



Rhetorical Strategy and Agenda Setting in Political Communication: The Discursive Power of the ‘Gerbang Baru Nusantara’ Slogan in the 2024 East Java Election

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Article Info

Article History:

Received: 12 January 2025
Revised: 15 February 2025
Accepted: 18 March 2025

Keywords:

Agenda Setting
Aristotelian Rhetoric
Gubernatorial Election
Political Communication
Political Slogan

Abstract

The focus of the study lies in the use of the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara,” which serves not only as a campaign tagline but also as a rhetorical instrument to shape public opinion and media discourse. The analysis shows that ethos was employed to emphasize credibility and bureaucratic experience; pathos to build emotional connections grounded in local identity; and logos through the presentation of concrete programs such as MSME digitalization and regional connectivity development. Within the framework of agenda setting, the slogan successfully redirected public attention to strategic development issues positioning East Java as a significant part of the national development scheme. The slogan was consistently used across various communication channels speeches, social media, public debates, and mass media coverage thus creating collective resonance. The integration of classical rhetoric and agenda-setting strategy illustrates that effective political communication relies not only on linguistic symbolism but also on the ability to manage perception and construct political identity. “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” emerges as a strategic discursive symbol in consolidating electoral support at the regional level.

INTRODUCTION

Political communication plays a strategic role in the success of regional election campaigns. As a form of interaction between candidates and the public, political communication functions to convey visions, missions, and policy programs in an effective and persuasive manner (Firmansyah, 2025). One essential element of political communication is the use of slogans or jargon that serve both as symbols of political identity and as persuasive tools (Pureklon, 2020; Hartig, 2018; Partington, 2017). The 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election brought together the candidate pair Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Emil Elestianto Dardak, who promoted the slogan "Gerbang Baru Nusantara" (Gateway to a New Archipelago). This slogan functioned not merely as a campaign tagline, but also as a representation of the pair's vision to position East Java as a hub of sustainable development in Indonesia. This article aims to analyze how the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” is employed as an effective political communication strategy.

According to Heryanto (2018), political communication plays a central role in supporting candidates' success in electoral contests. In modern political strategy, candidates and their campaign teams do not merely offer policy programs, but actively construct compelling and relevant narratives and public images to influence voter perceptions (Kontu & Pesak, 2024; Nelson & Thurber, 2018; Schill, 2012). One frequently key strategy in this process is the formulation and deployment of political jargon. As a concise, dense, and often symbolic expression, jargon possesses the power to encapsulate a candidate's vision, simplify complex messages, and imprint them in the public's memory for ease of recall and dissemination (Graber & Dunaway, 2017). In the context of the 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election, the slogan "Gerbang Baru Nusantara" emerged as a central element in the political communication strategy of Khofifah and Emil. The slogan's emergence signaled a deliberate effort to frame their campaign with a specific narrative intended to resonate with the conditions and aspirations of East Java's populace. This slogan did not merely function as an empty catchphrase, but was positioned as a symbolic representation of change, sustainable development, and the strengthening of East Java's strategic role within the broader national context.

The formation of a slogan such as "Gerbang Baru Nusantara" involves a complex process of strategic consideration. East Java, as the second most populous province in Indonesia and a highly diverse cultural mosaic comprising major cultural groups such as Arek, Mataraman, Madurese, and the Tapal Kuda communities presents unique challenges in crafting a political narrative that is inclusive and widely accepted (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). According to Suryanagara et al. (2025), in such a socially and culturally heterogeneous landscape, an effective political slogan must be capable of transcending cultural divides, building emotional and rational bridges across voter segments, and articulating a shared vision that feels relevant across regions, especially to the people of East Java.

Academic studies that specifically examine the formation process or genealogy of particular political slogans especially within the context of electoral campaigns in Indonesia remain relatively limited. Much of the existing research tends to focus on the impact or reception of slogans, while paying less attention to how a slogan like "Gerbang Baru Nusantara" is actually formulated. According to Perloff (2021), understanding these behind-the-scenes creative and strategic processes is crucial to uncovering the logic behind political narrative construction and how key messages are designed to attract voter attention and differentiate the candidate from their rivals.

This complexity becomes even more pronounced in the digital communication era. Rahmati et al. (2020) explain that social media and other online platforms enable political slogans to spread virally in a short time, but at the same time, present challenges in managing message consistency and controlling the evolving narratives in public discourse (Al Fatih et al., 2024). Once released into the public, a slogan like "Gerbang Baru Nusantara" can rapidly become the subject of discussion, interpretation, or even parody requiring agile and adaptive communication strategies from the campaign team.

More than a temporary campaign tool, political slogans such as "Gerbang Baru Nusantara" also have the potential to serve as markers of collective identity that the candidates aim to represent or construct (Romli & Nurlia, 2023). By selecting this phrase, the Khofifah-Emil pair sought to project a leadership image that is visionary, inclusive, and oriented toward shared progress for all of East Java's people, across the province's diverse cultural landscape. According to Shakhrizoda (2023), the success of a slogan in achieving its objectives depends heavily on its ability to resonate with the lived experiences, aspirations, and interpretive frameworks of the public. In understanding the complexity of media and politics, this study is important

as it seeks to fill a knowledge gap concerning the process of political slogan formation in the specific context of the 2024 East Java gubernatorial election. By focusing the analysis on the origins and strategic considerations behind “Gerbang Baru Nusantara,” this study aims to reveal the internal dynamics of the campaign team in formulating key messages and how the slogan was crafted as a strategic communication instrument to build narratives, mobilize support, and engage with East Java’s unique socio-cultural landscape.

METHODS

This study adopts a descriptive qualitative approach, focusing on rhetorical discourse analysis and agenda-setting theory to investigate the use of the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” (Gateway to a New Archipelago) in political communication during the 2024 regional elections. The purpose of this research is to examine how this slogan functions as both a rhetorical device and a strategic instrument for directing public attention toward key issues in the campaign. Rhetorical discourse analysis, based on Aristotelian rhetorical theory, is used to explore the elements of ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic) in the slogan’s deployment, while agenda-setting theory is incorporated to analyze how the media frames and amplifies the issues tied to this political message.

The data for this study is sourced from a variety of online media, including political speeches, official statements, press releases, and news coverage related to the *Gerbang Baru Nusantara* slogan during the 2023–2024 campaign period. These sources were selected for their credibility and relevance, covering both local and national media outlets known for political reporting. The media sources include traditional print and broadcast media as well as social media platforms, ensuring a comprehensive analysis of the slogan’s dissemination and public reception. The data collected was digitally archived, categorized by the date of publication, media type, and the specific context in which the slogan appeared, such as speeches, opinion pieces, or campaign messages.

Rhetorical discourse analysis is the primary method for interpreting the data. This approach examines how the slogan utilizes Aristotle’s three rhetorical elements: ethos, pathos, and logos. Ethos, or credibility, refers to how the slogan contributes to establishing the credibility of the political figures and their proposed initiatives. The analysis looks at how their leadership experience and public authority are represented through the slogan, aiming to enhance trustworthiness with the audience. Pathos focuses on the emotional appeal made to the public, particularly how the slogan evokes feelings of pride, hope, and collective identity among East Java’s citizens, encouraging a shared vision of regional development and progress. Logos, the logical component, examines the concrete policy proposals or programs associated with the slogan, such as infrastructure development, digitalization efforts, and economic strategies, which help rationalize the slogan’s message.

In addition to the rhetorical analysis, the study utilizes agenda-setting theory to explore how the *Gerbang Baru Nusantara* slogan shapes the public agenda by directing attention to specific political issues. According to McCombs and Shaw’s (1972) agenda-setting theory, the media plays a critical role in determining which issues become central to public discourse. In this research, the slogan is examined as a tool for influencing the public’s focus on key issues, such as regional development, economic growth, and national infrastructure projects. The analysis also includes an assessment of the frequency and consistency with which the slogan appears across various media outlets and how it is framed within the broader context of national development. By analyzing media framing, the study aims to determine whether the slogan is presented as a call for modernization, regional empowerment, or national progress.

The data analysis process involves identifying and classifying excerpts from speeches, articles, and social media posts that feature the slogan. These excerpts are categorized according to their rhetorical function whether they appeal to ethos, pathos, or logos and are analyzed to understand how each element contributes to the persuasive power of the political message. The study also compares how different media outlets frame the slogan and the issues associated with it, examining whether national media emphasize economic and infrastructural aspects, while local media highlight cultural and community elements. This comparative approach provides insight into how the media influences public perception and the interpretation of the slogan.

To ensure the reliability and validity of the findings, the study employs triangulation by using multiple types of data sources and media channels, both traditional and digital. This approach allows for a more comprehensive understanding of how the slogan is portrayed and received by the public. Additionally, peer debriefing is employed to confirm the accuracy and consistency of the interpretations. The categories of ethos, pathos, and logos are clearly defined according to established rhetorical theory to maintain consistency in analysis. The frequency of the slogan's appearance and its framing in the media are systematically analyzed to ensure transparency and replicability of the results.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of political speeches, news coverage, and campaign materials demonstrated that the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” functions as a multi-layered rhetorical instrument. The Aristotelian categories of ethos, pathos, and logos appear consistently across the dataset and reveal a structured communication strategy aimed at shaping public perception of the candidates and their developmental agenda.

Data Analysis

Tabel 1. Results of Jargon Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical Element	Form of Implementation	Speech/Source	Rhetorical Purpose
Ethos (Credibility)	Emphasis on Khofifah's leadership track record and experience	<p><i>“Despite this efficiency condition, God willing, we will still provide free homecoming transportation services both by land and sea, especially to the outer islands such as those in Sumenep, Madura.”</i></p> <p><i>(“Meskipun dalam kondisi efisiensi ini, Insyaallah kita tetap akan melakukan layanan mudik gratis baik lewat darat maupun laut, keluar pulau terutama keluar pulau yang ada di Sumenep, Madura.”)</i></p>	To establish moral authority and trustworthiness as an experienced leader
	Emil positions himself as an academic figure with rational, data-based arguments	<p><i>“This shift in mindset and paradigm is what needs to be captured from this new idea. I am confident that if seriously implemented, it can restore the confidence of East Java society that this region is the center and accelerator of national economic</i></p>	To offer technocratic and rational credibility to the proposed political slogan

		<p><i>growth, especially in Eastern Indonesia.”</i></p> <p><i>(“Perubahan mindset dan paradigma ini yang penting bisa ditangkap dari gagasan baru ini. Saya yakin jika ini serius dilakukan akan bisa mengembalikan lagi kepercayaan diri masyarakat Jatim bahwa kawasan ini adalah pusat dan akselerator pertumbuhan ekonomi nasional, khususnya Indonesia Timur.”)</i></p>	
	<p>Emphasizing Khofifah’s track record as governor and Emil’s technocratic legitimacy</p>	<p><i>“East Java, the New Gateway to the Archipelago... there is a relocation of the capital... a reference and connection between Eastern and Western Indonesia.”</i></p> <p><i>(“Jatim Gerbang Baru Nusantara... ada proses perpindahan ibu kota... referensi dan koneksitas antara Indonesia Timur dan Barat.”)</i></p>	<p>To foster public trust by linking the campaign slogan with real experiences and strategic vision</p>
<p>Pathos (Emotion)</p>	<p>Narrative of regional pride and collective enthusiasm to build the future</p>	<p><i>“We are opening the New Gateway to the Archipelago from East Java. Let us fill this space with our best service for the people.”</i></p> <p><i>(“Kita sedang membuka Gerbang Baru Nusantara dari Jawa Timur. Mari kita isi ruang ini dengan pengabdian terbaik untuk rakyat.”)</i></p>	<p>To emotionally connect with voters through collective identity and aspirational change</p>
	<p>Symbol of togetherness through collective address</p>	<p><i>“Welcome to all volunteers, supporters, and also the Khofifah-Emil supporter community. Here, we unite our spirit, unite our steps so that we can together realize a more prosperous and accomplished East Java as the new gateway to the archipelago.”</i></p> <p><i>(“Selamat datang seluruh relawan, pendukung dan juga masyarakat pendukung Khofifah-Emil. Di sini kita menyatukan semangat, menyatukan langkah agar ke depan kita bersama-sama mewujudkan masyarakat Jawa Timur yang lebih sejahtera, maju berprestasi sebagai gerbang baru nusantara,”)</i></p>	<p>To evoke a sense of inclusiveness and cultural closeness among East Java’s communities</p>
	<p>Construction of collective</p>	<p><i>“With prayer and hard work together, we can make East</i></p>	<p>To arouse spiritual emotion</p>

	character based on religious values and work ethic	<i>Java the main gateway to the progress of the archipelago.</i> <i>(“Dengan doa dan kerja keras bersama, kita bisa menjadikan Jatim sebagai gerbang utama kemajuan Nusantara.”)</i>	and a collective sense of “gotong royong” (mutual cooperation)
Logos (Logic)	Elaboration of a concrete development vision based on infrastructure and the digital economy	<i>“To enable digital transformation, we need to create digital transformation troops. Nearly 10,000 MSMEs are ready to become exemplary models for millions of others.”</i> <i>(“Untuk bisa transformasi digital adalah melahirkan pasukan transformasi digital. Ada hampir 10 ribu UMKM yang sudah siap menjadi percontohan teladan bagi jutaan UMKM lainnya.”)</i>	To demonstrate that the political slogan is supported by data-driven and analytical programs
	Geographic and geopolitical arguments regarding East Java’s strategic role as a regional connector	<i>“The New Gateway to the Archipelago is a response to the shift of the center of gravity from the Malacca Strait toward Central Indonesia...”</i> <i>(“Gerbang Baru Nusantara adalah antisipasi pergeseran center of gravity dari Selat Malaka ke arah tengah Indonesia...”)</i>	To instill logical understanding of East Java’s strategic position in both national and global contexts

Source: Various Media Article

An Aristotelian Rhetorical Approach to the “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” Slogan

Rhetoric, within the context of electoral politics, functions as a strategic tool to generate influence, construct public image, and mobilize support. According to Aristotle’s classical rhetorical framework, the effectiveness of political communication is determined by three key elements: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. These three elements can be concretely observed in the use of the political slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” by the candidate pair Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Emil Elestianto Dardak in the 2024 East Java gubernatorial election.

In Aristotelian rhetoric, *ethos* refers to the credibility of the speaker, determined by their character, track record, and perceived integrity as constructed by the audience. In this case, Khofifah–Emil leveraged their position as incumbents to establish public trust. Khofifah, as the sitting governor with a strong background in religious and social organizations, projected the image of a leader with high integrity. Emil, as the deputy governor and a former regent with an academic background from international institutions, strengthened the technocratic credibility of the team. As quoted in *detik.com*, Khofifah stated:

“Jatim Gerbang Baru Nusantara... we are currently preparing the process of connectivity between Eastern and Western Indonesia.”

This statement is not merely symbolic but also implies a structured policy direction, reinforcing the meaning of the “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” slogan. The phrase transcends the function of a mere campaign tagline, transforming into a strategic concept rooted in geopolitical considerations and regional potential, while

simultaneously enhancing the credibility and campaign narrative of Khofifah–Emil as leaders capable of delivering real transformation.

Pathos refers to the emotional appeal aimed at influencing the audience’s feelings through narrative, symbolic language, and shared aspirations. The slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” is not just a technocratic statement but a rhetorical attempt to invoke a collective spirit among East Java residents as part of a larger national narrative. As reported by *lenteratoday.com*, Khofifah addressed the public:

“Welcome to all volunteers, supporters, and members of the Khofifah–Emil community. Here we unite our spirit, we align our steps so that together we can realize a more prosperous, accomplished East Java society as the new gateway to the archipelago.”

This statement effectively utilizes *emotional rhetoric (pathos)* to evoke a sense of togetherness, collective enthusiasm, and communal identity. The greeting “all volunteers, supporters, and community members” signifies inclusivity and appreciation for all parties, regardless of hierarchy, reinforcing emotional proximity between the leader and the people. The phrase “unite our spirit, align our steps” is an emotional metaphor depicting collective effort toward a better future. It positions the people not merely as voters but as active contributors to a shared movement. Furthermore, the mention of “a more prosperous, accomplished East Java society” articulates not only a goal but also instills hope and shared aspirations. The concluding phrase “as the new gateway to the archipelago” reaffirms the grand mission and regional pride, positioning East Java not just as a geographic space but as a gateway to Indonesia’s future.

Finally, structurally in Aristotelian rhetoric, *logos* involves the use of logic, rational arguments, and programmatic evidence. Khofifah–Emil communicated concrete programs that supported their slogan, such as infrastructure development, expansion of the Trans Jatim public transport system, and the digitalization of MSMEs. As quoted in *metrotvnews.com*, Emil stated:

“To realize digital transformation, we must create a digital transformation task force. Nearly 10,000 MSMEs are now ready to serve as exemplary models for millions of others.”

This statement reinforces *logos* as it presents a tangible solution aligned with societal needs and the spirit of modernization. The message appears rational and trustworthy to voters, strengthening the logical appeal of their campaign promises.

The Slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” as an Agenda-Setting Strategy

According to McCombs & Shaw (1972; as cited in McCaul, 2020), the agenda-setting theory posits that media do not tell us *what to think*, but rather *what to think about*. In this context, the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” functions not only as a symbolic communication tool but also as a strategic means by which the Khofifah–Emil campaign team organized issue priorities in the minds of the public during the 2024 East Java gubernatorial election. By framing the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara,” the Khofifah–Emil team deliberately directed public attention toward several key issues: a) the shifting of national development focus from West Java toward the eastern regions of Indonesia; b) East Java’s strategic role as a national economic and logistics connector; c) the urgency of digital transformation and MSME empowerment; d) the regional revival as part of the grand project called *Nusantara* (discursively linked to the national capital relocation project, IKN).

Through multiple media channels including public debates, field campaigns, social media, and national media interviews the campaign consistently framed East Java not merely as a component of the national map but as a province at the center of

national attention. Both local and national media played a significant role in reinforcing this agenda. The following are selected news reports that illustrate how the agenda-setting function was operationalized:

Table 2. *Press Release News*

Media	Article Title
detik.com (2024)	Khofifah-Emil Reveal the Meaning of East Java as the New Gateway to the Archipelago During the Gubernatorial Election Debate
detik.com (2024)	Khofifah-Emil Reveal the Idea of East Java as the Gateway to the Archipelago, Here are the Details
suarasurabaya.net (2024)	"East Java as the New Gateway to the Archipelago" is the Slogan of the 79th Indonesian Independence Day in East Java
aksennews.com (2025)	Khofifah and Emil Present East Java as the New Gateway to the Archipelago
Barometerjatim.com (2024)	Final Debate of the East Java Gubernatorial Election, Khofifah-Emil Promotes East Java as the New Gateway to the Archipelago
news.detik.com (2024)	Khofifah in a Grand Campaign: East Java Progressing with Achievement, the New Gateway to the Archipelago
metrotv.news.com	Khofifah-Emil's Strategy to Accelerate the Transformation of MSMEs to Digital
kilasjatim.com (2024)	Khofifah-Emil Grand Campaign: Reciting Prayers Towards the New Gateway to the Archipelago
Lenteratoday.com (2024)	East Java Prosperous Justice Party Attends the Khofifah-Emil Grand Campaign, Kang Irwan Urges the Public to Vote for Number 2

Source: Various Media Article

The media's emphasis on the words "Gerbang" (Gateway) and "Nusantara" has shaped public perception that this is not an empty slogan. Through repeated exposure and strategic amplification of the jargon, the media has helped the public associate the Khofifah-Emil pair with key issues such as modernization, regional development, and nationalist-visionary leadership (Sharma & Shivakumar, 2023). By employing this slogan within an agenda-setting strategy, the Khofifah-Emil campaign effectively redirected discourse from local-level concerns toward a broader national narrative. The East Java gubernatorial election was framed not merely as a regional contest, but as an integral part of Indonesia's developmental trajectory. As a result, the campaign successfully dominated public and media discourse, making their slogan more recognizable than that of their political rivals. Furthermore, East Java was no longer positioned as a passive participant in national politics, but rather as a driving force behind the development of Eastern Indonesia.

Integration of Aristotelian Rhetoric and Agenda Setting

Table 3. Integrasi Model Retoris-Agenda Setting

Aristotelian Rhetoric Theory	Agenda Setting Theory	Integration
Ethos: Speaker's Credibility	<i>Who deserves to speak?</i>	Khofifah-Emil are positioned as authoritative figures representing the future of the archipelago.

Pathos: Public Emotion	<i>What should the public feel?</i>	The phrase “We are opening the new gateway to the archipelago” evokes a sense of collective pride and belonging. (“Kita sedang membuka gerbang nusantara baru” menumbuhkan <i>sense of belonging</i>)
Logos: Rational Argument	<i>What is worth discussing?</i>	Emphasis on infrastructure, digital MSMEs, logistics, and interregional connectivity reinforces logical appeal in political messaging.

The communication strategy employed by the Khofifah–Emil pair in the 2024 East Java gubernatorial election did not solely rely on the classical power of Aristotelian rhetoric but was strategically integrated with the principles of agenda-setting theory (Dhia et al., 2021). As Putranto (2021) argues, rhetoric is not merely a stylistic tool of persuasion; it also functions as a mechanism to shape and direct public awareness toward key issues foregrounded in a campaign.

In terms of *ethos*, the candidate pair constructed their credibility as competent and trustworthy leaders, drawing upon their leadership track records and visible presence in the public sphere. The media played a crucial role in reinforcing this narrative by positioning them as central figures within political discourse particularly in relation to East Java's development and its envisioned role in the broader project of *Nusantara*. Through consistent and favorable media coverage, the public was gradually directed to perceive Khofifah–Emil as the visionary leaders of the future.

Meanwhile, *pathos* was conveyed through the use of the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” and emotionally charged, inclusive phrases such as “We are all the gateway.” These expressions generated emotional resonance that fostered collective civic engagement. Feelings of pride, hope, and local identity were intentionally evoked to create emotional attachment to the candidate pair an effect amplified by media portrayals highlighting unity and the ambitious vision for East Java.

As for *logos*, it manifested through the presentation of strong programmatic arguments, including the digital transformation of MSMEs, infrastructure development, and the strengthening of interregional connectivity. By positioning these issues as pillars of their campaign, the Khofifah–Emil team not only offered concrete solutions but also steered both media and public attention toward treating these topics as shared discursive priorities. This aligns with the agenda-setting principle, wherein issues that are repeatedly raised gain prominence in public perception.

The integration of Aristotelian rhetoric and agenda-setting theory in the Khofifah–Emil campaign transformed their political communication into more than the mere delivery of messages. It functioned as a tool to construct public image, evoke emotion, and strategically direct public attention toward issues that reinforced their positioning as visionary leaders. Consequently, the slogan “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” transcended its role as a campaign tagline, evolving into a political

symbol operating across three dimensions credibility, emotion, and logic strengthened by the media's role as a conduit of public opinion formation.

The analysis of the political slogan "*Gerbang Baru Nusantara*" (Gateway to a New Archipelago) highlights the strategic use of Aristotelian rhetorical elements and agenda-setting theory to shape public discourse during the 2024 East Java Gubernatorial Election. The results of this study demonstrate that the slogan was not only a persuasive tool but also a strategic instrument that successfully framed political issues, built the credibility of the candidates, and directed media attention to key developmental issues.

The use of rhetoric in political communication is an established method to construct and project political identity (Perloff, 2021; Phelan & Maesele, 2023; Coman et al., 2021). In this case, the *Gerbang Baru Nusantara* slogan served as an effective rhetorical strategy for the candidates to build ethos, pathos, and logos. By linking the slogan to their political experience and leadership credentials, the candidates strengthened their credibility (ethos), portraying themselves as capable leaders with the expertise to manage East Java's development. This approach aligns with the findings of Heryanto (2018), who noted that credibility is a crucial factor in winning electoral contests, especially when the electorate is presented with competing candidates.

Pathos, the emotional appeal, played a central role in this campaign. The slogan, through its invocation of pride, hope, and unity, sought to forge a collective identity among the people of East Java. This is consistent with previous studies on political rhetoric, where emotional appeals are used to connect voters to a larger vision (Kontu & Pesak, 2024). The candidates' calls for "prayer and hard work" created a sense of togetherness and fostered collective action, a strategy that has been shown to mobilize support in electoral campaigns (Graber & Dunaway, 2017). The emotional resonance created by this rhetoric also helped to solidify the candidates' position as leaders who could unite diverse communities under a common vision of development.

The logical argument presented through the *Gerbang Baru Nusantara* slogan was grounded in concrete development policies, such as digital transformation and infrastructure improvements. By presenting these programs, the candidates were able to align their message with the public's desire for tangible results. The focus on the digitalization of MSMEs and the development of infrastructure in East Java reflects the growing importance of economic development and modernization in contemporary political discourse (Saputra & Kom, 2024; Setiawan, 2023). This approach supports the argument put forth by McCombs & Shaw (1972) that political messages must offer clear, actionable policies that resonate with public needs and concerns.

The use of media as a vehicle for political communication is integral to the effectiveness of a slogan. According to agenda-setting theory, media not only influences what people think about but also shapes the public's perception of the importance of various issues (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; Almakaty, 2025; Ajakaiye et al., 2023). In the case of "*Gerbang Baru Nusantara*", the media played a significant role in amplifying the slogan and aligning it with broader national development agendas. The repeated exposure of the slogan through various media outlets ensured that it became a dominant narrative in the public discourse. As noted by Al Fatih et al. (2024), social media and digital platforms are crucial for the dissemination of political slogans, but traditional media remains key in reinforcing the central message. This is evident in how local and national media outlets consistently framed East Java's development as a key component of Indonesia's national growth, focusing on economic development, infrastructure, and regional connectivity.

The framing of East Java as a “new gateway” for the archipelago, especially in the context of national economic and geopolitical shifts, highlights the media’s role in agenda-setting. The candidates successfully utilized the media to shape public perception, positioning East Java not merely as a passive participant in national development but as an active driver of change (Al Fatih et al., 2024). This strategy aligns with the findings of Perloff (2021), who emphasized the importance of framing in political communication, where the repetition and emphasis on certain issues can significantly influence public opinion. The slogan *Gerbang Baru Nusantara* was strategically used to highlight issues that the campaign team wanted to prioritize, such as regional development, infrastructure, and the empowerment of local businesses.

Slogans play an essential role in simplifying complex political messages and making them more accessible to the electorate. As a symbolic representation of the candidates’ vision, the *Gerbang Baru Nusantara* slogan encapsulated key themes of modernization, economic growth, and regional empowerment. This approach is consistent with the literature on political slogans, which asserts that they are powerful tools for creating a memorable political identity (Pureklon, 2020; Botaş, 2024). The slogan not only simplified the candidates’ vision but also helped to establish a connection with the electorate by framing East Java as the epicenter of a new developmental era. This approach reflects the findings of Dunaway & Graber (2017), who highlighted the significance of symbolic communication in electoral politics. By presenting a succinct and emotionally resonant slogan, the candidates were able to create a lasting impact on voters’ minds.

Additionally, the strategic repetition of the slogan across various media platforms ensured that it remained at the forefront of public attention throughout the election period. This constant reinforcement of the slogan’s message helped to solidify its association with the candidates’ development agenda, making it a key feature of the public’s electoral decision-making process. This strategic use of repetition aligns with the principles of agenda-setting theory, as it ensured that the issues associated with the slogan such as regional development and economic empowerment remained prominent in the public’s political discourse (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).

The integration of Aristotelian rhetoric and agenda-setting theory in the use of “*Gerbang Baru Nusantara*” demonstrates the effectiveness of combining rhetorical strategies with media influence in political communication. The results of this study support the argument that effective political slogans must be more than just symbolic tools; they must be part of a broader strategy that incorporates both emotional appeal and logical arguments while also leveraging media channels to influence the public agenda. The combination of ethos, pathos, and logos, along with strategic media framing, created a powerful political narrative that resonated with voters and positioned the candidates as credible, visionary, and capable of leading East Java into a new era of development.

The success of the slogan highlights the importance of crafting political messages that are not only rhetorically effective but also strategically aligned with media agendas. The *Gerbang Baru Nusantara* slogan served as a bridge between the candidates’ development goals and the public’s expectations, reinforcing the candidates’ political identity while shaping public perceptions of East Java’s role in national development. This study, therefore, underscores the significance of rhetorical strategies in political campaigns and the essential role of media in amplifying these messages to shape public opinion.

CONCLUSION

The political slogan “*Gerbang Baru Nusantara*” (Gateway to a New Archipelago), adopted by Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Emil Elestianto Dardak in the 2024 East

Java gubernatorial election, served not merely as a campaign tagline but as a strategic instrument in structured political communication. Through the Aristotelian rhetorical framework, the candidate pair successfully constructed ethos by presenting themselves as experienced and credible leaders, activated pathos to foster inclusive emotional resonance, and reinforced logos through rational arguments grounded in concrete programs such as MSME digitalization, regional connectivity, and preparedness for national development directions.

Beyond rhetorical appeal, from the perspective of agenda-setting theory, the slogan effectively directed public and media attention toward the key issues the candidates intended to foreground. “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” functioned as a narrative frame that not only delivered a message but shaped what the public should think and talk about namely, East Java’s strategic role as a hub for Indonesia’s future development. This slogan was produced, circulated, and reinforced across various media channels both conventional and digital rendering it a dominant element within the discursive contest of regional politics. The integration of rhetorical theory and agenda-setting theory in this study illustrates that an effective political slogan requires more than linguistic elegance or symbolic power. It must be grounded in credibility, emotional influence, rational argumentation, and the ability to shape public perception through media channels. The “Gerbang Baru Nusantara” slogan exemplifies the success of political communication that unites symbolic and structural strategies, transforming it from a mere slogan into a powerful instrument for opinion formation and political identity construction within the landscape of the 2024 East Java gubernatorial race.

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