

Hope, enthusiasm, and skepticism: Public emotional representation of female leaders' reputation in the 2024 East Java regent elections

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Abstract

The re-election of incumbent female regional leaders in the 2024 local elections has drawn public attention, especially on social media. The emerging sentiments reflect how society perceives female leadership, which still faces gender-related challenges in Indonesian politics. This study aims to analyze how the public responds to incumbent female leaders running for re-election and whether the emotions expressed are influenced more by their performance, gender factors, or a combination of both. This research employs a mixed-method approach with a Sequential Explanatory Design, where sentiment analysis is conducted to understand public opinion through comments on Instagram and Facebook. Data collection is carried out using esuit.dev to retrieve social media data, which is then analyzed using Orange to identify emotional and sentiment patterns. The study focuses on three female regional leaders in Blitar Regency, Nganjuk Regency, and Lumajang Regency, East Java Province, Indonesia. The findings reveal that public sentiment toward incumbent female leaders is influenced by three key factors: performance, awareness of gender issues, and social stereotypes. Many supporters appreciate candidates with strong leadership records and successful policies. However, this study also identifies negative sentiments linked to traditional gender norms, where some segments of society still question female leadership. These findings indicate that while female leaders can gain public recognition for their performance, they continue to face challenges related to gender bias, which can impact their electability. This study provides valuable insights into public emotions in the 2024 local elections and highlights the importance of inclusive political education to reduce gender bias in Indonesian politics.

Keywords: Public Emotion; Female Leaders; Incumbents; Gender; 2024 Regional Elections.

Introduction

Female leaders in local government have become a focal point in the discourse of Indonesian politics, especially in the lead-up to the 2024 Regional Head Elections (Pilkada). In East Java, this phenomenon is increasingly relevant given the strategic role of the region as one of the provinces with a large population and high socio-political complexity. The presence of female regional head candidates triggers various public emotions, ranging from enthusiasm to skepticism, reflecting the social and cultural dynamics of the local community. Historically, women's involvement in politics in Indonesia has faced significant challenges. Gender stereotypes and discrimination (Kousser et al., 2018). One of the studies conducted by Tevana Sari Dewi mentions that one of the factors contributing to the failure of a Regent candidate in the Pilkada contestation is the absence of historical precedent or representation of a region being led by a woman. This was evident in the case of the Regent candidate for Kudus Regency in 2018. This issue is closely related to the concept of difference, which assumes that women are not capable or suitable to be leaders (Dewi & Dewi, 2021). Women face significant barriers due to patriarchal culture (Kollo, 2017) and structural constraints such as limited access to political resources. However, several decades have shown progress, including an increase in the number of women in leadership positions at both the national and regional levels. In the 2020 simultaneous elections, East Java province saw an increase in the number of women elected as regional heads and deputy regional heads, with 23% of the 38 candidates being women, resulting in 9 women being elected. This demonstrates that women can overcome obstacles in navigating their gender identity, exhibit resilience, and actively participate in politics, potentially creating opportunities for other women to become regional heads.

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This means that voter confidence in women as regional heads is also increasing (Maella et al., 2019). However, the representation of women in politics, especially at the regional level, is still relatively low. East Java, as one of the provinces with a significant number of female voters, presents a fantastic opportunity for female candidates to gain strong support.

The 2024 election becomes a crucial moment for voters to evaluate the track record of women's leadership at the regional level. Factors such as their ability to address local issues, their political communication style, and their capacity to create meaningful change greatly influence public perception of female candidates. On the other hand, emerging issues such as identity politics, policy effectiveness, and societal expectations regarding gender roles in leadership also shape public emotions, both positive and negative. Several regions in East Java have experienced female regional leadership (Mariyanti et al., 2024; Wulandari et al., 2022). This serves as a foundation for understanding how public perceptions of female leadership in these areas have developed. In a study conducted by Della Nur Safitri et al., it was explained that there is skepticism in the Pilkada (regional elections) in East Java, especially in some regions where several candidates for Regent or Mayor are women. This issue becomes crucial in the lead-up to the 2024 Pilkada to explore how public emotions such as hope, distrust, or even rejection toward female candidates may influence election outcomes. Research on this topic is also relevant for mapping the factors that affect public acceptance of female leadership in the modern era, particularly in addressing the challenges of local democracy in Indonesia (D. N. Safitri & Ridwan, 2024).

This background emphasizes the importance of understanding the dynamics of public emotions toward female regional head candidates in East Java ahead of the 2024 local elections. We expect the findings of this study to significantly contribute to the development of inclusive strategies that encourage women's political participation and promote equitable representation in regional decision-making. Support and advocacy from the community become a source of strength in the contestation process. The contestation of the 2024 regional elections is receiving increasing news coverage. The public's attention has been drawn to the female regional leaders who are planning to run again in the 2024 regional elections in East Java. The political dynamics she experienced during her 4-year leadership have become the driving force behind her electability in the community. Particularly in the present digital era, there is ample opportunity for the public to engage, voice their thoughts, and openly express their emotions towards their regional leaders (Berliana & Santoso, 2023). Conversely, female regional leaders have the ability to effectively greet and engage in discussions with their constituents, thereby achieving a similarly significant impact. This concept is in line with John L. Austin's Speech Act Theory which explains that a person's utterance or statement does not only express something, but also carries out an action which in this study is represented by the act of making comments that represent emotions. Assert that comments on an issue spontaneously express opinions and influenced by negative gender stereotypes regarding women's leadership abilities, the deeply entrenched patriarchal culture in society, and the role of digital media reporting, which frequently portrays women as regional leaders in relation to their performance, often triggering misperceptions and negative sentiments from the public (Putri & Rahayu, 2024).

Political life and the presence of social media provide fertile ground for classifying public sentiments and emotions toward female regional leaders. The complexity of public sentiment and emotions towards female regional leaders is so varied, ranging from negative, positive, to neutral sentiments. Public emotions reflect the collective feelings of society, such as sadness, joy, anger, or surprise, which arise in response to an event or policy (Mathur et al., 2020). These emotions are not static but fluctuate over time, influenced by social dynamics, media coverage, and interactions on social media. Other factors, such as collective experiences and political changes, can also accelerate or diminish the intensity of public emotions. Therefore, understanding the fluctuations of public emotions is essential in analyzing public opinion and responses to a particular issue. Public sentiment and emotion are transformed into a form of trust and support from the community towards female regional heads (Aribowo & Khomsah, 2021). That serves as an important tool to understand political dynamics for all stakeholders, such as the government and political parties, in formulating a more targeted policy. According to (Saif et al., 2017), sentiment analysis aims to understand the attitudes of a group of people using one or more social media platforms for a specific topic.

Through sentiment analysis, it is possible to identify the issues that are the main concerns of the public and understand what the public is currently thinking. Additionally, sentiment analysis can assist leaders in assessing the effectiveness of their policies and implementing the necessary modifications. This enables them to later convey policies with greater effectiveness and persuasiveness (Nurfaizah, 2020).

Method

This research uses a quantitative-qualitative in sequential explanatory design with the sentiment analysis to analyze public emotions towards female regional head candidates in East Java ahead of the 2024 Regional Head Election (Pilkada). The research stages are designed to identify the main actors in a conversation that triggers other social media users to respond to comments. Sentiment analysis is used to analyze the categories of positive and negative emotions in comments regarding the Regent Election (Pilkada) in East Java. This approach helps to understand public perceptions and reactions toward the candidates, as well as the evolving dynamics of opinion on social media (R. Safitri et al., 2021). Researchers identify research problems by searching for content or posts related to the research topic. We conduct data mining to gather comments from a post. The data mining process for collecting comments from Instagram and Facebook uses the website <https://esuit.dev/>.

Crawling was conducted from November 30, 2024, to December 1, 2024, randomly on Facebook postings by inserting the keyword name of the female mayoral candidate, with filtering on public posts and a posting time range in 2024. The researcher selected 23 posts discussing each of the candidates. From the results of the crawling conducted after the data cleaning process. The researcher successfully extracted comments from Facebook posts with the numbers shown in the following table.

Table 1. Number of collected comments

Name	District/City of the Candidate Regent	Number of Comments
Rini Syarifah	Kabupaten Blitar	1652
Ita Triwibawati	Kabupaten Nganjuk	652
Indah Amperawati Masdar	Kabupaten Lumajang	556

Source: author observation (2024)

The stages of Sentiment Analysis begin with identifying the problem to determine a topic that needs to be addressed in the research process. We carry out this stage because it will establish the focus of a research study. The stage of searching for research objects remains the same using the website <https://esuit.dev/>, but at the Mining stage, the data is divided into two for the purposes of training data and test data. We then collect and check the mined data to make sure there are no duplicates or uncollected data. In the subsequent phase, the researchers utilized the Orange application to complete the preprocessing stages, which included branding categorization. The text preprocessing stages are carried out with several steps, namely Transformation to convert all text to lowercase and remove URLs from the text. The next stage is Tokenization to break the text into smaller parts such as words, sentences, and bigrams. The next step involves filtering, which performs language screening, removes numbers, deletes words with regular expressions, and retains verbs and nouns. The final process of data preprocessing is Normalization, which is used to normalize a sentence with abbreviations so that it can be read clearly. The next step is data splitting, which includes training data and test data. The selection of a sentiment model for determining the categorization of Positive, Neutral, and Negative is based on a lexicon approach using a corpus of positive and negative dictionaries in the Indonesian language.

Results and Discussion

Data crawling results

In the analysis of comments on posts about female mayoral candidates Rini Syarifah, Ita Triwibawati, and Indah Amperawati Masdar, the researchers successfully visualized the frequently appearing words. Words like "Win," "Spirit," and "Success" dominate, reflecting public attention on support for the candidates' competence. This visualization helps us

understand the main themes and public sentiment in the discussions related to the three candidates.

Rini Syarifah



Ita Triwibawati



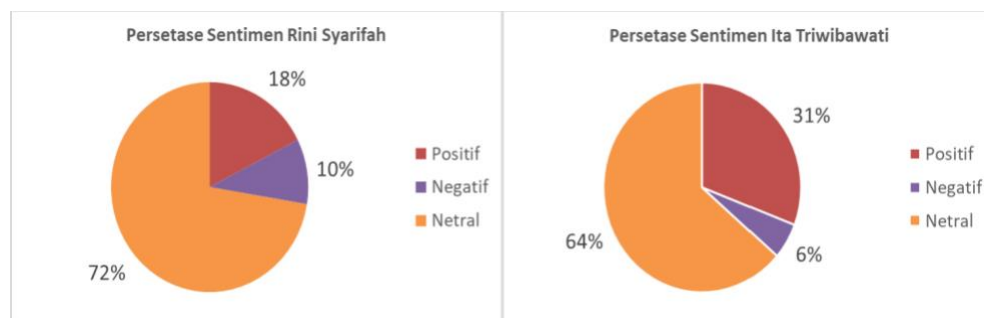
Indah Amperawati Masdar



Figure 1. Wordcloud from Comments on Posts About Female Mayoral Candidates

Sentiment-type classification

After analyzing comments on posts about the female mayoral candidate, the researchers successfully classified the comments into three main categories: positive, negative, and neutral. Positive comments generally contain support for the female candidacy, highlighting bravery, competence, or progressive views regarding the role of women in politics. Biases and attitudes towards the role of women influence activists' evaluations of female candidates (Sharrow et al., 2016). Conversely, criticism of the previous year's performance during the first term in office, criticism of the Regent Candidate's background, and skepticism about their abilities dominate negative comments. Meanwhile, neutral comments tend to be informative, pose questions, or provide views without any particular emotion or judgment. This classification provides a clearer picture of the public's response to the issue and reflects the diverse perspectives of society. Candidates who maintain a consistent stance on asylum seekers enhance perceived favorability and competence, whereas repositioning diminishes these factors. However, when criticised for "flip-flopping," favorability tends to increase (Gooch, 2022).



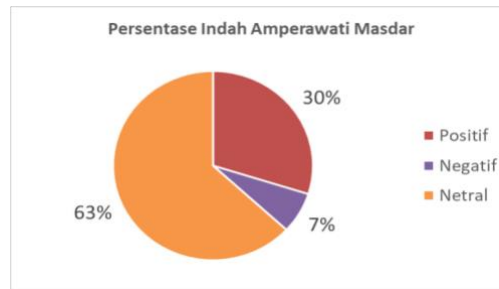


Figure 2. Sentiment Percentage on the Bupati Candidates
 Source : Reseacher, 2024

We conducted the sentiment analysis. The results indicate that the majority of comments on the posts discussing the three candidates are positive. This demonstrates the public's enthusiasm for digital media. The researcher also observed the opinions expressed in comments on posts that discussed the three female mayoral candidates. The researcher concluded that positive comments could include support and hope for the mayoral candidates. The enthusiasm for the presented vision and mission is evident. Meanwhile, negative comments revolve around issues such as reputation, identity, and scepticism towards female candidates for regent positions. There is often scepticism about female candidates, especially in male-dominated fields like politics. The perceived mismatch between traditional gender roles and leadership expectations can fuel this scepticism, resulting in disdain and decreased likability for female candidates who defy these norms (Mendoza & DiMaria, 2019).

Categorization of Crawling Results

From the classification of positive comments, the researchers found two categories of emotions, namely enthusiasm and hope towards the female mayoral candidate. Enthusiastic Emotion is a positive feeling characterized by enthusiasm, excitement, or a high level of interest in something. In the social and political context, enthusiastic emotions often arise when someone feels that something or someone has enormous potential to bring about the desired change or impact. Enthusiasm has been a driving force in significant historical political movements, such as the post-World War II era and the decolonization process that sparked aspirations for social justice and political change (Romitelli, 2017).

Table 2. Classification of Positive Comments

Emotion Classification	Positive comment
Enthusiasm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Alhamdulillah, ma'am, may you always be in good health. The people of Blitar are ready to support you. Hopefully, Blitar will continue to progress and prosper in the future. 2. I also appreciate Mrs. Indah's political promise during her campaign in Tegalrejo, where she stated that she would not allow or permit sand mining in the Gluduk River, Tegalrejo, to be transported outside the Tempursari district. The only tolerance is for construction needs within the Tempursari district. The community remembers and takes note of this political promise. Solid commitment! 3. The most important thing is that during five years of leading Blitar, there has been no trace of corruption. I am proud to have a leader like Mak Rini in Blitar.

Emotion Classification	Positive comment
Hope	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ita Triwibawati, I pray for your victory in the Nganjuk regional election and that you become a trustworthy and fair regent who can bring Nganjuk to a better future. 2. If you win, please ensure that agricultural machinery assistance for farmers is not distributed through government agencies or similar institutions. If possible, provide it directly to farmer groups. This is because, every time there is assistance, farmer groups are often asked to pay a certain amount of money. If they refuse, the assistance is given to another farmer group willing to pay. For example, an official might say: "Sir, there is a tractor assistance program. If you want it, you need to pay a certain amount. The money will be given to this person, that person, and so on. If you don't want it, that's fine. I will give it to another farmer group that agrees." 3. Ita Triwibawati, I salute you, but be prepared for external pressure. You will have to face the rice import mafia/importers because of the restrictions on agricultural supply from the central government, unstable prices, and the issue of Bulog not having projects, which also causes problems. In the past, Klopen Capir was excellent, but now India has adopted it. I pray for your success, ma'am. You will make history. 4. Bunda Indah & Mas Yudha have promised the creative economy players in Lumajang to transform Sujono Building into Lumajang's central coworking space. It will be equipped with various facilities and infrastructure to support the development of the creative economy in the era of AI technology advancement.

Source : Researcher, 2024

Several of the displayed comments exhibit signs of enthusiasm.

1. Positive Energy: Enthusiastic people usually feel more excited and motivated to support or engage in an activity. (This phenomenon manifests itself in various forms such as ready to support, keep moving forward, proud, move forward, and so on. Campaigns often use emotional appeal to stir enthusiasm among voters. This strategy not only activates existing loyalty but also motivates participation, demonstrating the power of emotions like enthusiasm to drive democratic engagement (Brader, 2005).
2. Optimism: The belief that expectations will yield positive or beneficial outcomes. (found in the narrative: keep spirit, definitely win). Political preferences primarily influence voter expectations about election outcomes. Other factors, such as political knowledge and campaign interest, have minimal impact on the accuracy of these expectations. Political knowledge does indeed enhance forecasting ability but does not change the preference-hope relationship (Mongrain, 2021).
3. Active Participation: Enthusiasm often drives someone to become more involved, whether in the form of tangible support (such as campaigns, discussions) or virtual. (for example in the narrative: ready to support). Enthusiasm during the election campaign influences candidate preferences and stimulates interest and engagement, showing that emotional involvement can enhance political participation and learning (Römmele et al., 2014).

The narratives present analysis of the emotions of enthusiasm and hope.

1. Hope for Change:
 In politics, the public often feels enthusiastic about leaders who are considered capable of bringing solutions to their problems, such as corruption, education, or public services. Through their comments, the community expressed satisfaction with the previous governance of the Ngajuk Regency leader, and expressed hope for positive changes if he were to lead again.
2. Representation or Symbolism:
 For instance, certain groups can become enthusiastic about women's leadership because they perceive it as a symbol of progress, gender equality, or innovation in leadership.

The emotion of enthusiasm symbolizes how, in a social structure still shaped by patriarchal culture, women's leadership is viewed as a progressive step towards modernization and gender equality. Even in Lumajang regency, female leadership is often associated with the courage to face local challenges, such as natural resource management and the empowerment of farming communities.

3. Achievements or track records:

These incumbent regional leaders have a good track record and tend to generate higher enthusiasm because they are considered competent and trustworthy, particularly in combating corruption in the Blitar region.

4. Emotional Involvement:

A charismatic communication style, enthusiastic campaigns, or personal stories from a candidate can create an emotional connection with the community. These female regional leaders build this emotional engagement during their tenure.

The enthusiastic emotions of the community towards women's leadership in Nganjuk, Blitar, and Lumajang regencies reflect hopes for social change, policy innovation, and regional progress. Women's leadership is not only a symbol of gender equality but is also considered a solution to local challenges that require an empathetic and inclusive approach. Women leaders face significant obstacles due to social and cultural norms, which can limit their career potential (Kalaitzi et al., 2019). However, the distribution of this enthusiasm among different societal groups is not uniform. The main support tends to come from progressive groups, women, and the younger generation, while conservative or traditional groups still show resistance to the narrative of women's leadership. Leadership strategies that focus on tangible results and strengthening public communication can transform this enthusiasm into broader support. Women's leadership faces various obstacles rooted in cultural, societal, and organizational norms. However, strategies such as enhancing public communication, focusing on tangible results, and increasing awareness and support can help overcome these challenges and expand support for women leaders. Overcoming these obstacles and supporting factors is crucial to fostering an inclusive environment that supports women's leadership in various contexts (Gilani et al., 2022).

Meanwhile, the categorization of expectations revolves around the development of regional infrastructure and the resolution of policy issues to ensure they are more beneficial to the people. This is shown by the following comment: "Ita Triwibawati, salute to you, Bunda. However, external pressure will be a challenge as you will be facing the rice mafia/importers due to restricting the entry of imported rice into Nganjuk. Additionally, there are limitations on agricultural support from the central government, unpredictable prices, and issues arising when Bulog has no projects. In the past, Klopen Capir was very successful, and now India has adopted it. I wish you success, ma'am—you will be making history." This comment expresses the hope that distributors and local farmers can overcome the challenges they face in selling rice. Hope is a positive emotion that emerges when an individual believes or expects a desired or anticipated outcome to occur or materialize. Hope is a complex emotional condition that involves the desire and expectation for a positive outcome in the future. Hope differs from optimism because it emphasizes uncertainty and personal effort. Hope and optimism contribute positively to psychological and physical well-being, with hope playing a significant role in resilience against stress and trauma. Understanding and measuring these concepts can provide valuable insights into their impact on well-being and mental health (Shanahan et al., 2020).

Components of Hope Emotion:

1. Belief: The conviction that there is a way out or a solution to a particular problem.
2. Desire: There is hope to achieve the desired outcome, such as success, security, or well-being.
3. Rational Optimism: Hope is often based on evidence or signs that indicate a positive outcome may occur.

In the context of women's leadership.

1. The belief that women can bring new perspectives and a more inclusive approach to problem-solving often drives hope for women's leadership. These emotions include:

2. Belief in Equality: The hope that the presence of female leaders will drive progress on gender issues.
3. Positive Change: Society hopes that female leaders can address issues with a more empathetic and innovative approach.
4. Trust in Track Record: If a female candidate has a positive reputation, public expectations for her leadership tend to be higher.

The emotion of hope is the main driver of social and political change. In the context of governance, high hopes can motivate the public to actively participate in supporting certain leaders, programs, or initiatives. However, failure to meet these expectations can lead to disappointment or apathy. Therefore, it is important for leaders to continuously meet public expectations and consistently build trust.

Table 3. Classification of Negative Comments

Emotion Classification	Negative Comment
Reputation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The wife of a former convict is running for office, and the goal remains the same. You already know how things work—plenty of their kind have recovered. Later, when the roads are full of potholes, people will start complaining. 2. Cassava turns into fermented tape, soybeans turn into tempeh, and ice cubes turn into shaved ice. 3. Just once, Mak. No change at all.
Skepticism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Besides focusing on agriculture, please, ma'am, also pay attention to rural communities involved in livestock farming, whether small or large-scale, so they can have access to markets for selling their products. Lately, many goat farmers have been anxious because it has been difficult to sell their livestock. 2. Bunda Ita, in the future, please regulate the distribution of fertilizers in Pace... Many groups are misusing it. 3. Making big promises, but the vision and mission have failed. why continue? Or is the plan to turn the area into a "1,000 Potholes Tourist Attraction"? 4. Social assistance is misplaced... It's always the same story the ones who need it most get nothing, while those who are already well-off benefit. Take me as an example. I take care of an elderly person, but I never receive any assistance, just get recorded in the data. 5. But the real issue farmers are facing now, ma'am, is the high price of fertilizer and inadequate irrigation. There is a dam, but it's not functioning properly. Farmers in forest areas are being oppressed and threatened. This is a major regional issue, ma'am. Water should be flowing to farmers' rice fields, but instead, they have to spend extra money to pay for electricity for water pumps.

Source : Researcher, 2024

The classification of these negative emotions shows a form of reputation for the female candidate for regent who will be in office. Like in For example, the comment "Her husband is a former convict who went to prison; the goal is still the same: the wife has many connections; she knows it herself; later the road will be filled with protests" is directed towards Ita Tribawati. g to Tribun's report, the KPK has arrested Ita Tribawati's husband twice (Sudin, 2024). The debate further exposed the reputation of Ita Triwibawati's family by mentioning the conversion of rice into paddy. This also became a topic of public discussion, as evidenced by comments like "cassava becomes tape, soybeans become tempeh, and ice cubes become shaved ice." Another negative reputation was shown in the comment: "Just once, Mak". The comment, "Not Change at Alls," was directed towards Rini Syarifah, the mayoral candidate running for the second time in this election. She made the comment as a form of public disappointment during her first term in office. Based on the explanation above, there are various types of negative emotions related to reputation:

1. Disappointment

It emerges when a diligently cultivated reputation undergoes a downturn, perhaps as a result of miscommunications, setbacks, or unjust feedback.

2. Anger
It arises when someone's reputation is attacked or damaged by the actions of others, such as slander or the spread of false information (hoax).
3. Anxiety or fear.
It arises from concerns about the possibility of reputational damage, especially if there is a risk of exposure to harmful information.
4. Hatred or revenge
It can arise as a reaction to parties considered to have damaged someone's reputation. The second classification is scepticism towards the attention of the Candidate Regent regarding the progress of livestock sector development.

The following comment effectively illustrates this point ; “Besides focusing on agriculture, please, ma’am, also pay attention to rural communities involved in livestock farming, whether small or large-scale, so they can have access to markets for selling their products. Lately, many goat farmers have been anxious because it has been difficult to sell their livestock...”. The skepticism arose due to the difficulty in distribution for goat sales. Such comments suggest the possibility of skepticism towards the livestock sector, which has rarely or perhaps never received consideration. Additionally, the agricultural sector has faced skepticism due to its past inability to control the improper use of fertiliser distribution and maintain stable fertiliser prices for farmers.

Next, skepticism is shown towards the failure in development. This is demonstrated by the following comment; “Making big promises, but the vision and mission have failed. why continue? Or is the plan to turn the area into a 1,000 Potholes Tourist Attraction?” This indicates a failure in the previous period in developing infrastructure. In addition, skepticism is shown towards the failure in the distribution of social assistance, as indicated in the comments; “Social assistance is misplaced... It’s always the same story the ones who need it most get nothing, while those who are already well-off benefit. Take me as an example. I take care of an elderly person, but I never receive any assistance, just get recorded in the data.”

The description above depicts scepticism as a negative emotion, characterized by doubt or distrust towards certain information, claims, or parties. Although scepticism can be healthy if used to critically assess the truth, excessive scepticism often generates negative emotions, both for the sceptical individual and for the party that is the object of skepticism. Skepticism toward women's leadership often stems from gender stereotypes and social norms, leading to negative emotions and reactions (Brescoll et al., 2018). To address this issue, it is necessary to focus on emotional development and challenging existing stereotypes to effectively support women in leadership roles (Segovia et al., 2022). Leadership programs that emphasize emotional intelligence and self-reflection can play an important role in overcoming these obstacles. Some nuances or types of skepticism The emotions in women's leadership, some of which are rooted in strong gender stereotypes in various regions, are as follows:

- a. Distrust
Narratives related to skepticism about women's leadership abilities exist, as experienced by Nganjuk Regency. These narratives associate women's leadership with their husbands, who were involved in corruption cases.
- b. Concern
There is a narrative that expresses concerns that if these female leaders were to serve again, they might struggle to handle more complex pressures.
- c. Suspicion
There is a narrative that suggests that the success of female leaders in the region is solely due to "gender privilege" or "certain political support," rather than their personal abilities.
- d. Doubt
There is a perception that women may be less competent in managing issues considered technical or strategic, such as the economy, infrastructure development, or security. The failure of the district leaders of Nganjuk and Blitar in the 2024 period reflects this belief. Negative emotions, such as skepticism and a poor reputation for women's leadership,

are often based on gender stereotypes and a lack of understanding about women's capacity to lead. However, by implementing effective strategies like education, promoting positive narratives, and increasing the representation of women in leadership, we can reduce these negative emotions, fostering a societal acceptance and support for women as competent leaders. Addressing negative emotions toward women's leadership requires a multifaceted approach that includes increasing the representation of women in leadership roles, promoting positive narratives, and educating people about gender stereotypes. These strategies can help create a more equitable and supportive environment for women leaders, ultimately reducing the impact of stereotypes and encouraging the acceptance of women as competent leaders (Brescoll, 2016).

Conclusion

This research shows that public emotions towards women's leadership ahead of the 2024 regional elections reflect a wide spectrum, ranging from enthusiasm and hope as symbols of progress and gender equality to scepticism and distrust influenced by gender bias and traditional stereotypes. Although there are challenges in the form of cultural and social prejudices, women's leadership has the opportunity to build a positive reputation through inclusive and innovative policies. A deep understanding of public emotions is important to support a more inclusive democracy and broader societal acceptance of women's leadership.

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