SELF-AFFIRMATION AS A SOCIAL MEDIA CULTURAL CONSTRUCTION: A STUDY OF ERICK THOHIR'S POLITICAL EXPRESSION ON TIKTOK

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Abstract: Self-affirmation is an affirmation that reflects a person's views and ways of thinking through statements and attitudes. It is often associated with someone's position that shows the vision and mission that is carried out. Self-affirmation can be shown by people through various content on social media, including TikTok. For government officials or politicians, self-affirmation is an attempt to form an image on social media by displaying various political expressions. This study aims to explore the strategy and impact of self-affirmation as an image construction on Erick Thohir's TikTok account. By using qualitative content analysis, this study seeks to reveal self-affirmation with thematic analysis, which related to Nahdatul Ulama (NU) and the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI). This research found that the self-affirmation strategy used by Erick Thohir on TikTok is to prioritize creative and entertaining content. The impact of the self-affirmation that Erick Thohir pointed out was constructing his own identity with NU supporters and Indonesian football fans, as well as the formation of political polarization. Various contents on TikTok are able to support Erick Thohir's self-affirmation in his efforts to become a candidate for vice president in the upcoming 2024 elections.

Keywords: *Self Affirmation; Social Media Image; Expression; TikTok; Erick Thohir*

Abstrak: Afirmasi diri merupakan afirmasi yang mencerminkan pandangan dan cara berpikir seseorang melalui pernyataan dan sikap. Seringkali dikaitkan dengan jabatan seseorang yang menunjukkan visi dan misi yang diembannya. Penegasan diri bisa ditunjukkan masyarakat melalui berbagai konten di media sosial, termasuk TikTok. Bagi pejabat pemerintah atau politisi, afirmasi diri merupakan upaya membentuk citra di media sosial dengan menampilkan berbagai ekspresi politik. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi strategi dan dampak afirmasi diri sebagai konstruksi citra pada akun TikTok Erick Thohir. Dengan menggunakan analisis isi kualitatif, penelitian ini berupaya mengungkap afirmasi diri dengan analisis tematik, yaitu terkait Nahdatul Ulama (NU) dan Persatuan Sepak Bola Seluruh Indonesia (PSSI). Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa strategi afirmasi diri yang digunakan Erick Thohir di TikTok adalah dengan mengutamakan konten yang kreatif dan menghibur. Dampak dari penegasan diri yang diutarakan Erick Thohir adalah terkonstruksinya identitas diri di kalangan pendukung NU dan suporter sepak bola Indonesia, serta terbentuknya polarisasi politik. Beragam konten di TikTok mampu mendukung penegasan diri Erick Thohir dalam upayanya menjadi calon wakil presiden pada pemilu 2024 mendatang.

Kata Kunci: Afirmasi Diri; Gambar Media Sosial; Ekspresi; TikTok; Erick Thohir

INTRODUCTION

With its various advantages and disadvantages, TikTok is able to provide various refreshments because it displays many things that other social media platforms do not have. TikTok, which abandons photos and emphasizes videos, is a force capable of encouraging various changes. This happened after the TikTok breakthrough that caught the world's attention and changed the map of social media. By relying on For Your Page, sound background and vertical screen, it is able to differentiate itself from other social media platforms. Finally, TikTok became increasingly popular, including becoming a tool and turning into a force.

TikTok is able to change digital politics because it presents various short videos that started as just jokes and became a great force.[1] Social media offers young people a valuable window into a natural context because they can interact with appropriate modes of expression.[2] As a result, the world is experiencing TikTok fever. TikTok is a popular short video platform and has grown into a social media application that is growing rapidly throughout the world.[3]

Originated and founded in China, TikTok is a social media that has successfully expanded with regionalization strategies and real market differences that are not owned by social media companies based in the United States[4]. TikTok's strong differentiation can become a very important differentiator so that it is no longer on a Chinese scale, but spreads to various countries. Despite negative sentiment in Western countries, TikTok's development is increasingly massive.

Until TikTok became known in the world of politics. Many politicians are starting to look at TikTok as a medium for communication. TikTok has also become a major force capable of having a big influence on politics. TikTok is a social media platform that has become a force in the world of politics. Why? TikTok was able to attract support and become a real force for political expression for the younger generation. Not a few

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[1] Guinaudeau, Benjamin, Kevin Munger, and Fabio Votta. "Fifteen seconds of fame: TikTok and the supply side of social video." Computational Communication Research 4.2 (2022): 463-485.

[2] Aharoni, Tali, et al. "Trust-oriented affordances: A five-country study of news trustworthiness and its socio-technical articulations." New Media & Society (2022): 14614448221096334.

[3] Zeng, Jing, and Crystal Abidin. "'# OkBoomer, time to meet the Zoomers': Studying the memefication of intergenerational politics on TikTok." Information, Communication & Society 24.16 (2021): 2459-2481.

[4] Kaye, D. Bondy Valdovinos, Xu Chen, and Jing Zeng. "The co-evolution of two Chinese mobile short video apps: Parallel platformization of Douyin and TikTok." Mobile Media & Communication 9.2 (2021): 229-253.

politicians use TikTok to attract young people's participation and use it as an alternative as capital in political games.[5]

It is emphasized that this research focuses more on TikTok as a social media platform that has been developing in recent years. Moreover, the need to be present on social media for politicians actually has the aim of being able to show how they appear by showing what they do and displaying what they want to show to the public.[6] Later, people will understand that social media is an inseparable part of politics. That is because apart from performative factors, there is a participatory dimension where politics is a game[7]. Until finally, social media became a permanent and comprehensive campaign strategy for building a legacy.[8]

In politics on social media, self-affirmation is important because it shows the politician's position and attitude. Self-affirmation refers more to how a politician presents themselves to the public with various influencing factors. It relates to people who want to maintain their integrity as a correct and good person by supporting behavior that confirms themselves with psychological pressure, strengthening political beliefs by providing appropriate information.[9] TikTok has also become a medium that can be used to affirm the self-affirmation of politicians.

Expression is related to self-affirmation, especially on social media. Self-affirmation shows identity development by displaying expressions through social processes or interactions by displaying personality as an effort to demonstrate identity. This effort to build identity is because social media is a realm for attracting public support and sympathy. This can be shown by efforts to construct expressions to support politicians' self-affirmation on social media. Expression in politics shows political views that strengthen self-affirmation so as to build affiliation in the virtual realm. [10] The main affiliation that politicians want to build on TikTok is the younger generation because

[5] Vijay, Darsana, and Alex Gekker. "Playing politics: How Sabarimala played out on TikTok." American behavioral scientist 65.5 (2021): 712-734.

[6] Glas, René, et al. "The playful citizen: An introduction." (2019): 9-29.

[7] Gordon, Eric, and Stephen Walter. "Meaningful inefficiencies: Resisting the logic of technological efficiency in the design of civic systems." The Playful Citizen 1.2019 (2019): 310-334.

[8] Moir, Aidan. "The Use of TikTok for political campaigning in Canada: The case of jagmeet singh." Social Media+ Society 9.1 (2023): 20563051231157604.

[9] Mason, Lilliana. "'I disrespectfully agree": The differential effects of partisan sorting on social and issue polarization." American journal of political science 59.1 (2015): 128-145.

[10] Weeks, Brian E., et al. "Incidental exposure, selective exposure, and political information sharing: Integrating online exposure patterns and expression on social media." Journal of computer-mediated communication 22.6 (2017): 363-379.

they are the majority of its users. Social media has become a locus for the development of political expression among the younger generation to make productive political communication a political consequence.[11]

This research focuses on examining the content on the TikTok account owned by Erick Thohir. Since 23 October 2019, he has been appointed as Minister of Indonesian State-Owned Enterprises (BUMN). Apart from that, on February 16 2023, Thohir became General Chair of the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI). In the book entitled AKHLAK FOR THE NATION written by Erick Thohir and Ary Ginanjar Agustian (2020), Thohir describes himself as having been in the professional world for the last three decades. Thohir is a government official who wants to present himself with many achievements by showing his competence.[12] Thohir is also a minister who is said to be a politician who has the ambition to become a presidential or vice presidential candidate in the 2024 election.

This research focuses on exploring self-affirmation as a political image construction carried out by Erick Thohir on his TikTok account. Well, self-affirmation as a political image construction is studied using the expression approach displayed by Erick Thohir in content on TikTok. The focus of the research is to explore the self-affirmation strategy used by Erick Thohir in constructing an image on TikTok and determine the impact of this self-affirmation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

TikTok and Political Participation

TikTok as a new type of social media is also considered a form of technology that encourages public participation in politics. TikTok is able to bring politics closer to people's grasp. It also makes politics far from being stiff and formal. TikTok is a video application that is popular among teenagers to show funny actions.[13]

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[11] Literat, Ioana, and Neta Kligler-Vilenchik. "TikTok as a key platform for youth political expression: Reflecting on the opportunities and stakes involved." Social Media+ Society 9.1 (2023): 20563051231157595.
[12] Hariyono, Theresia Ariyani, Gatut Priyowidodo, and Titi Nur Vidyarini. "Strategi Impression Management Erick Thohir sebagai Menteri BUMN melalui Akun Instagram@ Erickthohir." Jurnal e-Komunikasi 9.2 (2021).
[13] Vijay, Darsana, and Alex Gekker.

Social media is a forum for expression in politics. Every content presented on TikTok also has a message that contains certain motives and goals. TikTok is also a platform that is able to encourage collective action and influence public opinion.[14]

However, TikTok as a form of social media apart from encouraging participation also creates a responsibility that politics is a collective property. However, social media cannot be separated from algorithms, giving rise to politics that are subject to algorithms, giving rise to many adjustments. TikTok has advantages in the affective dimension as a social media platform to encourage political participation among young people.[15]

Self-Affirmation and Cultural Image Construction

Self-affirmation is generally known as a concept that is widely known in psychological studies. However, it can also be known in politics and become an interesting study on social media. Self-affirmation is not just a statement, but it is a confession in the form of affirmation about one's self. It is not just in the form of a statement, but an attitude and behavior that a person shows.

Self-affirmation is an action that manifests one's abilities and then affirms one's feelings of self-integrity, then positions people to maintain perceptions of global acceptance rather than being accepted in a specific domain and display humility to show pro-social attitudes such as empathy which shows one's personality.[16]

Self-affirmations also have a purpose. It is often associated with leadership. Self-affirmation display a person's character values[17], facilitate conflict[18], and understand social psychology.[19] (Hanel et al. , 2023).

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[14] Abidin, Crystal. "Mapping internet celebrity on TikTok: Exploring attention economies and visibility labours." Cultural science journal 12.1 (2021): 77-103.

[15] Brown, Yanni, Barbara Pini, and Adele Pavlidis. "Affective design and memetic qualities: Generating affect and political engagement through bushfire TikToks." Journal of sociology 60.1 (2024): 121-137.

[16] Sherman, David K., and Geoffrey L. Cohen. "The psychology of self-defense: Self-affirmation theory." Advances in experimental social psychology 38 (2006): 183-242.

[17] McQueen, Amy, and William MP Klein. "Experimental manipulations of self-affirmation: A systematic review." Self and Identity 5.4 (2006): 289-354.

[18] Sherman, David K., Jacob Brookfield, and Lauren Ortosky. "Intergroup conflict and barriers to common ground: A self-affirmation perspective." Social and Personality Psychology Compass 11.12 (2017): e12364.

[19] Hanel, Paul HP, et al. "Using self-affirmation to increase intellectual humility in debate." Royal Society open science 10.2 (2023): 220958.

Self-affirmation for people has consequences because it relates to various aspects of life. Affirmation in politics is often associated with psychological linking efforts to bind behavior, beliefs and groups which produce many impacts such as policies, beliefs and sources of information.[20] Self-affirmation also shows the value of both left and right wing politics to strengthen efforts to demonstrate good behavior at the personal or group level.[21] This shows that self-affirmation is closely related to the image construction of politicians.

Self-affirmation is an effort for politics to affirm itself by displaying one's integrity thereby opening up opportunities for opposing parties by displaying group beliefs and behavior.[22] So, self-affirmation can become an attitude of image construction related to personal and societal agendas.

Self-affirmation in the virtual realm is different from in the real realm. That's because there is behavior that shows clear differences. In the virtual realm, self-affirmation can have a positive impact on active participation in discussions thereby strengthening self-worth.[23] In this way, self-affirmation will strengthen the image built by politicians so that they have a positive impression in the eyes of the public.

METHOD

The paradigm used in this research is constructive in researching TikTok. With this constructive paradigm, it is the basis that this research does not provide criticism, but discovers digital political phenomena with the basis of seeking in-depth understanding and meaning.

The approach to this research is qualitative. This is because this research examines TikTok with a more social approach and does not use survey calculations. The research method applied is qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis can be used to examine the information practices of content creators on social media such as TikTok by paying attention to context so that they can determine cause and effect

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[20] Lyons, Benjamin A., et al. "Self-affirmation and identity-driven political behavior." Journal of Experimental Political Science 9.2 (2022): 225-240.

[21] Badea, Constantina, et al. "Self-affirmation, political value congruence, and support for refugees." Journal of Applied Social Psychology 47.7 (2017): 355-365.

[22] Binning, Kevin R., et al. "Seeing the other side: Reducing political partisanship via self-affirmation in the 2008 presidential election." Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy 10.1 (2010): 276-292.

[23] Park, Inyoung, et al. "Avatar-mediated communication in video conferencing: Effect of self-affirmation on debating participation focusing on moderation effect of avatar." International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction 39.3 (2023): 464-475.

relationships.[24] With qualitative content analysis, we try to get at the meaning-making and remembering processes shown on social media.[25]

The TikTok content studied was erick.thohir with a number of followers reaching 1.5 million. This is the official account belonging to Erick Thohir who describes himself on his TikTok profile as Minister of BUMN RI and Chairman of PSSI. The duration of the content studied was one year, namely January 2023 to April 2023. The number of video content studied on the TikTok account reached 15 videos selected with a purposive sample.

To support the qualitative content analysis research method, researchers also used thematic analysis to classify Erick Thohir's TikTok content. The main goal of a thematic analyst is to capture hidden meanings and determine orientation to the data so that it has clear concepts and values.[26]

Later, the research will produce certain themes related to self-affirmation as an image construction. There are several themes chosen by researchers in the content belonging to Erick Thohir's account, namely Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), with five videos. Apart from that, another theme chosen was related to the Indonesian Football Association (PSSI), consisting of five videos. Themes about NU and PSSI are two interesting things in Erick Thohir's efforts to show self-affirmation in shaping his image through political expression on TikTok.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The focus of the research was carried to explore the self-affirmation strategy used by Erick Thohir in constructing an image on TikTok and determined the impact of this self-affirmation. By using qualitative content analysis supported by thematic analysis in coding, the research was able to reveal the main objectives of this research.

Self-Affirmation Strategies In Image Construction

Creative Content

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[24] Lookingbill, Valerie. "Examining nonsuicidal self-injury content creation on TikTok through qualitative content analysis." Library & information science research 44.4 (2022): 101199.

[25] Jong, Wouter, Michel LA Dückers, and Peter G. van der Velden. "Crisis leadership by mayors: A qualitative content analysis of newspapers and social media on the MH17 disaster." *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management* 24.4 (2016): 286-295.

[26] Braun, Virginia, Victoria Clarke, and Nikki Hayfield. "'A starting point for your journey, not a map': Nikki Hayfield in conversation with Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke about thematic analysis." *Qualitative research in psychology* 19.2 (2022): 424-445.

TikTok content is a show of creative abilities on social media. Moreover, TikTok is a social media platform that is known for promoting innovation and creativity. Various videos uploaded on TikTok must also show a creative side to penetrate the algorithm and become popular so they can go viral. That way, content on TikTok is not just about quantity, but pays more attention to quality.

In the 2 minute 3 second video content, Erick Thohir also uploaded a video about the excitement of the 1 Century Nahdlatul Ulama reception at the Gelora Delta Sidoarjo Stadio. In the video description, he expressed his gratitude for the enthusiasm and orderliness of all Nadliyin residents. "As the largest Islamic organization, NU has existed through the ages. From the era of independence, reform, until now, in the digital era. NU remains relevant and loved," said Erick Thohir.

The prologue of the video attracts attention to how he dialogues with the Banser members who are preparing to perform the attraction. This dialogue is something that attracts the attention of TikTok viewers because the video does not directly show Erick Thohir's speech and the excitement of the event. However, it actually shows how prepared this spectacular event is. The dialogue held by Erick Thohir also did not discuss preparations, but instead showed nationalism. "Homeland?" he asked. Banser answered, "The price is dead!". Then, when asked again, "Pancasila!", Banser answered, "Glory!".

Then, creative videos are also displayed on content related to PSSI. "I see Mother Earth is in trouble," says the song entitled Mother Earth which is the background for a short 48 second video. The content in the video, Erick Thohir is greeting the U20 National Team players. The video was uploaded on March 29, 2023. Furthermore, on March 23, 2023, Erick Thohir uploaded a video of himself and the PSSI team landing in Doha, Qatar, to meet with FIFA officials. "For the team, everyone is ready to meet and negotiate with FIFA. Hopefully there will be a way out. How can we provide the best solution," he said in the video.

Creativity on TikTok is essential because it is directly related to inspiration and imagination. This can be evoked with songs or plots. Of course, it is supported by clear and genius visuals. This will encourage the emergence of videos that attract attention so that they can go viral.

The use of social media in politics also encourages the need for critical and creative literacy[27] where social media encourages the public to express new ideas and present different perspectives that allow them to be known to the outside world. TikTok users have the creativity to create videos, replicate videos and frame videos related to an event.[28] TikTok users produce political content with videos to elicit responses from others and encourage cross-partisan discussions.[29] TikTok is a medium that supports and demands creativity because it makes it easier for users to express themselves easily, including in a political context with the support of dance, memes and supporting solidarity.[30]

With videos that promote creativity, it is hoped that they can penetrate the TikTok algorithm. That is also what is shown in various videos uploaded to Erick Thohir's account. This virality has become a school of thought in TikTok so that creativity is a way. The For You Page on TikTok indeed presents content that is curated based on an algorithm based on personal interests and previously viewed videos.[31]

Entertaining Content

TikTok is different from other social media platforms. TikTok is a more casual and relaxed type of social media. This is very different from Twitter which tends to be stiff and formal. That's why a lot of video content on TikTok is not only informative, but tends to be entertaining. Content that is funny and has lots of jokes will attract attention and tend to be watched by many people. That's because social media is not a place to attract sympathy, but many people access TikTok to get entertainment at their fingertips.

Because of this, various TikTok content uploaded to Erick Thohir's account also contains entertaining things, generally showing funny things. Apart from that, the video also displays background sounds that are currently popular or appropriate to the content of the video. Entertainment is an effective strategy for

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[27] Glas, René, et al
[28] Vijay, Darsana, and Alex Gekker
[29] Medina Serrano, Juan Carlos, Orestis Papakyriakopoulos, and Simon Hegelich. "Dancing to the partisan beat: A first analysis of political communication on TikTok." Proceedings of the 12th ACM Conference on Web Science. 2020.
[30] Kaye, D. Bondy Valdovinos, Xu Chen, and Jing Zeng
[31] Zulli, Diana, and David James Zulli. "Extending the Internet meme: Conceptualizing technological mimesis and imitation publics on the TikTok platform." New media & society 24.8 (2022): 1872-1890.

shows that politicians or officials are not serious and formal people. However, this is an effort to show that Erick Thohir is a person who understands and understands social media.

Like some of Erick Thohir's content related to NU, Erick Thohir also displays entertaining content. NU, which is identified with the Prophet's prayers, was also affirmed by Erick Thohir. He uploaded a video of the Asyghil prayer sung by Azzam Nur Mu'jizat during the 1 Century NU reception. The video was uploaded on February 8, 2023 with a duration of 1 minute 26 seconds. Moreover, the expression shown by Erick Thohir was also appreciative of Azzam, who has limited vision but has a golden voice. This affirmation shows that Erick Thohir knows the most essential things about NU, such as prayers. Then, in a video uploaded on January 10 2023, Erick Thohir also showed footage of himself giving prayers at the event. The video shows him offering prayers together with Yenni Wahid and Mahfud MD.

Video related to PSSI when Erick Thohir greets several children on the sidelines of a football match. "What is that?" Erick Thohir joked when a teenager was crowding around to greet Erick Thohir, but one teenager fell. The video shows a teenager who stumbled and fell while trying to shake hands with Erick Thohir. Erick Thohir immediately greeted and hugged the smiling teenager. "It's been checked, thank God his little brother is fine, In fact he ran even faster when he was on duty as a ball boy," said Erick Thohir in the caption of his video on TikTok. The video was uploaded on April 16, 2023.

One of the advantages of TikTok, apart from the large number of users, is that it is friendly with funny and entertaining videos so that it has become an important part of political expression.[32] Based on virality and memetic remixes, TikTok is a social media platform that offers light entertainment by displaying many things.[33]

What is the purpose of entertaining content? Erick Thohir's various content has the feel of presenting himself as a relaxed and not tense person. Through jokes, it is actually an effort made by politicians as influencers to build a mood and vibe with their followers.[34] TikTok has the power to provide entertaining content and can persuade

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[32] Vijay, Darsana, and Alex Gekker
[33] Zeng, Jing, and Crystal Abidin
[34] Abidin, Crystal. Internet celebrity: Understanding fame online. Emerald Publishing Limited, 2018.

people to adopt new technology.[35] Humor has significant power to strengthen a person's presence and facilitate the success of the message to be conveyed.[36] A study show that TikTok is able to increase political participation because it provides a complex space through humor, strangeness and juxtaposition.[37]

Social media creates celebrity politicians so that they are able to accumulate social capital to gain political momentum.[38] Politicians who become celebrities will become influencers who build connections based on institutional affiliation.[39] Based on visuals, social media is able to build a unique and different persona and is legitimized by the quantity of its followers.[40] Then, self-affirmation in the virtual realm is able to demonstrate efforts to renew self-value that reflects the avatar displayed by a person.[41]

The Impact Of Self-Affirmation In Image Construction

Self-Affirmation Binds Identity

The self-affirmation that Erick Thohir shows in his various TikTok videos is that he is building an identity that he wants to achieve and become a target in his political career. Identity is the impact of self-affirmation that a person expresses to the public. The public will always identify people with certain groups or certain things. This could be positive, and it could be negative depending on the point of view of looking at the affirmation. Therefore, the identity that becomes self-affirmation must take into account society's perspective.

Erick Thohir showed self-affirmation when he also uploaded a short 37 second video entitled "Duet Paspamres and Banser" on February 7 2023. "This is extraordinary, the first time Banser has been allowed to board the presidential plane," said Erick Thohir, who was wearing a typical Banser jacket. This was an effort to show that he was part of Banser as a very important autonomous body in NU. Moreover, the public knows that the most loyal NU member is Banser. Banser is a confirmation of Erick Thohir's self-affirmation.

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[35] Wang, Yunwen. "Humor and camera view on mobile short-form video apps influence user experience and technology-adoption intent, an example of TikTok (DouYin)." Computers in human behavior 110 (2020): 106373.

[36] Skalski, Paul, et al. "Effects of humor on presence and recall of persuasive messages." Communication Quarterly 57.2 (2009): 136-153.

[37] Brown, Yanni, Barbara Pini, and Adele Pavlidis

[38] Zulli, Diana, and David James Zulli.

[39] Lewis, Rebecca. "Alternative influence: Broadcasting the reactionary right on YouTube." (2018).

[40] Abidin, Crystal.

[41] Park, Inyoung, et al

Why did Erick Thohir choose Banser over other NU wings? So far, Banser is a wing of NU known as guard the kyai. They are a group known as NU's vanguard in fighting for NU. The public also knows that Banser is a group of NU young people who have a hierarchical and strong level and level of cadre formation. Erick Thohir has also taken part in cadre formation as a Banser cadre.

The expression displayed by Erick Thohir also shows pride that he is a Banser member who can board the presidential plane and is close to power. It represents that Banser is also in the circle of power. The expression displayed by Erick Thohir in the video also shows high self-confidence. This was very natural because he was the only person on the presidential plane who wore a Banser jacket. That made him a differentiator that he was the person of interest on the plane. This cannot be separated from the fact that he is the chairman of the NU Centennial reception committee.

Then, the self-affirmation built by Erick Thohir was related to himself as chairman of PSSI. He confirmed that he was a fighter who wanted to improve football in Indonesia by becoming chairman of PSSI. Various TikTok video content featuring Erick Thohir shows his seriousness with the various approaches and strategies he uses.
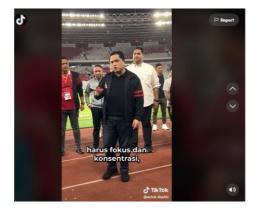

Figure 1. Erick Thohir's screen display while giving motivation to the PSSI U-20 team. (TikTok @erick.thohir, April 15, 2023)

Tau kenapa kalah? Ayo, jawab dong…. Mental. Skill kalian jauh lebih bagus dari mereka. Kita masih ada beberapa hari kedepan untuk persiapan, dan kita ingin membuat sejarah, sudah sepakat kan? Kita mau pergi sebagai orang yang kalah atau sebagai orang yang menang? Fisik bukan alasan. Kalau ada mental siapa lari!! Ayo, come on!! Ada satu game, harus fokus dan konsentrasi. Jangan pikirkan

*hasilnya!! Kalah menang itu biasa. Tapi berikan yang terbaik di lapangan, itu yang luar biasa! (TikTok @erick.thohir, 15 April 2023) (*Do you know why you lost? Come on, answer me... Mentally. Your skills are much better than theirs. We still have a few days to prepare, and we want to make history, that's agreed, right? Do we want to go as losers or as winners? Physicality is no excuse. If there is a mentality, who will run!! Come on, come on!! There is one game, you have to focus and concentrate. Don't think about the results!! Winning and losing is normal. But give your best on the pitch, that's amazing! (TikTok @erick.thohir, April 15, 2023)

Erick Thohir's self-affirmation in various expressions shown in the video shows that he is a politician who plays with many feet. Even though he is the general chairman of PSSI who has authority in organizational policies and strategies, he also shows himself as a field leader. He went directly to the field to provide motivation to the team of players. This is a self-affirmation that he is a leader who is willing to listen directly to the voices below. He also provides motivation directly in front of football players, without needing a lot of unnecessary rhetoric.

Erick Thohir's expression of self-affirmation is optimism about a struggle. This reinforces the importance of a leader's struggle not just sitting behind a desk, but rather emphasizes the importance of knowing all the conditions in the field so that they can find the right solution. Optimism also shows that what humans do is an effort without thinking about the results. However, Erick Thohir wants to build a self-affirmation with the expression that he does not have many demands, but he has an affirmation with a specific target.

By affirming himself with NU and PSSI, Erick Thohir is trying to build an identity to construct the image that he is someone who is close and a direct part of these two mass bases. The use of TikTok in politics can also bind affective ties and identity-based politics as an effort to strengthen political participation.[42] To build connections on social media, politicians must focus on personal experiences so they can build social networks.[43] TikTok has advantages over social media because it relies on a vertically oriented and forward-facing camera, thereby strengthening social presence and immersion with

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[42] Vijay, Darsana, and Alex Gekker
[43] Glas, René, et al

people who view it.[44] The political expression shown by TikTok is a symbol that supports collectivism to create a social movement.[45]

Self-Affirmation Legalizes Polarization

The content displayed by Erick Thohir on TikTok shows that he is building polarization as his support base. Even though he presents himself as a professional, Erick Thohir still uses a religious approach in various appearances. The polarization built by Erick Thohir shows his self-affirmation of populist politics by trying to gain support from right-wing groups.

Erick Thohir's various expressions confirmed that he was a member of Nahdatul Ulama (NU). This is shown in the 1 minute 27 second video content about National Level NU Porseni. In his video description, Erick Thohir revealed that NU had agreed to educate Nahdliyin young women to become warriors through sports and arts and culture. In the video, he also shows the impression that he is building an expression that he is part of NU by being appointed as the National NU Porseni committee.

Figure 1.2 Erick Thohir delivers a speech at the opening of the Nahdatul Ulama National Porseni. (TikTok @erick.thohir, January 7, 2023)

Pak Ganjar sama saya InsyaAllah selalu seiring. Seiring bukan berarti sama. Pak Ganjar ini pendukung MU, kalau saya Asernal, kalau KH Nusron Wahid pendukung Manchester City lain lagi, Mbak Yenny yang sedang dapat beban tugas jadi panitia sama saya pendukung Newcasle United. Tapi, Alhamdulillah, walaupun kita berbeda, tapi hatinya sama buat NU semua. (TikTok erick.thohir, 17 Januari 2023) (Mr. Ganjar and I, God willing, will always be together. Along does not mean the same.

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[44] Wang, Yunwen.
[45] Literat, Ioana, and Neta Kligler-Vilenchik.

Mr. Ganjar is a MU supporter, I am Asernal, KH Nusron Wahid is a Manchester City supporter, it's different, Mbak Yenny, who currently has the workload of being on the committee, and I am a supporter of Newcastle United. But, Alhamdulillah, even though we are different, our hearts are the same for all NU. (TikTok erick.thohir, January 17 2023)

This shows Erick Thohir's efforts to build closeness with NU residents. He positioned himself as a NU citizen who fought for NU. This cannot be separated from the fact that NU has a large mass base in Indonesia. In fact, Erick Thohir was not previously known to be active at NU. Political interests for the 2024 election made him prefer NU over other groups. The expression shown by Erick Thohir also shows that he is a NU member who is fighting for NU. This was nothing more than to win the hearts of NU residents as a self-affirmation that Erick Thohir was an inseparable part of NU. The various content displayed by Erick Thohir with his affirmation of being with NU is a form of polarization. Although TikTok is able to increase interaction between politicians and their supporters, it also has the risk of strengthening polarization.

NU is a social organization with members reaching tens of millions. It became the power of a large and influential religious group. That is the reason why Erick Thohir affirms himself more with NU. However, closeness to NU gave rise to political polarization. This is because Erick Thohir prefers to attract support from traditional wing groups. Erick Thohir's polarization will give rise to his self-affirmation that he tends to prioritize this group.

In fact, polarization is not only related to religion. But it is also related to football and PSSI. Football is not just a sport. However, it is a powerful political force because it has fans with very strong emotional and psychological attachments. Erick Thohir volunteered as a candidate for general chairman of PSSI and was finally elected. It became a self-affirmation that he constructed his image as a football leader in Indonesia.

Saya bersyukur terlahir sebagai orang Indonesia. Saya tumbuh besar di negeri ini. Negeri dengan keragaman, suku, budaya, agama. Namun dipersatukan dengan Bhineka Tunggal Ika. Apalagi yang sama indahnya dengan itu? Yaitu Sepak Bola. Sepak Bola bukan sekedar olah raga. Sepak bola di Indonesia harus menjadi panji

perdamaian. Sepak bola harus terus menjaga dan mempersatukan Sabang sampai Merauke. Di bawah nama Garuda, kami punya harapan dan cita-cita besar. Saya selalu bermimpi suatu hari lagu Indonesia Raya bisa bergema di kompetisi Sepak Bola Internasional. Esok dengan segala kerendahan hati, izinkan saya melayani bangsa untuk membangun dunia sepak bola Indonesia yang bersih dan berprestasi. (TikTok erick.thohir, 15 Februari 2023) (*I am grateful to be born as an Indonesian. I grew up in this country. A country with diversity, ethnicity, culture, religion. But united with Bhinneka Tunggal Ika. What else could be as beautiful as that? Namely Football. Football is not just a sport. Football in Indonesia must be a banner of peace. Football must continue to protect and unite Sabang to Merauke. Under the name Garuda, we have big hopes and aspirations. I always dreamed that one day the song Indonesia Raya could echo in international football competitions. Tomorrow, with all humility, allow me to serve the nation to build a clean and high-achieving world of Indonesian football.* (TikTok erick.thohir, February 15 2023)

By becoming general chairman of PSSI, Erick Thohir automatically built political polarization in his image construction. With the statement that he will unite Sabang to Merauke and realize hopes and aspirations by bringing Indonesia into various international competitions, this is a partial promise for Indonesian football. Carrying the theme of clean football also confirms himself as a clean leader. This is confirmation that he is indeed a leader who has never been involved in a corruption scandal while in power.

The expression shown by Erick Thohir was confidence that he would win the battle for PSSI general chairman. This is very natural because he is in the circle of power. He also confirmed himself as PSSI's savior with the various scandals that befell him. This is reinforced by his expression placing him as a hero who will lead PSSI in the TikTok video.

Erick Thohir also expressed the same thing in a video uploaded on January 15 2023. "We have the guts, for clean and high-achieving football. "In the future, there should be no dirty hands in Indonesian football," he said. At that time, he displayed optimism as a candidate for general chairman of PSSI who could win the battle. The issues and agenda promoted by Erick Thohir also have the theme of the public's voice

which wants PSSI to have less administrators who cheat and have achievements on the international stage.

The polarization shown by Erick Thohir is that he will prioritize football over other types of sports. It is admitted that football has many fans compared to other types of sports. Not only that, but how Erick Thohir will defend the public's view that sport has priority, but he is fighting for other interests. It could be that some people will think that Erick Thohir prioritizes football more than his main job as Minister of BUMN. Thus, football will have huge consequences for him. That would create very real polarization.

CONCLUSION

Self-affirmation is an effort to construct an image by a public official on social media. It has the aim of building a perspective in the eyes of the public about the associations or relationships established by that person. This aims to build a strong attachment with community groups. This is very useful for politicians who want to gain popularity and gain the sympathy of mass support.

Erick Thohir's self-affirmation strategy on TikTok is to create creative and entertaining content as an effort to build an image through political expression. The main goal of this content is to penetrate the FYP or TikTok algorithm system so that it can become viral content that can be watched by many people. In the future, it will become a magnet to popularize Erick Thohir's name and gain sympathy.

This research found that self-affirmation has an impact on identity construction with the image displayed on Erick Thohir's TikTok account. The identity constructed by Erick Thohir is that he is an inseparable part of NU and he specifically prides himself on being a Banser member. Apart from that, Erick Thohir also built an identity as the savior of football in Indonesia by becoming Chairman of PSSI. Both organizations have large masses so they can become magnets for political power for Erick Thohir. However, the choice to approach NU and PSSI risks how Erick Thohir builds polarization in the political game he is playing. This is a choice to show that every political movement in the form of self-affirmation carried out by Erick Thohir has an impact on society.

This research has limitations because it only examines one social media account, namely TikTok and with a certain theme. Future research could develop studies on the responses of followers of TikTok accounts so that they focus more on how interactions

occur with TikTok content. Apart from that, this research also does not look at public voices, so that in the future other research can focus on public comments or opinions about various content belonging to government officials.

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