



# Analysing the Role of K-popification on Political Engagement of Anies Baswedan's 2024 Election Campaign Using Structural Equation Model

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**Abstract.** This study explores the integration of K-pop fan culture into Anies Baswedan's 2024 Indonesian presidential campaign, termed "Kpopification," and its influence on political engagement. The research employs quantitative methodology, Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using SmartPLS software. The research highlights significant demographic insights, revealing a predominance of younger female users with active social media engagement, particularly on the platform X (formerly Twitter). Despite the innovative use of K-pop culture, which includes fan-driven campaigns and interactive elements, the study finds limited direct impact on offline political activism. Statistical analyses show that Political Self-Efficacy (PSE) and Political Use of Twitter (PUT) significantly enhance both online and offline political activities, with Online Political Activities (OnP) serving as a crucial mediator. However, the K-popification strategy itself does not significantly mediate political activism. The findings underscore the importance of targeted social media strategies and meaningful engagement in translating online presence into offline political outcomes, while also suggesting that cultural resonance alone is insufficient for driving substantial political engagement. Future research should explore how these dynamics apply across different cultural contexts to better understand the evolving role of social media in political communication.

**Keywords:** Kpopification, Network Analysis, Political Campaigning, Political Participation, Online Political Activism.

## 1 Introduction

Previous research has examined the role of social media in shaping political landscapes, revealing its growing importance in electoral processes (Chen, 2015; Spierings & Jacobs, 2014). Social media, particularly Facebook, played a significant role for the first time in the 2012 U.S. presidential election, highlighting its potential as a powerful tool for political communication (Carlisle & Patton, 2013; Ceron et al., 2014). Since then, social media has become an indispensable component of political campaigns,

serving as a crucial communication channel for candidates and acting as a "transmission belt" between the electorate and political figures (Schroeder, 2018; Tang & Lee, 2018). Through these platforms, candidates can engage with voters, mobilize supporters, and shape the public agenda more effectively (Stier et al., 2018). However, despite the rise of social media, many people still prefer to obtain political news from traditional sources such as television and print media due to their perceived reliability (Soon & Samsudin, 2016). This suggests that the media landscape is evolving into a hybrid ecosystem that integrates social media alongside traditional mass media, rather than one that entirely replaces it (Gurevitch et al., 2009).

Internet use in Indonesia has grown significantly, with 139 million active social media users in 2024, representing 49.9% of the population (Kemp, 2024). Most Indonesians use social media for leisure activities (58.9%), staying connected with family and friends (57.1%), and keeping up with trending topics (48.8%) (Howe, 2024). In the political realm, social media first became influential during the 2012 Jakarta gubernatorial election, where it played a key role in the campaigns of Joko Widodo (Jokowi) and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), marking the rise of social media in Indonesian politics (Astuti & Hangsing, 2018; Tapsell, 2021). Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube were utilized to disseminate information, mobilize supporters, and engage with voters, offering a cost-effective alternative to traditional media and enhancing civic participation through real-time communication and content sharing (Hui, 2020; Santoso & Wardani, 2021). These campaigns demonstrated the effectiveness of social media in reaching a broad audience and provided valuable insights into voter behavior, which refined campaign strategies (Saraswati, 2018). However, the increasing prominence of social media also amplified negative campaigning, as seen in the smear campaigns against Jokowi and Ahok (Hui, 2020).

Social media's use in political campaigns has broadened candidates' reach, including among fans of Korean pop music (K-pop), a phenomenon particularly influential in Indonesia, which is reported to have the largest K-pop fanbase globally on Twitter (CNN Indonesia, 2022; Yurcel et al., 2024). The Korean wave, which encompasses K-pop, K-dramas, movies, fashion, food, and beauty products, has penetrated deeply into Indonesia, especially among teenagers, who are significantly influenced by content shared through social media (Ahmad et al., 2024; Wulandari, 2022). K-pop fans, or "K-poppers," extend their community culture beyond entertainment in a trend known as K-popification, which has begun to shape political participation (Sabandar, 2024). For example, the K-pop fandom in Chile launched the "K-poppers for Boric" campaign in 2021, applying digital mobilization tactics from their fandom to support Gabriel Boric, who won the presidential election with the highest voter turnout (Muthmainnah, 2024; Soo, 2023). Similarly, the "K-pop Stans 4 Leni" campaign was organized to support Leni Robredo in the 2022 Philippine presidential election, illustrating how K-popification can effectively engage and mobilize youth for political purposes (Behl et al., 2023; Romero, 2021). In Indonesia, the Twitter account @aniesbubble applied similar tactics in support of Anies Baswedan's 2024 presidential campaign, using K-pop culture strategies like creating merchandise, organizing events, and fundraising efforts to appeal to young voters and foster political engagement (Briefer, 2024; Shula, 2024). However,

research indicates that while such campaigns may generate online attention, this does not necessarily translate into high voter turnout or tangible support (Yurcel et al., 2024).

This study aims to explore the impact of K-popification on Anies Baswedan's 2024 presidential campaign in Indonesia, focusing on its effects on both online and offline political engagement. It investigates how K-pop culture intersects with politics, examining aspects such as creativity, knowledge dissemination, communication, and civic empowerment within this trend. The research question guiding this study is: How do the elements of K-popification affect Anies Baswedan's 2024 campaign, particularly concerning Political Use of Twitter (PUT), Political Self-efficacy (PSE), Online Political Activities (OnP), and Offline Political Activities (OfP)? To address this question, the study employs a quantitative methodology using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), specifically Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis, to process data and understand voter sentiment and the influence of K-popification on political activism (Muthmainnah, 2024; Pamugari, 2024). This approach will describe the phenomena as they are observed and draw conclusions based on numerical data, particularly through the social media platform X.

K-popification has been notably prominent in Anies Baswedan's 2024 presidential campaign. Prior research has shown that K-pop fans have leveraged their expertise in digital content creation and online mobilization to support Baswedan, merging K-pop cultural elements with political activism both online and offline (Muthmainnah, 2024; Pamugari, 2024). This involvement highlights how technological advancements in social media have transformed traditional political engagement by increasing the frequency of political issue sharing, interactive responses, and voter encouragement, thus fostering a more dynamic and participatory political environment. The study of this phenomenon illustrates the evolving nature of political communication in the digital age and underscores the influence of fandom cultures on political outcomes and the role of digital literacy in contemporary political discourse.

## 2 Methods

This study adopts a quantitative methodology to investigate the role of K-popification in Anies Baswedan's 2024 Indonesian Presidential Campaign, examining both its antecedents and outcomes. Inferential analysis is employed to explore independent variables without making direct comparisons or assessing their interrelationships. The study incorporates exogenous variables such as the Political Use of Twitter (PUT) and Political Self-efficacy (PSE), which set the stage for understanding the intervening variables of K-popification (Kpop) and Online Political Activities (OnP). K-popification, involving fan engagement tactics and multimedia elements derived from K-pop culture, acts as a mediator influencing online political engagement and, subsequently, Offline Political Activities (OfP) like attending rallies and voting. This research aims to systematically assess how K-popification affects and is affected by both online and offline political activities, providing insights into contemporary political communication strategies and their impact on voter behavior.

Social media platforms, including X (formerly Twitter), are crucial for political engagement, facilitating the sharing of updates, responding to posts, and mobilizing voters, especially during elections (Yang et al., 2020). The integration of social media into campaigns fosters real-time interaction with voters, essential for shaping public opinion and generating support (Boatwright et al., 2019). The influence of K-pop fans on Anies Baswedan's campaign highlights how fandom strategies can significantly impact political activism (Muthmainnah, 2024; Pamugari, 2024). Political self-efficacy, which reflects an individual's belief in their political impact, drives both online and offline engagement (Yang et al., 2020). The K-popification of Baswedan's campaign demonstrates the fusion of K-pop fandom strategies with political activism, illustrating the transformative effect of digital culture on traditional politics. The study explores these dynamics, focusing on how social media, political self-efficacy, K-popification, and online activism influence campaign activities.

Data for this quantitative research was collected through an online questionnaire targeting Indonesian citizens eligible to vote, including supporters of Anies Baswedan, those who do not support him, and swing voters. Given the time constraints and the researcher's limited network, the snowball sampling method was employed. The survey was distributed over one week, from May 21 to May 28, 2024, and received responses from 124 participants. The questionnaire, which was adapted from H. Yang et al. (2020), includes sections on Political Use of Twitter (PUT), Political Self-efficacy (PSE), Online Political Activism (OnP), and Offline Political Activism (OfP), tailored to the context of the K-popification of Baswedan's campaign. For data analysis, the study uses Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Partial Least Squares (PLS) methods, processed with SmartPLS software. The validity and reliability of the data are assessed through convergent and discriminant validity tests, as well as composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha measures. The evaluation covers both the measurement model (outer model) and the structural model (inner model), utilizing Goodness of Fit tests, path coefficients, and hypothesis testing. PLS is selected for its adaptability with small sample sizes and non-normal data distributions. Mediation effects are tested using the Sobel test, and hypothesis testing is conducted with t-tests, where a p-value less than 0.05 indicates statistical significance.

### 3 Result & Discussion

The study surveyed 125 respondents to gather demographic data essential for interpreting the research findings. The gender distribution reveals a significant imbalance, with 65.6% of participants identifying as female and 34.4% as male. This disparity may reflect broader trends in social media engagement and political interest, particularly within the context of K-pop culture. The age distribution highlights that 50.4% of respondents are aged 17-25, a key demographic that is active on social media platforms like X (formerly Twitter) and engaged in contemporary cultural trends. Additionally, 69.6% of respondents have an X account, underscoring the platform's importance in

political campaigns. Social media activity levels vary, with 35.2% of respondents actively using X. These patterns suggest that younger females with high social media engagement are crucial for understanding how K-pop culture intersects with political strategies in the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election.

The study's measurement model evaluates the relationship between observed data and latent variables, including Political Use of Twitter (PUT), Political Self-Efficacy (PSE), K-popification (Kpop), Online Political Activism (OnP), and Offline Political Activism (OfP). The model is assessed using SmartPLS, focusing on convergent validity, discriminant validity, composite reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha. Initial analysis identified five indicators with factor loadings below the 0.70 threshold, leading to their exclusion and a subsequent reanalysis. The revised model met most validity criteria, though multicollinearity was found among some Kpop indicators, necessitating further adjustments. The final model, refined to include only reliable indicators, confirmed robustness through validity tests. The  $R^2$  values demonstrated moderate predictive power for Online Political Activities (0.485) but lower for K-popification (0.296) and Offline Political Activities (0.299). The model showed predictive relevance with  $Q^2$  values and a strong fit indicated by an SRMR value of 0.072, confirming alignment with the study's theoretical constructs.

Hypothesis testing in Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) used bootstrapping to repeatedly sample from the dataset and estimate model parameters, assessing their stability and reliability. A t-value of 1.96 or higher signifies statistical significance at a p-value of 0.05 or lower. The analysis found insufficient support for the impact of K-popification (KPop) on Offline Political Campaigns (OfP) and Online Political Activism (OnP), with p-values for hypotheses H1 (KPop  $\rightarrow$  OfP) and H2 (KPop  $\rightarrow$  OnP) exceeding 0.05. Similarly, hypotheses H5 (PSE  $\rightarrow$  OfP) and H8 (PUT  $\rightarrow$  OfP) also showed non-significant effects with p-values of 0.699 and 0.343, respectively. However, significant effects were observed for the influence of Political Self-Efficacy (PSE) on KPop (H4) and OnP (H6), as well as the effect of Political Use of Twitter (PUT) on KPop (H7) and OnP (H9), all with p-values below 0.05. Online Political Activism (OnP) significantly impacts Offline Political Campaigns (H3). Mediation analysis indicated that Online Political Activities mediate the effects of PSE and PUT on OfP, with significant indirect effects in H13 (PSE  $\rightarrow$  OnP  $\rightarrow$  OfP) and H17 (PUT  $\rightarrow$  OnP  $\rightarrow$  OfP). However, KPop did not serve as a significant mediator, suggesting its limited influence on offline political activities. Overall, while K-popification did not significantly impact political activism, Political Self-Efficacy and Political Use of Twitter were pivotal in enhancing both online and offline political engagement in Anies Baswedan's campaign.

The findings of this study make a notable contribution to the ongoing conversation about social media's impact on electoral outcomes, resonating with previous research. For instance, Kovic et al., (2017) examined the influence of candidates' media exposure and social media activity during the 2015 Swiss federal election, introducing the concept of "brute force effects," which extends the "mere exposure effect" (Hansen &

Wänke, 2009; Harmon-Jones & Allen, 2001). They found that while brute force effects existed, they were not the primary drivers of electoral success. Traditional media presence was more impactful, whereas social media activity had a lesser effect. Their research also highlighted that incumbency played a significant role in electoral success due to the two-step Matthew effect, where media prominence bolstered incumbents' advantages. The current study supports these findings by demonstrating that Political Self-Efficacy (PSE) and Political Use of Twitter (PUT) significantly influence Offline Political Campaigns (OfP) through Online Political Activities (OnP), underscoring the importance of engagement on social media platforms like Twitter or X. This alignment reinforces Kovic et al.'s point that social media engagement is more crucial than mere activity.

Similarly, Spierings & Jacobs (2014) identified both direct and interaction effects of social media on electoral outcomes. They noted that minimal social media use could influence voter preferences by highlighting a candidate's personality and modernity, although this effect was conditional. More critical were the interaction effects, which emphasized that active engagement with the audience was necessary, rather than simply having a large follower base. The current study's finding that Online Political Activities mediate the impact of PSE and PUT on OfP aligns with Spierings and Jacobs' conclusions. This reinforces the notion that active engagement and interaction on social media are essential for converting online presence into electoral success.

Doroshenko (2022) analysis of Volodymyr Zelensky's 2019 digital campaign reveals how effective social media engagement can mobilize diverse voter support. Despite having a smaller budget, Zelensky's use of hashtags and engagement tools, especially with younger voters, was pivotal in his success. This study's focus on the mediating role of Online Political Activities aligns with Doroshenko's findings, illustrating how social media can be leveraged to enhance political campaigns. This supports the current study's observation that PSE and PUT impact OfP through OnP, highlighting the strategic importance of social media in political campaigns. Russmann (2022) conducted a longitudinal study of Austrian political parties and found an increasing recognition of social media's potential for building supporter relationships. This led to a greater emphasis on interactivity and targeted campaigns. The current study's results, which show that PSE and PUT significantly affect Offline Political Campaigns through Online Political Activities, align with Russmann's observations. This confirms that targeted and interactive social media strategies are effective for improving political engagement and outcomes.

The K-popification of Anies Baswedan's presidential campaign represents an innovative approach to engaging Generation Z in Indonesian politics through cultural resonance. This strategy, which includes elements like TikTok, Korean captions, and fan-driven events, reflects the principles of "brute force effects" described by Kovic et al. (2017). Their study highlighted the importance of media presence and engagement, and the current study supports this by demonstrating how cultural resonance and active participation in the Anies Bubble's campaign align with these principles. The current study

also resonates with Spierings and Jacobs (2014), who emphasized the importance of interaction effects in social media. The Anies Bubble's interactive elements, such as voting polls and emojis, illustrate how engagement is crucial for translating online activity into offline political success. This supports the study's findings that Online Political Activities mediate the influence of PSE and PUT on Offline Political Campaigns. Furthermore, the mobilization of K-pop fans in Anies Baswedan's campaign parallels Doroshenko (2022) findings on Zelensky's use of social media for voter engagement. Similar to Zelensky's campaign, the Anies Bubble and Olppaemi Project successfully mobilized supporters through K-pop culture, with initiatives like the "HaveAniesDay" website and videotron campaigns. Despite these efforts, Yurcel et al. (2024) caution that high social media engagement does not necessarily translate to higher voter turnout, a point that aligns with Kovic et al. (2017) observation that brute force effects alone are not always decisive in electoral outcomes.

The involvement of Indonesian K-pop fans in political discourse, such as their opposition to the Omnibus Law in 2020 (Leonaldy, 2020; Rokhim, 2023), underscores their substantial influence. These fans have demonstrated an ability to mobilize and direct significant attention to political issues, thereby affecting public discourse and raising awareness without overt political manipulation. This capacity for mobilization highlights the strategic value of engaging K-pop fans in electoral campaigns. The K-popification of Anies Baswedan's campaign represents a novel strategy aimed at engaging Generation Z by leveraging the dynamics of K-pop fan culture. This approach aligns with existing research on the importance of media presence, social media engagement, and active interaction in shaping electoral outcomes. Nevertheless, while the strategy effectively increases awareness and engagement, it may not guarantee electoral success. Future research could explore the long-term impacts and effectiveness of such strategies across various cultural and political contexts, offering deeper insights into the evolving role of social media and popular culture in politics.

Yang et al. (2020) examined the effects of social media on political engagement during the 2016 US election, finding that while general Facebook use had a slight negative effect on political participation, political use had a significantly positive impact. This finding is reflected in the current study on Anies Baswedan's campaign, where targeted activities on the @aniesbubble account engaged voters more effectively than general social media use. This targeted engagement is crucial for fostering political efficacy and translating online actions into offline political participation. Lim (2017) concept of algorithmic enclaves provides a useful framework for understanding social media dynamics in political contexts. Algorithmic enclaves are affectively-driven networks on social media shaped by user interactions and algorithms, evolving based on emotional and cultural interactions rather than static filter bubbles or echo chambers. In Anies Baswedan's campaign, the @aniesbubble account employs strategies resonant with the theory of algorithmic enclaves by creating content that appeals to K-pop fans' emotional and cultural affiliations. This approach builds a supportive online community through affective interactions, aligning with how algorithmic enclaves foster engagement.

Yang et al. (2020) findings on the positive impact of targeted social media use on both online and offline political engagement are supported by the current study. It shows that Online Political Activities (OnP) mediate the influence of Political Self-Efficacy (PSE) and Political Use of Twitter (PUT) on Offline Political Campaigns (OfP). This mediation indicates that effective online engagement can lead to tangible offline political actions, emphasizing the importance of strategic social media use. The concept of algorithmic enclaves helps explain the effectiveness of these targeted strategies, as activities like fan events and interactive polls on the @aniesbubble account create a sense of community and belonging, essential for mobilizing political participation. Hui (2020) observed that social media algorithms can create polarized communities through emotional appeals and disinformation. Anies Baswedan's K-popification strategy has successfully drawn a large following by leveraging emotional and cultural connections, but it also risks contributing to algorithmic enclaves, where emotional bonds may overshadow moderate voices and ideological diversity. This highlights the dynamic nature of online political engagement and the potential for both positive and negative outcomes. The success of the @aniesbubble account in engaging voters through targeted, affective interactions underscores the potential of social media to enhance civic engagement and political participation, while also pointing to the need to address issues of polarization and disinformation. The K-popification of Anies Baswedan's campaign demonstrates how interactive social media activities can effectively engage voters by fostering emotional and cultural connections. This targeted engagement translates online participation into offline political actions, reinforcing Yang et al. (2020) findings on the positive impact of political social media use. The theory of algorithmic enclaves offers a deeper understanding of these dynamics, emphasizing the role of emotional appeals and the potential for polarization. As social media continues to influence political landscapes, understanding these dynamics is crucial for designing effective and inclusive political campaigns that foster genuine civic engagement and participation.

The findings of this study have significant implications. They highlight the crucial role of social media engagement, particularly through platforms like X, in political activities. The significant indirect effects of PSE and PUT on OfP through OnP emphasize the importance of active and meaningful social media engagement for electoral success. This supports the notion that strategic social media use can significantly impact political behavior and outcomes. Furthermore, the study suggests that not all forms of online presence impact offline political behavior equally. The limited mediation effect of K-popification in Anies' campaign indicates that cultural phenomena may not resonate as strongly in the political sphere as more direct forms of political engagement on platforms like X. This underscores the need for political campaigns to strategically select and utilize social media platforms and content that resonate with their target audience.



## 4 Conclusion

This study provides valuable insights into the complex interplay between social media engagement, political self-efficacy, and online political activities in the context of the 2024 Indonesian Presidential Election, specifically through the lens of K-popification in Anies Baswedan's campaign. The findings reveal that while Political Self-Efficacy (PSE) and Political Use of Twitter (PUT) significantly enhance both online (OnP) and offline (OfP) political participation, the K-popification strategy, despite its cultural resonance and innovative engagement methods, does not exert a significant direct impact on political activism.

The demographic analysis highlights the central role of younger females with high social media engagement, particularly those active in K-pop culture, in shaping online political discourse. However, the study also shows that while these groups contribute to online engagement, this does not necessarily translate into offline political actions. The results confirm that effective online political activities, driven by PSE and PUT, are crucial mediators that can transform social media interaction into tangible offline political outcomes.

Despite the innovative appeal of the K-popification strategy, its limited impact on political activism suggests that cultural resonance alone is insufficient to drive political engagement. Instead, active, targeted, and strategic communication—especially through platforms like X (formerly Twitter)—plays a more decisive role. The study's alignment with previous research underscores that while social media can amplify political campaigns, meaningful engagement is key to converting online presence into offline success.

This study highlights the evolving role of social media in political campaigns, particularly in the Indonesian context. As political strategies increasingly integrate popular culture, the findings emphasize the need for a nuanced approach that combines cultural relevance with strategic engagement to mobilize political participation effectively. Future research could further explore the long-term effects of such strategies across different political and cultural environments, offering deeper insights into the dynamics of digital campaigning in an increasingly connected world.

**Acknowledgments.** A third level heading in 9-point font size at the end of the paper is used for general acknowledgments, for example: This study was funded by X (grant number Y).

**Disclosure of Interests.** It is now necessary to declare any competing interests or to specifically state that the authors have no competing interests. Please place the statement with a third level heading in 9-point font size beneath the (optional) acknowledgments<sup>1</sup>, for example: The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article. Or: Author

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A has received research grants from Company W. Author B has received a speaker honorarium from Company X and owns stock in Company Y. Author C is a member of committee Z.

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