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ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AHEAD OF THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Case Studies on Political Campaigns, Political Propaganda, Public Opinion, Marketing, Political Advertising, and Political Negotiation

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ABSTRACT

The 2024 presidential election is an important moment in the political life of a country. This study aims to analyze the role of various aspects of political communsication in the presidential election, including political campaigns, political propaganda, public opinion, political marketing and advertising, and political negotiations. The research methodology uses a holistic approach with quantitative and qualitative data collection through online surveys, interviews, and media content analysis. Key findings highlight the significance of social media in shaping public opinion and the political communication strategies used by candidates. Practical implications of these findings include recommendations for more effective political campaign strategies and the development of more transparent communication policies.

KEYWORDS

Political Communication, Political Publicity, Campaign Planning



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INTRODUCTION

Political communication plays a crucial role in the presidential election process, influencing public perception and voting outcomes. In the context of the 2024 presidential election, this research aims to understand the impact of political communication elements on the dynamics of the presidential election. Through a holistic methodological approach, this study is expected to provide valuable insights for political stakeholders and academics.

Indonesia is currently entering a political year. We know that 2024 is a major democratic celebration, namely the determination or election of the President and Vice President. More specifically, in the Greater Jakarta area and in several other

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provinces, this year also marks the gubernatorial elections. In a democratic country like Indonesia, general elections (elections) for leaders at every level of government are mandatory, especially since the reformation. This means that democracy in this archipelago nation has been progressing with various dynamics.

In preparing for such elections, it is very common for each candidate to prepare for the 'political contest' given that there is usually more than one candidate. Each candidate competes to win the election. They strive to attract voters' attention to choose them. As a form of democracy in practice, the voters' voices certainly determine the victory. In short, the more votes or support a candidate gets, the more likely they are to win the election. Thus, the winner will secure a position of power in the government.

Since the 1998 reformation, the social and political dynamics in this country have been quite vibrant. When connected to the election process, every candidate will conduct their political campaign with the aforementioned objectives. In some cases, we might see unhealthy campaign processes. The use of radical methods, possibly due to misunderstandings or other reasons, occasionally occurs. However, their number is relatively small. The political campaign process in Indonesia so far can still be considered reasonable and proceeding as it should. Though, again, we sometimes encounter black campaigns.

In political campaigns, the most significant aspect is the messages conveyed by the candidates. Each tries to bring specific themes or topics to offer to the public. Some of us might be more familiar with political promises. This can be true, as it is part of the messages in political campaigns, though it does not always mean so.

Given the social developments we often observe, we need to understand the essence of political campaigns. As political students, we need to understand from both theoretical and practical perspectives. This paper will primarily explain the conceptual explanations of political campaigns and related matters.

From this background, it is necessary to examine the issues and strategies related to political campaigns. Therefore, this paper seeks to answer several questions: why is political campaigning important? How are campaign messages delivered to the public? And lastly, what strategies are employed to make a political campaign successful and increase votes/support?

Literature Review

Mass Media

Mass media is a crucial element in the process of political communication because without mass media, political messages cannot reach a wide audience quickly and massively. In a democratic political system, the function of the media is to serve as a channel for political communication originating from outside the media itself and also as a transmitter of political messages constructed by journalists (McNair, 1995, p. 11).

The influence of mass media is very strong, as highlighted by the "reflective-projective theory," which suggests that mass media can reflect an ambiguous image and lead to diverse interpretations (Rakhmat, 1994). Such is the power of mass media that Bartholomew H. Sparrow (1999) describes it as the "Fourth Branch of Government." Paul Johnson (1997) identifies seven daily sins of mass media: (1) ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL COMMUNICATION AHEAD OF THE 2024 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION Case Studies on Political Campaigns, Political Propaganda, Public Opinion, Marketing, Political Advertising, and Political Negotiation

distortion of information, (2) dramatization of false facts, (3) invasion of privacy, (4) character assassination, (5) exploitation of sex, (6) poisoning the minds of children, and (7) abuse of power.

In politics, mass media is not only a source of political information but also often a driver of political change. Generally, mass media tends to cover political events with certain biases. Concretely, the media plays a significant role in political communication. The active involvement of the media in politics reflects the dynamics in the relationship between the government and society.

Mass media is a social force that exercises free and responsible social control, as Muhtadi (1999) views it. We recognize that the influence of mass media can be seen from historical facts that imply significant changes in political behavior resulting from media exposure. With technological development, mass media now includes the internet, surpassing the capabilities of print and electronic media. The internet is currently considered the most effective and efficient communication tool for conveying information. Today, internet mass media is regarded as a publicity tool for each candidate.

Publicity

Although there are various definitions and methods for determining publicity, it can generally be said that publicity is the planned dissemination of messages using certain media to achieve organizational goals without paying the media (Lesly, 2003). On the other hand, publicity also refers to news written by mass media that includes information about a product, services, events, positions, workers, contributions, history, goals of a business, agency, or group (Ramacitti, 1990). Similarly, publicity is the news about someone, a product, or service that appears in media-provided space or time in the form of news, features, editorial content, or broadcast programs (Newsom, Turk, & Kruckeberg, 2004).

According to Heryanto (2018a), there are four types of publicity: 1) Pure publicity; 2) Free publicity; 3) Tie-in publicity, and 4) Paid publicity. Pure Publicity involves publicity activities utilizing everyday occurrences, such as greetings or holiday wishes. Pure publicity is often seen on street corners, such as banners or billboards with holiday greetings from candidates or political actors.

Free Ride Publicity uses the presence of other parties, such as seminars, religious gatherings, social events, or activities by other figures to boost popularity. This type of publicity is similar to pure publicity but involves third-party events outside the political communicator.

Tie-in Publicity takes advantage of extraordinary events, such as providing social assistance to natural disaster victims. This activity is akin to "hitting two birds with one stone" as it uses an extraordinary event to gain popularity, typically attracting media coverage.

Lastly, Paid Publicity involves paying the media for publicity. Examples include creating special talk shows or collaborations to cover an individual's activities over a certain period or entering special partnerships (Heryanto & Rumaru, 2013).

Propaganda

Political propaganda is a deliberate effort to influence public opinion and manipulate perceptions through the use of biased or dishonest messages. Literature on political propaganda identifies various manipulative techniques used in political contexts, such as the use of stereotypes, message framing, and emotional rhetoric. Propaganda has now become a routine and accepted part of politics, seen as a form of political communication aimed at influencing society. It is not limited to messages created during political celebrations and executive and legislative election campaigns.

Propaganda is a part of political communication that can be conducted persuasively. As stated by Munthe in his journal "Propaganda and Communication Science," propaganda is fundamentally persuasive, employing methods of appeals, enticements, invitations, and "promises" to encourage people to willingly or voluntarily do something according to a specified pattern. According to Jacques Ellul, as quoted by Nimmo in the book *Media Komunikasi Politik* (Heryanto, 2018b), propaganda can be defined as communication carried out by an organized group that aims to create active or passive participation in the actions of a mass of individuals, united psychologically through psychological manipulation, and integrated into an organized group.

In Nimmo's book (2002), it is mentioned that there are seven key propaganda techniques that utilize a combination of words, actions, and logic for persuasive purposes as follows:

- 1. Name Calling: Assigning a negative label to an idea, person, object, or purpose to get people to reject something without examining its reality.
- 2. Glittering Generalities: Using positive words to describe something to gain support without investigating the accuracy of the association.
- 3. Transfer: Identifying a cause with a symbol of authority.
- 4. Testimonial: Using statements from respected or despised individuals to promote or denigrate a cause.
- 5. Plain Folks: An appeal that suggests the speaker is aligned with the audience in a collaborative effort.
- 6. Card Stacking: Carefully selecting accurate and inaccurate, logical and illogical statements, etc., to build a case.
- 7. Bandwagon: An effort to convince the audience of the popularity and correctness of a cause so that everyone will join.

Mass media has the power to shape public opinion, which can ultimately elevate or tarnish someone's image. This assumption aligns with the theoretical framework of Berger and Luckmann (1990) that social interaction can occur through a dialectical process. This dialectical process creates stages such as subjective reality, symbolic reality, and objective reality (Heryanto, 2018b).

Objective reality refers to patterned actions and behaviors that are generally perceived by individuals as facts. Symbolic reality is the symbolic expression of what is perceived as "objective reality." Additionally, subjective reality is the construction of reality possessed by individuals and constructed through the process of internalization. These three stages connect the concept of dialectics, which occurs through externalization, objectification, and internalization. Externalization is the

adaptation to the socio-cultural world as a human product. Objectification is social interaction in an intersubjective world that is institutionalized. Internalization is the process by which individuals identify themselves within a social institution or organization because they become members of it (Heryanto, 2018b).

Significance of Campaigns

Political communication is a crucial field of study within political science that examines the interaction of communication between political actors and the public. Theories of political communication, such as Lasswell's model of "who says what, to whom, through what channel, with what effect," provide a foundational understanding of how political messages are produced, conveyed, and received by the public.

A political campaign is a series of activities conducted by candidates, political parties, or other interest groups to influence the opinions and behaviors of voters in an election. Previous research has highlighted campaign strategies, the effectiveness of campaign messages, and their impact on public perception and election outcomes.

The importance of campaigns can be understood by grasping the concept of a political campaign itself. A political campaign is an organized effort that seeks to influence decision-making processes within a particular group. In democracies, political campaigns often refer to election campaigns where leaders or candidates are chosen. In certain countries, referendums are also used to determine specific policies through public voting. While referendums are rare in Indonesia, examples can be seen in European countries, such as the Brexit referendum in the United Kingdom a few years ago. In modern politics, the most prominent campaigns focus on elections and candidates for head of state or government. A clear example is presidential elections, where candidates and their supporters campaign for their respective sides.

According to Rice and Paisley, a campaign is the desire to influence the beliefs and behaviors of others through communicative appeal. Political campaigns are a form of political communication conducted by a group of people, an individual, or a political organization at a certain time to gain political support from the public.

Based on Law No. 1 of 2015 concerning the General Election of Members of the House of Representatives, Regional Representative Council, and Regional House of Representatives, Article 1, paragraph 26, a campaign is defined as "the activities of election participants to convince voters by offering their vision, mission, and programs."

According to Rogers and Storey (1987), a campaign is a series of planned communication actions aimed at creating specific effects on a large audience, carried out continuously over a certain period. Many communication experts acknowledge that the definition provided by Rogers and Storey is the most popular and widely accepted among communication scholars. Thus, campaigns are fundamentally commonplace and frequently observed. However, the implementation of campaigns often deviates from regulated rules.

Campaigns come in various types. The General Election Commission (KPU), through decision letter no. 35 of 2004, regulates all forms or types of campaigns. According to this regulation, there are at least nine types/forms of campaigns:

- 1. Public debates/open debates between candidates,
- 2. Activities that do not violate laws and regulations,
- 3. Installation of campaign tools in public places,
- 4. Distribution of campaign materials to the public,
- 5. Dissemination through print and electronic media,
- 6. Broadcasting through radio and/or television,
- 7. Limited meetings,
- 8. Public rallies,
- 9. Face-to-face meetings and dialogues.

Additionally, regarding the definition of campaigns, Article 1, paragraph 26 of Law No. 10 of 2008 states that a campaign is an activity carried out by election participants to convince voters by offering the vision, mission, and programs proposed by the election candidates.

Public Opinion:

Public opinion encompasses the attitudes, beliefs, and views of the public on political and social issues. Studies of public opinion consider the factors that influence opinion formation, such as mass media, social groups, and personal experiences. Research also focuses on measuring public opinion through surveys and data analysis.

Political Marketing and Advertising:

Political marketing involves the marketing strategies used by candidates and political parties to gain voter support. This includes the use of political advertisements in mass media, social media campaigns, and political branding strategies. Studies on political marketing and advertising aim to understand how political messages are positioned and conveyed to target audiences.

Political Negotiation:

Political negotiation occurs when political actors interact to reach agreements or compromises in public policy formation. Literature on political negotiation includes theories about the negotiation process, negotiation strategies, and factors influencing negotiation outcomes, such as power, interests, and time constraints.

Messages in Campaigns

An idea can arise for various reasons and is constructed into messages that can be communicated to the public or audience. These messages will be responded to and subsequently accepted or rejected by the public. Essentially, a campaign is the delivery of political messages in various forms, from posters, discussions, advertisements, to leaflets. Regardless of the form, messages always use verbal symbols intended to captivate the broader audience.

The success of any campaign always involves message designers who are sensitive and creative (Roger and Synder, 2002). These designers have the sensitivity to identify their audience and the creativity to design messages that align with the general characteristics of the target audience. Messages or issues are crucial in

enhancing the "selling value" of a candidate. Candidates will strive to maximize and convince the public with the messages they convey. In short, these messages are presented as attractively as possible to engage potential voters.

It is common for each candidate in a campaign to promote specific issues or topics. If understood, this is a part or example of a campaign message. These messages/issues usually concern specific topics or phenomena developing in society. We often hear the phrase 'campaigning is selling issues.' This phrase holds some truth. Some examples include issues of poverty and social welfare. In such themes, the campaign message is about improving welfare, whether through economic programs or other relevant initiatives.

Another frequently highlighted campaign message is the issue of corruption, which is common at various levels. In this case, the campaign message often includes a call to vote for a clean and religious candidate. The candidate will claim to be a better choice, free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN), and also of a religious background.

Campaign messages can emphasize the idea that the candidate wants to share with the voters. Often, campaign messages consist of main points addressing policy issues. These points are summarized into the main campaign idea, which is then repeated simultaneously to create a specific impression on voters. For example, Candidate A has a particular program, while Candidate B has another, possibly different, program. Political candidates often try to portray other candidates as lacking substantial messages related to their policies. Moreover, a significant portion of political campaign strategies is aimed at undermining other candidates. Simultaneously, candidates also strive to convince and attract voters to choose them. When a candidate wins the election, their political campaign can be considered successful.

Black Campaign

In a political contest like this, we sometimes recognize the term black campaign. A black campaign is an attempt to damage or question someone's reputation, by issuing negative propaganda. It can be applied to individuals or groups (Jay C, 2002). The people targeted are generally poli-ticians, public officials, activists and of course other political candidates. The term smear campaign is also often used in other more general matters such as job competition.

Black campaigns arise because of heated competition in campaigns. Another term states that black campaigning is the use of destructive methods of seduction, innuendo or rumors about a candidate being spread to the public/ potential voters. This is done in order to create negative perceptions that are considered unethical, especially in terms of public policy.

An example that we can still remember is the Chinese stooge rumor. This sara issue is very sensitive in Indonesia's multi-cultural society. Candidates will say that the opposing candidate brings the interests of certain groups that are hated by the community, in this case China. Another issue for example is the issue of PKI descendants. Some candidates have accused their opponents of being descendants of PKI figures. Another sensitive issue is a candidate's infidelity scandal. Candidates will bring down their opponents by raising these immoral issues.

In essence, a smear campaign is aimed at bringing down an opponent. Communication in black campaigns is attempted to cause the phenomenon of resistance from voters. In this way, the public becomes anti / unwilling to vote for him because of or on the basis of the bad perceptions that have been built up.

Black campaigns can generally be carried out by candidates or candidates because they lack strong resources to attack other candidates by playing on the emotions of voters so that in the end they can leave the candidate or candidate of their choice. This can be understood because the candidate feels threatened to lose if they do not do certain methods.

Campaign Strategy & Planning

When a political campaign is interpreted as an activity to persuade voters that aims to increase electability and popularity, then a candidate needs to have a mature strategy and planning. Candidates who participate in elections certainly have different campaign methods from other candidates. Campaigns that are a means to achieve political goals require a strategy, which will be very important (Herpamudji, 2015). This is in order to win the election and the ideals that the candidates and supporting parties want for the future.

Here are some things that need to be considered in the campaign strategy, namely analyzing the political map, determining the winning target, forming a campaign team, formulating campaign strategies, networking, organizing campaigns, and overseeing vote acquisition. (http://www.uky.edu)

The first is analyzing the political map. On this side, candidates need to map potential voters. Technically, it can be done by examining the electoral districts, digging up information about the vote acquisition in the two previous elections with the intention of comparing. In this analysis, it is also necessary to map key person data or influential people in the community. For example, determining and knowing religious leaders, community leaders, women's movement leaders, professional group leaders, and journalists is also very important.

Second is the determination of the target vote. The number of votes targeted needs to be formulated by understanding the regional distribution, voter segmentation, voter targets, and voter trends. These things are important for calculation. The deeper the information obtained, the more reliable the calculation or prediction can be.

The third is related to the formation of the Campaign Team. The existence of a team is very important to help all campaign processes from start to finish. The campaign team is an individual or institution that supports the candidate's candidacy. The campaign team can be divided into a core team and a support team. The team may also consist of a consultant, campaign manager, communications director, legal staff, field director, scheduler, volunteer coordinator, database admin, and fundraising director. Other elements may be added as needed.

After that, the fourth aspect is Campaign Strategy Formulation. In this case, the team needs to make a mapping of the determination of the targeted voter segments, determination of the priority scale of addressing, preparation of campaign issues, campaign media, campaign equipment, campaign forms and models.

No less important is the networking aspect. This fifth aspect is closely related to the extent of social connections that can be used to attract funding. In addition, of course, networking can serve to gain wider support. Networks can include mass organizations, NGOs, professional organizations, partner organization networks, journalist associations, women's organizations, party wing organizations, regional organizations, religious organizations, and other organizations concerned with relevant issues.

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The last one is the need for Vote Acquisition Monitoring. In this aspect, the team needs to determine witnesses and volunteers in the election process. In addition, a network of independent monitors is also very important. This can be used as a source and comparison material on vote acquisition information. After that, of course, there must be a monitoring system in the electoral process.

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RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative and qualitative research design. The data was collected through online surveys of respondents who were potential voters, interviews with political communication experts, and analysis of mass media content. The data analysis techniques used include descriptive statistics and qualitative content analysis.

Data analysis reveals interesting patterns in political communication ahead of the 2024 presidential election. Key findings include the important role of social media in shaping public opinion, effective political campaign strategies, and political propaganda efforts from various parties. The relationship between variables is explained through regression and correlation analysis

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This study highlights the effectiveness of various political communication strategies employed by candidates in the 2024 presidential election. Table 1 summarizes the survey responses on voters' perceptions of communication tactics, focusing on social media influence, message clarity, and emotional appeal.

Table 1. The survey responses on voters perceptions of communication tactics									
Indicator	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)		Strongly gree (%)	Disa-			
Social media influence	54	30	10	4	2				
Message clarity	48	35	12	3	2				
Emotional appeal in propaganda	60	28	8	3	1				
Effective use of political ads	52	33	10	4	1				
Importance of traditional media	30	40	20	8	2				

Table 1. The survey responses on voters' perceptions of communication tactics

The data shows a significant agreement (84%) that social media heavily influences political opinion, demonstrating its role as a main communication platform for candidates. Message clarity and emotional appeal were also rated highly, underscoring their effectiveness in capturing voter interest and support.

In terms of propaganda, 88% of respondents found emotional appeal effective, as it resonates with the public's sentiment toward candidates and issues. This finding highlights how candidates have leveraged emotions in crafting messages to enhance voter engagement and loyalty.

Political advertising's role was deemed crucial, with 85% of respondents agreeing that advertisements on social and traditional media impacted their view of candidates. These ads, combining visuals and slogans, helped simplify complex political messages, making them accessible and memorable for the public.

Traditional media remains relevant, particularly for older demographics, with 70% of respondents indicating its importance in forming political views. This suggests that, while digital platforms are effective for younger voters, traditional media retains influence across broader age groups.

A closer look at public opinion formation reveals that online discussions, often facilitated by influencers and prominent public figures, play a role in shaping perspectives. Survey results indicate that 78% of respondents follow political figures on social media, illustrating the influence of personalities in swaying public perception.

The findings also emphasize the role of alliances and political negotiations in expanding voter reach. About 67% of respondents acknowledged that endorsements from allied groups or figures influenced their support for a candidate, illustrating the power of political partnerships.

Finally, Table 2 displays the results of a regression analysis between social media engagement (independent variable) and voter support (dependent variable), showing a positive relationship where increased engagement on digital platforms correlates with heightened voter support for candidates.

Table 2. the results of a regression analysis between social media engagement (independent variable) and voter support (dependent variable)

Variable	Coeffi- cient	Std. ror	Er- t-Statis- tic	Significance value)	(p-
Social media en ment	gage- 0.65	0.10	6.5	0.000	
Constant	2.10	0.40	5.25	0.001	

The regression analysis confirms that active social media engagement is a strong predictor of voter support, with a significant p-value of 0.000, reinforcing the role of digital interaction in political influence.

Discussion

Social Media's Influence on Voter Perception

The study highlights social media as a critical tool for political communication, particularly among younger demographics. The high engagement on platforms like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook allows candidates to communicate directly with voters, bypassing traditional media. This immediacy helps build a strong, relatable image and encourages voter interaction through likes, shares, and comments, making social media an indispensable component of modern political strategy.

The Role of Emotional Appeal in Political Propaganda

Emotional appeal emerged as a powerful element in political propaganda. Candidates frequently use emotionally charged language to evoke strong responses, thus fostering loyalty and support. Techniques such as "name-calling" and "bandwagon" are especially effective in reinforcing favorable opinions while simultaneously casting opponents in a negative light. This finding underscores the importance of understanding psychological triggers in crafting persuasive political messages.

The Enduring Influence of Traditional Media

Despite the rise of digital platforms, traditional media continues to hold sway, particularly among older voters. Television and print media maintain a credibility that some view as lacking in social media. Therefore, candidates aiming for a broad demographic appeal must strategically balance digital and traditional channels to maximize outreach and maintain credibility.

Political Alliances and Public Endorsements

The study also found that political alliances and endorsements significantly impact voter perception. Alliances lend legitimacy to a candidate, expanding their appeal among the supporters of allied groups or individuals. Public endorsements signal shared values and vision, which are particularly effective in appealing to undecided voters, who may rely on trusted figures for guidance.

Message Clarity and Accessibility

Clear, concise messaging enhances a candidate's accessibility to voters, especially in political advertising. Advertisements often use straightforward language

and visuals to convey complex ideas, making it easier for voters to understand and retain political platforms. This approach aligns with the high scores for message clarity in Table 1, indicating its crucial role in voter persuasion.

Implications for Future Campaign Strategies

The results suggest that a hybrid approach combining social media, traditional media, and strategic alliances may offer the most effective reach. As digital media's role continues to grow, campaign teams should focus on real-time engagement with the public while upholding traditional media for authority. Moving forward, understanding the nuances of voter psychology and digital engagement will be vital in crafting successful political campaigns.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that political communication has a very important role in determining the outcome of the presidential election. The contribution of this research to the existing literature is a deeper understanding of the dynamics of political communication ahead of presidential elections. Suggestions for further research include the development of more sophisticated research methodologies and comparative research between countries.

In a democratic country, political campaigns are very important in introducing candidates to the public. We understand political campaigns as organized efforts that seek to influence the decision-making process of a particular group. With the aim of winning a particular election, each candidate needs to consider careful strategy and planning. This strategy and planning is very important because it determines the candidate's victory in the election process. However, we also sometimes see efforts that may be unhealthy in the political process. Campaigns conducted by each candidate are often colored by efforts to bring down opponents, or black campaigns. Perhaps Ed Goeas of The Tarrance Group in America has a point: "Campaigning is about maximizing your strengths and neutralizing your weaknesses, while at the same time neutralizing your opponent's strengths and highlighting their weaknesses.

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