

Thematic Analysis of the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto: A Linguistic Study of Political Discourse

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Abstract

Political manifestos serve as vital instruments used by political parties to communicate their ideology, promises, and policy directions to the public. Thematic analysis allows scholars to investigate the underlying meanings, values, and ideological structures found in texts, especially in political discourse. This study focuses on the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto for Malaysia's 14th General Election as a key document reflecting the coalition's aspirations and reformist ideals. The objectives of this study are to identify the main themes within the manifesto text, analyze the use of language and linguistic strategies, and explain the relationship between the identified linguistic themes in the political discourse of Pakatan Harapan (GE14). This study adopts a qualitative approach by analyzing the textual data of the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto 2018 ("Kita Boleh!") using Braun and Clarke's (2006) Thematic Analysis framework. The analysis identified six main themes and twenty codes that represent thematics in the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto. The findings reveal that the manifesto constructs a people-centered and reform-oriented discourse emphasizing well-being, transparency, education, and sustainability, thereby portraying Pakatan Harapan as a coalition committed to progressive governance and the welfare of the people.

Introduction

Political manifestos are fundamental instruments in modern political systems, serving as pivotal mediums for political parties to disseminate their ideologies and electoral pledges to the public (Vestergaard, 2023). These meticulously crafted documents transcend mere campaign flyers; they are comprehensive articulations of a party's policy positions and political philosophies at a specific juncture, often emerging from extensive internal negotiations (Ivanusch et al., 2023). By clearly outlining their visions and commitments, manifestos establish a foundational contract between parties and the electorate, fostering accountability and significantly influencing voter decision-making during elections (Vestergaard, 2023). They form the backbone of electoral campaigns, guiding both internal party communication and external public engagement.

In the Malaysian political landscape, parties like Pakatan Harapan utilize their manifestos as primary instruments to communicate their intended governance and societal reforms to the citizenry. The Pakatan Harapan Manifesto, specifically "Kita Boleh!" from the 14th General Election, exemplifies this function by detailing the party's agenda across

various sectors. The manifestos constructed by each political party are not simply lists of promises but strategic linguistic construct designed to persuade, inform, and mobilize support by articulating the party's values, goals, and desired public image through carefully chosen language and rhetorical strategies (Malghani et al., 2019).

To effectively discern the core messages and underlying intentions conveyed by political parties, especially within the nuanced context of Malaysian politics, thematic research was applied to the text of the Pakatan Harapan manifesto. Thematic analysis, proposed by Braun and Clarke offers a systematic yet flexible framework for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns of meaning within qualitative data (Ahmed et al., 2025). This methodology is particularly well-suited for uncovering the essence of what political parties aim to communicate to the Malaysian populace, as it allows researchers to move beyond surface-level content to extract deeper social and ideological meanings embedded in the text (Mwita & Mwilongo, 2025). By doing so, it illuminates how political language functions as a potent tool for identity construction and influencing public opinion. Therefore, this study aims to identify the main themes within the manifesto text, analyze the use of language and linguistic strategies, and explain the relationship between the identified linguistic themes in the political discourse of Pakatan Harapan (GE14).

Political manifestos serve as foundational communicative instruments in political campaigns, articulating a party's ideology and electoral promises to the electorate. Manifesto are considered authoritative statements of party policy, meticulously negotiated and approved within party structures (Ivanusch et al., 2023). They function as a crucial link between political parties and voters, essentially acting as a contract that outlines a party's intended actions in exchange for electoral support. Linguistically, manifestos are characterized by a persuasive tone, often employing modal auxiliary verbs to convey intention, promise, obligation, and necessity in a strategic effort to sway voters (Nartey & Yankson, 2014). The deliberate crafting of language, including the use of emotional appeals and rhetorical devices, is crucial for engaging with voters and building trust, as effective political communication relies on credibility, logic, and emotional resonance (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2023).

Previous research has extensively explored the linguistic dimensions of political manifestos, both within Malaysia and internationally. In Malaysia, studies have delved into the discourse strategies employed by major political parties. For instance, Aman utilized a critical discourse analysis framework to examine the Barisan Nasional's 2004 general election manifesto, revealing how language was manipulated to secure and maintain political power (Aman, 2009). More recent analyses by Saidin and Azrun have highlighted how language in digital campaign excerpts, particularly from the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party and the Democratic Action Party, is used to create and reinforce religious and racial divisions in pursuit of political power (Saidin & Azrun, 2024). Internationally, linguistic analyses have encompassed diverse political landscapes. Studies have investigated the use of emotion-associated language in the manifestos of UK political parties, such as the Conservative and Labour parties (Nishi, 2023). In Indonesia, research has focused on the textual and discursive strategies employed by national leaders to construct political images (Kristina et al., 2021), and comparative studies have examined modalities in political debate discourse between Indonesia and the USA (Adawiah, 2017). Large-scale projects like the Manifesto Project have also facilitated quantitative text analysis by providing extensive, annotated corpora of electoral programs from numerous countries, enabling cross-national comparisons of policy positions and linguistic patterns.

Thematic analysis, particularly the model proposed by Braun and Clarke, is a widely utilized and flexible method for analyzing qualitative data (Ahmed et al., 2025). This structured yet adaptable framework facilitates the identification, analysis, and interpretation of patterns of meaning within datasets. Braun and Clarke's model typically involves six phases: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This method is not merely descriptive but also involves a degree of interpretation in the selection of codes and the construction of overarching themes. The justification for selecting thematic analysis in linguistic research stems from its inherent flexibility across various research questions, sample sizes, data collection methods, and approaches to meaning generation (Mwita & Mwilongo, 2025). According to (Mwita & Mwilongo, 2025), Thematic analysis is particularly well-suited for extracting social and ideological meaning from extensive text-based material, enabling researchers to systematically describe and interpret qualitative data by assigning codes and developing themes that reflect lived experiences, views, and behaviors. It is explicitly recognized as appropriate for identifying ideological positions and divides within political texts.

Method

This study employs a qualitative research design, utilizing thematic analysis as its primary methodological approach. The analysis is specifically guided by the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006), a widely recognized method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data. This approach offers a systematic yet flexible process for understanding subjective experiences and social realities embedded in textual data.

The data for this study were sourced from the official Pakatan Harapan Manifesto, titled "Kita Boleh!", published in 2018 for the 14th General Election. The selection of this document is predicated on the academic understanding that political manifestos serve as authoritative statements of a party's policy and ideology. They function as a critical medium through which political parties communicate their electoral programs, represent their ideological stances, and establish a contract with the electorate (Vestergaard, 2023). Therefore, analyzing this manifesto provides direct insight into the political discourse and strategic linguistic choices of Pakatan Harapan.

The thematic analysis procedure, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (Braun & Clarke, 2006), commenced with a critical initial phase of data familiarization. This involved comprehensive reading and immersion in the textual data to gain a holistic understanding of its content and nuances. Subsequently, an initial coding process was undertaken, wherein key words and phrases relevant to social issues and underlying policies were systematically identified and assigned preliminary codes. This iterative process of reading and initial coding lays the groundwork for deeper thematic exploration (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Following the initial coding, these granular codes were then grouped and organized into broader, potential themes. This stage involved an iterative process of refining and reviewing these emergent themes to ensure their coherence and distinctiveness, while accurately reflecting the patterns within the data. The themes were then meticulously named to encapsulate their essence. The final step involved the construction of a thematic narrative, where each identified theme was elaborated upon and supported by direct textual excerpts from the manifesto, thereby grounding the interpretation firmly in the data.

Results and Discussion

The thematic analysis of the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto text revealed six principal themes, which collectively articulate the party's political and social priorities. Among the themes successfully identified were (1) Well-being & Cost of Living, (2) Employment & Economy, (3) Transparency & Institutional Reform, (4) Education & Social, (5) Health & Welfare and (6) Environment & Disaster Resilience. This aligns with scholarly understanding that political manifestos serve as critical documents for political parties to convey their intentions, policies, and ideological stances (Anigbogu et al., 2021). The linguistic choices within such manifestos are instrumental in shaping public perception, influencing political actions, and fostering electoral support by strategically highlighting key commitments and enhancing the party's image (Malghani et al., 2019).

Theme 1: Well-being & Cost of Living

The thematic analysis of the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto has identified "Well-being & Cost of Living" as a significant theme, reflecting the party's deep concern for public welfare and the rising cost of living. The manifesto outlines a people-centric approach, emphasizing concrete measures such as price control, eradication of cartels, financial aid provision, and ensuring food security to address these critical issues. This focus underscores the party's commitment to alleviating the economic burdens faced by the populace.

The linguistic strategies employed within this theme showcase an inclusive discourse, utilizing phrases like "mendahulukan kepentingan rakyat" (prioritizing the people's interests) and "menjamin keselamatan makanan" (ensuring food security). Such language signals a clear people-centred orientation, aiming to resonate with the public's immediate concerns and present the party as responsive to their daily struggles. This approach is instrumental in constructing a political narrative that champions the welfare of its citizens.

Table 1
Theme 1: Well-being & Cost of Living

Tema	Kod	Quotation (Petikan Asal dari Dokumen)
Well-being & Cost of Living	Cost of Living	"Kita boleh menangani isu kos sara hidup dengan mengambil pendekatan yang mendahulukan kepentingan rakyat."
	Price Control	"Kita boleh menghapuskan kartel dalam sektor bahan makanan dan keperluan asas bagi menggalakkan persaingan dan membasmi kegiatan kaut keuntungan melampau (profiteering)."
	Living Assistance	"Meneruskan program Bantuan Sara Hidup (BSH) untuk membantu mengatasi kos sara hidup."
	Food Security	"Menjamin keselamatan makanan tidak terhad sekadar memastikan pengeluaran makanan yang cukup. Ia perlu merangkumi aspek kebajikan pemain individu seperti petani, nelayan dan penternak."

Based on Table 1, Theme 1: Well-being and Cost of Living highlights Pakatan Harapan's concern for the people's economic welfare through four main codes: (1) cost of living, (2) price control, (3) living assistance, and (4) food security. This theme emphasizes the coalition's focus on improving citizens' well-being by outlining measures such as regulating the prices of essential goods, curbing cartel activities, continuing financial aid for affected groups, and ensuring food security that encompasses the welfare of farmers,

fishermen, and livestock breeders. Overall, the theme reflects the manifesto’s linguistic strategy centered on the people’s interests, employing an inclusive and empathetic approach toward everyday economic issues.

The "Well-being & Cost of Living" theme of the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto focusses on a number of important issues, including addressing inflation and stabilising commodity prices, increasing household incomes through minimum family wage laws and agricultural support, completely eliminating poverty through targeted assistance programs, and ensuring access to affordable housing in addition to strong social security measures. These commitments collectively form a framework designed to enhance the overall quality of life and economic stability for all citizens.

Theme 2: Work & Economy

Theme 2, "Work & Economy," highlights the Pakatan Harapan manifesto's focus on economic development rooted in social justice. This theme particularly emphasizes policies related to minimum wage, the burgeoning gig economy, entrepreneurial opportunities for youth, and fostering autonomous regional development in Sabah and Sarawak. Such a focus reflects a comprehensive approach to economic policy that seeks to integrate social equity with growth.

The language employed within this theme is characterized by a progressive and aspirational tone. Phrases such as "pelan dasar gaji minimum yang tersusun" (a structured minimum wage policy plan) and "memperkasa Wilayah Sabah & Sarawak" (empowering the regions of Sabah & Sarawak) serve as linguistic strategies to construct an image of a party committed to inclusive economic practices. This strategic use of language aims to convey a vision of economic development that benefits all segments of society, rather than concentrating wealth or opportunity.

Table 2
Theme 2: Work & Economy

Tema	Kod	Quotation (Petikan Asal dari Dokumen)
Work & Economy	Minimum Wage	"Pelan dasar gaji minimum yang tersusun bagi mencapai sasaran negara berpendapatan tinggi."
	Gig Economy and Entrepreneurship	"Untuk pekerja buruh kasar dan ekonomi gig, sistem perkembangan kerjaya akan diperkenalkan."
	Youth Assistance	"HARAPAN berazam untuk memudahkan akses golongan belia menjadi sebahagian dari kegiatan ekonomi negara."
	Development of Sabah And Sarawak	"Memperkasa Wilayah Sabah & Sarawak menerusi pelaksanaan Perjanjian Malaysia 1963."

Based on Table 2, Theme 2: Work and Economy reflects Pakatan Harapan’s focus on fostering an inclusive and progressive economic framework through four identified codes: (1) minimum wage, (2) gig economy and entrepreneurship, (3) youth assistance, and (4) development of Sabah and Sarawak. This theme underscores the coalition’s commitment to ensuring fair income distribution, empowering gig and informal sector workers, supporting youth participation in national economic activities, and promoting balanced regional development. Collectively, these elements highlight the party’s linguistic emphasis on economic equality and social justice, portraying Pakatan Harapan as a coalition that advocates sustainable growth anchored in fairness and opportunity for all.

Underpinning the "Work & Economy" theme are several key commitments from Pakatan Harapan. These include the creation of quality and high-skilled job opportunities, the economic empowerment of youth and local entrepreneurs, the provision of social

protection for gig workers and those in the informal sector, and the pursuit of balanced regional economic growth anchored in humanitarian values, termed "Humanitarian Economy". These commitments collectively articulate a vision for an economy that is not only robust but also equitable and socially responsible.

Theme 3: Transparency & Institutional Reform

Theme 3, "Transparency & Institutional Reform," underscores the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto's commitment to principles of good governance, comprehensive institutional reform, and media freedom. This theme is evidenced by specific codes such as combating corruption, reforming the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, and ensuring media liberty, all of which collectively articulate the party's dedication to integrity and transparency. These elements signify a strategic focus on rectifying systemic issues and fostering a more accountable administration.

The language within this theme employs a moral discourse and emphasizes institutional responsibility, evident in phrases like "negara bersih, jujur dan amanah" (a clean, honest, and trustworthy nation) and "semakan oleh Jawatankuasa Pilihan Khas Parlimen" (review by a Special Parliamentary Select Committee). This linguistic strategy is crucial for building public trust, by projecting an image of a party committed to ethical governance and robust checks and balances. The emphasis on parliamentary oversight and national integrity aims to resonate with public demands for accountability.

Table 3
Theme 3: Transparency & Institutional Reform

Tema	Kod	Quotation (Petikan Asal dari Dokumen)
Transparency & Institutional Reform	Combating Corruption	"HARAPAN komited dalam mendukung aspirasi rakyat yang mahukan negara bersih, jujur dan amanah."
	MACC Reform	"Pencalonan Ketua Pesuruhjaya SPRM perlu disemak oleh Jawatankuasa Pilihan Khas Parlimen yang dwipartisan."
	Media Freedom	"Menghidupkan semula usaha untuk menubuhkan Majlis Media dan meminda Akta Mesin Cetak."

Based on Table 3, Theme 3: Transparency and Institutional Reform emphasizes Pakatan Harapan's strong commitment to integrity, accountability, and good governance through three identified codes: (1) combating corruption, (2) MACC reform, and (3) media freedom. This theme illustrates the coalition's effort to build a clean and trustworthy government by reinforcing anti-corruption mechanisms, ensuring parliamentary oversight in institutional appointments, and promoting press freedom. Linguistically, the manifesto employs moral and ethical expressions that project a reformist image, aligning the party's discourse with public expectations for transparency and institutional integrity.

Under the umbrella of "Transparency & Institutional Reform," Pakatan Harapan outlines several key aspirations. These include the comprehensive eradication of corruption through the strengthening of the MACC and the implementation of parliamentary oversight mechanisms. Furthermore, the manifesto pledges to guarantee freedom of information and media, transitioning from a culture of secrecy to one of openness. Other commitments involve restructuring executive and judicial powers to prevent abuse, enhancing the parliamentary democratic system by addressing political funding and ensuring equitable representation, and safeguarding fundamental human rights through legal reforms and freedom of expression.

Theme 4: Education & Social

Theme 4, "Education & Social," in the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto underscores a resolute commitment to enhancing access to quality education. This theme particularly emphasizes the prioritization of Technical and Vocational Education and Training, financial assistance for the B40 income group, and comprehensive reforms to the education system. These initiatives collectively highlight a strategic effort to foster an educated and skilled populace, addressing societal inequalities through equitable educational opportunities.

The language employed within this theme is distinctly inclusive, aiming to bridge social divides by promoting equal educational access. Phrases such as "basiswa B40" (B40 scholarships) and "reformasi pendidikan untuk semua anak Malaysia" (education reform for all Malaysian children) exemplify this inclusive discourse. Such linguistic choices strategically position the party as a champion for educational equity, resonating with a broad spectrum of the electorate by promising universal access to quality learning.

Table 4
Theme 4: Education & Social

Tema	Kod	Quotation (Petikan Asal dari Dokumen)
Education & Social	TVET Education	"Menjelang tahun 2030, Malaysia sepatutnya menjadi negara berpendapatan tinggi dengan guna tenaga berkemahiran yang lebih tinggi."
	B40 Scholarships	"HARAPAN akan memperkenalkan Biasiswa B40 bagi mengurangkan kebergantungan golongan kurang berkemampuan kepada kemudahan pinjaman."
	Education Reform	"Untuk memastikan pendidikan berkualiti dapat diberikan kepada semua anak Malaysia termasuk anak-anak di Sabah & Sarawak, pembaikan sekolah daif akan menjadi teras Reformasi Pendidikan."

Based on Table 4, Theme 4: Education and Social highlights Pakatan Harapan's dedication to enhancing equitable access to quality education and social development through three identified codes: (1) TVET education, (2) B40 scholarships, and (3) education reform. This theme reflects the coalition's commitment to producing a skilled workforce by strengthening technical and vocational education, supporting students from low-income families through financial aid, and improving educational infrastructure across regions. The manifesto's linguistic choices emphasize inclusivity and empowerment, portraying education as a key driver for social mobility and national progress.

Under the "Education & Social" theme, Pakatan Harapan outlines several key commitments. These include reforming the national education system to enhance quality, ensure fairness, and grant institutional autonomy; empowering youth, women, and children as critical social investments for the nation's future; elevating the status of TVET and technical education to secure dignified skills and employment; and improving social welfare through family assistance, women's reproductive health, and support for the elderly. These pledges collectively articulate a holistic vision for social development underpinned by a robust and equitable education system.

Theme 5: Health & Welfare

Theme 5, "Health & Welfare," prominently featured in the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto, demonstrates a strong commitment to strengthening the public health and social welfare systems. This emphasis is conveyed through the use of direct and assertive phrases such as "reformasi kesihatan perlu dilakukan segera" (health reform needs to be done immediately) and "menangani isu doktor kontrak" (addressing the issue of contract doctors). Such expressions underline the party's recognition of pressing healthcare challenges and its dedication to swift action, aligning with the broader academic understanding that political manifestos serve as key channels for parties to articulate their health policies and engage in electoral competition over social issues (Belchior & Teixeira, 2022). Parties often prioritize healthcare system expansion, equity, and access in their platforms .

The linguistic strategy employed within this theme conveys a tone that is both urgent and empathetic, effectively reinforcing the party's image as highly responsive to the needs of the populace. This strategic use of language, characterized by a focus on immediate action and a compassionate approach, is a common feature in political communication designed to build intimacy with voters and influence public sentiment. Empathetic narratives and emotional appeals in political discourse are recognized as powerful tools for connecting with and mobilizing audiences, highlighting the party's dedication to the well-being of its citizens.

Table 5
Theme 5: Health & Welfare

Tema	Kod	Quotation (Petikan Asal dari Dokumen)
Health & Welfare	Healthcare Reform	"HARAPAN percaya reformasi kesihatan perlu dilakukan segera sebelum nasi menjadi bubur."
	Welfare of Healthcare Workers	"Menangani isu doktor kontrak dan menjamin kebajikan penjawat kesihatan."
	Health Insurance	"Meluaskan program perlindungan mySalam kepada golongan M40."

Based on Table 5, Theme 5: Health and Welfare underscores Pakatan Harapan's commitment to improving the nation's healthcare system and social protection through three identified codes: (1) healthcare reform, (2) welfare of healthcare workers, and (3) health insurance. This theme reflects the coalition's emphasis on implementing immediate healthcare reforms, addressing issues related to contract doctors and staff welfare, and expanding protection schemes such as mySalam to the M40 group. The linguistic expressions used in the manifesto convey urgency and empathy, highlighting Pakatan Harapan's concern for equitable access to healthcare and the well-being of all citizens.

The "Health & Welfare" theme further outlines Pakatan Harapan's holistic and inclusive approach to social protection and human development. Key commitments include a comprehensive reform and restructuring of the public health system, along with the provision of extensive social protection schemes such as mySalam, PeKaB40, and PERKESO, designed to cover diverse segments of society. The manifesto also prioritizes the empowerment of vulnerable groups, including the elderly, persons with disabilities, and impoverished families, alongside a significant emphasis on mental health and social well-being as fundamental aspects of human development. These commitments reflect a broader trend in political discourse where social policies, including support for vulnerable populations, are central to party platforms and electoral competition.

Theme 6: Environment & Disaster Resilience

Theme 6, "Environment & Disaster Resilience," as articulated in the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto, highlights a strong sense of responsibility towards environmental stewardship and adaptation to climate change. The manifesto prominently features terms such as "Akta Perubahan Iklim", "kesiapsiagaan banjir" (flood preparedness), and "pembangunan lestari" (sustainable development). These terms not only signify specific policy intentions but also reflect a commitment to integrating environmental concerns into the core of their political agenda.

The language employed within this theme showcases a profound global awareness and a forward-looking concern for the future, directly aligning with the principles of sustainable development goals. Political parties, through their manifestos, often articulate their environmental positions and commitments, which can influence policy outcomes and societal engagement with climate action (Lundquist, 2022). The emphasis on climate change adaptation, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable development reflects a broader international recognition of these issues, with numerous studies linking governmental plans and policy documents to the implementation of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (Swaris et al., 2023). Such discourse is critical in positioning the party as one that is responsive to both local and global environmental challenges.

Table 6
Theme 6: Environment & Disaster Resilience

Tema	Kod	Quotation (Petikan Asal dari Dokumen)
Environment & Disaster Resilience	Climate Chan	"Menggubal Akta Perubahan Iklim yang menetapkan sasaran pelepasan karbon dan liputan hutan menjelang 2040."
	Disaster Management	"Menyelaras dan merangka plan kesiapsiagaan banjir dan bencana menyeluruh yang menggariskan tanggungjawab setiap peringkat kerajaan."
	Sustainable Development	"Mengutamakan rancangan infrastruktur saliran dan tebatan banjir serta pembangunan lestari."

Based on Table 6, Theme 6: Environment and Disaster Resilience emphasizes Pakatan Harapan’s environmental responsibility and proactive stance toward climate adaptation through three identified codes: (1) climate change, (2) disaster management, and (3) sustainable development. This theme highlights the coalition’s commitment to enacting a Climate Change Act, strengthening national preparedness for natural disasters, and promoting sustainable infrastructure development. The linguistic choices in the manifesto reflect a forward-looking and globally aware discourse, positioning Pakatan Harapan as a coalition dedicated to environmental stewardship and long-term national resilience.

Under the "Environment & Disaster Resilience" theme, Pakatan Harapan outlines several key principles. These include strengthening resilience and disaster preparedness through enhancing agencies like NADMA, providing post-disaster aid, and formulating comprehensive flood mitigation plans. Furthermore, the manifesto commits to clear climate change policies, including the enactment of a Climate Change Act and a pledge towards achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. The party also advocates for the empowerment of the green economy through investments in renewable energy and sustainable resource management, alongside promoting environmental education and awareness to foster collective responsibility for environmental preservation among citizens and the nation. These commitments demonstrate a multi-faceted approach to ensuring long-term environmental health and societal resilience against natural disasters.

The analysis reveals that the Pakatan Harapan Manifesto transcends a mere political document, functioning instead as a strategic linguistic discourse. This strategic communication aims to influence public perception and build a distinct political image through the careful selection of language and rhetorical devices. Such manifestos are ingeniously crafted to persuade the electorate for political support, demonstrating the symbiotic relationship between language and politics in shaping citizens' support for a party's platform (Anigbogu et al., 2021). Research consistently shows that political parties strategically use sentiments and emotions in their manifestos to communicate their stances and differentiate themselves from opponents (Nishi, 2023).

The language employed in the manifesto conspicuously features an empathetic and aspirational tone, particularly through phrases such as "mendahulukan kepentingan rakyat" (prioritizing the people's interests). This aligns with findings that political discourse often leverages emotional appeal, credibility, and logic to influence audiences and convey intended messages effectively (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2023). Furthermore, the manifesto integrates principles of morality and reform, using expressions like "negara bersih, jujur dan amanah" (a clean, honest, and trustworthy nation), which serve as a rhetorical strategy to build public trust and legitimize proposed institutional changes. This moral discourse is critical in positioning the party as committed to good governance and accountability.

Overall, the manifesto's discourse underscores the party's effort to construct a political image rooted in 'rakyat, reformasi dan kesejahteraan' (people, reform, and well-being) through inclusive and meaningful language. By strategically framing its policies and values, the manifesto conveys a vision of sustainable development ("pembangunan mampan, kesiapsiagaan banjir" - sustainable development, flood preparedness) and a commitment to environmental responsibility. This approach is consistent with academic studies that analyze how political parties, through their manifestos, address issues such as social welfare and sustainable development, often aligning with global agendas like the Sustainable Development Goals to demonstrate foresight and concern for future generations. The strategic use of language, therefore, is not merely descriptive but performative, actively shaping the party's identity and its perceived alignment with the public's aspirations.

Conclusions

The Pakatan Harapan Manifesto, through its six core themes of Work & Economy, Transparency & Institutional Reform, Education & Social, Health & Welfare, Environment & Disaster Resilience, and a meta-theme emphasizing its strategic linguistic discourse, effectively functions as more than a mere political document. It is a carefully crafted narrative designed to build public trust and support, positioning the party as one that champions the interests of the people and advocates for significant reform (Malghani et al., 2019). The language employed across these themes characterized by empathy, aspiration, moral principles, and a vision for sustainable development strategically articulates the party's commitments, such as prioritizing the people's welfare, ensuring clean and trustworthy governance, and fostering a responsible future. This strategic use of language, which includes persuasive rhetoric and inclusive discourse, is fundamental to how political parties communicate their intentions, shape public opinion, and mobilize support for their agendas, ultimately constructing a political image centered on the electorate, reform, and overall societal well-being (Al-Khawaldeh et al., 2023).

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