

ENTREPRENEURS' POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES IN REGIONAL HEAD ELECTIONS

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Abstract

This research aimed to determine the role of political branding and personal branding in the choice of regional heads. This research used a qualitative approach. This type of research was qualitative descriptive research. Data collection methods using interviews, and documentation techniques. The research results showed that political branding during the regional election campaign is formed through self-identification, namely character, abilities, values, political products, ideas, positioning, constituent segmentation, personality, key political messages, and interpretation. Personal branding in supporting his candidacy to become deputy mayor is explained by appearance, leadership style, visibility, and personality. The reason for entrepreneurs' strategies with political branding and personal branding during the campaign period is that branding strategies provide symbolic value in terms of identification, meaning, value, benefits, promises, and differentiation of a political product. Political branding and personal branding are considered capable of influencing perceptions and providing confidence to constituents. Political branding and personal branding are the results of interactions and emotional attachments that exist between political contestants and their constituents.

Keywords: Positioning, political branding, personal branding

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran branding politik dan personal branding dalam pemilihan kepala daerah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif. Jenis penelitian ini adalah penelitian deskriptif kualitatif. Metode pengumpulan data menggunakan teknik wawancara dan dokumentasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa branding politik selama kampanye pemilihan kepala daerah dibentuk melalui identifikasi diri, yaitu karakter, kemampuan, nilai-nilai, produk politik, ide, positioning, segmentasi konstituen, kepribadian, pesan politik kunci, dan interpretasi. Personal branding dalam mendukung pencalonannya menjadi wakil wali kota dijelaskan melalui penampilan, gaya kepemimpinan, visibilitas, dan kepribadian. Alasan strategi pengusaha dengan branding politik dan personal branding selama masa kampanye adalah bahwa strategi branding memberikan nilai simbolis dalam hal identifikasi, makna, nilai, manfaat, janji, dan diferensiasi produk politik. Branding politik dan personal branding dianggap mampu mempengaruhi persepsi dan memberikan keyakinan kepada konstituen. Branding politik dan personal branding merupakan hasil interaksi dan keterikatan emosional yang ada antara kontestan politik dan konstituen mereka.

Kata Kunci: *Penempatan, pencitraan politik, pencitraan pribadi*

INTRODUCTION

Entrepreneur when he becomes a politician in creating political branding to get support from the people. Berenschot dkk., (2021) study explains that the relationship between business and politics is mainly built on the assumption of a reasonable regulatory environment in which nation-state institutions handle issues of public concern and regulate business behavior. Subekti dkk., (2021) found that political communication from a person who has popularity will be easier in politics. Mietzner, (2020) explain that political communication forms a political actor becoming more popular so that it will be easier to become a politician. Amoncar, (2020) revealed that branding is a set of identities that represent the goals to be achieved and how it is strived for. So according to him, branding is constructed on three main variables namely positioning, personality, and brand identity. Sørensen, (2020) explains that political branding is a strategy to distinguish themselves from competitors in a political competition that is built on three main indicators, namely political parties, actors, and policies. Indicators of political party variables are defined as ideology, culture, political track record, and reputation of the party.

Petridou dkk., (2021) explains that in the business world, it provides opportunities to turn entrepreneurs into political actors. The relationship between politics and companies in which there is also a political community. The relationship between companies and politics: companies as distributive agents, companies as political communities, corporate practices and policies as a matter of citizenship, and companies as active participants in the political process. Entrepreneurs who are involved in politics must have communication strategies to win their political votes. Communication in human life is something that can not be separated, both have an important role and are related to each other. Political communication is a field or discipline that examines behavior and communication activities that are political, have political consequences, or affect political behavior. The role of communication in the political world, also can not be separated in all its activities, with the communication of the delivery of political messages and political objectives will be conveyed properly as desired. Hidayaturrahman dkk., (2022) explains that political communication plays an important role in the government's efforts to assess government policies or the performance of government officials. Varughese & Semetko, (2022) explains that political communication plays an important role in delivering political messages to the public.

Political communication becomes an important element in bridging communication between the political elite and civil society. Rodrigues, (2020) explains that political communication is an important factor in building a civilized society where elites and civil society are connected. According to Hidayaturrahman, Ngarawula, dkk., (2022) political communication plays a very important role in the political system: this political communication determines a dynamic element and becomes a decisive part of political socialization, political participation, and political recruitment.

The importance of the strategic role of political communication can also be seen from Calignano & Nilsen, (2024) view of political communication, but the indicators of this view differ from those proposed by Szakonyi, (2020) mentions "political communication as pure discussion about the allocation of public resources (revenues), official authority (who is given the power to make legal, legislative, and executive decisions), and official sanctions (what the state rewards or punishes). From what Bjørnå, (2021) said, that political communication talks about the allocation of public resources that have value, government authorities who are given the power to make decisions in both the legislative and executive fields and sanctions given by the government.

In an increasingly open political climate, competition becomes an inevitable logical consequence. This forces the contestants to formulate the most effective strategy to market their personal characteristics, initiatives, ideologies, political ideas, and work program designs to build trust and a positive image in the eyes of constituents. In a democratic system, being the best in the eyes of constituents is an absolute requirement that must be achieved by the contestants to gain votes and win the existing political competition.

Trust and a positive image can be achieved easily if the contestant can construct his identity, offer interesting political products, and plant a strong positioning of competitors into the minds of constituents. On the political agenda, this strategy is called political branding (Tilome dkk., 2020). Political branding itself is an old tactic that is commonly used by political contestants to gain popularity during the election campaign. Although not necessarily guarantee victory at the hands of contestants, political branding can be a powerful weapon in creating a different and more efficient campaign (Zhang dkk., 2021). By creating strong and clear branding, the impression of a political contestant will be firmly planted in the minds of constituents. This will later become a consideration and determinant factor for constituents when they are confronted with a series of political choices in other words strong branding will be difficult to shake by competitors and most likely will win the existing political competition

The implementation of the Regional Head Election is an important part of Indonesian state life in the Reformation era where almost all actors (politicians) and political parties can carry out the functions of political communication properly. The success of communication by political actors will not only realize the political goals of the actors themselves, but this success can realize greater political goals, namely public support for political parties and political actors in the election of governors, the presidential election, and so on. Sus, (2021) find that political communication has an important role in the political process. This study explains that the role of political communication in elections in Kenya, South Africa. Political strategies used include using the role of the media, forming political options, and listening to direct complaints from the public.

Based on Kodiyat dkk., (2020), 44% of US citizens rely on social media for political awareness about candidates in the 2016 presidential election. It says there are nearly 10 million Trump followers on Twitter while Hillary Clinton has nearly 7 million. Yet on Facebook, Trump has nine million about doubling the number of followers. It was

discovered by the Pew study that political candidates use Facebook for five to seven posts per day and Twitter for 11 to 12 tweets per day. Aminah dkk., (2020) defined strategic communication as "the purpose of using communication by an organization to fulfill its mission. Likewise, Siddarth dkk., (2023) argues," all types of organizations, including the private and public sectors, are political parties, NGOs, and social movements, using strategic communication to achieve their goals Macnamara (2012) examines the use of interested parties in strategic communication to achieve goals, achieve impacts, and to address them an agenda highlighting dynamic ethical issues but little attention is paid to the use strategic political communication by politicians. The role of political actors in increasing the importance and strategic use of political communication is explored.

Therefore, the existence of political communication plays an important role in the political achievement of candidates for the people's representatives. Communication itself is a process and activity of delivering an information or message from the communicator to the communicant, which later the communicant will respond to what has been conveyed by the communicator. Communication is a very fundamental need for someone in social life (Mukhsinov & Ergashxodjayeva, 2023).

Communication is the process of social interaction that people use to arrange meaning which is their image of the world (on which they act) and to exchange that image through symbols (Berenschot dkk., 2021). Politics are various activities in a political system (or state) that involve the process of determining these goals. Decision making (decision making) about whether the objectives of the political system involves the selection of several alternatives and the priority scale chosen goals. To implement this policy, it is necessary to have power and authority, which will be used both to foster cooperation and to resolve conflicts that may arise in this process. The method used can be persuasive (convincing) and if necessary is coercion (coercion). Without the element of coercion this policy is only a mere satisfaction of the desire (statement of intent) (Mietzner, 2020).

Political communication plays a very important role in the political system: political communication determines a dynamic element, and becomes a decisive part of political socialization, political participation, and political recruitment Rodrigues, (2020) can also handle opinions or accusations of political opponents. Furthermore, political communication aims to attract sympathetic audiences to increase political participation in the lead up to the general election or regional head election (Mietzner, 2020).

- a. **Building a Political Image:** One of the goals of political communication is to build a good political image for the public. The political image is built or formed based on information that we receive, both directly and through political media, including mass media that work to convey general and actual political messages.
- b. **Forming and Fostering Public Opinion:** The formation of public opinion in political communication, is largely determined by the role of political media, especially mass media. Indeed the press, radio, film and television, in addition to having the function of providing information, educating, connecting and entertaining, also mainly shape the political image and public opinion which

are important dimensions in political life. Each political system develops its political communication network, and recognizes the importance of special sources; while the channels and listeners will differ according to the type of media used.

- c. Encouraging Political Participation: Political participation as a goal of political communication is intended so that individuals participate in political activities (political participation). So that one important form of political participation is when someone (the public) wants to vote for a politician or a particular political party in the general election.

Political branding is used by political actors to gain popularity during the election campaign period (Okolie dkk., 2021). Haughton dkk., (2022) defines a brand as an identity that distinguishes a commodity in a marketing practice in the form of a product, service, individual, city or even country with its competitors and represents a set of symbolic and emotional values behind it. Amoncar, (2020) also explains that brand actually is a term that refers to a promise regarding self-privilege and the benefits offered to others. There is also what defines the brand as everything that arouses one's perception or thought when the name of the brand is mentioned (Petridou dkk., 2021). Brand is not just an identification, but a symbolic representation of the identity of a marketing commodity or in this study it is assumed to be a political contest that has a specific purpose and represents the various values behind it.

There are three main reasons that branding becomes important in the practice of political campaigns (Varughese & Semetko, 2022). First, branding provides symbolic value for the identification, meaning, value, benefits, promises, and differentiation of a political product. Second, branding is considered capable of influencing perceptions and giving confidence to constituents. Finally, branding is the result of interaction and emotional attachment that exists between political contestants and their constituents. So for this reason the true contestants need to consider branding as one of the weapons in their political campaigns.

Political branding does not necessarily guarantee victory in the hands of constituents. But political branding can be a powerful weapon for contestants in creating different and more efficient political campaigns (Calignano & Nilsen, 2024). Branding is a new form of political marketing (Cantor dkk., 2021). Branding is defined as a psychological representation of a product/organization that is more directed to symbols rather than the use of tangible values. The Harmes, (2020) idea of branding itself is more than a theory that can be applied to cities, countries and even politicians by giving them a public identity. The aim of this research were to find out the steps taken by businessmen politicians be success a politicians and to find out strategic political communication by entrepreneurs who have succeeded in becoming politicians."

METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach. Purwanza, (2022) define qualitative research as research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from

people. The method to determine the informants in this study, the authors use purposive sampling that is choosing informants with certain criteria. Data collection methods in this study are the sources of literature and documentation, namely data collection techniques by viewing, recording, and analyzing secondary data that is done by taking data related to the issues discussed, as well as other sources of literature relevant to the problem be the object of research. The technique used in the validity of data is the triangulation of data validity checking techniques that utilize something other than the data to check or as a comparison of that data. In this study using triangulation with sources that is comparing and checking back the degree of trust in information obtained through time and different tools in qualitative methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Strategies of Entrepreneurs' Political Communication be a succes politicians

Election of regional heads as a form of manifestation of democratic politics in practice shows two completely different faces, the first face shows the dark side of regional elections. Based on this side, the election of regional heads is only used as a venue for power struggles by a handful of elite political parties to gain power in regional executive institutions. Political parties that should be merely instruments for presenting the best candidates for the community tend to prioritize candidates who are loyal to superiors rather than candidates outside parties who might be considered to be more qualified and deserve to be regional leaders. It is not impossible that the control of parties over regional heads seems to be the target of political battles in national elections in both the legislative and presidential elections. This means that the election of regional heads is an instrument of the elite ambitions of the party to cultivate power to seize strategic positions.

Election of regional heads explained by each pair of candidates certainly competing with each other in attracting public interest to vote, as in the purpose of political communication, that political communication aims to attract sympathetic audiences in order to increase political participation before the general election or regional head election (Regional head election) (Dong dkk., 2021). Not only political communication is carried out carefully in the face of competition in the election, but a strategy is also needed, in order to achieve the expected goals. Political communication strategies are needed to prepare in competing with opponents of other candidates, as well as forming an image positive in the eyes of the community. In dealing with elections like this, the candidate pairs, the campaign team and the supporting party must have prepared a well-planned plan, so that the strategy that it carries is right on target or successful. In the campaign period, the pairs of candidates compete to be elected, in which the community as the goal is to convey political communication related to the political goals of the candidates. Society is the biggest hope for the candidate pairs, a strategy that is carried out with a mature and organized course can attract audiences to vote.

In order to win a competition in general elections, of course it cannot be separated from the existence of several winning strategies, one of which is by developing a

political communication strategy. Strategic political communication in creating political branding includes:

- a. **Internal Political Communication:** Strategy for communicating with community organizations. The activities carried out can be categorized as part of a dialogical political lobbying process. So the expected result of political lobbying is mutual understanding and agreement which will later be strengthened through formal discussions in political meetings or trials which will result in certain political decisions and attitudes.
- b. **Formation of a Success Team:** In addition to conducting political communication with internal parties and think about how to win the sympathy of people in the elections. In this case, of course, they were assisted by the success team to win. The formation of a successful team was carried out for socialization and consolidation at all levels of the movement. The formation of the team starts from the district, sub-district level, to the branch level. The composition of the campaign team and its winners consists of the person in charge, advisor, chairman and deputy chairman, secretary and deputy secretary, treasurer and deputy treasurer, several departments (public relations, issues and propaganda; logistics; socialization, mass campaign and mobilization; law and advocacy; witnesses and reporting, and campaigners), and coordinators in each district.
- c. The success team that was deployed District Election was not only from structural members parties, but also from people outside the structural party. There are at least two successful teams that work in an organized and well-coordinated way, namely the official team and the volunteer teams. The formation of campaign team was basically a combination of a team of candidates for regional head and deputy regional head and party, which is under one coordinator.
- d. **Coordination and Outreach:** The campaign and winning team held a coordination meeting to determine strategic steps. The results of the meeting mandated coordination and outreach to all levels of party elements both at the branch and branch level, coordination and outreach in all levels of the parties. Road show coordination and outreach to all levels of party elements. After the road show, the campaign team as well as the candidates for the regional head and deputy head of the region held an evaluation and coordination meeting to determine the next winning steps. In addition, the team and the candidates carried out socialization on an average of 5-10 days a day, and as part of an orderly management to synchronize the socialization it was decided that there was a supporter movement and set a scheduling gate.

The implementation of the coordination and outreach activities has a political side, that is when a number of masses gather, then the impression of the community begins to build that the candidate is popular, the team is solid, and the support of the real mass. Because basically this coordination and outreach activity functions to consolidate the team to be

able to burn their spirits, so that eventually they want to move to support. It served as an introduction as a candidate for regional head and deputy regional head to the community.

Political Campaign

The campaign is one of the election agenda that must be passed and utilized as well as possible by all candidates for the election. The campaign was carried out in the context of socialization, raising mass supporters and to increase team solidity. Basically, the campaign is carried out by candidates. This campaign team candidates by offering vision and mission or program orally or in writing to the public, to convince voters in order to get maximum support. Campaign planning that is not maximal will affect voters, the success team, and the image of the candidates themselves.

From a long time ago party had begun launching a campaign strategy aimed at socializing candidates and mobilizing as much support as possible. The concept of campaigns is more dialogical, meaning that the campaign is face to face. The face-to-face campaign, which is the agenda going to the market and meeting citizens, is considered the best-selling and the best approach. By considering a number of things, such as the characteristics of the voters, the geographical location of the campaign location, and the cultural factors of the local community, campaign activities are carried out using certain methods that are considered the most able to influence the mass of voters. In addition, the methods chosen must be effective, efficient, and with minimal cost (saving). This is because given the limited source of campaign funding in the elections. Thus the campaign activities are carried out by means of a community gathering agenda, limited meetings between party internal officials, public meetings, down to market agendas, mounting pictures or other props and social actions, such as fogging (fogging).

The victory process obtained by one of the mayor's pairs was inseparable from the political communication strategy carried out in the campaign process. Digital media as a means to market ideas, solicit support, and raise funds from its constituents. The speed and flexibility of digital media are used to reach out and interact directly with constituents. A series of activities carried out during the campaign period formed a political branding of him as a figure of a leader who represents the aspirations of young people and minorities and is ready to give a new color in the government system. The results in an instant was able to arouse people's participation, hopes and enthusiasm become the mayor and vice mayor. Personal branding belongs advantage as a businessman opening up the opportunity for him to win the election as deputy mayor. Entrepreneur has a strategy to successfully get votes and be elected as people's representatives. Therefore, the existence of political communication plays an important role in the political achievement of candidates for the people's representatives.

Discussion

A campaign is an action carried out by an organization or institution that has certain goals and objectives and carries the features of a mission and vision. The goal is to get the most votes, get support and want to be known/introduced. The campaign is divided into two parts, there is an indoor campaign and an outdoor campaign. Indoor campaigns are usually

carried out indoors. Meanwhile, outdoor campaigns are carried out outdoors. In principle, a campaign is a process of individual or group communication activities carried out institutionally and aims to create a certain effect or impact.

Several communication experts admit that the definition given by Rogers and Storey is the most popular and acceptable among communication scientists (Tilome dkk., 2020). This is based on two reasons. First, this definition clearly states that a campaign is a form of communication action, and the second reason is that this definition can cover the entire process and phenomenon of campaign practice that occurs in the field. Political campaigns are the continuous creation, re-creation and transfer of significant symbols through communication. Campaigns combine active participation campaigning and voting. Campaigns try to manage voters' impressions of them by revealing symbols they hope will appeal to voters. The media used by campaigners, promoters and journalists who play a role in the media also create and modify significant symbols. Voters selectively pay attention to certain things in the campaign, take them into account and interpret them.

Baumann dkk., (2021) said that political communication is a genuine discussion about the allocation of public resources, official authority, and official laws. Apart from that, political communication is also seen as an interactive process that focuses on the transmission of information between politicians, the media and the public. As with the two forms of political communication above, political campaigns as one of the results of political communication in Indonesia cannot be said to always be in the same position or stagnant. Political communication is carried out to test the popularity and gauge the electability of prospective general election contestants. The advertising activities they carry out will produce responses that illustrate the marketability of each candidate's political ideas, which will ultimately be attached as product specifications to be marketed and sold in the political marketing arena to win the votes of potential voters in the general election. Whoever the candidate displays, the political ideas they convey are real political products and will be marketed and then sold to the prospective voter audience at the price of voting (Chowdhury & Naheed, 2020).

Varughese & Semetko, (2022) explains that the currently developing sociocultural environment is changing to the new media era. Whether he realizes it or not, what Ryan Kono has done in the 2018 Gorontalo Regional Election campaign and his team is trying to take advantage of the cultural environment that has developed rapidly in recent years, namely the culture of quite high use of social media, namely celebrities. The celebrity system in politics is a new concept that is now realizing its benefits in connecting political actors with their voters. Ryan Kono and his team adapted popular culture as a political campaign strategy.

Advances in global communication technology, especially the internet, are accompanied by a trend of high use of social media. Political activity is no longer limited to formal bureaucratic forums but is developing in a more popular direction such as social media. The use of social media in campaigning is a collective area for the purposes of forming political branding itself. Communication without boundaries of space and time

on the new media Twitter changes the condition of passive audiences into interactive partisans who are no longer just spectators but become part of the story. Politics is no longer a serious matter but has become a 'spectacle' as well as learning where voters and those elected can interact with each other even without meeting face to face. Hidden and limited political debates even tend to be manipulative, indirectly constructed by social media to be more friendly. One of the political communication strategies and winning teams is political branding and personal branding. Political branding was formed through the social media Twitter, indirectly Twitter as a personal account that was used actively during the Mayoral Election campaign, played a role in conveying personal political branding messages. Political branding refers to the differentiation of a person as a politician who wants to portray himself as a person who is different from politicians.

CONCLUSION

A businessman's political branding during the regional election campaign is formed through self-identification, namely character, abilities, values, political products, ideas, positioning, namely constituent segmentation, personality, key political messages, interpretation. Political branding is no longer formed only by personality and appearance, but also more specifically by building relationships with constituents, the originality of leaders, responsiveness to technology, the personal values being channeled, as well as key political messages such as giving hope and public support. , activity reports and conveying political values/ideologies are also a message strategy that is distributed. The appearance attached to the candidate reflects the overall political branding message from the meaning of the clothes worn. Meanwhile, the personal branding that exists in the figure in supporting candidacy for deputy mayor is explained by appearance, leadership style, visibility and personality. The reason for political branding and personal branding strategies during the campaign period is because branding strategies provide symbolic value for identification, meaning, value, benefits, promises and differentiation of a political product. Political branding and personal branding are considered capable of influencing perceptions and providing confidence to constituents. Political branding and personal branding are the results of interactions and emotional attachments that exist between political contestants and their constituents.

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