
WHEN VISUALS SPEAK: THE IMPACT OF ACCENTUATIONS ON DECISION OUTCOMES



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Abstract

This study investigates how visual accentuation influences re-election intention among Generation Z, with visual appeal and self-brand congruence as mediating factors. The study focuses on the 2024 Indonesian Legislative Election, examining a campaign that used a distinctive visual strategy featuring a popular fictional character. A quantitative approach was applied, with data collected from 400 Generation Z respondents in the Central Java II electoral district. Structural Equation Modeling Partial Least Squares (SEM PLS) was used to analyze the relationships among visual accentuation, visual appeal, self-brand congruence, and re-election intention. The results indicate that visual accentuation significantly affects re-election intention. Stronger effects occur indirectly through visual appeal and self-brand congruence than through direct exposure alone, suggesting that psychological evaluations enhance the impact of visual elements on voter behavior. These findings highlight the importance of designing political campaigns that leverage visual strategies to engage younger voters effectively. The study provides practical guidance for political communication and lays the foundation for future research on visual-based persuasion in electoral contexts.

Keywords: Visual Accentuation, Visual Appeal, Self-Brand Congruence, Re-Election Intention

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, political communication strategies have experienced profound transformations, particularly in developing marketing oriented approaches aimed at effectively engaging and influencing Generation Z voters. As first time young voters, this cohort prefers visually compelling and authentic content over traditional verbal messaging (Alifatunnisa, Azzahra, & Nurfalah, 2024). Generation Z represents a substantial portion of the electorate in Indonesia. Based on official statistics, Gen Z voters constituted approximately 22.85% of the national registered voters in 2024 (Fath Putra, 2023), and in the Central Java II constituency, they accounted for 23-24% across Jepara, Kudus, and Demak (Budiawan, 2024). The significant presence of Gen Z voters highlights the importance of understanding their engagement with visual political communication.

This pattern opens opportunities for politicians to build their personal image through consistent and appealing visual content. Previous studies have shown that visually attractive and consistent content can enhance engagement and trust among young voters toward legislative candidates (Sastro & Zulkarnain, 2025). Additionally, visual dramatization can attract Instagram users as long as these visuals align with the candidate's identity (Ariadi, Razani, Castity, & Lesmana, 2024). Meanwhile, studies on viral political communication emphasize that viral videos influence public perception primarily through their visual and viral components (Utami, 2017). These findings collectively highlight the rising importance of visual political communication for Generation Z.

Although marketing, visual political communication has gained scholarly attention, gaps remain in understanding how specific visual strategies work in Indonesia's political context. One example is the innovative use of fictional characters by politicians, such as Jamaludin Malik, a legislative member for the 2024-2029 period representing Central Java II, who employed the fictional character Ultraman in his campaign. While the use of fictional characters in political campaigns is not unprecedented globally, its application in Indonesia, especially to engage Generation Z, remains rare. Furthermore, several factors influencing the effectiveness of visual strategies, such as low political engagement among Gen Z, limited understanding of self-brand congruence and visual appeal, and the lack of studies examining mediating effects on re-election intention remain underexplored (Suhariyanto & Rozak, 2025).

Research on the effects of visual elements in political marketing and voter behavior demonstrates results that vary according to context. Images used by political candidates on social media generate different levels of audience engagement depending on platform and visual style. Candidate-centered images on Facebook tend to increase engagement, whereas informal or personalized visuals on Instagram do not consistently produce stronger effects (Farkas & Bene, 2021). Studies of campaign posters indicate that visual campaign tools remain widely employed, particularly in areas with limited access to digital media, yet their effectiveness in influencing voter behavior depends on demographic characteristics and situational context (Utomo, 2025). Other research shows that visual elements can capture attention and shape audience perceptions, but the direct impact of visual accentuation on behavioral intentions, including voting decisions, cannot be generalized universally (Boomgaarden, Boukes, & Iorgoveanu, 2016). These findings highlight the importance of considering audience characteristics and the integration of visual elements with broader campaign strategies when evaluating the effectiveness of visual political communication.

The study offers a major theoretical contribution by enhancing frameworks in visual persuasion, self-congruity, and political branding. Previous research in visual persuasion yields mixed results regarding how visual cues affect audience attitudes and behaviors. Some scholars argue that intensified visual elements in advertisements strengthen consumer response and facilitate deeper engagement (Phillips & McQuarrie, 2010). Empirical evidence also suggests that emphasizing aesthetic and social values can boost consumer behavior. Other indicates that aesthetic or social-value accentuation may enhance consumer responses (Ferdinand & Zuhroh, 2022). Other demonstrates that visual cues circulating in digital political environments do not influence all audience segments equally. Their findings reveal that visual political content tends to affect liberal viewers more strongly, while conservative audiences show limited responsiveness to similar visual stimuli (V. Dan & F. Arendt, 2021).

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in integrating visual accentuation with two psychological mechanisms, visual appeal and Self-Brand Congruence, which have not been examined together in relation to Re-Election Intention. Previous research establishes that visual appeal shapes emotional responses, aesthetic judgment, and the perceived attractiveness of visual content (Reimann, Zaichkowsky, Neuhaus, Bender, & Weber, 2010). Research on Self-Brand Congruence demonstrates its role in predicting candidate preference and political brand attachment through psychological identity alignment (Pich & Dean, 2015). Existing studies do not explore whether the influence of visual accentuation on political decision making operates indirectly through these mediators. The absence of such an integrated framework constitutes a major theoretical gap in political branding and political psychology literature.

The study further contributes to political branding theory by expanding its conceptual boundaries. Previous work in political branding focuses largely on verbal identity, candidate imagery, and emotional narratives (Smith & French, 2009). Political branding literature has not yet examined the role of nonconventional accentuated visuals, including fictional characters, in shaping young voters' political perceptions. The findings of this study address this gap by examining how identity congruence with accentuated political visuals influences Re-Election Intention.

The first novelty of this research is that it represents the earliest academic study investigating the use of a fictional character, Ultraman, as a visual accentuation strategy within a legislative campaign in Indonesia. Previous research has examined accentuation strategies within commercial marketing contexts and has demonstrated the influence of accentuation on sales performance (Ferdinand & Zuhroh, 2022). However, these studies have not linked the concept of accentuation to political communication nor examined the use of popular culture characters as visual persuasion tools. Accordingly, this study extends the application of accentuation from commercial marketing to political communication and enriches scholarly discourse on the use of popular culture symbols and the phenomenon of political entertainmentization in the Southeast Asian political context.

The second novelty lies in constructing and empirically testing a model that links visual accentuation to Re-Election Intention through visual appeal and Self-Brand Congruence. Studies on visual accentuation in commercial branding contexts provide foundational insights (Pieters & Wedel, 2004), yet they do not apply these concepts to political communication nor incorporate psychological mediation. Studies on political visuals describe their persuasive characteristics but do not integrate layered psychological

pathways (Grabe & Bucy, 2009). No prior research has combined these variables into one comprehensive framework in either global or Indonesian political communication scholarship. This study addresses the gap by providing empirical evidence on how Generation Z voters process accentuated political visuals cognitively and affectively and how these processes shape their intention to support the same candidate again.

This study aims to address this gap by analyzing the effectiveness of the Ultraman based visual accentuation strategy used by Jamaludin Malik in political communication targeted at Generation Z voters in Indonesia. The study examines how visual appeal and self-brand congruence mediate the influence of visual accentuation on re-election intention among Generation Z voters in Central Java II. The analysis seeks to explain the psychological mechanisms that shape Gen Z responses to politically dramatized visual messages.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Political Communication Strategy

A political communication strategy is a deliberate method used by political actors to craft persuasive messages, choose media channels, and influence public perception during campaigns or broader political discourse (Karlsen & Enjolras, 2016). In contemporary hybrid media environments, political communication often merges traditional media coverage with tailored social-media content. Coordination between these two spheres determines the overall effectiveness of the campaign strategy (Roemmele, Gibson, & Society, 2020). Empirical studies show that candidate-centered messaging, strategic visual content, and networked supporter mobilisation significantly shape the reach and resonance of political communication within target voter segments (Bossetta, 2018).

Theoretical frameworks justify why a political communication strategy can serve as a basis for constructing variables. According to Framing Theory, the way messages are framed, what is emphasised, and how issues are presented influence how audiences interpret and evaluate political issues (Entman, 1993). Visual-oriented persuasion finds support in Visual Rhetoric Theory, which posits that images and visual design function as persuasive symbols capable of eliciting emotional, cognitive, and identity-based responses (Alim & Rahim, 2021). A further psychological basis lies in Self-Congruity Theory, which suggests individuals are more receptive to stimuli that align with their self-concept, making visual identity cues and brand (or candidate) congruence theoretically relevant for political branding and re-election intention.

Hence, political communication strategies that combine framing, visual rhetoric, and identity-based cues can logically influence political behavior and intentions, mediated through variables like visual appeal and self-brand congruence.

Visual Accentuation

Visual accentuation in political communication refers to the deliberate emphasis on visual components such as background details, symbols, colors, framing, and compositional cues to make political messages or candidate characteristics more salient and easier for audiences to interpret (V. Dan & F. J. T. I. J. o. P. P. Arendt, 2021). Subtle ideological signals embedded in a politician's visual environment help voters associate candidates with particular ideological positions and influence voting intention (V. Dan & F. J. T. I. J. o. P. P. Arendt, 2021). Candidates on different social media platforms often employ varied visual framing strategies to highlight specific personal attributes or group affiliations. Theoretical

justification for using visual accentuation as an independent variable comes from visual framing theory and visual persuasion theory. Visual framing theory proposes that the presentation of images shapes audience perception and interpretation (Grabe & Bucy, 2009). Visual persuasion theory holds that images and visual design can evoke emotional, cognitive, and identity based responses that go beyond what verbal messages alone can accomplish (Messaris, 1997).

These theoretical frameworks support treating accentuated visual elements as independent variables that influence psychological mediators such as visual appeal, identity congruence, memory recall, and political engagement; these mediators may in turn affect behavioral intentions such as re election intention.

Visual Appeal

Visual appeal describes how attractive or pleasant audiences perceive visual elements such as layout, aesthetics, color combinations, typography, and composition. Visually appealing content tends to capture attention more quickly and supports more efficient processing of messages (Dagalp & Södergren, 2024). Empirical findings demonstrate that higher visual aesthetics improve performance in visual search tasks, making target objects more salient and easier to detect during early stages of attention (Wiecek, Wentzel, & Landwehr, 2019). This implies that political messages or campaign materials with strong visual appeal are more likely to be noticed, correctly interpreted, and remembered by recipients. Visual appeal serves not just as decoration but as a strategic component in persuasion, especially when the design aligns with the candidate's values or narrative boosting positive evaluations and evoking emotional responses that can lead to voter support (Shi, Huo, & Hou, 2021).

A theoretical foundation for using visual appeal as a key variable comes from cognitive-perception theories and dual-coding/memory theories. Research on visual perception and aesthetic appeal shows that aesthetic quality of stimuli can influence attention, memory encoding, and emotional responses, which are critical mediators for attitude formation and behavioral intention (Wiecek et al., 2019). Cognitive load theory and principles from Gestalt psychology also support the idea that well-organized, aesthetic visual compositions reduce cognitive effort and improve message clarity hence increasing the likelihood of persuasive impact. Based on these theoretical grounds, visual appeal justifies its role as an independent variable influencing mediators like attention, recall, emotional response, and eventually behavioral outcomes such as political support or re-election intention.

Self-Brand Congruence

Self-brand congruence describes the extent to which an individual's self concept, including actual, ideal, social, and ideal social dimensions, aligns with the image they associate with a brand or political candidate (Michel, Torelli, Fleck, & Hubert, 2022). Empirical studies demonstrate that strong congruence between the self and a brand strengthens emotional bonds such as brand attachment and brand love, which subsequently increase behavioral support and advocacy intentions (Shimul & Phau, 2023). Theoretical grounding is found in Self Congruity Theory, which states that individuals prefer stimuli that reflect their self concept because such alignment enhances identity expression and reduces cognitive conflict. Attachment Theory further explains that when a brand or candidate

becomes connected to the self, individuals develop deeper loyalty and a stronger inclination toward supportive behavior. These theories are strongly relevant for Generation Z because this cohort relies heavily on identity-based processing when evaluating political messages. Generation Z tends to form attitudes based on authenticity, self expression, and alignment with personal values rather than solely on rational policy analysis. Self brand congruence therefore becomes a logical and theoretically supported variable for explaining how Generation Z voters interpret dramatized political visuals, internalize candidate identity, and decide their re election intention.

Re-election Intention

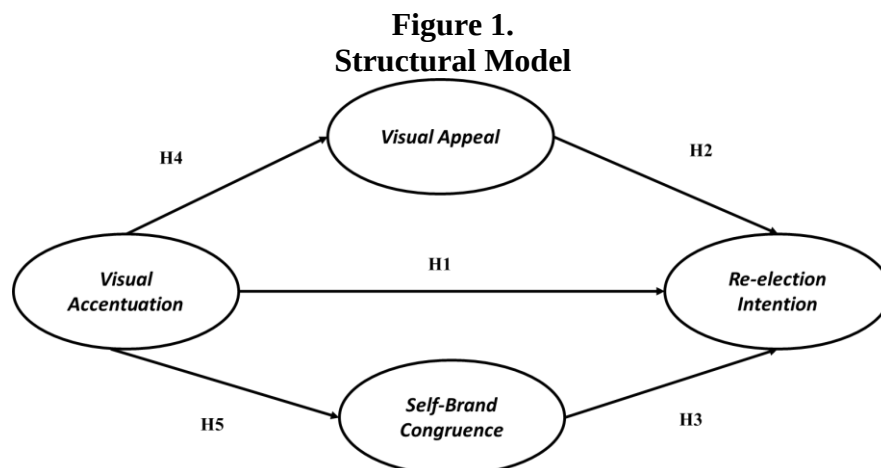
Re-election intention arises from how voters look back on an incumbent's performance, interpret their motives, and respond to communication efforts that influence public perception (Liberini, Redoano, & Proto, 2017) . Experimental evidence shows that voter decisions are shaped by policy outcomes as well as impressions of sincerity and goodwill from incumbents (Andrews & Bokemper, 2025). Visual presentation and framing function as central elements in forming voter preferences. Campaign messages that emphasize positive motives and present a candidate image aligned with voter values can increase the likelihood of winning re-election (Berk, 2025).

Social judgment theory adds a complementary theoretical basis by describing how individuals process political communication according to their existing attitudes and value structures (Sherif, 1961). Contemporary studies demonstrate that political messages that match voters' internal beliefs and identity orientations are more likely to be accepted and transformed into voting intentions (Lodge & Taber, 2013). Visual components such as framing, aesthetic appeal, and identity cues therefore operate as persuasive inputs that shape how voters evaluate candidates within their latitude of acceptance.

This theoretical logic supports the placement of Visual Appeal and Self Brand Congruence as mediating variables. Visual Appeal influences the effectiveness of political communication because visually attractive messages increase attention, emotional engagement, and favorable evaluation toward candidates, which subsequently strengthen voting intention. Self Brand Congruence serves as a deeper psychological mechanism because voters are more likely to support a candidate whose projected identity aligns with their self concept. Combined, these mechanisms explain how accentuated visuals can shape re election intention through aesthetic evaluation and identity-based processing, especially among Generation Z who are highly sensitive to visual and value oriented political cues.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Model



This study adopts a quantitative research approach employing Structural Equation Modeling - Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). This analytical technique is appropriate for examining predictive and complex causal relationships and is robust when dealing with relatively small sample sizes and non-normal data distributions. The proposed model investigates the effect of visual accentuation on re-election intention, with visual appeal and self-brand congruence specified as mediating constructs. Based on Figure 1, the model shows that Visual Accentuations (VA) influence Voter Perception (VP) and Self-Brand Congruence (SBC), which then shape Re-Election Intention (REI). Each construct is measured by its respective indicators as shown in the figure.

Sample Selection and Data Source

Table 1.
Number and Proportion of Generation Z Voters
in Indonesia and Central Java II Constituency

Region		Gen Z Voters	Percentage
Indonesia		46.800.161	22.85
Jawa Tengah		5.891.384	20.83
Jawa Tengah II	Kab. Jepara	216.861	24.00
	Kab. Kudus	145.140	22.60
	Kab. Demak	212.753	23.42

Source: BPS (2025), KPU Jepara, Kudus, and Demak (2024)

Table 1 shows the Generation Z voters in the 2024 legislative election. The target population consists of Generation Z voters in Jepara, Demak, and Kudus regencies, totaling 574,754 individuals. Using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, a minimum sample size of 400 respondents was determined to ensure adequate representation. Purposive sampling was employed to recruit participants who met the criteria of being Generation Z voters and having direct or indirect exposure to the 2024 legislative campaign. The demographic distribution indicates a higher concentration of respondents from Jepara, reflecting the population structure of the selected electoral district.

Data Collection

Data were collected between June until September 2025 through an online self-administered questionnaire distributed via the SurveyHeart platform. The instrument captured demographic characteristics, campaign exposure, and assessments of the main constructs. Of the 400 valid responses, 259 were female (64.7%) and 141 male (35.3%). Respondents were born between 1997 and 2007, with the largest cohort originating from 2001 (20.7%). A total of 386 respondents (96.5%) lived in Jepara, while Demak and Kudus each contributed seven respondents (1.8%). Most participants (93.0%) reported direct exposure to the visual political campaign under study.

The distribution indicates a strong concentration of participants from Jepara, prompting consideration of potential geographic clustering. Sampling bias literature emphasizes that disproportionate representation of a single area may limit external validity (Morrison, Lee, Gruenewald, Marzell, & misuse, 2015). Representativeness can still be justified when the target population is inherently localized or when the theoretical focus is tied to a specific region (Reynolds, Simintiras, & Diamantopoulos, 2003). In settings where political conditions, campaign visibility, and electoral dynamics are predominantly local, a Jepara-focused sample remains capable of producing relevant empirical insights (Reynolds et al., 2003). Geographic biases become more problematic when researchers attempt to generalize findings to broader populations without acknowledging the localized nature of the sample (Chen, Keglovits, Devine, Stark, & translation, 2022).

Data Analysis and Variable Measurement

Data analysis was performed using SmartPLS version 4.0. Four latent variables were measured using a ten-point Likert scale, Visual Accentuation (X1), Visual Appeal (X2 and mediator 1), Self-Brand Congruence (X3 and mediator 2), and Re-election Intention (Y). The SEM-PLS procedure was utilized to assess both the measurement model and the structural model. Path analysis was conducted to evaluate direct and mediated effects within the proposed framework. The use of SEM-PLS enables rigorous testing of theoretical relationships while accommodating model complexity and ensuring predictive relevance (Sarstedt & Cheah, 2019).

Table 1.
Measurement of Research Variables

No.	Variable	Indicators	Source
1	Visual Accentuation	- Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals are different from those of other candidates. - Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals are very attractive in my opinion. - Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals reflect the lifestyle, habits, and sense of humor of Generation Z. - Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals strongly portray local values that resonate with the mindset and overall vibe of Generation Z.	(Ferdinand & Zuhroh, 2022)
2	Visual Appeal	Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals are already very well done.	(Ramish, Zia, Saraih, Suanda, & Ansari, 2023)

No.	Variable	Indicators	Source
2	Visual Appeal	- Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals are indeed highly likable. - Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals enhance his image / In my view, Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals really stand out.	
		- Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals provide a fun and unique experience. - Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals are pleasing to the eye.	(Feng & Zhao, 2024)
4	Self-Brand Congruence	- Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals are very enjoyable. - I feel quite connected with Jamaludin Malik's campaign style. - The Ultraman visuals in Jamaludin Malik's campaign fairly represent me, as someone who is somewhat fed up with ordinary campaigns.	(Tiwari & Kumari, 2024) (Wijnands & Gill, 2020)
		Jamaludin Malik's unconventional campaign approach of appearing as Ultraman on social media really represents me as a Gen-Z.	(AlQahtani, 2025)
		- Jamaludin Malik's campaign visuals really feel like me. - The unconventional and distinctive visuals of Jamaludin Malik's campaign reflect the image I want to show to others.	(Luna-Cortés, López-Bonilla, & López-Bonilla, 2019)
		- If an election were held today, I would most likely choose Jamaludin Malik. - When thinking about which candidate to vote for, Jamaludin Malik immediately comes to mind.	(Noyan & Simsek, 2012)
6	Re-Election Intention	- I intend to vote for Jamaludin Malik again in the upcoming election. - I will encourage my friends and people around me to support Jamaludin Malik again in the next election.	(Huarng & Yu, 2019) (Jena & Sarmah, 2015)

Source: Data processed by the researcher (2025)

Table 1 presents the operationalization of the research variables, including Visual Accentuation, Visual Appeal, Self-Brand Congruence, and Re-Election Intention. Visual Accentuation captures how the campaign emphasizes distinctive visual elements that are culturally relevant and tailored to Generation Z preferences to differentiate the candidate. Visual Appeal reflects respondents' perceptions of the aesthetics, attractiveness, and engaging qualities of the campaign visuals. Self-Brand Congruence measures the alignment between voters' self-concept and the identity or values represented by the candidate's campaign, particularly through creative strategies such as the Ultraman visuals. Re-Election Intention assesses the likelihood of voters continuing to support the candidate, including their expressed intentions to vote and to encourage others' support. Collectively, these indicators

ensure that each construct is grounded in validated theoretical and empirical foundations while focusing specifically on Generation Z voters.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model Evaluation

The results of the Outer Loading Matrix indicate that the majority of indicators satisfy the criteria for convergent validity. The construct Re-election Intention (REI) demonstrates excellent indicator performance, with loadings ranging from 0.908 to 0.968, all of which exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70. Similarly, the construct Self-Brand Congruence (SBC) shows strong loadings between 0.755 and 0.905, where most indicators fall within the high-validity range. For Visual Accentuation (VA), the loadings fall between 0.760 and 0.872, indicating consistent convergent validity. Meanwhile, Visual Appeal (VP) presents loadings from 0.604 to 0.877. Although the indicator VP3 (0.604) is slightly below the ideal 0.70 threshold, it remains acceptable. Values between 0.40 and 0.70 may still be considered acceptable when the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) is above 0.50 (Hair, 2014). This finding aligns with the view that convergent validity is achieved once the AVE reaches the minimum threshold of 0.50 (Henseler, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2015). In addition, the fact that most indicators across all constructs surpass the 0.70 loading benchmark reinforces the reliability of the measurement model, even when one or two indicators fall slightly below this value (Amora, 2021). Overall, these outcomes confirm that the measurement items used in this study fulfill the required validity standards and are suitable for proceeding to the structural model assessment.

Table 2.
R-Square Test Result

No.	Variable	R-Square	Adjusted R-Square	Interpretation
1	VP	0.745	0.745	Strong to Substantial
2	SBC	0.603	0.602	Moderate to Strong
3	REI	0.634	0.631	Moderate to Strong

Source: SmartPLS Processed Data (2025)

Table 2 shows that Visual Appeal (VP) has the strongest explanatory power in the model, with an R-Square value of 0.745. This indicates that the predictors account for a substantial portion of variance in respondents' visual appeal perceptions. Self-Brand Congruence (SBC) and Re-election Intention (RE) show moderate to strong levels of explained variance, with R-Square values of 0.603 and 0.634, respectively. These results suggest that the model is able to predict the dependent constructs adequately and that the independent variables meaningfully contribute to variations in respondents' evaluations and behavioral intentions.

Table 3.
Construct Validity and Reliability Test Result

No.	Measurement Indicator	VA	VP	SBC	RE
1	Cronbach's Alpha	0.855	0.901	0.921	0.975
2	rho_A	0.868	0.913	0.925	0.975
3	Composite Reliability	0.901	0.925	0.939	0.979
4	AVE	0.696	0.676	0.719	0.888

Source: SmartPLS Processed Data (2025)

Table 3 shows that all constructs meet the required thresholds for internal consistency and convergent validity. Visual Accentuation (VA) and Visual Appeal (VP) exhibit strong reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.85 and Composite Reliability exceeding 0.90. Self-Brand Congruence (SBC) demonstrates excellent measurement quality, supported by an AVE of 0.719. Re-election Intention (REI) records the highest reliability, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.975 and an AVE of 0.888, indicating that its indicators capture the construct exceptionally well. Overall, the results confirm that the measurement model is robust and the indicators used in this study adequately represent their respective constructs.

Table 4.
Specific Indirect Effect Test Result

No.	Statistic	VA → SBC → REI	VA → VP → REI
1	Original Sample (O)	0.459	0.255
2	Sample Mean (M)	0.461	0.252
3	(STDEV)	0.048	0.065
4	T Statistic	9.665	3.940
5	P Value	0.000	0.000

Source: SmartPLS Processed Data (2025)

Table 4 shows that both mediation pathways produce statistically significant indirect effects, indicating that Visual Accentuation (VA) influences Re-election Intention (REI) through two distinct psychological mechanisms. The pathway mediated by Self-Brand Congruence (SBC) demonstrates a stronger effect, suggesting that voters are more inclined to support a candidate when campaign visuals resonate with their personal identity. In contrast, the mediation through Visual Appeal (VP), although comparatively weaker, still provides meaningful explanatory value by enhancing voters' aesthetic and emotional responses to the presented visuals. These findings highlight that identity-based evaluations exert a deeper persuasive impact than purely perceptual appeal. Overall, the results confirm that the model possesses strong indirect predictive power, underscoring the importance of integrating both identity driven and visually engaging elements into political communication strategies.

Table 5.
Hypothesis Test Result

No.	Analysis	VA→REI	VA→VP	VA→SBC	VP→REI	SBC→REI
1	Coefficient	-0.077	0.863	0.776	0.295	0.592
2	Sample Mean	-0.075	0.863	0.776	0.292	0.593
3	(STDEV)	0.064	0.021	0.026	0.075	0.057
4	T-Statistics	1.195	41.526	30.291	3.943	10.455
5	P-Value	0.232	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
6	Significant	No	Yes	Yes	0.295	0.592

Source: SmartPLS Processed Data (2025)

Table 5 shows that the hypothesis testing results reveal a clear distinction between the direct and indirect influences of Visual Accentuation (VA) within the model. The direct effect of VA on Re-election Intention (REI) is not statistically significant, indicating that

mere exposure to accentuated visual elements does not directly enhance voters' intention to re-elect a candidate. However, VA demonstrates strong and highly significant effects on both Visual Appeal (VP) and Self-Brand Congruence (SBC), confirming that accentuated visuals effectively strengthen voters' perceptual and identity-based responses. Furthermore, both VP and SBC significantly predict REI, with SBC exhibiting a stronger influence, suggesting that identity alignment plays a more substantial role in shaping electoral support than aesthetic appeal alone. Overall, these findings indicate that VA operates primarily through psychological mediators rather than direct persuasion, reinforcing the importance of designing political visuals that not only attract attention but also align with voters' self-concept to generate meaningful behavioral intentions.

Figure 2.
Result of Structural Model

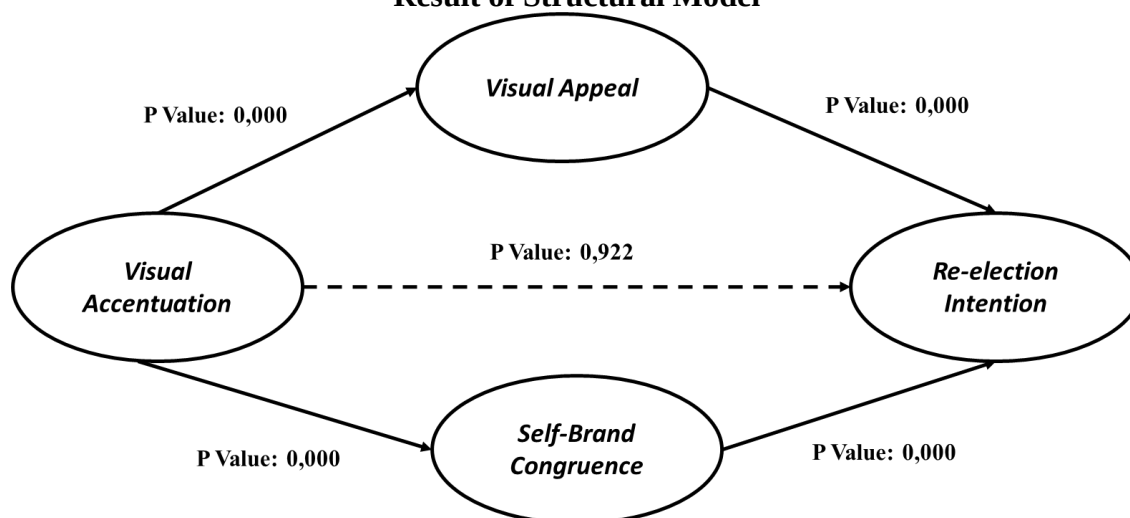


Figure 2 presents the relationships among variables based on the P Value results, where each number displayed on the paths represents the P Value for each relationship. Solid lines in the diagram indicate significant effects, while dashed lines represent non-significant effects. The direct relationship between Visual Accentuation (VA) and Re-election Intention (REI) is depicted as a dashed path because its P Value does not meet the significance threshold. In contrast, the indirect effect of Visual Accentuation (VA) on Re-election Intention (REI) through the mediating variables Visual Appeal (VA/VP) and Self-Brand Congruence (SBC) is statistically significant.

The results further indicate that Visual Accentuation does not have a significant direct effect on Re-election Intention, which explains why mediation is required to transmit its influence. Although the direct path from Visual Accentuation to Re-election Intention is not statistically supported, the indirect pathways through Visual Appeal and Self-Brand Congruence are significant. This finding demonstrates that Visual Accentuation influences voters' re-election intention only when it enhances visual attractiveness and aligns the candidate's image with voters self-identity. Therefore, Visual Appeal and Self-Brand Congruence function as essential mediating mechanisms that strengthen and channel the impact of Visual Accentuation on Re-election Intention.

The Effect of Visual Accentuation on Re-Election Intention (H1)

The effect of visual accentuation on re-election intention is not significant. This indicates that the presence of accentuated visual elements such as intensified colors, symbolic characters, or exaggerated graphic emphasis does not directly shape the intention of Generation Z voters to support a candidate. This finding challenges the assumption of visual persuasion theory, which posits that heightened visual intensity should immediately enhance persuasive outcomes. The results suggest that voters do not form electoral intentions solely from exposure to visually striking stimuli. Consistent with research on digital political cognition, voters evaluate political visuals through deeper psychological assessments rather than surface-level attention capture. Therefore, visual accentuation alone is insufficient to trigger behavioral intention, implying that its influence operates through more complex processes such as emotional resonance or identity-based evaluation rather than direct persuasion.

The Effect of Visual Appeal on Re-Election Intention (H2)

The effect of visual appeal on re-election intention is positive and significant. Aesthetically pleasing visuals contribute meaningfully to strengthening voters' support for a political candidate. This finding supports visual affect theory, which argues that design attractiveness shapes viewers' emotional responses and subsequent behavioral judgments. When campaign visuals evoke harmony, clarity, and pleasantness, voters perceive the candidate more favorably and are more willing to express electoral support. This result aligns with previous studies indicating that design quality and aesthetic fluency enhance message reception, emotional engagement, and political preference formation among young voters. In this context, visual appeal functions as a perceptual gateway, allowing voters to process political messages more positively. Although not the strongest predictor, visual appeal demonstrates that aesthetic experience remains an important component of digital political communication.

The Effect of Self-Brand Congruence on Re-Election Intention (H3)

Self-brand congruence significantly influences re-election intention and emerges as the strongest predictor in the model. When voters perceive a match between their personal identity and the symbolic attributes of the candidate, their intention to support the candidate increases substantially. This finding is consistent with self-congruity theory, which emphasizes that individuals are drawn to political figures who reflect their values, aspirations, lifestyle, or self-image. In digital political contexts, symbolic consistency including personality cues, narrative themes, and visual identity markers reinforces a sense of closeness between voters and the candidate. This effect is particularly pronounced among Generation Z, who rely on identity-driven heuristics when interpreting political content. The results confirm that identity alignment provides a deeper and more enduring basis for persuasion compared with aesthetic attractiveness alone.

Indirect Effect of Visual Accentuation on Re-Election Intention Through Visual Appeal (H4)

Visual appeal significantly mediates the effect of visual accentuation on re-election intention. Although visual accentuation does not directly generate electoral intention, it enhances voters' responses by increasing the perceived attractiveness of the visual material. This mechanism is consistent with visual fluency theory which suggests that enhanced visual

features improve processing clarity and emotional resonance, enabling persuasive effects to emerge indirectly (Reber, Schwarz, & Winkielman, 2004) . The results indicate that accentuated visuals shape the aesthetic experience of campaign materials, making political messages more engaging and emotionally appealing. However, this mediating influence is weaker than identity-based mechanisms, indicating that perceptual attractiveness alone is insufficient to create strong political commitment. Nonetheless, this pathway demonstrates that accentuation contributes to political persuasion by enhancing how voters aesthetically interpret campaign visuals.

The Indirect Effect of Visual Accentuation on Re-Election Intention Through Self-Brand Congruence (H5)

Self-brand congruence significantly mediates the effect of visual accentuation on re-election intention and represents the strongest indirect influence in the model. Accentuated visuals are more persuasive when they create symbolic alignment between voters and the candidate, thereby strengthening psychological connection and political intention. This finding confirms that identity resonance is the key mechanism linking visual design to electoral persuasion.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that visual accentuation does not directly influence re-election intention, but exerts a significant effect through the mediating roles of visual appeal and self-brand congruence. The findings suggest that visual accentuation alone is insufficient to directly stimulate voters' intention to support a candidate. The effect becomes significant only when visual strategies enhance aesthetic appeal and align the candidate's image with voters' self-identity. Among the two mediators, self-brand congruence demonstrates a stronger mediating role, indicating that voters respond more positively when the candidate's visual representation resonates with their identity, values, and self-concept.

From a practical standpoint, these findings imply that political marketing practitioners should not rely solely on visual accentuation strategies, but should develop visual content that is more engaging, meaningful, and identity-oriented in order to strengthen visual appeal and self-brand congruence. Campaign visuals must therefore go beyond mere visual prominence and aim to establish emotional and identity-based connections with voters.

For future research, this study recommends examining political marketing strategies based on accentuation image, particularly the case of Prabowo Subianto's 2024 presidential campaign. Future studies may investigate how the construction of the "Gemoy" image conceptualized as an accentuation image variable influences public perception and voting decisions. Such research would contribute to a deeper understanding of how image-based visual accentuation shapes political preferences within contemporary digital campaign environments.

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