

Innovation in Political Communication Strategy: A Qualitative Approach in Examining the Influence of Campaign Messages

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: political communication strategy, campaign messages, qualitative approach. This research investigates innovations in political communication strategies through a qualitative approach, focusing on the influence of campaign messages in the context of general elections in Indonesia. Through content analysis of campaign messages, this research identifies the main themes, framing strategies, and rhetoric used to influence voter perceptions. The findings of this research have practical implications for designing more effective campaign strategies, increasing more informed voter participation, and contributing new thinking to political literature and political marketing in Indonesia.



Introduction

Campaigns are an important political process in the formation and distribution of power in society, especially in the context of decision-making within a country. These campaigns are usually known as elections where people elect their representatives, such as members of parliament or village heads. (Yoteni et al., 2023). In Indonesia, the general election system is regulated by Law Number 9 of 2012 concerning the General Election of Members of the House of Representatives, which emphasizes the importance of elections in the life of the nation and state. (Pardede, 2014). Through elections, the people elect their representatives to sit in various government institutions. (Khairazi, 2015).

Active participation in the campaign is expected to increase understanding and positive attitudes towards the implementation of elections. This positive attitude is reflected in people's participation by using their voting rights to elect representatives they trust (Juditha, 2014). The campaign also becomes a channel for the community to express their aspirations in electing leaders who can represent and advance shared hopes for a better future. However, there are still people who choose not to vote (abstention) (Juditha, 2014).

Campaigns are also carried out through political communication in terms of political marketing which is specifically used in efforts to win elections. The concept of marketing itself is known in economic studies, but in politics, political marketing refers to the way political actors convince voters about the political products they offer. This

approach involves a series of strategic and tactical activities to influence voters in both the long and short term, to maximize support for candidates or political parties.

According to Candrasari (2022) , a campaign is a series of organized communication activities to create a certain impact on targets sustainably within a certain period. IFEX defines campaigns as activities with practical goals to change social society, involving two-way communication that influences public opinion through certain media.

Khoirudin (2016) , defines political marketing as the application of marketing concepts in politics, with a focus on identifying and meeting stakeholder needs. The basic concept of commercial marketing emphasizes the importance of satisfying consumers (stakeholders) in company planning and operations.

This research aims to explore innovations in political communication strategies by using a qualitative approach to examine the influence of campaign messages. This research is important considering the crucial role of political campaigns in Indonesia's democratic process. With a deeper understanding of the effectiveness of campaign messages, better voter participation and more informed decision-making in general elections can be expected.

The research objectives include identifying key elements in campaign messages, analyzing effective political communication strategies, and exploring contextual factors that moderate the effectiveness of campaign messages in Indonesia. It is hoped that the results of this research can provide practical guidance for political practitioners in designing more effective campaign messages, increase public understanding of political communication strategies, and contribute new thinking to the literature on political marketing and political communication in the Indonesian context. The implications of this research include the development of smarter political communication strategies, providing an empirical basis for decision-making in political campaign management, and stimulating further scientific discussion about the use of qualitative methods in the study of politics in Indonesia.

Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with a focus on content analysis of political campaign messages. This approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of how campaign messages influence voter perceptions and attitudes. The research subject is political campaign messages conveyed by candidates or political parties in the context of general elections in Indonesia. The data analyzed includes campaign materials in the form of speeches, advertisements, and social media. Data will be collected through literature study and direct observation of publicly available campaign materials. Content analysis will be carried out on text, images, and messages conveyed on various communication platforms. Data will be analyzed using a content analysis approach. The analysis steps will include identifying the main themes in the campaign message, analyzing the message framing, and identifying rhetorical strategies used to influence voters. This analysis will help in understanding how political campaign messages are designed to achieve specific political goals.

Results And Discussion

Identify Key Themes in Political Campaign Messages

The dominant themes in the political campaign messages investigated reflect the policy priorities and communication strategies used to influence voter perceptions. The following is a more in-depth analysis with support from theory and data.

1. Economy and Welfare

Economic framing theory, as proposed by George Lakoff, illustrates that political campaign messages tend to use economic framing to shape public opinion about the success or failure of economic policies. Research by Ramadhan (2024) Shows that voters tend to give high priority to economic issues in general elections. Analysis of data from the Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that voters are often more responsive to messages that promise continued economic growth and increased employment compared to messages that emphasize the risks of inflation or social inequality.

2. National Security

Based on national security theory and public perception, campaign messages often use security framing to build an image of trust and strength. The "securitization" theory by Widjajanto (2013) Explains that national security issues can be raised to escalate issues into threats that require an emergency or high-priority response from the government. Data from the Gallup Poll shows that public confidence in a candidate's ability to safeguard national security can significantly influence election results.

3. Public health:

Crisis and public response theory indicates that campaign messages responding to pandemics such as COVID-19 tend to use crisis framing to highlight leadership and rapid responses to public health emergencies. Research from the Pew Research Center shows that public health policy and the response to the pandemic are important factors in voters' evaluations of government and candidate performance.

4. Education and Human Resources Development:

Human investment theory, as proposed by Theodore Schultz, highlights the importance of investment in education and human resource development to achieve sustainable economic development. Data from UNESCO indicates that better access to education and job training can directly increase labor productivity and reduce socio-economic disparities.

Message Framing in Political Campaign Messages

Framing analysis shows that political campaign messages are structured using various framing techniques to influence voter perceptions. Following are some of the framing techniques used.

1. Framing the Economy as Recovery or Failure

Candidates often use economic framing to present the successes or failures of past economic policies and to offer different visions of the future. For example, the use of economic data, such as the unemployment rate or GDP growth, can be chosen to show the achievements or challenges facing the country. Economic framing theory, as proposed

by Zaenuddin, illustrates that voters can be influenced by the way economic information is presented, either as a recovery from a crisis or as a sign of the failure of existing policies.

2. Framing Security as a National Priority

National security issues are often presented as national priorities that require strong leadership and firm policies to protect the country's interests. Securitization theory, as proposed by Kuncoro (2023) , explains that security issues can be "securitized" to increase the urgency and urge the need for an effective response from the government or candidate. Campaign messages use this framing to build an image of security and trust among voters.

3. Framing Health as a Response to Crisis

Health crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, are often used to demonstrate a candidate's ability to tackle major challenges and offer responsive solutions. The use of crisis framing in a public health context can strengthen perceptions of a candidate's leadership and managerial skills. The crisis framing theory by Nuraliza (2024) Shows that responses to a crisis can shape public opinion about the ability of a government or candidate to manage a difficult situation.

4. Framing Education as an Investment in the Future:

Education is often raised as a crucial investment for building a skilled and globally competitive society. This framing uses human investment theory, as proposed by Maulyan (2019) , which highlights the importance of education in increasing individual capabilities and improving overall quality of life. Campaign messages that use this framing aim to convince voters that the candidate has a clear and effective plan to improve the education and job training system.

Rhetorical Strategy in Political Campaign Messages

Rhetorical strategies used in political campaign messages can play an important role in influencing voter perceptions and support. The following are some commonly found rhetorical strategies.

1. Emotional Appeal

Emotional appeal is used to connect emotionally with voters through universal values or shared experiences. For example, the use of national pride or social concern can evoke positive emotions that influence voters' attitudes and behaviour. The emotional appeal theory, as proposed by Umar (2023) , shows that emotions can be a strong factor in political decision-making.

2. Logos and Ethos

Logos (ratio) and ethos (credibility) are used to build beliefs about the candidate's success and competence. The use of empirical evidence, statistical data, or policy analysis can increase confidence that candidates have the knowledge and skills to address the challenges facing society. The theory of logos and ethos, as taught in the classical rhetoric

of Aristotle, emphasizes the importance of evidence and strong character to win public trust.

3. Values and Identity Affirmation:

Assertions of values such as justice, loyalty to one's country, or family values can be used to strengthen a candidate's identity and attract voters who identify with those values. The use of this strategy reflects political identity theory, which emphasizes that voters often choose based on social identities or values that they consider important (Aliano & Adon, 2023).

In political campaigns, key themes such as the economy and prosperity, national security, public health, and education have become the main focus in efforts to influence voters. The use of economic framing strategies to present policy successes or failures, as well as emphasis on national security issues and responses to health crises, is an integral part of communications designed to build a positive image. In addition, rhetorical strategies such as the use of emotional appeal, logos, and ethos, as well as affirmation of values, play an important role in shaping public perceptions of the candidate's competence and vision. By utilizing this combination, campaigns can be more effective in attracting and retaining voter support in tight political competition.

Comparison and Interpretation

The findings will be compared with existing theories in the literature regarding political marketing and political communication. Interpretation will be carried out to relate the findings to the Indonesian political context and its implications for political participation and voter support.

1. Practical Politics: A Guide for Candidates and Political Parties

Analysis of key themes in campaign messages such as the economy, national security, public health, and education provides valuable insights for candidates and political parties in designing more effective campaign strategies. It appears that research shows that effective economic framing can increase the appeal of campaign messages by highlighting past economic achievements and a clear vision for the future. Based on political communication theories such as framing theory, candidates can utilize these approaches to build a strong image in the eyes of voters. Thus, this research provides concrete direction for candidates and political parties in adapting their campaign messages to political dynamics and voter preferences in Indonesia.

2. Voter Participation: Increased Understanding and More Informed Participation

Disseminating the findings of this research can increase public understanding of political communication strategies. More informed voters tend to be better able to critically evaluate the campaign messages conveyed. It is likely that, by knowing how candidates use national security framing or responses to health crises to influence public opinion, voters can better differentiate between political rhetoric and the substance of the policies on offer. This implication not only strengthens voter participation in the democratic process but also increases the people's ability to elect leaders who can respond effectively to their demands and aspirations.

3. Political Literature: Contribution to the Development of Knowledge

The findings of this research also contribute to developing political literature about Indonesia, especially in the context of political marketing. By analyzing contextual factors that moderate the effectiveness of campaign messages, such as local political culture, level of political literacy, or demographic characteristics of voters, this research provides deeper insight into political dynamics in Indonesia. This contribution is important to expand the scope of academic literature that includes the specific context of Indonesia in the study of global political communication.

By considering practical implications, more informed voter participation, and contributions to the political literature, the findings of this research are not only relevant for political practitioners and researchers but also for the wider public interested in better political processes and decision-making in the future. Thus, maintaining the continuity of research in this field can help Indonesia move towards a more dynamic and inclusive democracy.

Research Limitations

Although the results of this study provide valuable insights, several limitations need to be noted:

1. Limitations in Data Access

This research may be limited by access to complete and representative data regarding existing political campaign messages. Limited access to primary data from ongoing political campaigns or internal data from political parties can affect the overall representation of variations in campaign messages in the field. These constraints may limit the ability to provide a comprehensive and in-depth picture of the diverse political communication practices in Indonesia.

2. Limitations of Generalization of Results

The research focus on specific case studies may limit the generalizability of the results of this study. While specific findings may provide in-depth insights into that specific context, the generalizability of the results to the broader political situation in Indonesia may be limited. Variability in political practices between regions or differences in voter preferences could influence the extent to which these findings can be applied generally across the country.

These limitations need to be considered in the interpretation and application of the findings of this study in a broader context. Future research could expand the scope of the data or use a more inclusive methodological approach to overcome these limitations and deepen our understanding of the dynamics of political communication in Indonesia.

Conclusion

This research illustrates the importance of innovation in political communication strategies through a qualitative approach to examine the influence of campaign messages. In the Indonesian context, political campaigns are not only a general election process, but also a forum for building active community participation in democracy. The research findings highlight that key elements in campaign messages, such as economic framing,

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national security, public health, and education, play a central role in influencing voter perceptions and attitudes. The rhetorical strategies used, such as emotional appeal, logos, ethos, and affirmation of values, are important in shaping the candidate's image and winning voter support.

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