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Implementation of the Political Marketing Mix and Electronic Word of Mouth in the 2024 Regional Head Election of Karawang Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of the political marketing mix on electronic word-of-mouth (E-WoM) and voting decisions, as well as the mediating role of E-WoM. The research adopts a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS 4.1.1.4. Data were collected from 200 respondents who participated in the 2024 Karawang local election through an online questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale. The findings indicate that most elements of the political marketing mix—product, price, place, promotion, people, and process—have a positive and significant effect on E-WoM, while physical evidence does not show a significant influence. Furthermore, all elements of the political marketing mix positively and significantly affect voting decisions. E-WoM is proven to have a direct positive effect on voting decisions and serves as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between most political marketing mix elements and voting decisions, except for physical evidence. These results demonstrate that voter behavior is shaped by a complex interaction of rational, emotional, and social factors, and highlight the strategic importance of digital communication and peer-to-peer information sharing in modern political campaigns. The study contributes theoretically to the development of political marketing literature in local democratic contexts and provides practical insights for political actors in designing more effective and participatory campaign strategies in the digital era.

KEYWORDS *Political Marketing Mix; Electronic Word-of-Mouth; Voting Decision; Local Election; Digital Political Campaign*

INTRODUCTION

In an era of increasingly intensive globalization and democratization, the use of marketing strategies in the political realm has become a universal phenomenon that cannot be ignored. Hermawan Kertajaya (1996) explained that in an increasingly fierce competition situation, marketing becomes an increasingly important function, and when the competition is very tight and unpredictable, marketing must be everyone's soul. This holds true not only in the business world but also in the political context, where the increasingly open and transparent democratic system requires political elites to compete in a healthy and professional manner.

Globally, the implementation of marketing in politics has been used by Western countries since the beginning of the 20th century. The United Kingdom began implementing political marketing strategies in 1929, while the United States has been using them since 1926 as a strategy for winning elections (Aceh & Kholisoh, 2023; Alzate et al., 2024; Wei & Mokhtar, 2021). American political parties and politicians are widely recognized for pioneering many of the techniques that now permeate modern election campaigns in most major democracies.

The 2024 United States presidential election, which pitted Democrat Kamala Harris against Republican Donald Trump, shows how a comprehensive political marketing strategy can affect election outcomes. Trump, with a background as an accomplished businessman,

managed to use his business instincts in political campaigns by realizing that awareness is key in a political campaign (cnbcindonesia.com, 2024). The slogan "Make America Great Again" is considered to have high selling value and gave Trump a victory with 70,871,620 votes (51.0%) compared to Kamala Harris, who received 65,963,074 votes (47.5%).

In Indonesia, the application of political marketing has become increasingly relevant along with the development of the post-reform democratic system. Changes in the structure and mechanism for the election of regional heads have had a major impact on the development of studies on political marketing, especially voter behavior (Al-Nsour, 2023; Naumenko, 2022; Pysarenko, 2024; Winchester et al., 2016). Butler and Collins (2001) see an increase in volatility in voter behavior. This makes voter partisanship more difficult to predict, and the instability of voter behavior is greatly influenced by the fading of voters' ideological ties with parties or election contestants.

The specific problem faced in the Indonesian political context is the low level of public trust in politicians and political parties. This is reflected in data from the Corruption Eradication Commission (*Komisi Pemberantasan Korupsi*, KPK), which shows an increasing trend in corrupt practices. In 2021–2024, the KPK recorded a recapitulation of corruption criminal prosecutions with alarming figures: in 2021, there were 119 investigations initiated, 108 investigations, 88 prosecutions, 87 indictments, and 89 executions; in 2022, it increased to 113 investigations initiated, 120 investigations, 133 prosecutions, 141 indictments, and 101 executions; in 2023, there were 127 investigations initiated, 161 investigations, 129 prosecutions, 113 indictments, and 124 executions; meanwhile, in 2024, there were 73 investigations initiated, 154 investigations, 90 prosecutions, 91 indictments, and 108 executions (kpk.go.id, 2025). This trend shows that corruption remains a serious challenge affecting public trust in political institutions.

In a more specific context, 2024 is often referred to as a political year because it featured general elections for regional heads (*Pemilihan Kepala Daerah*, Pilkada) simultaneously in accordance with the mandate of Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Elections. A total of 545 regions—consisting of 37 provinces, 415 regencies, and 93 cities—participated in the 2024 regional head election (kpu.go.id, 2024). The phenomenon of *golput* (white group) is also a serious concern; in the 2019 election, the percentage of people who abstained was recorded at 29.68% in the legislative election and 19.24% in the presidential election (data.goodstats.id, 2023).

The urgency of this research lies in several crucial factors. First, there is a need for a deep understanding of how modern political marketing strategies can be applied in the context of Indonesia's local politics. Second, the increasingly important role of digital media and *electronic word-of-mouth* (*e-WOM*) in shaping public opinion and influencing political decisions. Third, the need to develop a political marketing model that aligns with the socio-cultural characteristics of Indonesian society. Fourth, the urgency to provide practical guidance for political practitioners in designing more effective and ethical campaign strategies.

Relevant research in the field of political marketing has been conducted by various international scholars. O'Cass (2001) points out that political marketing does not guarantee victory but provides tools to maintain relationships with voters so that trust and vote support will be built. Kotler & Levy (1969) reinforce the relevance of marketing science to politics by stating that the concept of marketing is not limited to business institutions. Lees-Marshment

(2001) developed the concept of a market-oriented party that shows how political parties can adopt a marketing approach to increase their electability.

In the context of e-WOM, research by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004) shows that *word-of-mouth* electronic communication has a significant impact on consumer decisions. Chu and Kim (2011) further identified the determinants of consumer engagement in e-WOM on social networking sites, which are relevant to the modern political context where digital platforms are the main arena of political discussion. Cheung and Thadani (2012) developed an integrative model that shows the impact of e-WOM communication on decision-making.

In Indonesia, political marketing research is still limited. Firmanzah (2012) has conducted a comprehensive study on political marketing in the Indonesian context, but the focus is still on the national level. Dulah (2014) shows that the seriousness of political marketing efforts is believed to maximize the winning potential of political parties and candidates through the application of standard marketing techniques in political campaigns.

The novelty of this research lies in several innovative aspects. First, this study is one of the first empirical studies to apply the 7P Political Marketing Mix in the context of regional head elections in Indonesia. Second, the integration of the e-WOM concept with the political marketing mix in one research model has not been widely done, especially in the context of local politics in Indonesia. Third, the use of *Kabupaten Karawang* as a research locus makes a unique contribution because of its characteristics as an area with a large number of voters and a high level of digital activity. Fourth, this study uses a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach with SmartPLS, which allows comprehensive analysis of simultaneous relationships between variables.

Based on the phenomena described, this study has several main objectives. First, to analyze the influence of the Political Marketing Mix on *Electronic Word-of-Mouth* in the political campaign for the 2024 *Kabupaten Karawang* Regional Election, titled *Implementation of the Political Marketing Mix and Electronic Word of Mouth in the 2024 Regional Head Election of Karawang Regency*. Second, to examine the direct influence of the Political Marketing Mix on the community's voting decisions in the 2024 *Kabupaten Karawang* Election. Third, to measure the extent to which *Electronic Word-of-Mouth* affects voters' voting decisions in the 2024 *Kabupaten Karawang* Elections.

The benefits of this research can be seen from two perspectives. From an academic perspective, this research makes a theoretical contribution to the development of marketing management studies, especially in the application of the 7P Political Marketing Mix and *Electronic Word-of-Mouth* concepts in the context of local politics in Indonesia. This research is also expected to serve as a reference for model development and empirical testing in contemporary political marketing studies.

From a practical perspective, this study provides input and recommendations to political practitioners, success teams, and candidates in developing more effective and relevant political campaign strategies that align with the characteristics of modern voters, especially in utilizing the 7P marketing approach and managing e-WOM to positively influence perceptions and voting decisions.

The implications of this research are multidimensional. Theoretically, the results are expected to enrich the literature on political marketing in Indonesia and provide an empirical basis for developing political marketing theory in the context of local democracy. Practically,

the findings can guide political candidates and campaign teams in designing more effective strategies, especially by integrating elements of the marketing mix with digital communication management. Methodologically, this research contributes to the use of SEM for analyzing political phenomena, which can serve as a reference for future studies in political marketing.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method. The research population is all Karawang residents who have voted in the 2024 Karawang Regional Election. The sampling technique uses purposive sampling with the following criteria: (1) having voted in the 2024 Karawang Regional Election, (2) being at least 17 years old, and (3) willing to fill out a questionnaire completely.

Based on the calculation using the SEM formula (5 x the number of indicators), with a total of 35 indicators, a sample size of at least 175 respondents was obtained. Taking into account the 10% error rate and the need for pilot testing, a sample of 200 respondents was determined. The variables studied consisted of: 1) Independent variable: Political Marketing Mix 7P (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, Physical Evidence) dan Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM). 2) Dependent variable: Voting Decision

Data collection was carried out through an online questionnaire using Google Form with a Likert scale of 5 points (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS 4.1.1.4 software with stages of validity, reliability, normality, model suitability, and hypothesis testing.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Evaluation of the Analytical Model

a. Outer Model

1) Convergence Validity

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test Results with Outer Loading

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
Product (X1)	X101	0.914
	X102	0.946
	X103	0.921
Price (X2)	X201	0.937
	X202	0.899
	X203	0.916
	X204	0.898
	X205	0.878
	X206	0.897
	X207	0.854
	X208	0.915
	X209	0.848
	X210	0.895
Place (X3)	X301	0.919
	X302	0.907
	X303	0.902
	X304	0.914
Promotion (X4)	X401	0.870

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading
	X402	0.918
	X403	0.922
	X404	0.915
	X405	0.887
People (X5)	X501	0.148
	X502	0.911
	X503	0.878
	X504	0.913
	X505	0.898
Process (X6)	X601	0.891
	X602	0.899
	X603	0.881
Physical Evidence (X7)	X701	0.909
	X702	0.939
	X703	0.916
Voting Decision (Z)	Z01	0.935
	Z02	0.835
	Z03	0.847
	Z04	0.787
	Z05	0.770
E-WoM (Y)	Y01	0.775
	Y02	0.789
	Y03	0.727

Source : Processed Data (2025)

Based on the table above, it is known that all the values of loading factors are above 0.70 and this means that all constructs are valid. The table above is the result of the convergent validity test with the Average Variance Exctracted (AVE) obtained from calculations using SmartPLS. The following is the AVE value for each variable:

Table 2. Results of the Convergent Validity Test with Average Variance Exctracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Exctracted (AVE)
Products (X1)	0.919
Price (X2)	0.972
Place (X3)	0.931
Promotion (X4)	0.943
People (X5)	0.869
Process (X6)	0.878
Physical Evidence (X7)	0.922
Voting Decision (Z)	0.813
E-Wom (Y)	0.763

Source : Processed Data (2025)

The results of the convergent validity test with AVE showed that all variables in this study had an AVE above 0.50. That means that the researcher variable has met the prerequisites

for the convergent validity test. A model of convergent validity test results performed with SmartPLS software can be seen in the image below:

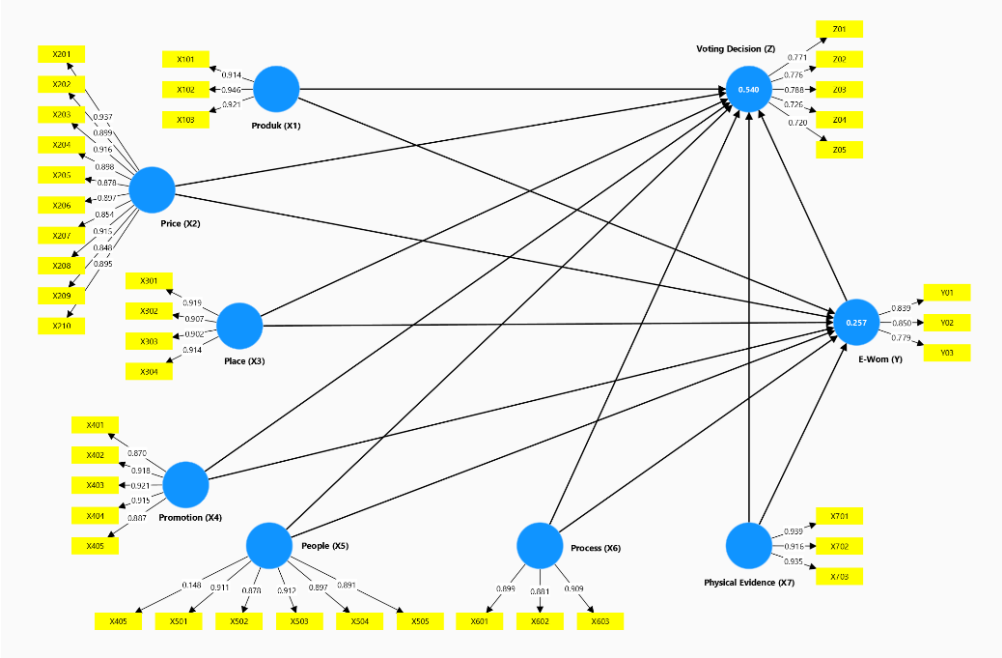

Image 1. Convergent Validity Test Results Model

Source : SmartPLS 4 (2025)

2) Discriminatory Validity

The discriminant validity test is carried out to see the differentiators of each construct measured. The discriminant validity test can be carried out by looking at the cross loading value of each variable must be above 0.70. In addition, the discriminant validity test can also be carried out by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with the correlation values between the variables in the study. If the square root of the AVE value of each variable has a value greater than the correlation value between the variables, then it can be said that the research model has good discriminant validity. The following are the square root values of AVE and the results of the discriminant validity test.

Table 3. AVE Value and AVE Square Root

Variable	Average Variance Exctracted (AVE)	AVE Square
Products (X1)	0.919	0.959
Price (X2)	0.972	0.986
Place (X3)	0.931	0.965
Promotion (X4)	0.943	0.971
People (X5)	0.869	0.932
Process (X6)	0.878	0.937
Physical Evidence (X7)	0.922	0.960
Voting Decision (Z)	0.813	0.902
E-Wom (Y)	0.763	0.873

Source : Processed Data (2025)

Table 4. Results of the Discriminant Validity Test

	Y	X5	X7	X3	X2	X6	X1	X4	Z
E-Wom	**0.823**								
People	0.230	**0.822**							
Physical Evidence	0.089	0.023	**0.930**						
Place	0.241	-0.050	-0.048	**0.910**					
Price	0.261	0.115	0.041	0.113	**0.894**				
Process	0.191	0.046	0.033	0.090	0.039	**0.897**			
Products	0.169	0.017	0.006	-0.116	-0.120	0.085	**0.927**		
Promotion	0.154	0.108	-0.002	0.042	-0.036	-0.105	-0.023	**0.903**	
Voting Decision	0.559	0.372	0.250	0.255	0.300	0.319	0.170	0.200	**0.757**

Source : Processed Data (2025)

From the results of data processing, the cross loading value is above 0.70 and the square root value of AVE of a construct is higher than that of other constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables have a good discriminant validity value.

3) Reliability Test Results

Table 5. Results of the Discriminant Validity Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability
Products (X1)	0.919	0.939
Price (X2)	0.972	0.974
Place (X3)	0.931	0.934
Promotion (X4)	0.943	0.950
People (X5)	0.869	0.920
Process (X6)	0.878	0.886
Physical Evidence (X7)	0.922	0.932
Voting Decision (Z)	0.813	0.816
E-Wom (Y)	0.763	0.769

Source : Processed Data (2025)

The composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for all study variables were above 0.70. Therefore, it is concluded that the variables in this study have a good level of reliability.

b. Inner Model

1) Multicollinearity Test Results

Table 6. Nilai Inner Collinearity Statistic (VIF)

Variable	Inner Collinearity Statistic (VIF)	
	E-WoM (Y)	Voting Decision (Z)
People (X5)	1.222	1.036
Physical Evidence (X7)	1.110	1.006
Place (X3)	1.158	1.045
Price (X2)	1.164	1.047
Process (X6)	1.173	1.036
Products (X1)	1.115	1.037
Promotion (X4)	1.106	1.031

Source : Processed Data (2025)

A good VIF value is below 10.00. The results of the multicollinearity test of the relationship between the variables of this study were below 10.00. This means that the relationship between exogenous variables is not high or multicollinearity does not occur.

2) Model Conformity Test Results

Table 7. Determination Coefficient Table

Variable	R-Square
E-WoM (Y)	**0.352**
Voting Decision (Z)	**0.472**

Source : Processed Data (2025)

Based on the table above, the R-Square E-WoM (Y) value is 0.352. This shows that the variables Product (X1), Price (X2), Place (X3), Promotion (X4), People (X5), Process (X6), Physical Evidence (X7) and Voting Decision (Z) have an effect of 35.2 (0.352 x 100%) on the E-WoM (Y) variable. While the remaining 64.8% (100 – 35.2) were influenced by other variables that were not studied in this study. Then the R-Square Voting Decision (Z) value is 0.472. This shows that the variables Product (X1), Price (X2), Place (X3), Promotion (X4), People (X5), Process (X6) and Physical Evidence (X7) have an effect of 47.2 (0.472 x 100%) on the E-WoM (Z) variable. While the remaining 52.8% (100 – 47.2) were influenced by other variables that were not studied in this study.

2. Hypothesis Test

The following are the results of hypothesis testing in this study:

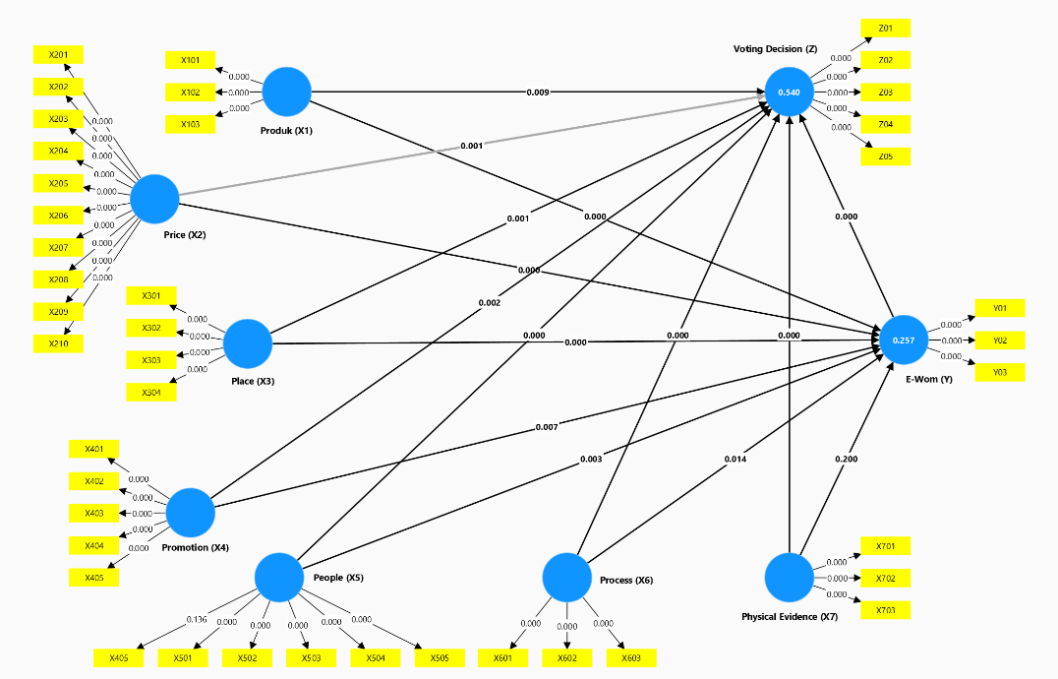

Image 2. Path Analysis Path Hypothesis Test Results Model
Source: SmartPLS 4 (2025)

The requirements for decision-making are: 1) If the value of the infection is < 0.05; then the hypothesis is accepted, which means that there is a significant influence between

variables. 2) If the significance value of > 0.05; then the hypothesis is rejected, which means that there is no significant influence between variables.

The following is the hypothesis in this study:

a. The Influence of Political Marketing Mix on E-WoM

H1 : Products have a positive and significant effect on E-WoM
H2 : Price has a negative and significant effect on E-WoM
H3 : Place has a positive and significant effect on E-WoM
H4 : Promotion has a positive and significant effect on E-WoM
H5 : People have a positive and significant effect on E-WoM
H6 : Process has a positive and significant effect on E-WoM
H7 : Physical Evidence has a positive and significant effect on E-WoM

Table 8. Results of Political Marketing Mix Testing on E-WoM

Hypothesis	Original Sampel	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-Values
Products (X1) against E-Wom (Y)	0.212	3.510	0.000
Price (X2) against E-Wom (Y)	0.234	3.968	0.000
Place (X3) against E-Wom (Y)	0.233	3.667	0.000
Promotion (X4) against E-Wom (Y)	0.154	2.710	0.007
People (X5) vs. E-Wom (Y)	0.185	2.994	0.003
Process (X6) versus E-Wom (Y)	0.152	2.461	0.014
Physical Evidence (X7) against E-Wom (Y)	0.081	1.280	0.200

Source : Processed Data (2025)

Based on the hypothesis testing results presented in the table, it can be concluded that product, place, promotion, people, and process variables have a positive and significant effect on electronic word of mouth (E-WoM), as evidenced by significance values of 0.000, 0.000, 0.007, 0.003, and 0.014 respectively, indicating that H1, H3, H4, H5, and H6 are accepted. The price variable also shows a significant effect on E-WoM with a significance value of 0.000; however, because the direction of the effect is positive rather than negative as hypothesized, H2 is rejected. Meanwhile, physical evidence does not have a significant influence on E-WoM, as indicated by a significance value of 0.200, leading to the rejection of H7.

b. The Influence of Political Marketing Mix on Voting Decisions

H8 : Products have a positive and significant effect on Voting Decisions
H9 : Price has a negative and significant effect on Voting Decision
H10 : Place has a positive and significant effect on Voting Decision
H11 : Promotion has a positive and significant effect on Voting Decision
H12 : People have a positive and significant effect on Voting Decisions
H13 : Process has a positive and significant effect on Voting Decision
H14 : Physical Evidence has a positive and significant effect on Voting Decision

Table 9. Results of Political Marketing Mix Testing on E-WoM

Hypothesis	Original Sampel	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-Values
People (X5) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.257	5.394	0.000
Physical Evidence (X7) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.210	4.087	0.000
Place (X3) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.174	3.322	0.001

Hypothesis	Original Sampel	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-Values
Price (X2) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.177	3.385	0.001
Process (X6) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.223	4.433	0.000
Product (X1) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.139	2.619	0.009
Promotion (X4) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.152	3.111	0.002
People (X5) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.257	5.394	0.000
Physical Evidence (X7) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.210	4.087	0.000

Source : Processed Data (2025)

Based on the hypothesis testing results, it is found that the product, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence variables have a positive and significant effect on Voting Decision, as indicated by significance values of 0.009, 0.001, 0.002, 0.000, 0.009, and 0.000 respectively, leading to the acceptance of H8, H10, H11, H12, H13, and H14. The price variable also shows a significant influence on Voting Decision with a significance value of 0.001; however, because the effect is positive rather than negative as hypothesized, H9 is rejected.

c. The Influence of E-WoM on Voting Decisions

Table 10. Results of E-WoM Testing on Voting Decision

Hypothesis	Original Sampel	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-Values
E-Wom (Y) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.302	4.898	0.000

Source : Processed Data (2025)

1) On H15, a significance value of 0.000 was obtained, indicating that H15 was accepted. This shows that E-WoM has a positive and significant effect on Voting Decision.

d. The Role of E-WoM Mediation

H16 : E-WoM mediates the influence of Product on Voting Decision
H17 : E-WoM mediates the influence of Price on Voting Decisions
H18 : E-WoM mediates the influence of Place on Voting Decision
H19 : E-WoM mediates the influence of Promotion on Voting Decision
H20 : E-WoM mediates the influence of People on Voting Decisions
H21 : E-WoM mediates the influence of Process on Voting Decision
H22 : E-WoM mediates the influence of Physical Evidence on Voting Decisions

Table 11. E-WoM Mediation Test Results

Hypothesis	Original Sampel	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-Values
People (X5) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.257	5.394	0.000
Physical Evidence (X7) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.210	4.087	0.000
Place (X3) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.174	3.322	0.001
Price (X2) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.177	3.385	0.001
Process (X6) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.223	4.433	0.000
Product (X1) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.139	2.619	0.009
Promotion (X4) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.152	3.111	0.002
People (X5) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.257	5.394	0.000
Physical Evidence (X7) on Voting Decision (Z)	0.210	4.087	0.000

Source : Processed Data (2025)

Based on the mediation analysis results, it is found that electronic word of mouth (E-WoM) significantly mediates the influence of product, price, place, promotion, people, and process on Voting Decision, as indicated by significance values of 0.007, 0.027, 0.003, 0.022, 0.008, and 0.029 respectively, leading to the acceptance of H16, H17, H18, H19, H20, and H21. In contrast, E-WoM does not mediate the influence of physical evidence on Voting Decision, as shown by a significance value of 0.229, resulting in the rejection of H22.

The Influence of Political Marketing Mix on Electronic Word-of-Mouth

Political marketing mix is a strategic approach that adapts the traditional marketing mix to a political context, as developed by Lees-Marshment (2001). In the 2024 Karawang Regional Election, this strategy has proven to play an important role in shaping voter perception and encouraging the dissemination of political information digitally through Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WoM). The results show that most elements in the marketing mix have a positive and significant effect on e-WoM, with some findings expanding existing theoretical understanding.

Product elements, which refer to the candidate's image, show a positive and significant influence on e-WoM. This is in line with brand personality theory (Aaker, 1997; Needham, 2006), which states that candidates with strong and consistent character are easier to talk about by voters. In Karawang, candidates who display personal narratives, public service records, and proximity to the community encourage voters to share campaign content voluntarily. This reinforces the idea that political imagery is not only about perception, but also about the dissemination of information based on social identification (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Interesting findings appear in the price variable. Theoretically, price in the political context is often associated with the burden or risk borne by voters. However, the results of the study show that price actually has a positive and significant effect on e-WoM. This phenomenon can be explained through the Expectancy-Value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), in which voters value campaign promises as valuable expectations, not as burdens. In Karawang, the political commitments made by candidates—such as work programs and promises of budget transparency—became the subject of discussion and the dissemination of information on social media, showing that expectations of future benefits encourage sharing behavior.

Place, as a campaign distribution channel, has also shown a positive and significant influence on e-WoM. Campaigns conducted in strategic public spaces such as markets, schools, and social media provide great opportunities for the public to record, share, and discuss political activities. These findings support the principles of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which emphasizes the importance of message consistency across multiple channels. When information distribution is done strategically and inclusively, digital engagement increases significantly.

Promotion is the most directly related element to e-WoM. Creative, emotional, and interactive promotional strategies have been proven to encourage people to share campaign content voluntarily. Candidates who use storytelling approaches, strong visualization, and local narratives create high emotional resonance. This is in line with the theory of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986), in which the processing of information through

peripheral pathways—based on emotions and symbols—can trigger rapid responses and the wide dissemination of information.

The people element, which includes a successful team, volunteers, and local influencers, has a central role in shaping e-WoM. The credibility and social connections of these campaign actors became a bridge between political and public messages. These findings support the theory of the Two-Step Flow of Communication (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), which states that opinion leaders play an important role in the dissemination of political information. In Karawang, open support from local figures and active volunteers is the main trigger for the virality of campaign content.

Process, as a representation of the campaign mechanism, also shows a positive influence on e-WoM. A campaign that is transparent, participatory, and responsive to local issues encourages people to actively discuss the political process. This supports the theory of Engagement and Interactivity (Malthouse & Calder, 2011), which states that emotional and cognitive engagement encourages digital participation. Candidates who open up dialogue spaces through live streaming, public discussions, and Q&A sessions on social media create a more inclusive and interactive political experience.

In contrast, physical evidence did not show a significant effect on e-WoM. Campaign attributes such as t-shirts, brochures, and billboards tend to be passive and don't trigger meaningful digital interactions. While physical attributes can visually reinforce a candidate's image, they are not powerful enough to encourage people to actively share information on social media. This reinforces the findings of the Elaboration Likelihood Model that information processing through a central pathway—based on arguments and interactions—is more effective in driving e-WoM than static physical symbols.

Overall, the findings of this study show that e-WoM in the context of the Karawang Regional Election is more influenced by elements that are interactive, emotional, and community-based. Products, promotions, people, and processes are the main triggers because they create space for people to engage, react, and share. Meanwhile, symbolic elements such as physical evidence are less able to trigger meaningful digital participation.

The implications of these findings are crucial for future political campaign strategies. Successful candidates and teams need to design a political marketing mix that not only conveys the message, but also encourages active participation of the community in disseminating information. This approach requires a deep understanding of voters' digital behavior and the dynamics of horizontal communication on social media, as described in the theory of Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 2003).

Furthermore, these results also show that e-WoM is not a spontaneous phenomenon, but the result of a structured and integrated communication strategy. When elements in the marketing mix are designed with local context and voter characteristics in mind, e-WoM can be a very effective tool in shaping public opinion and increasing candidate electability.

In the context of Karawang, where people are increasingly digitally literate and active in political discussions, campaign strategies that prioritize interaction and participation are the key to success. Candidates who are able to build a relevant, touching, and easily shareable political narrative will have a significant competitive advantage.

The Influence of Political Marketing Mix on Voting Decisions

Political marketing mix is a strategic approach that adapts the traditional marketing mix to a political context, as explained by Lees-Marshment (2001). In the 2024 Karawang Regional Election, this strategy has proven effective in influencing people's voting decisions. The results show that all elements in the marketing mix—product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—have a positive and significant effect on voting decisions. These findings reinforce the relevance of political marketing approaches in understanding voter behavior in the digital and participatory era.

The product element, which refers to the candidate's image, has the strongest influence on voting decisions. Voters tend to choose candidates who have strong character, a clear track record, and a touching personal narrative. This is in line with the theory of Brand Personality (Aaker, 1997), which states that voters perceive candidates as "brands" with a certain personality. When the image of a candidate is in accordance with the values and expectations of voters, the decision to choose becomes more directed and steady. Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) also supports this finding, in which voters tend to vote for candidates they perceive as representing their social identity.

The finding that price has a positive and significant effect on voting decisions is an interesting thing that contradicts the initial assumptions. Theoretically, price in the political context is often associated with the risk or burden that voters must bear. However, in this study, voters actually assessed political commitments and campaign promises as a form of added value. This can be explained through Expectancy-Value theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975), in which voters consider the long-term benefits of their political choices. The promise of a realistic and transparent work program is a determining factor in the voting decision, showing that voters in Karawang are rational and prospective.

Place, as a campaign distribution channel, also shows a significant influence on voting decisions. Campaigns carried out in strategic locations such as markets, schools, and social media provide wide and equitable access to information. These findings support the principles of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC), which emphasizes the importance of consistency and affordability of campaign messages. When political information is easily accessible to various levels of society, then the decision to vote becomes more informed and rational. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003) is also relevant here, as the distribution of innovative campaigns accelerates the adoption of political decisions by the public.

Promotion is a very influential element in shaping the decision to choose. Creative, emotional, and locally-based promotional strategies have proven to be able to build psychological closeness between candidates and voters. In this context, the theory of the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) explains that voters process campaign information through two paths: the central path (based on argument and logic) and the peripheral path (based on emotion and symbols). Effective promotion is able to reach both channels simultaneously, strengthening the campaign's persuasion.

People, which includes a successful team, volunteers, and local influencers, have a critical role in shaping voting decisions. The credibility and social connections of these campaign actors became a bridge between political and public messages. These findings support the theory of the Two-Step Flow of Communication (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), which states that opinion leaders play an important role in the dissemination and reception of political

information. Open support from local figures increases voters' trust in candidates and strengthens voting decisions.

Process, as a representation of the campaign mechanism, also shows a positive influence on voting decisions. Campaigns that are transparent, participatory, and responsive to local issues increase public trust and encourage voters to make more conscious decisions. The Theory of Engagement and Interactivity (Malthouse & Calder, 2011) explains that emotional and cognitive engagement encourages more active and meaningful political participation. When voters feel involved in the political process, they tend to make more robust and experience-based decisions.

Physical evidence, which is often considered a symbolic element, also has a positive effect on voting decisions. Campaign attributes such as t-shirts, brochures, billboards, and activity documentation give the impression of the candidate's professionalism and commitment. In the context of Karawang, the physical symbol of the campaign is a marker of the candidate's real presence in the community. This reinforces symbolic theory in political communication, where campaign visuals and artifacts serve as reminders and reinforcing political identities. The Elaboration Likelihood Model theory also explains that physical symbols can reinforce the processing of information through peripheral pathways.

Overall, the findings of this study show that the decision to vote in the Karawang Regional Election is influenced by a combination of rational, emotional, and social factors. Strategically designed political marketing mix is able to reach various psychological dimensions of voters, from image perception to community involvement. This suggests that voting behavior is not the result of a single factor, but rather a complex interaction between campaign elements.

The implications of these findings are crucial for future political campaign strategies. Successful candidates and teams need to design a political marketing mix that not only conveys a message, but also builds an emotional and social connection with voters. This approach demands a deep understanding of the characteristics of local voters and the dynamics of political communication in the digital age.

Furthermore, these results also show that voters in Karawang are increasingly rational and participatory in determining their political choices. They not only consider the candidate's image, but also assess the commitment, campaign process, and political symbols displayed. This signifies a shift from identity politics to the politics of performance and engagement.

In the context of the theory of Diffusion of Innovation (Rogers, 2003), innovative and participatory campaign strategies accelerate the adoption of voting decisions. Candidates who are able to convey political messages creatively and inclusively have a greater chance of winning the hearts of voters. Voting decisions are no longer just a response to a campaign, but the result of a continuous and meaningful communication process.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth Mediation on the Relationship between Political Marketing Mix and Voting Decision

In the era of digital politics, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (E-WoM) has become a major force in shaping public opinion and influencing voting decisions. Based on the results of the study, E-WoM not only has a direct effect on voting decisions, but also mediates most elements in the political marketing mix on voting behavior. These findings reinforce the position of E-

WoM as a psychological and social variable that bridges campaign strategies with voter responses.

The results of the study show that E-WoM has a positive and significant effect on voting decisions (H15). These findings are in line with the classic Word-of-Mouth theory (Arndt, 1967) and the development of Electronic Word-of-Mouth by Hennig-Thurau et al. (2004), which states that information disseminated informally by trusted individuals has a major impact on consumer decisions—in this case, voters. In Karawang, voters trust political information that comes from fellow citizens, local figures, or volunteers, especially if it is conveyed through social media and instant messaging applications.

E-WoM has been proven to mediate the influence of products on voting decisions (H16). A strong and relevant candidate image not only influences voters directly, but also encourages other voters to share the information. Brand Personality Theory (Aaker, 1997) and Social Identity Theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) explain that when voters feel represented by a candidate's character, they tend to spread support digitally. E-WoM is a channel for the expression of political identity that strengthens the influence of image on voting decisions.

Price is also significantly mediated by E-WoM (H17). Although price in political contexts is often associated with risk or burden, these findings suggest that campaign promises and political commitments are actually the subject of positive discussion in the digital space. The Expectancy-Value Theory (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) explains that voters assess the long-term benefits of their political choices, and when those expectations are shared through E-WoM, the influence on voting decisions becomes stronger. This suggests that perceptions of "political prices" can be transformed into social values through digital communication.

Place, as a campaign distribution channel, is also mediated by E-WoM (H18). Campaigns conducted in strategic locations and social media create opportunities for voters to record and share political activities. The Diffusion of Innovation Theory (Rogers, 2003) supports this finding, where innovation in campaign distribution accelerates the dissemination of information through digital social networks. E-WoM expands the reach of campaigns and deepens their impact on voting decisions.

Promotion has a very strong mediation relationship through E-WoM (H19). Engaging, emotional, and locally-based promotional strategies encourage voters to voluntarily share campaign content. The Elaboration Likelihood Model theory (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) explains that promotions that touch peripheral pathways (emotions, symbols) are more easily disseminated through E-WoM. When the content goes viral, the influence on voting decisions increases significantly. This shows that promotions designed with narrative and visual approaches have a dual effect: direct persuasion and social spread.

People, which includes successful teams and volunteers, is also mediated by E-WoM (H20). The credibility and social connections of these campaign actors are the main sources of trusted political information. The Two-Step Flow of Communication theory (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955) explains that opinion leaders play an important role in disseminating political information. In the digital context, they are the main drivers of E-WoM that influence the decision to choose. When volunteers or local figures express their support openly on social media, the information is more trustworthy and more likely to be disseminated.

Process, as a campaign mechanism, shows significant mediation through E-WoM (H21). Transparent and participatory campaigns encourage voters to share their experiences digitally.

The Theory of Engagement and Interactivity (Malthouse & Calder, 2011) explains that emotional and cognitive engagement encourages active participation. When the campaign process creates a positive experience, voters tend to disseminate it through E-WoM, reinforcing the influence on voting decisions. This shows that an inclusive and open political process has a viral effect that expands the electoral impact.

However, physical evidence is not mediated by E-WoM (H22). Although campaign attributes such as T-shirts, brochures, and billboards have a direct effect on voting decisions, they are not powerful enough to encourage the digital dissemination of information. This suggests that the physical symbols of the campaign are passive and do not trigger the social interaction necessary for E-WoM. The Elaboration Likelihood Model theory supports this finding, where physical symbols tend to be processed through peripheral pathways without generating meaningful digital engagement. This confirms that in the digital age, visual elements need to be combined with interactive content in order to trigger a mediation effect.

Overall, these findings suggest that E-WoM acts as a mediation mechanism that reinforces the influence of campaign strategies on voting behavior. Elements in the political marketing mix that are interactive, emotional, and community-based are more easily mediated by E-WoM, while elements that are symbolic or static are less effective in creating a mediation effect. This reinforces the idea that effective political communication should be designed to spark social participation and the horizontal dissemination of information.

The implications of these findings are crucial for political campaign strategists. To maximize influence on voting decisions, successful candidates and teams need to design elements of the marketing mix that are not only directly engaging, but also able to trigger the dissemination of information through E-WoM. This approach demands an in-depth understanding of voters' digital behavior and the dynamics of social communication in digital media.

In the context of Karawang, where people are increasingly active in digital political discussions, E-WoM is a very effective tool in shaping public opinion and voting decisions. Candidates who are able to create a relevant, easily shareable political narrative have a greater chance of winning the hearts of voters. This shows that the success of a campaign depends not only on the content of the message, but also on how the message is disseminated and received by the digital community.

CONCLUSION

This research concludes that the 7P political marketing mix—encompassing product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence—plays a crucial role in influencing voter behavior during the 2024 Karawang Regency Regional Election. Interactive, emotionally resonant campaign strategies tailored to local needs significantly foster electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) via digital media, shaping public perceptions and preferences. All mix elements positively and significantly impact voting decisions, reflecting voters' interplay of rational, emotional, and social factors, while e-WOM mediates this relationship for most elements except physical evidence—highlighting that campaign success hinges on both message substance and digital dissemination effectiveness. For future research, scholars could longitudinally examine these dynamics across multiple election cycles or incorporate emerging AI-driven personalization in e-WOM to assess evolving voter responses in Indonesia's digital

political landscape.

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