

Media and political campaigns for individual pairs of regional election winners in Rejang Lebong regency in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract

The 2020 elections were held for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic, this also had an impact on campaign activities as it is known that during the pandemic all outdoor activities were limited. This study aims to find out what kind of campaigns were carried out and the media used by the winning individual pairs and their team in the 2020 Local Leaders Election of Rejang Lebong during pandemic. This study applied a qualitative method with a constructivism paradigm. The research subjects are individual pairs and supporting teams. Data collection technique is in the form of interviews and documentation. This research applied Nowak and Warneryd's campaign model to explain this phenomenon. From the results of the study it can be concluded that the campaign is not much different from the previous Local Leaders Election but the use of social media is very important in the campaign during the pandemic because all activities are limited, therefore social media has an important role during the campaign period and the media used in the campaign, namely: social media such as Facebook, Whatsapp, and Instagram.

Keywords: *media, campaign, local leaders election, Covid-19, individual pair*

INTRODUCTION

Campaigning is an important thing in the democratic process. According to Law Number 1 of 2015 concerning General Elections of Parliament Member, the Local Parliament, and Regional People's Representative Council in article 1 number 26, campaign is the activity of the candidates to convince voters by offering a vision, mission, and the candidate's program. (Rogers & Storey, 1987) argues that the campaign is a series of planned communication with the aim of creating a certain effect on a large number of audiences carried out continuously over a certain period of time.

Campaign is basically to present the vision, mission, and program of the candidate pairs so that voters are interested to vote. In campaigns, candidate use several ways to attract voters' attention such as using the media as a tool for campaigning. According to (Arsyad & Azhar, 2002), the media are all forms of intermediaries used

by humans to convey or spread ideas or opinions, so that the ideas or opinions reach the intended recipient. In campaigning, the media has an important role in determining whether someone is successful or not in attracting the attention of the audience/voters, especially in the 2020 Local Leader Elections during the Covid-19 pandemic where all public activities are limited, including the campaign execution.

With the Covid-19 virus that has hit the whole world including Indonesia, prevention and anticipation are carried out such as WFH (Work From Home) to limit activities outside the room, wearing masks, and washing hands using hand sanitizers regularly. The campaign restrictions make the candidate pairs and the team do some changes in terms of campaign strategy considering that the 2020 Local Leader Election is different from the previous one. The use of media is very important in mobilizing voters considering that the media is an effective and efficient means of conveying the vision, mission, and programs of candidate pairs during the pandemic.

In the 2020 Rejang Lebong Local Leader Election, there were 4 pairs of candidates who meet the requirements approved by the General Elections Commission where 3 of them were through political parties/coalition of political parties and 1 was through individual channels. The four pairs according to serial number are:

1. DR. H. Muhammad Faisal, S.E, M.M., MCDO and Fatrolazi, S.E are supported by 5 political parties with 14 seats.
2. Hj. Susilawati, S.E and H. Ruswan YS, S.Sos are supported by 2 political parties with 8 seats.
3. Drs. Syamsu Effendi, M.M and Hendra Wahyudiansyah were the only candidates who went through the individual route with 21,323 supports.
4. M. Fikri Thobari, S.E and Tarsisius Samuji, S.Pd were supported by 2 political parties with 6 seats.

According to the Decision of the General Election Commission of Rejang Lebong Regency No:05/PL.02.7-Kpt/1702/KPU-Kab/I/2021 concerning the Determination of the pairs of candidates for Regent and Deputy Regent elected in the Election of Regent and Deputy Regent of Rejang Lebong Regency in 2020, the pair numbered three who was a couple through the independent track on behalf of Drs. Syamsu Effendi, MM and Hendra Wahyudiansyah, received 43,540 (forty-three thousand five hundred forty) votes, 30.07% of the 144,800 valid votes. In 2020, for the first time, the Local Leader Elections in Indonesia, especially in Rejang Lebong Regency, was held during a pandemic, all outdoor activities were limited considering the very fast spread of the Covid-19 virus.

Therefore, there is a change in carrying out the campaign carried out by the individual winning pairs in the 2020 Local Leader Election of Rejang Lebong election. The purpose of this research is to see campaign activities carried out by the winning individual partners of election Rejang Lebong period 2020 during Covid-19 and what media used. This research is motivated by previous research conducted by (Ulfa et al., 2020).

The Campaign Strategy of 2019 Presidential and Vice Presidential Election on Sosial Media, this research focuses on the 2019 presidential and vice presidential election strategy through social media, the conclusion from this research is that social media as a means of campaigning for presidential and vice presidential candidates in 2019 is very actively used. Social media contributes to the implementation of democracy both positively and negatively and a comparison of the two accounts @BK52bersamaJKW and @PrabowoSandi_ID shows that the two Twitter accounts are very enthusiastic about campaigning. However, the level of dynamic consistency on the Twitter account @BK52bersamaJKW has been unstable since February during the campaign process, while the Twitter account @PrabowoSandi_ID was inactive in November and December and then there was an increase in January. Research (Wildhan et al., 2020).

Use of Social Media as a Campaign Tool and Digital Participation in the Election of the City of Depok 2020 year. This study aims to explain the phenomenon of campaign politics and forms of digital participation through the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter in the 2020 Pilkada Simultaneous. The results of the research that in using social media, each pair of candidates has different preferences for campaign issues. Even though the candidate pairs have dominant campaign issues and high digital participation, this is not necessarily a determining factor in winning the 2020 Depok City Pilkada contest. Further research (Bossetta, 2018).

The Digital Architectures of Social Media: Comparing Political Campaigning on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat in the 2016 U.S. Election. The present study argues that political communication on social media is mediated by a platform's digital architecture—the technical protocols that enable, constrain, and shape user behavior in a virtual space. The research results, First and foremost, campaigns shared much of the same content—in text, images, and video—across different social media platforms.

Second, both the interviews and social media data point to the dominance of Facebook in the 2016 election cycle. The platform was the most attractive social media for political campaigns on account of several architectural design features. Third, even though campaigns invested less heavily in newer platforms like Instagram and Snapchat, the study found that all of the candidates analyzed here were active on these platforms. A standard trend observable across the campaigns is that Instagram was used more often than Snapchat. Finally, research from (Adeiza, 2016).

Digital Media and Campaign Practices in Nigeria: Ekiti State Governorship Election, This is a study of the digital campaign practices of a winning opposition candidate in a governorship election in Ekiti state, Nigeria. The study found that the winning candidate framed digital media use as elitist and anti-people but still discreetly used the same for campaigning.

In addition, the campaign is engaged in two main practices: informing and involving. Informing practices include using SMS to coordinate meetings and spread rumors about the opposition, as well as for debunking the opposition's allegations. The campaign delegated rumor-spreading tasks to proxies, thereby saving itself the pain of proving accusations against the opponent.

Different from previous research, this research will examine how the campaign was carried out by the individual pair who won the regional elections in Rejang Lebong regency in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic using the Nowak and Warneryd campaign models and what media to use during the campaign and why to choose media the.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Media and campaigning

Campaigning is one of the stages in the implementation of the Regional Election. According to Law No. 1 of 2015 concerning General Elections for Members of the House of Representative, Regional People's Representatives Council, and Regional Representatives Council in Article 1 No. 26 is the activity of Election Contestants to convince voters by offering a vision, mission, and the Election Contestants program. Furthermore, (Rogers & Storey, 1987) argues that the campaign is a series of planned communication actions to create a particular effect on a large number of audiences that is carried out continuously over a certain period.

Political campaigns are an intensive interaction process from political parties to the public for a certain period and usually occur before the election (Kurniawan, 2009). A political campaign is a period (time) given by the general election committee to contestants, both political parties and independent candidates, to describe work programs, influence public opinion, and mobilize people to vote for them during voting (Lilleker & Negrine, 2006).

(Kotler & Roberto 1989) claim that a political campaign is an organized effort carried out by a group (change agent) intended to persuade another party (target, to accept, modify or reject ideas, attitudes, practical actions, and behavior). A campaign is a period right before citizens make real political choices (Henry et al., 2006). Political campaigns are essentially an agenda carried out during an election conducted by a group of people to influence voters' decision-making process.

In the context of communication, campaigns are defined as communication activities carried out in an institutionalized manner (Venus, 2018). Snyder in (Gudykunst & Mody's, 2002) research mentions that a communication campaign is an organized communication action directed at a particular audience and time to achieve specific goals.

There are various channels used in campaign activities. They are generally grouped into direct (non-mediated) and mediated channels (Venus, 2018). Direct channels include field visits, counseling, public dialogue, and organizing events. Meanwhile, indirect channels generally include general media (leaflets, newsletters, posters, banners, banners), mass media channels (television, radio, magazines, newspapers, and cinema films), as well as social media channels (Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, YouTube, Line, and Instagram) (Venus, 2018).

Independent candidates

Candidates who went through the independent track were only allowed to participate in the Regional Election in 2007 through the Decision Letter of the Constitutional Court’s Decision No.5/PUU-V/2007, which challenged Law No. 32 of 2004 and was revised to become Law No. 12 of 2008. Pairs that went through the independent track were valid only for Regional Head Election (Regional Election). According to PKPU 3 of 2017 Article 10, based on the number of DPT up to 250,000 with a minimum of 10% support, the number of DPT 250,001-500,000 with minimum support of 8.5%, DPT with a total of 500,001-1,000,000 gets a minimum of 7.5% support. DPT > 1,000,000 gets at least 6.5% support.

Model campaign nowak and warneryd

According to McQuail & Windahl (1993) nowak and warneryd campaign models are among the traditional examples of the campaign. In this model, the campaign process begins with the goal of achieving and ends with the effects obtained (Venus, 2018). What should be noted in this model is that the individual elements are interconnected and the changes that occur in one element will result in changes to the other. Now nowak and his agency offered him eight elements:

1. Intended effect, it has to be clearly defined in order to make the determination of the other elements easier.
2. Communication, owing to the potential campaign disruptions of other candidates.
3. Communication objects are usually focused on one thing because each object will be different and will be different methods of communication.
4. The target of population & including group, can be classified based on campaign messages, whether they are difficult or easy to reach.
5. The channel, which was used to deliver campaign messages.
6. The message, was shaped according to the characteristics of his receiving group.
7. The communicator/sender, as one expert at delivering messages, the communicator must also have credibility in the eyes of the communicator.
8. The effects, including cognitive effects (mindfulness, increased, knowledge, consciousness), affective effects (feelings, mood, and attitude), and cumulative (action decisions and applications)

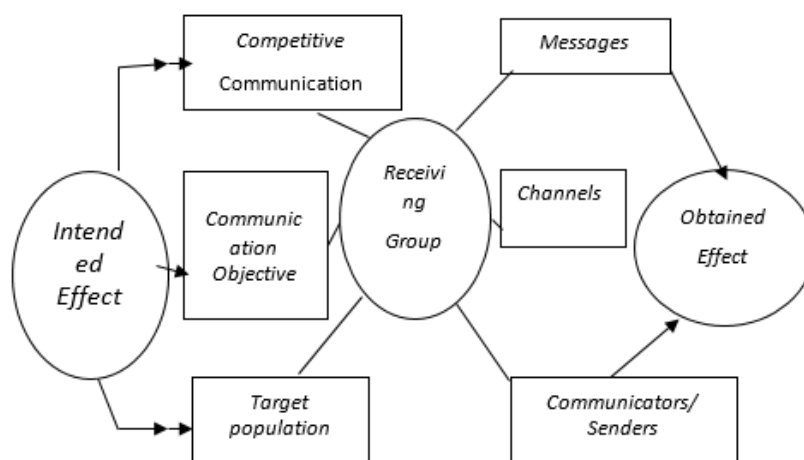


Figure 1. Nowak & Warneryd campaign communication model in Venus (2018)

METHODS

This research was structured using a qualitative method with the main aim of providing an overview of the symptoms or reality to provide an understanding (*verstehen*) of the emergence of reality or the communication phenomenon under research (Pawito, 2007). This type of descriptive research aims to describe the facts found in a systematic, factual, and accurate manner (Kriyantono, 2006). The research method used in this research is a case study which is one type of qualitative approach to examine a case in a limited real-life context through detailed and in-depth data collection (Creswell, 2015). The research design used is the study method. cases that provide more accurate research evidence (Yin, 2014). In this study, the author aims to examine how the campaign was carried out by the individual pair winning the 2020 Rejang Lebong District Election during the Covid-19 pandemic using the nowak and warneryd models and media what to use when campaigning for the 2020 Rejang Lebong election. Research data collection was carried out through interviews and documents. Interviews were conducted with selected research informants using the Typical case sampling technique, usually used to select informants with the aim of describing a case that is typical and unusual. In this case, the cases studied are unique, requiring detailed information from certain informants who are selected based on certain categories (Patton, 2002). In this study, two informants were selected who were directly involved in the campaign process, namely: Hendra Wahyudiansyah (deputy regent elected for the 2020 period) through the individual route and Kennedy Adi Chandra (winning team). The data of research were analyzed using an interactive model of analysis encompassing data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2014).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The 2020 Rejang Lebong regional election is different from the previous election which was held during the Covid-19 pandemic. This election is also regulated according to health protocols during the campaign period. The campaigns carried out by each pair of candidates during the pandemic were different compared to the previous elections. Therefore, it is interesting to review the campaigns carried out by the winning candidates for the 2020 Rejang Lebong Pilkada during the pandemic who applied the Nowak and Warneryd campaign models with 8 elements and the media used during the campaign and why they chose these media.

The intended effect

The intended effect is the effect or goal to achieve or expect in the campaign. The effect or goal must be clearly defined, thus the determination of the other elements will be easier to do. Based on the expected effect, every political actor provides support in the form of votes at the time of election because of the many voters. With a lot of support, the candidate will automatically be elected later (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

The formulation is carried out by mapping the number of votes in each constituency and divided into loyal voters, other supporters, and floating voters or those who have not yet determined their support.

This is useful for determining the next steps and identifying voters because voters have different characteristics. Therefore, a different approach is needed for each segment of the voter (Adi, Timses 2020).

The effect that winning couples will achieve on the election of rejang lebong district in the 2020 period is that of obtaining as much support from voters as possible by mapped out the number of votes in each election and divided into loyal voters, other supporters, and remote or untenable voters. This is helpful in determining the next step and identifying voters because they have different characteristics.

Competing communication

Competing communication is a communication competition arising from other competitors in the form of a campaign that is contrary to the applicable regulations. In a campaign, what is no less important is the potential generated by competitors.

Actually, the campaigns carried out by other pairs are not paid much attention, we focused more on how to get more voters' attention (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

the same thing as what was conveyed by (adi, timses 2020) our team focuses on mobilizing voters in the constituency, but if there are violations from other candidates, we will bring them to election disputes later.

Competitive communication was not paid much attention to, the Syamsul-Hendra pair focused more on how to get more voters' attention and if there was a violation from the new candidate they would later bring it into an election dispute.

The communication object

Campaigns are usually centered on a theme or object; therefore, each campaign has different objectives and will differ in its communication campaign model. Therefore, the campaigner must understand the campaign so that the message sent to the public will be conveyed.

Basically, the treatment that we give to each group of voters is different according to their characteristics so that the message we convey is accepted by them and they voluntarily give their voting rights to elect us (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

(Adi, Timses 2020) also believes that each group of voters must have differences, therefore our role in campaigning for work programs is also different, for example the message we convey to farmer groups must be different from youth groups.

The communication object, the treatment of voters differs according to the characteristics of each voter. This is what the winning pair does through the individual route, namely Syamsul-Hendra so that the message to be conveyed is accepted by the public.

Population target and the receiving group

In conducting a campaign, the audience or population as the target of the campaign must first be clear. In political marketing, the voter grouping is called segmentation. There are 6 divisions in classifying voters which were adopted from (Kollat et al, 1972), (Dalrymple and Parsons, 1976), and (Cui and Liu, 2001). According to (Firmanzah, 2018), the divisions are geographical, demographic, psychographic, behavioral, socio-cultural, and causal.

The voter grouping is carried out in order to identify voters so that the team that goes into the field is in accordance with the voters' characteristics (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

Our target group of voters is youth or novice voters because they are easier to approach than other voters and they are also more energetic to be in the team and to influence other voters (Adi, Timses 2020).

The grouping of voters was carried out by the Syamsul-Hendra pair so that the team that went directly to the field understood what the people wanted and the political messages they wanted could be received directly by them. The chosen target group is first-time voters because this group is considered more approachable and more energetic and militant when used as a team to influence other groups.

The channel

The channels may vary depending on the characteristics of the recipient group and the type of campaign message. Different forms or types of communication channels are closely related to various kinds of messages and different audiences as the target of a campaign. The channels we use are media, both printed and electronic one.

We also use mass media because the Local Leader Election is held during a pandemic regarding the limitation on the number of masses when conducting direct or face-to-face campaigns, therefore the media plays a role in the campaign process that we carry out (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

Our team has a network from the lower levels and we approach voters as much as possible by that network (Adi, Timses 2020).

The channels used by the Syamsul-Hendra pair are in the form of print and electronic media as well as mass media and use team networks from the lower levels to the top

The message

Messages can be formed according to the characteristics of the receivers. The difference of messages or central themes need to be sharpened based on the campaign model being implemented.

The message conveyed to our voters is adjusted to the voters' characteristics, To the young people, we carry a message that says we are a millennial pairs prioritizing the millennial aspect (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

The other message that we convey to voters is that because our candidates are millennial pairs, it does not mean that we do not brand other voters too (Adi, Timses 2020).

The messages conveyed must be according to the characteristics of voters, such as first-time voters, where the majority are young people. The messages they convey must also be millennial according to the characteristics of first-time voters.

The communicator/sender

Communicators must have credibility in the recipient's point of view and have the ability to communicate so that voters are interested to vote.

Our communicators are people who have influence on the group to make it easier for us to carry out our vision, mission, and programs (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

The teams we recruit in each electoral district have the power to approach voters and have the ability to communicate so that the messages can influence voters and give their votes (Adi, Timses 2020).

The communicators of the Syamsul-Hendra pair are people who have influence within a group so that the message conveyed is more easily accepted.

Obtained effect

This campaign certainly wants to produce an effect. In a political campaign, the desired effect is more on the number of voters who cast their votes. If the number of votes makes the candidate win the election, the effect is automatically successful. The campaign aims to attract as many voters as possible in order to win us in the Local Leader Election.

If we are elected, the work program that has been designed will later be implemented with a sustainable effect (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020).

As a team, our goal is how to win the candidates we support. Our candidate's win becomes the effect we get after carrying out a series of political activities (Adi, Timses 2020).

This campaign certainly wants to produce an effect, namely with a lot of support from voters because the aim of this campaign is to get as many voters as possible to win the Syamsul-Hendra pair in the local elections and the work programs that have been designed can be implemented and felt by the community.

Media Campaign

Media is one of the tools in carrying out campaigns. Media in campaigns or commonly called campaign channels are divided into two (Venus, 2018) namely direct channels in the form of counseling, field visits, organizing events, and public dialogue and media channels which are divided into three, they are general media (banners and posters), mass media channels (television, radio, cinema films) and also social media channels

(Facebook, Whatsapp, Twitter, Youtube, and Instagram).

The evolution of social media, like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, from platforms facilitating networks among friends to powerful political tools, has been an especially momentous development. The political role of social media in American politics was established during the 2008 presidential election. Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama's social media strategy revolutionized campaigning by altering the structure of political organizing. Obama's campaign took on the characteristics of a social movement with strong digital grassroots mobilization (Bimber, 2014). The informant (Hendra, Deputy Regent 2020) also stated:

During the campaign, we often use social media Facebook, Whatsapp, and Instagram but more people use Facebook and Whatsapp. Therefore we focused more on social media. Because the 2020 election was held during the pandemic, it was difficult to get directly into the field and people who came to the meeting were also limited.

Similar to Marcinkowski & Metag (2014) politicians in Germany also use social media even when they believe it is not effective. out of fear of losing votes rather than any real hope of gaining new supporters. Social media has low barriers to entry and offers expanded opportunities for mass political engagement. They have centralized access to information and have made it easier for the online population to monitor politics. Growing numbers of people are using social media to engage in discussions and share messages within their social networks (Owen, 2017). Based on data taken from (Wearesocial.com) the use of social media in 2022 will reach 4.62 billion or 58.4% of the total population in the world, namely 7.91 billion.

Data (Trends) of the Internet and Social Media Users in Indonesia in 2022. Total Population (population): 277.7 million (2021: 274.9 million/1% increase); Connected mobile devices: 370.1 million (2021: 345.3 million/3.6% increase); Internet users: 204.7 million (2021: 202.6 million/1% increase); Active Social Media Users: 191.4m (2021: 170 million, up 12.6%).

Data on social media platforms that are widely used in Indonesia in 2022. Whatsapp users in Indonesia are 88.7% of the total population, the previous year was 87.7% (increase); Instagram users in Indonesia are 84.8% of the total population, 86.6% in the previous year (down); Facebook users in Indonesia are 81.3% of the total population, the previous year was 85.5% (decreased); Tiktok users in Indonesia are 63.1% of the total population, 38.7% in the previous year (increasing rapidly).

The high use of social media has resulted in political actors using social media as a tool in campaigning for their vision, mission, and work programs, this is what has caused a shift in campaign strategy which used to use print and electronic media to now shift to social media. The informant (Adi, the winning team) stated that:

Facebook and Whatsapp are used because all voters including novice voters use those social media more than other types of social media. It is also to have an efficient time and budget. We also use electronic media but it is not as intense as social media because electronic media here does not reach remote areas.

It was in line with research conducted by (Febri et al., 2020) regarding Political Campaigns through Social Media by Regional Head Candidates of Pesisir Selatan Regency in the 2020 Regional Election. Due to the implementation of the Regional Election held during the pandemic, the candidates preferred to use social media as the choice for the campaign. However, it was found that the use of social media had not been maximized and had no significant effect. the same thing was conveyed by (Filimonov, Russmann, & Svensson, 2016; Russmann & Svensson, 2016; Vaccari, 2008) that political campaigns are currently mostly mediated by new media. Previously, promotional media was limited to print, electronic, and mass media. Now, social media has emerged as a new medium for campaigning. This causes a change in the use of media in campaign activities. However (Gladwell, 2010) argues that it is too early to claim that traditional media will be removed and replaced by social media. Even so, the use of social media in campaign activities tends to be used more frequently, considering the high number of social media users among the public makes social media an alternative in campaigning to attract voters' sympathy.

CONCLUSION

The campaign carried out by the winning candidates of 2020 Rejang Lebong Local Leader Election is not much different from the previous election. They conducted a campaign based on the Nowak and Warneryd model by looking at 8 elements. What distinguishes the 2020 campaign from the previous campaign lies in the use of social media, where the use of social media is carried out intensely to voters because the election was held during a pandemic, where all outdoor activities are limited, including campaigns. Although meetings were held in limited numbers of participants, the use of social media is still very effective in mobilizing voters during campaigns in the pandemic.

The media used by the winning candidate of the 2020 Rejang Lebong Local Leader Election during the campaign was mostly done on social media especially Facebook, Whatsapp, and Instagram. They focused more on Facebook because Facebook users are more than other social media users. Electronic media is also used even though it was not used as intense as social media. Due to the fact that electronic media networks do not reach all corners of the region and nowadays people use social media more than electronic media. The use of social media also saves time and budget in conducting campaigns.

Research on the media and political campaigns has been widely carried out in Indonesia and other countries, while research discussing individual election-winning pairs is still very rare, because the phenomenon of individual pairs winning regional elections is still very rare in Indonesia, especially in other countries that do not have candidates who through private channels. This research does not discuss the role of the media in the political campaigns carried out by individual election-winning pairs, but rather looks at the media used and campaign activities carried out in the 2020 period. Meanwhile, the weakness of this research is the research focus which only looks at the perspective of the media used and campaign activities.

Based on the results of this study, we provide recommendations for further research, namely how individual couples in Rejang Lebong Regency can win Pilkada for 3 consecutive periods and what factors make candidates through political parties less attractive to the public.

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