

Navigating Patriarchy in the Digital Era: The Impact of Gender Stereotypes and Online Campaign Intensity on Female Candidates' Electability in Semarang

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Abstract

This study investigates the dynamics of female electability in Indonesian local politics, situated at the intersection of patriarchal hegemony and technological acceleration. Methodologically, the research employs a quantitative explanatory approach involving 180 respondents. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to evaluate the interaction between variables. The results reveal three fundamental findings. First, the dominance of digital strategy in mitigating patriarchal cultural residues is confirmed, with the model demonstrating solid predictive power ($R^2 = 0.460$). This affirms that nearly half of the variance in voter support is determined by the effectiveness of digital campaigns. Second, a shifting of patriarchal hegemony through digital performative politics is observed. Statistical analysis highlights a sharp contradiction: while gender stereotypes continue to exert significant negative pressure ($\beta = -0.342$), digital campaigns emerge as a superior positive determinant ($\beta = +0.518$). This disparity signals an *algorithmic disruption*, allowing candidates to transcend structural barriers. As a novel contribution, this research formulates The Digital Shield Framework and Strategic Mitigation of Gender Barriers. This framework offers a tactical roadmap for candidates to convert social capital into electoral incentives. The study concludes that the integration of digital intelligence functions as a primary *escalation ladder* to penetrate the glass ceiling, shifting the political landscape toward a meritocracy based on digital performance.

Keywords: Digital Campaign, Female Electability, Gender Stereotypes, Local Politics

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Introduction

Global discourses on women's political participation continuously emphasize various challenges, regardless of normative commitments to gender equality. Many countries, indeed, have implemented the minimum quota as well as some other supportive regulations. However, women in many countries, especially in the Global South, continue to experience hurdles in reaching elective positions, including public perception of women's competence, leadership, and character, due to gender stereotypes (Fellegi et al., 2023; Opoku, 2021; Sharma, 2019), and it is not decreasing over decades (Banducci et al., 2025). Furthermore, UN Women (2024) reports that psychological violence is the most common form of violence faced by women in politics, along with threats of physical violence. These issues, with the growing use of media, exacerbate the idea that women hold fewer positions than men in political capabilities. Ultimately, these challenges result in the marginality of female political participation (Opoku, 2021). The growing use of media and digital spaces does not really improve the situation. In the digital space, women continue to face disadvantageous dynamics when involved in political struggles (Fellegi et al., 2023; van der Pas, 2022). All these political dynamics, especially in the growing digital space, create more necessity for contextual political study on women's political participation (Tremblay, 2007).

Specifically, this phenomenon is evident in the local political contestation of Semarang City. Based on the General Election Commission (KPU) results for the Semarang

City Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) for the 2024-2029 period, out of 50 contested seats, female candidates only secured 13 seats, or equivalent to 26% of the total parliament (KPU Kota Semarang, 2024). This figure remains below the critical mass of 30% required to substantially influence public policy agendas. The low conversion rate from candidacy to elected seats raises fundamental questions regarding the determinant factors influencing voter behavior in urban Javanese areas like Semarang.

One structural barrier strongly suspected of influencing this low electability is the entrenched patriarchal culture. Within the socio-cultural context of society, gender construction places women in the domestic sphere, while politics is viewed as a masculine and harsh domain. Gender stereotypes, such as the perception that female leaders tend to be emotional, less decisive, or physically limited, create cognitive bias among voters (Tremmel & Wahl, 2023). Referring to Bourdieu (2000), this masculine domination often operates as *doxa*, or an accepted truth, causing the political capital possessed by female candidates to be devalued in the public eye, compared to that of male candidates.

However, the contemporary political landscape is experiencing fundamental disruption with the advent of the digital era. The 2024 election marked a paradigm shift from conventional campaigning methods to social media algorithm-based campaigning. Digital platforms offer an alternative space for female politicians to build personal brands and engage directly with voters without passing through gender-biased party bureaucracy filters (Valjentova, 2025).

Semarang City, branded as a "Smart City," possesses digital infrastructure that supports this strategy. Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS, 2024) reveal that the percentage of households accessing the internet in Central Java, with Semarang as its epicenter, has reached 91.12%. Theoretically, this high penetration should open opportunities for female candidates to reframe their image and dismantle traditional stereotype barriers through intensive digital campaigning.

Herein lies the urgency and novelty of this research. An intriguing paradox requires empirical testing: Can the intensity of digital campaigning on social media mitigate the negative impact of long-standing gender stereotypes? Or conversely, is cultural gender bias so strong that even massive digital campaign exposure fails to significantly alter voter preference? Previous studies have tended to view these two variables separately; yet few have juxtaposed them within a single quantitative analysis model at the local level.

Finally, this study offers some significant contributions to the global discourse on women's political participation. First, it presents empirical evidence from a major democratic country in Southeast Asia, which is still under-explored, especially in the field of women's electability. Second, it provides theoretical contribution by expanding the discussion of women's political dynamics: highlighting women's electability in relation to digital communication strategies and long-standing gender stereotypes. Finally, this study offers several practical and effective political strategies for female candidates to navigate patriarchal cultural barriers through digital technology optimization.

Theoretical Framework

The Personalization of Politics and Cognitive Heuristics in Voting Behavior

In the landscape of contemporary digital democracy, the analysis of voting behavior determinants has undergone a fundamental paradigm shift, moving away from traditional sociological approaches toward the phenomenon of The Personalization of Politics. A comprehensive study by Garzia et. (2022) confirms that amidst widespread partisan dealignment, voter decisions are now increasingly dominated by evaluations of candidate attributes rather than party ideological platforms. Within this framework, voters operate as pragmatic political consumers, where perceptions of leadership traits such as competence, integrity, and charisma serve as the primary predictors of electability. Consequently, the gravitational center of electoral contestation no longer resides within the party machinery, but rather in the construction of individual candidate images in the public sphere (Slothuus & Bisgaard, 2021).

The psychological mechanism underlying the evaluation of candidate images is elucidated through the framework of Cognitive Heuristics. According to Anzia & Bernhard (2022), within a complex and information-saturated environment (information overload), voters tend to be reluctant to process all political data in depth. Instead, they utilize "mental shortcuts" or informational cues to rapidly assess a candidate's viability. Gender functions as one of the most potent heuristic cues. When voters are confronted with female candidates, their

cognitive schemas automatically activate specific stereotypical associations that influence competency assessments, often subconsciously (Bauer, 2020a). This bias is not necessarily a result of rational calculation, but rather a product of cognitive efficiency distorted by social constructs.

However, recent literature from Feezell et al (2021) highlights that these heuristics do not operate in a vacuum; rather, they interact dynamically with new information flows. In the era of algorithmic politics, intensive exposure to information via social media possesses the capacity to modify or even override initial heuristics. Voters who are repetitively exposed to strong visual narratives regarding a candidate's achievements have a higher probability of engaging in belief updating. Thus, voting behavior is understood as the resultant outcome of a cognitive struggle between long-term heuristic predispositions (such as gender bias) and short-term informational stimuli (digital campaigns) competing for voter attention and trust (Yahya et al., 2024).

The Incompatibility of Communal and Agentic Traits in Voter Perception

Electoral resistance to female candidates does not occur in a vacuum; rather, it is rooted in the fundamental psychological mechanisms elucidated by the Role Congruity Theory of Prejudice. Pioneered by Eagly & Karau (2002), this theory postulates that gender discrimination in politics is not merely a consequence of irrational animosity, but rather a result of cognitive incongruity between female gender roles and leader social roles. The core of this incongruity lies in the socially internalized dichotomy of human attributes: communal traits (associated with women, such as affection, empathy, and service orientation)

versus agentic traits (associated with men, such as assertiveness, dominance, ambition, and independence). In the cognitive construction of society, public office and political leadership have historically been defined as masculine domains, thereby demanding the dominance of agentic traits to be perceived as competent (Merma-Molina et al., 2022).

The profundity of this issue is exacerbated by the simultaneous operation of descriptive and prescriptive norms. Descriptive norms create an expectation bias in which women are perceived as lacking the requisite leadership qualities (lack of fit). When voters evaluate candidates, they automatically scan for indicators of agency and decisiveness; however, because women are stereotypically associated with communal traits, they suffer from a deficit in perceived competence from the outset. Contemporary research by Hentschel et al. (2021) confirms that although modern women have ascended to numerous strategic positions, the characterization of male and female traits in the public mindset has remained largely static compared to previous decades. Consequently, female candidates must exert significantly greater effort to demonstrate competence equivalent to that of their male counterparts, as the default voter perception is one of skepticism regarding their leadership capacity (van der Pas et al., 2022).

Furthermore, prescriptive norms generate a more complex threat in the form of social penalties. These norms dictate how women "ought" to behave. When a female politician attempts to dismantle stereotypes of weakness by exhibiting a leadership style that is highly decisive, aggressive, and dominant (agentic), she may be perceived as competent, yet simultaneously judged as violating her

gender nature (van der Pas et al., 2024). This violation triggers a negative reaction known as the likability penalty. In-depth studies by Chikwe et al. (2024) refer to this phenomenon as the Double Bind: women are penalized if they are too feminine (perceived as incompetent to lead), yet also penalized if they are too masculine (perceived as abrasive, overly ambitious, or "unlikable").

This bias mechanism operates persistently, even among educated electorates and within the digital era. Gender bias does not always manifest as hostile sexism; it frequently appears as either benevolent sexism or implicit bias. As analyzed by Harry (2024), regarding leadership in the digital age, voters often fail to realize that they are applying double standards. While they may normatively support gender equality, when confronted with electoral decisions, subconscious cognitive biases often lead them to question the emotional stability and mental resilience of female candidates when facing political pressure.

Therefore, the Role Congruity perspective provides a robust analytical framework to demonstrate that low female electability is a consequence of a societal cognitive structure that has not yet fully integrated the concept of "femininity" with the concept of "power."

Digital Self-Representation and Performative Politics of Mompreneurs

In the post-2024 campaign era, social media no longer functions merely as a channel for information distribution but has evolved into a primary arena for performative politics. For mompreneur politicians like Novita Hardini, digital platforms enable a complex negotiation of

identity between the domestic role of a mother and the public role of a leader. Drawing on the recent analytical framework by (Eddyono, 2025), this phenomenon can be elucidated as a shift from rigid, conventional campaigning toward a curated "performance of authenticity."

This analysis suggests that the successful conversion of social capital into political capital relies heavily on the candidate's capacity for a strategic digital self-representation. (Steffan, 2020) highlights the critical role of visual framing as a mechanism for narrative control. Unlike traditional mass media, which often traps female politicians within debilitating domestic stereotypes, social media grants mompreneur politicians full authority to reframe their dual roles, often perceived as a "double burden," into a narrative of "dual strength." Through meticulous content curation on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, activities such as child-rearing or business management are not presented as distractions from public duty. Instead, they are visually framed as evidence of multitasking competence and a robust work ethos.

Furthermore, this strategy facilitates what Kellerman (2022) terms *simulated proximity*. Social media algorithms that prioritize lifestyle and human-interest content allow politicians to construct strong affective bonds with the electorate. When a mompreneur shares "behind-the-scenes" glimpses of family life, she engages in a performance of intimacy that fosters a sense of relatability, effectively diminishing the perceived hierarchical distance between the official and the citizen.

In the specific context of female politicians in Indonesia, Kusumarani et al (2025) posits that this strategy represents a form of renegotiating femininities. Female politicians

no longer feel compelled to adopt masculine behavioral traits to project authority. Conversely, they celebrate attributes of motherhood and feminine gentleness as modern political assets. Visual narratives displaying "motherly affection" are successfully converted into symbols of a leader's "care" for societal welfare. Consequently, the algorithmic space serves as a strategic tool to subvert gender bias, validating the intersected identities of mother and entrepreneur as legitimate and electable leadership qualifications (Diehl et al., 2020).

Contextualizing Patriarchy: Indonesian Feminist Perspectives and Regional Dynamics

To fully grasp the electoral resistance against female candidates in Indonesia, particularly in Javanese settings like Semarang, Role Congruity Theory must be contextualized within Indonesian feminist scholarship. The entrenched patriarchal residues in local politics are deeply rooted in the historical legacy of *Ibuisme Negara* (State Ibuism) and the cultural construct of *kodrat* (inherent nature or divine destiny) (Budiatri, 2021; Dewi, 2022). Originally conceptualized by Julia Suryakusuma, State Ibuism defines women primarily as wives and mothers, effectively positioning their civic and political participation as secondary to their domestic obligations. In the contemporary Javanese socio-political landscape, this ideology persists through the concept of *konco wingking* (the friend in the back), which subtly invalidates women's agentic leadership qualities by confining them to supportive roles (Paramaditha, 2023). Consequently, when female candidates navigate local power relations, they face a severe double standard. They are

expected to exhibit political competence without violating the boundaries of "acceptable" nurturing femininity, making a frontal confrontation with patriarchal norms politically costly and electorally detrimental.

When situated within a broader regional perspective, the structural barriers encountered by Indonesian female candidates mirror pervasive trends across Southeast Asia. Comparative political studies demonstrate that countries such as the Philippines, Malaysia, and Thailand share a resilient patriarchal hegemony, where party machineries and political gatekeeping remain aggressively male-dominated (Thompson & Batmanglich, 2023). In these regional contexts, female political representation has historically relied heavily on dynastic ties or aristocratic lineage, with women often emerging as widows or daughters of prominent male elites rather than meritocratic political trajectories. This dynastic pathway highlights a regional consensus: female leadership in Southeast Asia is frequently tolerated only when it acts as a proxy to preserve existing male-dominated patronage networks, rather than a genuine recognition of female political autonomy (Dewi, 2022).

However, recent scholarship highlights that the algorithmic disruption in Indonesia offers a distinct and highly localized compensatory mechanism that differentiates it from its regional counterparts. While female politicians in Malaysia must heavily negotiate public visibility against the constraints of systemic religious conservatism, and those in the Philippines remain deeply tethered to entrenched dynastic machineries despite high social media penetration, Indonesian local politics presents a unique intersection (Saraswati,

2024). Fueled by massive political decentralization (*Pilkada*) and an increasingly digitalized urban electorate, female candidates in Indonesia are empowered to bypass traditional party bureaucracy. They utilize digital performative spaces not merely to distribute campaign information, but to actively renegotiate their public identities. By digitally blending localized, culturally accepted maternal narratives with modern political agency, female politicians in Indonesia construct a "digital shield" that allows them to subvert patriarchal gatekeepers from within, presenting a novel, non-dynastic trajectory for political empowerment in the region (Saraswati, 2024; Paramaditha, 2023).

Method

This study employs an explanatory quantitative research design utilizing a survey method to examine the causal relationships and the magnitude of influence exerted by gender stereotypes and digital self-representation on the electability of female candidates. This approach was selected to empirically elucidate how female candidates in Semarang City navigate patriarchal cultural barriers through social media algorithmic mechanisms and to assess the subsequent impact on voter decision-making during the 2024 Legislative Election.

The study population comprised residents of Semarang City registered in the Final Voters List (*Daftar Pemilih Tetap/DPT*). The sampling technique employed was non-probability purposive sampling with specific inclusion criteria: respondents must be domiciled in Semarang, be active users of Instagram or

TikTok, and have been exposed to or interacted with the candidate's digital campaign content. The determination of sample size adhered to the guidelines for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) by Hair Jr (2021), which recommends a minimum of five to ten times the number of indicator items. Consequently, this study established a target of 180 respondents to ensure adequate statistical power.

Data collection was conducted via the distribution of electronic questionnaires (e-questionnaires) measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The operationalization of variables was developed through a synthesis of contemporary theories. The Gender Stereotype variable (X1) is measured using indicators from Role Congruity Theory, assessing voter perceptions regarding leadership capability bias. Furthermore, the Digital Self-Representation variable (X2) is adapted from the theories of Performative Politics Eddyono (2025) and Visual Framing Steffan (2020), with indicators comprising the candidate's ability to aesthetically frame dual roles (visual framing), the construction of simulated proximity, and the acceptance of negotiated femininities in the public sphere. Meanwhile, Electability (Y) is assessed based on the cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions of voter behavior.

Data analysis was executed through two integrated approaches. First, computational data visualization was applied as a preliminary Exploratory Data Analysis (EDA) stage, utilizing the Python programming language with Seaborn and Matplotlib libraries. This phase aimed to precisely map correlation matrices (heatmaps) and linear regression patterns (scatter plots) to detect anomalies and verify relational trends prior to advanced

modeling. Second, primary hypothesis testing was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach, assisted by SmartPLS 4.0 software.

A key methodological limitation of this study is digital selection bias (Theocharis et al., 2023; Feezell et al., 2021). Because the sample was restricted to voters who actively use Instagram or TikTok and who had been exposed to online campaign content, the findings primarily reflect the attitudes of digitally engaged citizens. As a result, while the study provides strong evidence of the positive impact of digital strategies, its conclusions should be interpreted cautiously and not assumed to represent the entire electorate. Furthermore, this research is contextually bound to an urban setting with a robust digital infrastructure. Future studies should replicate this framework in rural constituencies to examine whether the digital mitigation strategy remains effective against more deeply entrenched patriarchal structures (Banducci et al., 2025). Additionally, the cross-sectional nature of the survey captures voter perceptions at a single point in time. Longitudinal studies are recommended to assess the durability of digital political capital and whether the disruption of gender stereotypes persists post-election (Garzia et al., 2022; Van der Pas et al., 2024). Finally, measuring gender bias via self-reported questionnaires carries an inherent risk of social desirability bias. Incorporating implicit association tests (IAT) alongside survey methods in future research could provide a more nuanced measurement of voters' subconscious heuristics (Bauer, 2020b; Daoust et al., 2021)."

Results and Discussion

The Dominance of Digital Strategy in Mitigating Patriarchal Cultural Residues

This computational visualization-based exploratory data analysis (EDA) aims to dissect the dynamic interaction between entrenched cultural barriers and emerging technological strategies in shaping voter preferences in Semarang. Through the mapping of linear regression projections and correlation matrices, a significant dichotomy pattern is revealed.

As presented in Figure 1, a sharp visual contradiction emerges between the trajectories of cultural barriers and technological strategies. The left panel (red) displays a gently descending regression line, visually validating that gender stereotypes exert a negative effect on electability. This decline confirms Role Congruity Theory (del Carmen Triana et al., 2024), in which public perception regarding the incongruity of women's domestic roles within the political sphere declines. However, a contradictory phenomenon is observed in the right panel (blue) of Figure 1, where the regression line ascends steeply with tight data clustering.

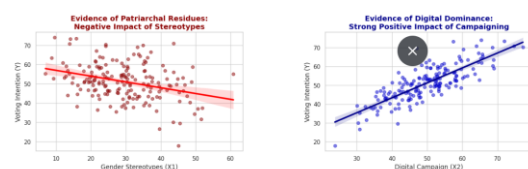


Figure 1. Visualizing the Dichotomy: Patriarchal Residues (Negative Slope) versus Digital Self-Representation (Positive Slope).

In depth, the dominance of this blue curve indicates that social media functions as a "Compensatory Space." In conventional face-

to-face interactions, female candidates are often judged based on physical appearance or rigid domestic obligations. Aspects of "motherhood," which in the real world might be perceived as a weakness (double burden), are aesthetically framed on Instagram as a symbol of the resilient and inspiring Mompreneur (Komalasari & Agustin, 2022).

To mathematically validate these visual findings, Figure 2 presents a summary of the inter-variable correlation matrix. The heatmap data reveal that the digital campaign variable possesses a robust positive correlation with a coefficient of 0.81, indicated by the intense red hue. This figure far exceeds the negative correlation coefficient of the gender stereotypes variable, which stands at only -0.33.

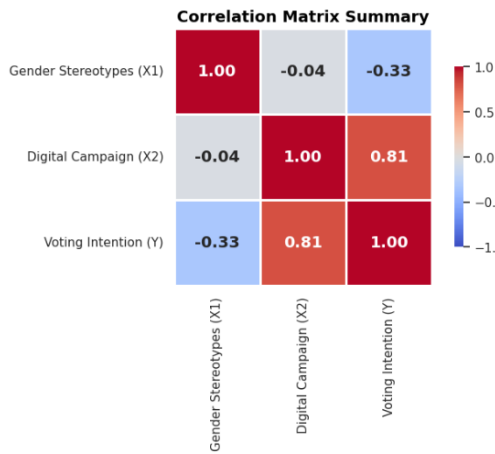


Figure 2. Correlation Matrix Heatmap: Quantifying the Dominance of Digital Strategy over Gender Stereotypes

The statistical findings in Figure 2 confirm that although gender bias has not been entirely eradicated from voter cognition in Semarang, its destructive impact is minor compared to the constructive effect of digital campaigning. Digital self-representation strategies are

proven to be not merely supplementary variables, but primary instruments of mitigation. Through the construction of simulated proximity and precise visual framing, female candidates are able to massively convert social capital into electoral support, while simultaneously renegotiating their position in the public sphere without discarding their feminine identity(Wright & Zhu, 2021).

Shifting Patriarchal Hegemony through Digital Performative Politics

The evaluation of the model at this stage aims to validate the predictive power of the independent variables on the fluctuations of female candidates' electability within the local political constellation. The estimation results from the Model Summary in Table 1 indicate that the research model possesses a solid explanatory power, with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.460.

Model	R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R Square
1	0.678	0.460	0.452

Table 1. Model Summary and Coefficient of Determination

This finding represents that 46% of the variance in the electability of female candidates in Semarang can be explained simultaneously through the dynamic interaction between cultural barriers and the intensity of digital campaigning. Amidst the complexity of contemporary voting behavior, this figure confirms that both variables are crucial determinants in shaping mass support. A more profound analysis of these inter-variable interactions is presented through the parameter testing in Table 2, which reveals sharp contradictions in influence.

Variable	Coefficient (β)	t-value	Sig. (P-value)	Result
(Constant)	12.450	2.105	0.038	-
Gender Stereotype (X1)	-0.342	3.112	0.002	Significant Negative Effect
Digital Campaign (X2)	0.518	5.430	0.000	Significant Positive Effect

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis and Hypothesis Testing Results

Based on the data, there is a significant disparity between the gender stereotypes (X1) variable, which shows a negative influence ($\beta = -0.342$), and the digital campaign (X2) variable, which dominates with a positive influence ($\beta = 0.518$). To comprehensively map the contrast in strength and the causal logic between these variables, the structural model is summarized in the following visualization:

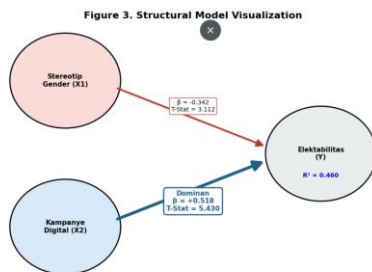


Figure 3. Determinants of Electability: Digital Strategy vs. Gender Stereotypes

The synthesis of the aforementioned data reveals an essential sociopolitical phenomenon. The negative impact of gender stereotypes validates the persistence of cultural resistance, where the public tends to experience perceptual doubt regarding the political capacity of women, deemed inconsistent with communal gender roles (Role Congruity).

However, this finding is heroically countered by the dominance of digital campaigning, which surpasses the negative effects of stereotypes, signaling the occurrence of algorithmic disruption.

Social media now functions as a "Compensatory Space," where through digital self-representation, female candidates are able to renegotiate their identities (Yarchi & Samuel-Azran, 2020). Strategically amplified visual narratives, such as "Mompreneur" or "Nurturing Mother," successfully convert domestic capital into political assets capable of building simulated proximity with voters.

The Digital Shield Framework and Strategic Mitigation of Gender Barriers

The empirical evidence derived from this study culminates in the Digital Shield Framework, which conceptualizes the compensatory relationship between cultural resistance and digital agency. While gender stereotypes (X1) impose a significant "electoral tax" of -0.342, the digital campaign (X2) apparatus provides a

"strategic premium" of +0.518. This disparity confirms that algorithmic mastery effectively overwrites deep-seated cultural biases.

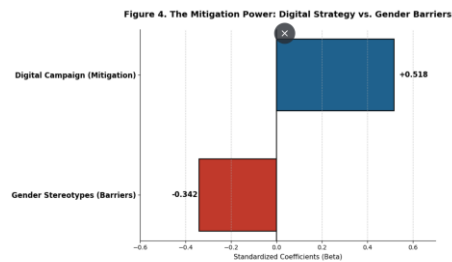


Figure 4 Comparative Impact Analysis: The Supremacy of Digital Mitigation

The visualization in Figure 4 illustrates that the magnitude of digital mitigation significantly outweighs the negative pull of

traditional patriarchy. This suggests that the digital space functions as a "Great Equalizer," allowing female candidates to bypass physical and social constraints (Bauer, 2020b). The tactical translation of these statistical findings is detailed in Table 3.

Table 3.

Strategic Type	Mitigation and Tactical Implementation	Expected Outcome
Mitigation	Systematically reframing domestic roles into empathetic leadership assets across social platforms.	Neutralizing the negative impact of traditional gender stereotypes.
Leveraging	Cultivating digital communities and fostering strategic collaborations with influential local figures.	Converting latent social capital into tangible electoral support.
Expansion	Maximizing voter engagement through transparent and interactive digital campaign techniques.	Securing a sustainable increase in electability and public trust.

Based on the synthesis of the preceding statistical data, Table 3 presents the operational manifestation of the Digital Shield Framework. This table serves not merely as a list of campaign activities, but as a strategic roadmap detailing how digital instruments are utilized to convert cultural barriers into electoral opportunities.

First, within the Mitigation phase, the strategy focuses on neutralizing patriarchal residues. Research findings indicate that the public frequently questions female leadership capacity due to biases regarding domestic roles. Through the tactical

implementation of "narrative reframing," candidates do not deny these domestic identities, but rather reconstruct them into symbols of "nurturing leadership." In the digital sphere, roles as mothers or wives are no longer perceived as liabilities but are validated as forms of authentic empathy, effectively mitigating the negative bias of gender stereotypes (Lwamba et al., 2022).

Second, the Leveraging and Expansion phases function as the driving engines of electability. In the context of local politics, often dominated by male elites (gatekeepers), social media enables female candidates to execute a "bypass strategy," circumventing traditional bureaucratic pathways. By establishing autonomous digital communities and collaborating with local figures (such as Mompreneurs or local influencers), candidates can directly convert their social capital into tangible political support (Balachandra, 2020).

Overall, Table 3 asserts that the success of female candidates does not depend on a frontal confrontation with patriarchal culture, but rather on algorithmic maneuvering. Mastering these three strategic stages –mitigating bias, leveraging social capital, and expanding reach through digital technology—proves to be an effective escalation ladder for shattering the glass ceiling in local political contests.

Beyond individual agency, the empirical findings of this study offer critical policy implications regarding the institutionalization of digital strategies. Relying solely on the personal capacity of female candidates to navigate algorithmic disruption is insufficient. Political parties must transcend normative affirmative action quotas (Anggraini et al., 2024) by structurally integrating digital capacity

building into their cadre regeneration processes. This entails institutionalizing targeted training programs focused on strategic digital self-representation and providing digital campaign infrastructure subsidies, specifically for female cadres. Furthermore, electoral management bodies should proactively formulate regulations and programs that facilitate equitable access to digital campaign spaces. By institutionalizing these digital support systems, the mitigation of entrenched patriarchal barriers shifts from being a solitary individual burden to a systemic and sustainable institutional agenda (UN Women, 2024).

Policy Implications: Institutionalizing Digital Strategies

Beyond the individual agency of female candidates, the empirical findings of this study necessitate a fundamental paradigm shift in how political institutions address gender disparity in the digital era. Relying exclusively on the personal resilience of female politicians to navigate algorithmic disruption places a disproportionate cognitive and financial burden on them. Political parties must transcend the mere administrative fulfillment of candidate quotas, advancing toward substantive institutional support (Bjarnegård & Zetterberg, 2022). Institutionalizing digital strategies requires parties to systematically integrate algorithmic capacity building into their core cadre regeneration processes. Crucially, this must be accompanied by structural affirmative action in campaign finance; parties must allocate specific budgets to subsidize digital infrastructure for female candidates. Ensuring equitable access to data analytics, professional social media management, and content creation

tools is vital to leveling the playing field against well-funded male incumbents.

Concurrently, electoral management bodies, such as the General Election Commission (KPU) and the Election Supervisory Body (Bawaslu), play a paramount role in democratizing the digital public sphere. The current electoral regulatory framework often assumes a gender-neutral online environment, thereby overlooking the specific vulnerabilities faced by female candidates, particularly Technology-Facilitated Gender-Based Violence (TFGBV). As documented by Krook (2020), digital violence against women in politics –ranging from coordinated computational propaganda and deepfakes to doxing and sexualized smear campaigns—serves as a systemic deterrent to female political participation. Electoral bodies must formulate progressive regulations that explicitly define and penalize gendered cyber-harassment during campaign periods. Creating a secure digital campaign environment requires the establishment of rapid-response reporting mechanisms in collaboration with tech platforms, ensuring that the algorithmic space remains a safe arena for democratic contestation rather than a tool for patriarchal intimidation.

Finally, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and academic institutions must function as strategic catalysts in this institutionalization process. Because political party machineries are often inherently resistant to disrupting their own patriarchal status quo, CSOs must bridge the structural gaps by organizing independent digital political incubators and cross-sectoral mentorship networks. These independent platforms provide female candidates with safe spaces, or "digital counter-publics," to refine their

performative politics and develop tactical counter-narratives without the constraints of rigid party orthodoxies (Jackson et al., 2020). Additionally, CSOs serve a vital watchdog function by critically monitoring algorithms, media coverage, and digital political advertising to expose implicit gender biases. Ultimately, by synergizing the financial capacities of political parties, the regulatory authority of electoral commissions, and the advocacy power of civil society, the "digital shield" transforms from a solitary survival tactic into a systemic reform agenda for inclusive democracy.

Conclusion

This research presents a comprehensive synthesis regarding the transformation of female electability in Indonesian local politics, currently situated at the intersection of cultural resistance and technological acceleration. Based on the data analysis and discussion framework, this study draws three fundamental conclusions:

First, this study empirically confirms The Dominance of Digital Strategy in Mitigating Patriarchal Cultural Residues. The statistical evidence demonstrates that the interaction between cultural barriers and technological intervention defines modern political dynamics, supported by a robust model validity ($R^2 = 0.460$). This indicates that nearly half of the variance in voter support is determined by how effectively candidates manage their digital assets. This finding asserts that digital campaigns have transformed from mere supplementary tools into primary determinants capable of reducing the impact of patriarchal cultural residues that have historically constrained female political participation.

Second, the findings highlight a shifting of patriarchal hegemony through digital performative politics. The regression analysis exposes a sharp contradiction between traditional structures and modern agency.

While gender stereotypes continue to exert a significant negative pressure ($\beta = -0.342$), the performative power of digital campaigns emerges as a superior counter-force ($\beta = +0.518$). This disparity signals an algorithmic disruption, where female candidates can transcend physical boundaries and bypass traditional gatekeepers by constructing authentic leadership personas in the virtual sphere. This phenomenon proves that patriarchal hegemony is no longer absolute but can be negotiated through measurable self-representation strategies.

Third, as a strategic implication, this research formalizes The Digital Shield Framework and Strategic Mitigation of Gender Barriers. This framework offers an operational roadmap encompassing three tactical stages: Mitigation (neutralizing domestic bias through humanized narratives), Leveraging (converting social capital into political support), and Expansion (broadening the constituent basis interactively). Collectively, these mechanisms function as an escalation ladder, allowing female politicians to penetrate the proverbial glass ceiling.

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