

# Women's voices for the earth: Communication strategies of women candidates on environmental issues in the 2024 election

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**Abstract.** Environmental issues have become a major focus in political agendas, including the selection of legislative candidates. This research aims to understand the communication strategies of women legislative candidates in shaping political narratives related to environmental issues in Aceh ahead of the 2024 legislative elections. This includes analyzing the communication approaches used, such as through mass media, social media platforms, and direct meetings with voters. Methods: This study used a qualitative approach. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and content analysis of messages delivered by women legislative candidates through various communication channels. Results showed that women legislative candidates successfully used persuasive language to relate environmental issues to voters' daily lives. Communication strategies included active participation in mass media, use of social media platforms, and direct meetings with voters. The narratives developed strengthened voters' perceptions of the impact of environmental issues in the local context. This research shows that women in Aceh politics play an important role in shaping political messages related to the environment. Skillful communication strategies helped strengthen the relationship between women legislative candidates and voters, while the narratives created a deeper and more personal understanding of environmental issues.

## 1 Introduction

The role of women in politics has received increasing attention in recent decades. Understanding the importance of women's involvement in politics not only reflects aspects of gender equality but also provides a more comprehensive perspective on the policy-making process. Diversity in decision-making to achieve equality is also about enriching policy formulations with different ideas, views, and experiences.

The 2024 Legislative Elections stand out as a focal point that plays an instrumental role in the development of democracy. These elections will influence the composition of representation in the legislature, play a crucial role in shaping the direction of public policy,

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and reflect the wishes and aspirations of the people. Therefore, it needs to learn how legislative candidates, especially women, should prepare for the 2024 elections and communicate with voters.

As the 2024 elections approach, candidates for legislative seats face a complex set of challenges. Intense political competition, changing social dynamics, and evolving issues require effective political communication strategies to win voter support. On the other hand, elections also provide opportunities for women to bring unique and refreshing perspectives to politics, inspire positive change, and transform the face of political issues.

The appropriate political communication strategy is necessary for female legislative candidates to win the voters' votes. Strategy is essentially planning and management to achieve goals. The planning of political communication strategy has important role, namely in determining the direction of political activities, as well as in gaining public support, political communication planning must be considered, specifically; expected results, the target audience must be evident, the approach used to achieve goals, budget, time and evaluation [1]. Political communication strategy is an organization's deliberate management of information and communication to achieve political goals [2].

The significance of using effective political communication strategies for legislative women candidates and how good communication strategies are critical to influencing views and support and achieving their political goals. One of them is environmental issues. Environmental issues are becoming increasingly urgent and require serious attention in politics. Topics such as climate change, sustainability, and the conservation of natural resources are becoming increasingly important to society. In the context of the 2024 elections, the political integration of environmental issues into political platforms is crucial, as political decisions can have significant effects on our environment. Women have been granted an equal position in environmental protection and management [3].

Women's legislative candidates often face specific challenges in political competition. Politics is viewed as a harsh and dirty public sphere, coupled with stereotypes against women, that women do not have the ability and expertise in politics, and this opinion strongly discriminates against women [4]. When traced together, it takes the contribution of the entire community to solve the country's problems, and the contributions of women from all walks of life are needed to produce policies and decisions that are not only from the point of view of one party, but it is also discussed that the issue concerns the sustainability of the lives of citizens, such as environmental problems. Environmental issues are becoming increasingly important on the political agenda, both at the national and local levels. Moreover, Indonesia's environmental conditions are very worrying, with exploitation in the form of deforestation transformed into extractive industries becoming increasingly widespread. According to data from IPBES 2018, Indonesia loses 680,000 hectares of forest each year, the worst in the Southeast Asian region. Meanwhile, data on river damage compiled by KLHK showed that out of 105 existing rivers, 101 were found to be moderately to severely polluted [5].

Legislative candidates with a deep understanding of the complexities of environmental issues have an advantage in their communication strategies. They will be better able to talk to voters about sustainable policies, protect the environment, and create more equitable conditions for society. Based on surveys, climate change as an uncertain phenomenon is increasing, and this is suspected by humans [6]. Achieving a balance between people and the environment can be challenging due to political and public barriers to environmental advocacy [7]. By doing so, they will gain the support of voters who are also concerned about the future of the earth, women legislative candidates must convey their message clearly and convincingly on environmental issues. Using persuasive language that can make voters feel personally connected to the issue is essential. A strong narrative can provide context and stories that make environmental issues relevant to voters' daily lives, build empathy, and

trigger positive responses. That will ultimately lead voters to sympathize with these women candidates for caring about the environment.

This research examines the unique environmental dynamics and challenges in Aceh, a region with distinct cultural differences from other areas. Previous research has not particularly highlighted Aceh's local context. To address this gap, we focus on local conditions of Aceh. Previous research has focused on description rather than in-depth analysis of communication strategies used by female legislator candidates. Therefore, gaps may arise in understanding the effectiveness and impact of these strategies on voters. Previous research has primarily focused on campaigns and political discourses rather than examining women's involvement in local-level environmental policymaking and implementation in Aceh. This new research aims to address this gap. Previous research has not yet especially explored how narratives built by female legislator candidates can influence public understanding of environmental issues at the local level. While previous research focused on quantitative analysis and did not explore the relationship between gender and environmental issues, this study aims to understand how environmental topics specifically affect women and how they respond to them. Previous research has not fully explored women's involvement in decision-making regarding environmental issues in Aceh. This research can emerge by understanding the extent to which women are involved in policy-making processes. The results of this research can detail these gaps and formulate research questions designed to fill gaps in the existing literature. Based on several gaps explained above, this makes researchers interested in exploring the findings of this research.

This research aims to analyze the communication strategies of female legislative candidates in conveying environmental issues in political campaigns in the 2024 elections. This analysis is an effort to understand how women build political narratives and messages related to the environment and then influence public perception and support in the 2024 legislative elections. With a deeper understanding of this communication strategy, we hope to illustrate the role of women in formulating gender-responsive environmental policies.

## **2 Literature review**

Several previous studies related to women in environmental issues. Research conducted by Norgaard, Kari, and Richard York. "Gender Equality and State Environmentalism" It has found that countries with a high proportion of women in parliament are more likely to ratify environmental agreements than other countries and that women are more concerned about the environment [8]. Furthermore, research conducted by Amy and Ian with the title "The Effects of Women Officeholders on Environmental Policy" The research found that women and girls consistently show higher levels of concern for the environment than men and boys. Separately, research also shows that female officials pay special attention to issues prioritized by their female constituents. Interestingly, despite the consistent gender gap in attitudes towards environmental issues, the existing literature pays little attention to the role of women officials in the policy-making process. The study conducted a pooled cross-sectional time series analysis of environmental standards in 18 Western parliamentary democracies from 1990 to 2012. The results suggest that the presence of women in government is related to higher adoption of environmental standards [9].

Other research conducted by Cassandra and Jayoti with the title "Women in government, environment, and corruption", Other research conducted by Cassandra and Ali found that A large number of studies have identified a positive relationship between women and environmental concerns. The research shows that a high percentage of women in positions of political power will improve environmental quality. However, empirical analyses testing this theory are still diverse. It discusses here that women in political power do have a positive effect on environmental outcomes. The hypothesis is that a higher percentage of women in

positions of political power improves environmental outcomes through both direct and overall effects (more care for the environment) and indirect effects (reduced corruption); however, the indirect impact was statistically significant [10]. Furthermore, research conducted by Ziroat and Raufhon with the research title “Women’s Parliamentary Representation and Sustainable Development Goals: a Cross-Country Evidence” This research examines the correlation between women's representation in parliament and sustainable development goals using cross-country data from 2015 to 2019. The study found a positive and significant relationship between increasing the number of women's seats in parliament and the SDGs. Additionally, it found that women in parliament have a positive and causal relationship with the aim of sustainable development [11].

The studies above illustrate that women in political power positively impact environmental and sustainability policies. They focus on environmental issues and directly influence policy implementation and sustainable development goals. However, the research also reveals variations and complexities in the relationships between women, environmental policy, and sustainable development.

## **2.1 State of the art of this research**

This research focuses on the role of women in shaping political narratives related to environmental issues in Aceh. The contributes to understanding political and environmental dynamics in specific regional contexts. The qualitative approach analyzes complex phenomena in-depth, showing the sustainability of recent research trends. This research provides a more comprehensive understanding of the role of women in environmental politics. The study analyzed the communication strategies used by female candidates running for office through various channels, such as mass media, social media, and face-to-face meetings. This emphasizes the importance of these tools in political communication.

This research highlights the success of female legislative candidates in using persuasive language to link environmental issues to voters' daily lives. That can significantly contribute to understanding of effective political communication at the local level. State of the art of this research lies in its ability to build a narrative that links environmental issues to the local context in Aceh. This contribution can be instrumental in developing policy strategies that align with the needs and values of local communities.

## **2.2 Environmental communication strategy**

In politics, using appropriate communication strategies is essential to make the message delivered effective. A communication strategy is an organized and focused plan for achieving communication goals. In this context, communication strategies are key to influencing public perceptions, building support, and shaping political narratives. Communication strategy implies a systematic plan for the efficient achievement of communication goals [12]. In the case of research on the role of women in environmental issues, communication strategies include various approaches used by female legislative candidates to communicate messages related to environmental concerns. Communication strategy in politics is a deliberate management of information and communication by organizations to achieve their policy aims [13].

Environmental issues a global topic of discussion, such as climate change, forest fires, pollution, environmental degradation, and water crisis, environmental issues are becoming a big problem because environmental issues affect the sustainability of human life on earth, so they require the attention of the whole community, not just the responsibility of the government alone, but the responsibility of all citizens. According to research, women are more likely to prioritize environmental protection over economic growth, to pay extra taxes

to protect the environment, and to believe that global warming will be a "serious threat" during their lifetimes [14]. This finding is that women are much more concerned about environmental issues than other topics.

### **2.3 The candidate for women legislative member**

The legislative institution is an institution that represents all the people in drafting laws and participates in supervising the implementation of existing laws in the executive body, where each member elected through general elections. Candidates for legislative members in this research are individuals who nominate themselves as members of the legislature. Legislative candidates are individuals who participate in political contests to win seats in the legislature. They will compete with other prospective legislative members who will win the contestation.

Women legislative candidates are individual women who nominate themselves to become legislative members in a general election. Legislative refers to institutions or bodies responsible for making laws and policies at the government level, such as parliament or legislative councils at the national or regional level. The general election process involves candidates competing for support and votes from voters. Candidates for women legislative members can come from various backgrounds and political parties. The participation of women in politics, including candidacy as legislative members, has become a focus of attention to ensure equality and inclusive representation in government institutions.

## **3 Methodology**

This research comes from a constructivist (interpretative) paradigm. The constructivist paradigm believes that the basis for understanding social meaning lies in unique, contextual, and meaningful events [15]. According to Denzin and Lincoln the constructivist research model has several characteristics, including reality is relative, meaning that the current reality is specifically constructed and is local, subjective, and created to produce knowledge based on results, including results that occur during interactions between researchers and informants [16]. The research method used in this research is descriptive with a qualitative approach

According to Creswell, qualitative research is a descriptive attempt to describe the symptoms or relationships between symptoms observed during observation [17]. his research is part of descriptive research, namely describing and synthesizing various conditions, situations, and reality phenomena that exist in society as research objects and trying to realize this reality. The essence, pattern, sign, or description of a particular state, situation, or phenomenon. Data is collected in the form of words, not numbers, and whatever is collected can be the key to exploring the data.

The qualitative approach leads directly to the study of the context and individuals (groups) of the society in which the individuals and groups are placed. Generally, qualitative research topics can include organizations, groups, individuals, texts, or artifacts. This approach will provide insight into the image of political parties in creating a positive image of female politicians within their parties. The selection of informants is based on people who know the information needed for this research. This will make it easier for researchers to extract research data.

This research will be conducted with several informants from several political parties, local and national; namely the Partai Demokrasi Indonesia-Perjuangan (PDI-P), Partai Demokrat; representing the National Party. Partai SIRA, and Partai Nanggroe Aceh (PNA) representing the Aceh Local parties. The informants in this research were two women legislative candidates from PDI-P, two women legislative candidates from Partai Demokrat, two women legislative candidates from Partai SIRA, and two from Partai PNA. The

informants from this research are women legislative candidates from electoral District 1, which includes Banda Aceh City, Aceh Besar, and Sabang City) and these female legislative candidates are elected legislative members at the provincial level.

Data collection was carried out in this research by observing the communication activities carried out by female legislative candidates during direct meetings with their constituents, then data collection was also carried out through direct interviews with informants, in this case, female legislative candidates, this was done to gather information regarding political messages that they carry out during the campaign and then researchers dig up information data through documentation, such as mass media reports, social media about activities and communication messages carried out by female legislative candidates.

The data analysis technique in this research is the Miles and Huberman interactive model data analysis method. In interactive model, it was stated that qualitative data analysis is carried out interactively and continues continuously until completion. Data analysis includes three stages, namely data reduction, which focuses on simplification, abstraction, the transformation of field data, summarization, and then presentation of information data through the presentation of data, the data is organized and arranged in a relationship pattern, so that it will be easier to understand and draw conclusions or verify data, findings may be in the form of a description or image of an object that was previously unclear, so that after research it becomes clear, it may be in the form of causal or interactive relationships, hypotheses and theories [18].

## **4 Results and discussion**

Aceh is one of the regions in Indonesia that also participates in implementing this positive regulation. In Aceh Province, due to the enactment of the Aceh Administration Law (UUPA), No. 11 of 2006, women's political participation is necessary so that the interests and perspectives of Acehnese women can be voiced. The provisions in the law become the main basis to ensure that women's presence in politics is mandatory and important.

Legislative elections (Pileg) are an essential moment in a country's democratic process. Members of parliament play a central role in representing the interests of society, formulating public policy, and exercising oversight of the government. However, in several countries, including Indonesia, the proportion of women in parliament is still low compared to the overall female population. This gender inequality results in an imbalance in the political decision-making process.

Apart from the existing legal regulation, the participation of women in the political space has another urgency in the production of policies that support women. The participation of women in politics, especially in the People's Representative Council (DPR/DPRD), is not without fundamental reasons. Several factors make it important to fulfill the 30% quota for women's representation in politics. One important reason is the responsibility and sensitivity to gender issues, especially those related to women, children, and minority groups, as well as environmental issues. The presence of women in parliament can provide a deeper perspective on these issues and ensure that their interests and rights are considered in public policies. Moreover, women's participation in politics also contributes to raising social, moral, and environmental awareness [19]. Fulfilling the quota for women's representation in politics is not only based on statutory regulations but also based on the urgency to fight for issues that are relevant to women and society more broadly.

Legislative candidates' self-preparation starts from being prepared for the political, economic, social, and psychological capital that female legislative candidate must have maximally because many negative stigmas are labeled on women because they participate in the political space, various stereotypes that women do not deserve to be present in the political space, because women are unable to think rationally, do not want to take risks and

women are only "inhabitants" of the kitchen/domestic space, and this stereotype is attached to women, as a result, it becomes a view in general society that the public world is the world of men and the domestic world is the place of women [20].

Women's legislative candidates should implement several effective political communication strategies to gain the most support from their constituents. This includes efforts to design messages that are interesting and relevant to voters. As a result of interviews with several informants, they said that we try to apply persuasive communication to our constituents, this is done to persuade them and provide an understanding of the importance of the presence of women in politics to solve social problems that occur in society, including environmental problems, especially environmental problems. illegal logging which caused flooding in almost all districts/cities in Aceh and then a clean water crisis in coastal areas.

The results of field research also found that female legislative candidates tried to convey political narratives about the environment to the public (voters) to change their perceptions and views and at the same time, a political communication strategy to convince voters of the legislative candidates' abilities regarding environmental issues. Researchers said that the approaches taken by women legislative candidates were personal and group. Personally, this means that when meeting with their constituents, female legislative candidates try to convey their vision and mission to participate in this contest, raising issues related to environmental topics, they try to convince voters that they are capable in this field apart from issues related to women, children, and other minorities. It is believed that the persuasions carried out by female legislative candidates will affect voters, as said by Aristoteles in Wood states that there are three pillars of persuasion; ethos (credibility), pathos (emotion), and logos (logic) [21].

Based on the results of interviews with informants, they convinced the public that this environmental problem is not a government problem, but this is a problem for the community. This environmental problem is a problem that is very close to women, water problems the example, how chaotic it is when a household does not have clean water for consumption, it is women who will feel the impact, they will be the ones who have difficulty meeting their daily needs, therefore we need women who care about this problem, these messages and reasons are trying to be expressed and conveyed to society in meetings both personally and in groups.

Researchers saw that some of the informants understood things related to environmental issues well and this became an attraction for them to nominate themselves as members of the legislature. This informant's profession is as a journalist, so much of his writing and coverage focuses on environmental issues. she hopes that his presence in parliament will produce solutions and policies that care about the environment, which has so far not been a top priority for regional governments. She tried to convey this narrative to the people she met. Researchers see that the sensitivity and concern of women are much stronger than that of men so the presence of women in parliament will make parliament much more sensitive in raising environmental issues, as the results of previous research published in this article.

In meetings both intentionally and unintentionally, this research informant tried to convince the public by conveying data and evidence that occurred due to ignorance of the environment; and how many flash floods occurred due to illegal logging carried out by irresponsible people, for example, water pollution. in rivers, for example, all of this is due to human activity. The environmental issues raised strengthen the political message of this female legislative candidate.

Researchers also saw that this female legislative candidate tried to link problems related to environmental issues with the survival of her constituents and the next generation. They try to convince voters that they care about environmental issues. Researchers see this as a political communication strategy that female legislative candidates try to use to win voters' votes in the 2024 legislative elections.

Personally, this is done in informal meetings, meaning when they meet at mauled events, kenduri, and even when they meet when they buy vegetables at stalls near their homes. As a group, this is done through activities in their villages, during routine recitations in their villages, for example, etc. The political communication channels they have been carrying out lately are through social media (WhatsApp groups, Facebook), which are displayed there in the form of their social activities, such as cooperation activities, cleaning meunasah, ditches, and other environmental-related matters. The political communication channels used by female legislative candidates to convey messages related to environmental issues are often face-to-face communication, i.e., meeting directly with the community individually and in groups. The use of social media to build public trust, mapping public responses to political images, so that public opinion support can be obtained from the public as political communicators [22]. Some others do it through online media, they try to write related to the environment, such as articles relating to water pollution, illegal logging, drought, lack of clean water, and so on. These media become their political communication channels in building their political narratives and strategies for legislative candidates to approach voters in their respective electoral districts.

Another finding that can be found from this research is that female legislative candidate try to open a space for dialogue with their voters, they try to listen to constituents' concerns about environmental issues and other problems, and they seem to open up space to discuss with their constituents all environmental issues that are of concern to them. Problems in society and women also feel the consequences of these problems. Based on the results of interviews with female legislative candidates, female legislative candidates are more likely to approach mothers or women, perhaps because they understand what women feel. In developing a communication strategy, several factors should be considered. First, getting to know the audience is the first step for a communicator to create effective communication, second, composing the message, namely determining the theme and subject. The main requirement for changing the audience of this message is the ability to attract their attention [23]. Researchers found that political communication strategies are used by legislative candidates to attract their constituents, and some factors should be considered.

Based on the results of the informant interviews, it was found that female legislative candidates did not collaborate with activists and environmental organizations, nor were they minimally involved in advocacy, even though this could strengthen their political messages and efforts. This can also help build their credibility with their constituents.

Effective political communication strategies will help female legislative candidates build strong public support for environmental issues and, in turn, influence more sustainable policies. To win the votes of the electorate, female legislative candidates must have an appropriate political communication strategy that includes methods, techniques, and functional relationships between the elements and factors of the communication process for operational activities. Between the elements and the factor of the communication process for operational activities to achieve the aims. Masduki said that political communication strategy is a planning process that focuses on the long term and provides a way to achieve the goals to be realized [24]. Delivering clear and concise messages, using multiple communication channels, and involving community members in the policy development process are all elements of a successful communication effort [25].

Researchers note that there are many other communication strategies that female legislative candidates can employ, such as selectively emphasizing policy issues to highlight their competence on policy issues on which their party has built a reputation [26]. It suggested that when politicians circumvent the party agenda framework, they may do so by "trespassing" on issues that are not central to the party agenda [27]. Based on the field findings, it was seen that female legislative candidates are trying to use reliable political



communication strategies to convince voters that they care about environmental issues in their campaigns, even though the campaign period has not yet begun.

This research is different from previous research, this research looks more at the communication strategies carried out by legislative candidates in their campaigns by voicing environmental issues that are currently national and global problems. Environmental issues are the central issues that female legislative candidates try to convey when dealing with their voters. Then this research tries to highlight the progress of Acehese female legislative candidates in campaigning for these global issues to the community and at the same time provide their political messages. The weaknesses of this research are that; research tends to generalize about communication strategies and environmental issues without adequately considering cultural factors and the local context in Aceh. This research focuses on the Acehese context; the generalizability of the findings to the wider region or population may be limited.

## 5 Conclusion

The political communication strategy used by women legislative candidates to convince voters is through several things, namely; implementing persuasive communication to constituents, understanding matters relating to environmental issues, conveying data and evidence relating to environmental issues, and linking issues relating to environmental issues with the survival of constituents. The political communication channels used are personal, group (face-to-face), and social media. opening space for dialogue with voters and women legislative candidates is still minimal in building collaboration with environmental activists and organizations.

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