, yet fail to transmit it effectively if the style is misaligned; this can hamper interpersonal relationships and undermine perceptions of fairness and relational justice (Irvan, 2019). Interpersonal justice is shaped by polite, respectful

communication and by ongoing interaction: a leader engaging intensively with subordinates or the public fosters stronger mutual understanding. In state administration, to build quality relations between cabinet, government and citizenry, the president must develop a consistent communication style that reflects personality, credibility, empathy and clarity. Effective communication style blends both high-context and low-context elements: honesty, sincerity, clarity, concision and politeness— as well as leader competencies of sensitivity, flexibility, conviction, and empathy (Tubbs & Moss, as cited in Ruliana, 2021).

In this research, the focus is the communication styles exhibited by Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo, and Prabowo Subianto during the December 2023–January 2024 campaign period, as reported in major online news outlets (Detik.com, Kompas.com, Republika.go.id). These media were selected for their distinct ideological affiliations: Kompas.com (Catholic nationalist), Republika.go.id (Islamic nationalist) and Detik.com (nationalist). Preliminary observations suggest these outlets have been highly active in covering the 2024 campaign (September–November 2023).

Based on this background, the research problems are:

1. What are the tendencies in communication style of Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo and Prabowo Subianto in the 2024 presidential election?
2. Based on their communication style, can personality types of Anies Baswedan, Ganjar Pranowo and Prabowo Subianto be traced?

Communication style is conceptualised as the specialised set of interpersonal behaviours applied in specific contexts (Tubbs & Moss, as cited in Ruliana, 2021). Each style is comprised of behaviours that aim to evoke particular responses in

particular situations (Dedy Andika, 2021). Norton's typology identifies ten styles—dominant, dramatic, animated expressive, open, argumentative, relaxed, friendly, attentive, precise, impression-leaving (Ivan, 2019). Personality, meanwhile, is conceptualised as enduring patterns of feelings, thoughts and behaviours (Cervone & Pervin, 2018) and influences an individual's communication style. Environment and genetic predispositions both shape personality and thus style (Cervone & Pervin, 2018). The classic four-type system of melancholic, choleric, phlegmatic and sanguine offers heuristic insight into underlying dispositions (Cervone & Pervin, 2018).

Contemporary research supports the salience of style and medium in political campaigns in Indonesia. For example, Sosrohadi, Syukri & Arismanto (2024) demonstrate how persuasive speech-acts by 2024 presidential candidates reveal both direct and indirect strategies of influence. Karim (2024) employs social-media data mining to show how netizen sentiment and communication patterns reflect campaign dynamics. Moreover, Aminulloh *et al.* (2024) employ critical discourse analysis to expose how social-media “political gimmicks” in the 2024 election may shift focus from substantive issues to symbolic performance. These findings underscore the importance of not only what is said by candidates but how and through what channels the message is delivered and framed.

In contemporary electoral environments, the interplay between communication style, candidate personality, and voter decision-making has never been more evident. The general election context offers a rich terrain for analyzing how presidential candidates adapt their communication behaviour to cultivate favorable perceptions and influence voter attitudes. For instance, research shows that

personality traits of candidates—such as openness, extraversion and agreeableness—manifest in communication style, which in turn affects electoral outcomes (Costa Lobo, 2017). Meanwhile, in a study on micro-targeting, Decker and Krämer (2023) found that personality congruence between message style and recipient traits significantly shapes persuasive effects, indicating that communication behaviour tailored for specific audience types can enhance candidate appeal.

When applied to presidential candidates, communication style becomes a strategic tool: it encompasses verbal and non-verbal cues, level of formality, tone, storytelling, and platform choice. In the U.S., Hmielowski *et al.* (2020) demonstrated that communication behaviours during presidential elections—such as attention to campaign information, internet searches and political discussion—shift significantly over time and vary depending on the electoral battleground context. This underscores how candidates must deploy dynamic communication behaviours to align with shifting media and audience landscapes.

In Indonesia's 2024 presidential election, the nexus of personality and communication style is further contextualised by media and cultural diversity. Arrianie, Lestari, Meranti and Ningrum (2024) explore how political communication and intercultural variables influence candidate selection and campaign behaviour, showing that communication strategies must adapt to parochial, subject and participant cultural segments to resonate effectively. Likewise, Akbarani and Arliansyah (2025) examine how presidential candidates use social-media tailored “Generation Z communication style” (relaxed, friendly, live-streaming) to engage younger voters, illustrating how personality and medium shape communication behaviour in the digital age.

Therefore, in analysing presidential candidates' communication style and personality, we observe that: (1) personality traits provide the underlying orientation to how candidates communicate; (2) communication style expresses and operationalises that personality in specific behaviours and media; (3) the general election context requires adaptation across channels and audience types; and (4) communication behaviour beyond substantive content—how something is said, by whom, on what platform, and with what tone—can crucially affect electoral influence. By focusing both on personality and communication style, scholars and practitioners gain insight into why some presidential candidates manage to connect more effectively with electorates than others.

METHOD

Qualitative content analysis is a research method used to interpret and systematically categorize textual data to uncover meanings, patterns, and themes within communication (Schreier, 2012). Unlike quantitative approaches that emphasize frequency counts, qualitative content analysis focuses on the contextual and latent meaning of text (Vaismoradi *et al.*, 2013). It is particularly suitable for analyzing news discourse, interviews, or media texts where the researcher seeks to understand the underlying communication style, ideology, or representation (Mayring, 2019).

The process of conducting qualitative content analysis generally involves several key steps. First, researchers define the research questions and select the material relevant to their focus. Second, they develop a coding frame, identifying categories that capture essential aspects of the data. Third, the researcher segments the text into meaningful units and applies the coding scheme systematically. Fourth, interpretation

and categorization are conducted to identify recurring themes or meanings. Finally, findings are synthesized to draw conclusions and theoretical insights from the data (Schreier, 2012; Mayring, 2019). Through this process, qualitative content analysis provides a structured yet flexible framework for interpreting communication phenomena within their social and cultural context.

The research was conducted by analyzing documents of news (from Detik.com, Kompas.com and Republika.go.id) with news samples highlighting news items that contain the meaning of communication style in December 2023-January 2024. The research focuses on the statements/utterances of the three presidential candidates in the form of direct statements and/or indirect statements in the news of the three media. Direct statements are usually written by newspapers using quotation marks (“), while indirect statements are usually written by newspapers using the exact words spoken by someone (in this case the presidential candidates). It is enclosed in quotation marks. An indirect statement (also called reported speech) conveys the meaning of what someone said but does not use their exact words.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Anies Baswedan's communication style in various contexts and different times during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign seems to be focused on the pattern or form of argumentative and precise communication style. In an argumentative communication style, a communicator tends to like to argue and be aggressive when delivering his messages (Ivan: 2019). Sentence after sentence uttered by Anies Baswedan appears to be systematically arranged and contains reasons why he did a certain action, often in the form of questions and answers (question/

answer), according to the context of the situation and event he is referring to.

Table 1. Anies Baswedan's Argumetative Communication Style

"Why are we gathered here? Because we want change, we want mothers to no longer be bothered by high cost of living. God willing, change can be won in this place."

"So when there is support and the support is conveyed openly, and when conveying support there is hope. So we are open because that is a form of support, right? So it is two-way, on the one hand support is given, on the other hand, expecting a commitment, the commitment of course is in line with the principles in our country, one principle of Pancasila, the 1945 Constitution, according to the regulations. So we are open,"

"Those who have a lot of money don't go out, sir. The ones who go out are the billboards. The billboards are everywhere, the people are nowhere," said Anies, which was greeted with laughter from the congregation. "But those whose billboards are nowhere and the people are everywhere, that's it."

Source: Own elaboration

Another prominent communication style of Anies Baswedan is precise, which means that the communicator focuses more on accuracy, documentation and evidence in information and arguments (Ivan: 2019). Anies often completes his explanation with data and information about something he wants to convey that his audience understand what he means, as illustrated below:

Table 2. Anies Baswedan's Precise Communication Style

Anies explained that the problem of high logistics costs so far was caused by uneven infrastructure conditions. Anies noted that 52 percent of roads in the regions were in poor

condition. So, the number of accidents is high, many fatal incidents result in high food costs. In addition, the long travel distance also makes commodities sent between regions arrive at the location in a state of deer so that entrepreneurs suffer losses.

Anies said that all Indonesian people, wherever they are, should have the same rights and obligations to meet their needs. Indeed, according to Anies, Indonesia is an archipelagic country that requires a complex transportation system. Not only land transportation, but also air and sea transportation that can connect all islands.

"So, one of the main points that we bring in our program going forward, is building inter-island connectivity. Everything is connected."

Source: Own elaboration

What Anies Baswedan mentioned above is indeed a fact or reality that actually exists in Indonesia, where the geographical conditions of Indonesia consist of many islands, both large and small. Conditions like this must be addressed logically and rationally in the form of policies that will be taken by the government. This is more or less the framework of Anies Baswedan's mindset and feeling patterns, as revealed from the messages he conveyed.

Ganjar Pranowo's communication style during the 2024 Presidential Election campaign tends to form an Open and Impression leaving pattern. In the Open communication style, a communicator is open, friendly, gregarious, has no secrets and is approachable, so that a sense of trust arises and two- way communication is formed, while in the Impression leaving communication style a communicator tries to form an impression/image on his listeners (Ivan: 2019).

Table 3. Ganjar Pranowo's Open Communication Style

Ganjar said there was nothing wrong with the education curriculum during Jokowi's administration. The most important thing, he said, is to build the world of education through character, morals, ethics and integrity.

"What must be accelerated now is human resource development. Like it or not, like it or not. "Is the curriculum changed? The good ones, don't change them, sir, but the bad ones must be changed, sir. Especially the wrong ones must be changed, sir," he explained.

According to Ganjar, the world of education is not only about creating 'craftsmen'. However, he said, it is also necessary to build figures with character, morals, and integrity.

"So, whether they want to be replaced or not, it depends. But in my opinion, the world of education does not only create craftsmen. The world of education must also build character, morals, ethics, integrity, so that's what you said earlier, there should be no corruption, integrity, that's why it's important for teachers to also educate," he said.

"So, teachers also have to get that attention. So, education, yes there is education provided but also teachers. When that happens, then we will make a big leap because we are in the process of entering an era of demographic bonus."

Source: Own elaboration

Here, Ganjar Pranowo appears to be open, confident, and tries to approach his audience, namely the people of West Java, so that they will support him as a presidential candidate, and he stated that he is quite optimistic about this.

Table 4. Optimistic Impression Leaving Communication Style of Ganjar Pranowo

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Source: Own elaboration

Another form of impression leaving that forms the impression/image of himself as a person who cares about education, has moral obligation, ethics, and integrity, as shown by Ganjar as seen in the table below:

Table 5. Communication Style of Integrity Impression Leaving Ganjar Pranowo

"We live in a country that is united in diversity, and we cannot avoid this diversity," said Ganjar.

"So, we, the founders of the nation, have outlined with Bhineka Tunggal Ika, yes, this is us. No one can claim that he has done the most for his people. No one," he continued.

"So, live the diversity comfortably, that is the spirit of togetherness with the colors that we have," he explained.

"The rainbow is not beautiful with just one color, and the many colors in the rainbow are what make our eyes shine. Each color in the rainbow is what makes us shine together," he added.

Source: Own elaboration

Prabowo Subianto's communication style is included in the Dominant category/type represented in the meaning of the keywords "promise, commit, firm, steadfast, brave, confident, emphasize, work hard, ensure, and emphasize, and maintain". As has been stated, in the Dominant communication style, a communicator tends to want to dominate the conversation and does not like his/her conversation to be interrupted (Ivan: 2019).

Table 6. Prabowo Subianto's Dominant Communication Style

He promised to provide free food and milk for children in schools. "If we are given a mandate by the people, we will prepare a program to provide food and milk for all Indonesian children in all public schools, private schools, Islamic boarding schools, we will provide lunch and milk for all," Prabowo said while campaigning in Lebak Regency, Banten, Sunday (3/11/2023).

Prabowo also promised to improve nutrition for pregnant women. He said this was done so that stunting cases in Indonesia could be eliminated.

Prabowo promised to eliminate poverty. He also wants to eradicate corruption in Indonesia. "We will also eliminate poverty

and we must eradicate corruption to the roots," he concluded.

Presidential candidate number 2, Prabowo Subianto, is committed to realizing energy self-sufficiency by realizing green and renewable energy. He is optimistic that Indonesia can process solar from palm oil-based biofuels entirely.

"With good political will, which is firm, steadfast and brave and with good management, it won't be long before we can be self-sufficient in energy. We don't need to import fuel from abroad anymore. And what's extraordinary, later our fuel will be from bio, from plants, it will become clean energy, it will become green energy," said Prabowo.

The Defence Minister then emphasized not to choose the wrong leader. Prabowo said that the wrong leader will only make Indonesia stagnate. The wrong leader will not be able to utilize all the potential that exists to make Indonesia a prosperous country.

Prabowo is confident that if he becomes president, he can make Indonesia progress. "Therefore, I ask for support from all of you," he said, and was greeted with cheers from all those present.

The Defence Minister said that he would work hard to improve the people's welfare if he succeeded in becoming president. "I need your support and help to improve the lives of all people," he said

Presidential candidate number 2, Prabowo Subianto, ensured that the TNI and Polri institutions would remain directly under the president if he is elected in 2024. Prabowo conveyed this in the third presidential debate at Istora Senayan, Jakarta, Sunday (7/1/2024).

"We need to maintain the good system. I will continue to ensure that the TNI and Polri remain directly under the president's control to speed up reactions and shorten the span of

control and span of command," Prabowo said.

Source: Own elaboration

Sentence after sentence uttered by Prabowo Subianto, which contains the key words above, indicates that he wants to position himself as the center of the discussion and it seems that he is confident that he is able to implement what he says, therefore his listeners are expected to believe him.

In general, communication styles are influenced by factors or elements contained in each personality which is comprehensive, meaning it refers to all aspects of the individual, such as mental life, emotional experience, and social behavior. Genetic factors and environmental roles greatly contribute to personality and differences between individuals. Factors such as intelligence level, neural structure, belief system, experience, parenting patterns in the family, and education contribute to people's communication style (Cervone and Pervin, 2018).

Table 7. Communication Styles and Behavior of the Three Presidential Candidates for the 2024 General Election

Anies Baswedan	Prabowo Subianto	Ganjar Pranowo
The communication style and behavior displayed by Anies Baswedan, which tend to fall into the Argumentative and Precise categories mentioned above,	A communication style that tends to be Dominant . The words he expresses often have a firm tone and seem to carry a sense of command , and he prefers that	Ganjar Pranowo's communication style tends to be Open and Impression-Leaving . His personality leans toward Phlegmatic , characterized by being passive , cautious ,

suggest that his personality leans toward **Sanguine**. This is characterized by being sociable, enjoying interactions, being talkative, responsive, relaxed, enthusiastic, free-spirited, and having leadership qualities.

his speech not be interrupted by his conversation partner. This aligns with the characteristic s of a **Choleric** personality, which include: easily offended and quick to anger, highly competitive, a natural leader, a strong desire for control, goal-oriented, extroverted, possessing strong leadership qualities, optimistic, and confident.

thoughtful, peaceful, controlled, reliable, consistent, and calm.

Source: Own elaboration

Based on family background, education and career path, it is unsurprising that Anies Baswedan's communication style is strongly aligned with the argumentative and precise dimensions. Research into his social-media presence (Kurniasih & Setianti, 2022) shows that Anies systematically uses structured content and consistent diction to build his personal brand as an intellectual leader. In particular, the study of his Instagram usage found his posts emphasise thought-leadership, data-driven themes and carefully chosen language (Kurniasih & Setianti, 2022). Similarly, analyses of his

televised discourse find a high level of rhetorical control and structured message construction, reinforcing his image as academically oriented and deliberate (Yulian Anggini & Putra, 2022). Together, these findings support the view that his communication style is well planned, orderly and information-rich. From a personality perspective, this behaviour aligns not only with the “precise” communication style but also suggests a more sanguine personality: sociable, talkative, responsive, enthusiastic and leadership-oriented. Although the sanguine type is often associated with light-heartedness, in this case the data suggest that Anies pairs his sociability with intellectual rigour and systematic communication.

By contrast, Prabowo Subianto’s communication style appears to lean firmly into the dominant dimension. Empirical research on his debate performance during the 2024 presidential election shows he uses aggressive, assertive verbal and non-verbal cues consistent with a confrontational leadership style (Sulton, 2024). Observers noted his communication as “firm”, emotionally charged and sometimes less controlled—hallmarks of a dominant communicator (Antara News, 2023). Additional research into his campaign branding further shows his social-media image emphasises strength, decisiveness and control (Yulianti *et al.*, 2024). From the personality-style lens, Prabowo thus seems to mirror a choleric type: competitive, goal oriented, extroverted, confident and desiring control. His military background and hierarchical career path may reinforce this style and personality pattern.

Finally, Ganjar Pranowo demonstrates a communication style best characterised as open and impression-leaving. Studies of his Instagram and YouTube campaign content reveal that he portrays himself as approachable, “close to the citizens”, interactive and empathetic

(Ayudifa & Chasana, 2023; Wiryany *et al.*, 2023). His leadership communication is described as participative, diplomatic and collaborative, especially in his home province of Central Java (Wiryany *et al.*, 2023). This style maps onto what might be described as a phlegmatic personality: calm, controlled, reliable, thoughtful and consistent. While his public style is dynamic and social-media savvy, the underlying personality revealed is one of steady consistency rather than overt dominance or structure.

The findings regarding the communication styles of three Indonesian presidential candidates resonate strongly with prior research in political communication. For example, the categorisation of Anis Baswedan (with an argumentative, precise style) reflects the broader conclusion that candidates who communicate in structured, data-driven ways tend to present themselves as intellectually credible and articulate (Anom, Vina, & Samani, 2024). This compares to studies showing that candidate character traits and communication style shape voter perceptions: one model argues that traits such as competence and trustworthiness become salient through mediated communication and influence vote preference (Hardy, 2010). Thus, a candidate’s precision and systematic delivery reinforce perceptions of competence and structure.

Meanwhile, the “dominant” style you identify in Prabowo Subianto aligns with findings in debates and media coverage showing that aggressive non-verbal cues, strong leadership posture and command-oriented discourse can enhance a candidate’s assertiveness image, but also risk alienation when over-used (Piontek & Tadeusz-Ciesielczyk, 2019). Research on non-verbal communication in presidential debates isolated gestures, facial expression and stance as significant in shaping audience

perception of credibility and power (Alfiah, Mukhroman & Dimiyati, 2024). This supports your linkage of a choleric personality style with dominant communication behaviour.

The interpretation of Ganjar Pranowo's "open" and "impression-leaving" style likewise finds support in literature that champions relational, interactive and participative communication approaches for candidates seeking to build trust and affinity with grassroots publics. A study of Indonesian candidates on social media found that openness, relatability and two-way communication help foster sentiment of closeness and authenticity (Akbarani & Arliansyah, 2025). Furthermore, literature on digital campaigning emphasises that impression-forming through live streaming, informal interaction and responsiveness aligns with the participatory style increasingly demanded in modern elections (Dawam, Ihsan & Darmawan, 2024).

Putting your findings in conversation with this research suggests a few insights. First, communication style is not merely a wrapper for message content but embodies personality, background and strategic orientation—consistent with trait-based models of candidate evaluation (Hardy, 2010). Second, the medium and context (debate vs. social media) mediate how style is expressed and perceived: non-verbal cues matter in debates, interactive style matters on social media (Alfiah et al., 2024; Akbarani & Arliansyah, 2025). Third, while dominant and precise styles may signal competence and strength, open and relational styles may better cultivate trust and public engagement—important in an era of digitalised mass-citizen interaction.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the empirical studies from Indonesian journals suggest clear alignments between background/career, choice of communication

style and inferred personality type for each candidate. Anies embodies structured, precise persuasion tied to an intellectual persona; Prabowo projects decisive dominance backed by competitive leadership; Ganjar offers open, citizen-oriented communication underpinned by a steady relational personality. These patterns help explain how each candidate not only what they communicate, but how they choose to communicate—and how that reflects their personality orientation.

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