## POLITICAL MARKETING STRATEGIES USING A POSITIONING APPROACH AMONG YOUNG VOTERS

**Achmad Herman**

Communication Science Study Program, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University, Indonesia

**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to identify the implementation of political marketing strategies using a positioning approach performed by the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Maju' for Central Sulawesi Province to gain votes among young voters. This study used a qualitative method and data were collected from observation and in-depth interviews. The informants were the secretary, the head of media, young politicians, and young volunteers of the campaign team. The results of the study showed that the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Maju' for Central Sulawesi Province used a positioning approach in building a certain image for Jokowi-Ma'aruf by depicting the figure of Jokowi as a young leader who is honest and close to young people. The campaign team also showed various differentiating factors owned by Jokowi-Ma'aruf to young voters. The Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for the Central Sulawesi Province did not only use positioning actions for the Jokowi-Ma'aruf but also for the Regional Campaign Team itself.

**Key Words**:  Political, Marketing, Positioning, Campaign, Voters, Beginners.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Political marketing strategies have to be applied properly to provide big impacts. Scammell states that an effective political campaign has to be based on the right political marketing strategy as even though political campaigns are carried out as often as possible, without the proper political marketing strategy, they will only harm political parties (Sayuti, 2014). Political marketing strategies are widely applied during general elections which involve many political parties. In the 2019 presidential election, all Indonesians had the opportunity to use their right to vote to elect members of the legislature and President and Vice President for the next 5 years. Of the two political events held in 2019, the presidential election attracted the most attention from the public due to the massive political campaigns by the incumbent and the opposition, even before the official campaign period begins.

The political campaign becomes more lively after the determination of the two candidates for president and vice president, namely pair number 1, Mr. Ir. H. Jokowi and his deputy Dr. K. H. Maa'ruf Amin supported by some political parties such as PDIP, GOLKAR, NasDem, PKB, HANURA, PPP, PSI, PERINDO, PKPI, and pair number 2 namely, Lieutenant General H. Prabowo Subianto Djojohadikusumo and his deputy H. Sandiaga Salahuddin Uno supported by GERINDRA, PKS, DEMOKRAT, and PAN.

The candidates carried out various political campaigns since the campaign period was officially opened by the General Election Commission (KPU) on April 13, 2018. Each candidate also uses political marketing strategies in each political campaign. This can be seen from the selection of campaign locations and the people visited such as the campaign by Joko Widodo who is known to often go directly to the community such as during a visit to Pekanbaru City on December 15, 2018. Meanwhile, presidential candidate number 2, Prabowo Subianto chose to fill in the campaign activities by strengthening coalition relations with political parties as well as the mass organizations as he often held internal meetings with the political parties that support him in his residence in Hambalang.

Political campaigns are not only carried out by the two candidates involved, but also by the supporting parties to ensure the victory of the candidates by creating hashtags for social media, creating slogans, and making accessories for supporters. To win the presidential election, the supporting party does not only campaign nationally but also focuses on areas that have vote potential. For campaign activities at the national level, the two pairs of candidates have their teams consisting of political parties that support them. Prabowo-Sandiaga established the National Winning Body, while the Jokowi-Ma'aruf established the National Campaign Team. The National Campaign Team consisted of high-ranking party officials, party cadres, and national figures who support Jokowi-Ma'aruf and is led by Erick Thohir. The National Campaign Team has the task to coordinate every campaign activity both at the national and regional levels.

The Jokowi-Ma'aruf pair, supported by nine political parties, also formed the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' to gain votes at the regional level. The team consists of some selected cadres of the parties supporting the Jokowi-Ma'aruf in each region. The regional team has the task to convey the vision, mission, and work programs of Jokowi-Ma'aruf as well as carrying out campaign activities to gain votes. One of the areas that are considered to have the big voting potential for the Jokowi-Ma'aruf is Central Sulawesi Province. Thus, on September 22, 2018, the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province was officially established and the chairman was Ahmad M Ali.

The campaign activities in Central Sulawesi Province were carried out by the two candidate pairs carefully as this province had just been hit by a natural disaster in the form of an earthquake, tsunami, and liquefaction on September 28, 2018. These conditions have prevented the two pairs of presidential and vice-presidential candidates from visiting this province too often to carry out campaign activities. This was to avoid the politicization of natural disasters and eliminate accusations from political opponents who can accuse them of taking advantage of disasters to gain political advantages. Thus, here the Regional Campaign Team plays an important role.

Through the Regional Campaign Team, Jokowi-Ma'aruf carried out campaigns that could be considered covert campaigns as they did not label the social assistance provided to the community with the name of the pair. However, the regional campaign teams inserted symbols representing the pairs in the social assistance sent to Central Sulawesi Province, such as when Jokowi-Ma'ruf volunteers sent a trauma healing team and set up a Central Sulawesi earthquake post. Even though the Jokowi-Ma'ruf's team had confirmed that the assistance did not use attributes related to

Jokowi-Ma'ruf but the assistance can be a good political marketing strategy to improve the candidate's image in Central Sulawesi.

Besides sending various assistance to victims of the earthquake, tsunami, and liquefaction in Central Sulawesi Province, the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province also carried out campaign activities by carrying out declarations of support for the Jokowi-Ma'ruf pair with various community organizations and posting campaign attributes in the form of posters, billboards, and banners on main roads. To attract more attention, the Regional Campaign Team used the local language "kaili" in every poster, billboard, and banner. This study aims to identify the political marketing strategy of the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province in gaining votes among young voters in the 2019 Presidential Election.

## 2.LITERATURE REVIEW

The combination of communication and politics in political communication has occurred for a long time in rhetoric, propaganda, agitation, lobbying, political action, and public opinion, even *acta diurna* (government announcements) and *acta senates* (senate announcements) as the pioneer of the modern press (Arifin, 2011). Political communication is a combination of political and communication science. The discussion of this study focuses on the process of conveying messages through the media (Iqbal & Soyomukti, 2013). Meanwhile, political marketing covers a combination of the best elements from traditional approaches and the use of communication technology and marketing skills (talent). The goals of political marketing are not much different from the principles of commercial marketing, namely the process of planning and pricing, promotion, and dissemination of ideas, goods, and services to meet individual satisfaction and organizational goals. Political marketing is the dissemination of information about candidates, parties, and programs carried out by political actors (communicators) through certain communication channels targeting certain segments to change the perspectives, knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of prospective voters as desired by the information provider (Cangara, 2014).

Political marketing strategy is a campaign strategy to form a certain set of political meanings in the minds of voters. A campaign is a series of activities to communicate advertising or promotional activities. Advertising communications are disseminated in verbal or visual messages that have a specific goal (Liliweri, 2011). A political campaign is a continuous creation, re-creation, and transfer of significant symbols through communication. The campaign combines the active participation of campaigners and voters (Nimmo, 2010). Ideally, campaigns can use different communication methods coordinated within a certain period to direct audiences to a particular issue. A series of political meanings that are formed in the minds of voters become a behavioral orientation that will direct voters to choose certain candidates. This political meaning is an important output of political marketing that determines which party will be chosen by voters. The formation of political meanings with a political marketing approach can be divided into 9, namely positioning, policy, person, party, presentation, push marketing, pull marketing, and pass marketing polling (Nursal, 2004).

### 3.METHOD

This study used a qualitative method. Qualitative studies are based on the philosophy of postpositivism where truth is in accordance with the nature of objects, researchers as the key instrument, and the results emphasize meaning rather than generalization (Sugiyono, 2013). Data collection methods are ways to collect data so that the results can present valid and reliable information (Bungin, 2006). In this study, data were collected from observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative consisting of three stages namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion (Miles & Huberman, 1992).

### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presidential election in Indonesia is one of the political events that most attracts the interest of the people like the 2019 presidential election. The people want to use their right to vote and it cannot be separated from the massive campaigns done by the two candidates in the community. They used various methods to gain sympathy from the public such as by implementing political marketing strategies. A political marketing strategy is an effective way to get people's voices if the strategy is applied appropriately unless the money and effort spent by the campaign team will be wasted.

The Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province also carried out various campaign activities to win as many votes as possible in this province. Besides focusing on the general public, the Regional Campaign Team also pays special attention to young voters who previously have used their rights to vote or have just got their right to vote. It is because the number of young voters reached 80 million voters (40% of the total voters of 185 million) covering 5 million first-time voters who have just received their right to vote in 2019.

Gaining votes from young voters is not easy for the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province to market their candidate due to the presence of a young candidate like Sandiaga Uno as the opponent makes. Therefore, an appropriate political marketing strategy is needed so that the Regional Campaign Team can win the votes of young voters in this province.

The increase in young people's awareness of politics has also increased their participation in the presidential election. This has made young people potential campaign targets to help the Jokowi-Ma'aruf win. This condition shows that young people are also increasingly critical in making their choices. Thus the campaign team needs appropriate campaign strategies to market the candidate to young voters.

The results of the study showed that the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province made great efforts to position Jokowi-Ma'aruf. Positioning is an act of instilling a certain image in the minds of voters so that a political offer from a contestant has a unique, clear, and meaningful position (Nursal, 2004). Thus, the Regional Campaign Team first built a certain image for Jokowi-Ma'aruf by depicting the figure of Jokowi as a young leader who is honest and very close to young people. They also conveyed some of Jokowi's policies to help young business actors in creative industry sectors, while Ma'aruf Amin was depicted as the figure of a great scholar close to *santri*.

After building the image of Jokowi-Ma'aruf in the eye of prospective young voters, the Regional Campaign Team then pointed out the differentiating factors possessed by this pair. Nursal (2004) states that positioning would be effective if it can show the differences and advantages of contestants compared to competing contestants. The Regional Campaign Team tried to show the various differentiating factors that Jokowi-Ma'aruf has to young voters such as the background between the two candidates where Prabowo comes from the military while Jokowi comes from ordinary people. This difference is emphasized so that young voters feel a special affinity with the figure of Jokowi who comes from ordinary people. The next is the experience in leading in government-owned by Jokowi as he had various positions in government, ranging from regional heads to President, while Prabowo has only succeeded in becoming a leader in the field of the military as Kopassus commander. The Regional Campaign Team also compared the capabilities of the two candidates in terms of leadership experience. These differentiating factors added value to the image of Jokowi-Ma'aruf.

The Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province only carried out positioning actions for Jokowi-Ma'aruf but also for the Regional Campaign Team itself. This team built the image by involving young cadres in every political marketing activity to maintain Jokowi's image, which has so far been known to be close to young people and expects to get the sympathy of young prospective voters for future political marketing.

## 5.CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province has made great efforts to carry out positioning in building a certain image for Jokowi-Ma'aruf by depicting the figure of Jokowi as a young leader who is honest and very close to young people. They convey some of Jokowi's policies concerning young business actors' creative industry sector, while Ma'aruf Amin is depicted as a great scholar who is close to *santri*.

Then the campaign team also show the differentiating factors possessed by the Jokowi-Ma'aruf to young voters. The first differentiating factor is the different backgrounds between the two candidates, where Prabowo comes from the military, while Jokowi comes from ordinary people. This difference is emphasized in order to make young prospective voters feel that they have a special closeness to Jokowi who comes from ordinary people. The second differentiating factor is the experience in leading government where Jokowi has more experience in various positions in government, from regional head to President, while Prabowo has only succeeded in becoming a leader in the military field as commander of Kopassus.

The Regional Campaign Team of 'Koalisi Indonesia Kerja' for Central Sulawesi Province does not only carry out positioning actions for the Jokowi-Ma'aruf but also for the team itself. The Regional Campaign Team builds the image of the candidate by involving young cadres in every political marketing activity.

## REFERENCES

Arifin, A. (2011). *Komunikasi politik: Filsafat, paradigma, teori, tujuan, strategi, dan komunikasi politik Indonesia*. Graha Ilmu.

Bungin, B. (2006). *Metode penelitian kualitatif*. Jakarta: PT. RajaGrafindo Persada.

Cangara, H. (2014). *Komunikasi politik konsep, teori dan strategi*. Jakarta: PT. RajaGrafindo Persada.

Iqbal, M., & Soyomukti, N. (2013). *Komunikasi Politik (Kudeta Politik, Media, Analisa Komunikasi Rakyat dan Penguasa)*. Intrans Publishing.

Liliweri, A. (2011). *Komunikasi Serba Ada Serba Makna*. Jakarta: Kencana.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1992). *Analisis Data Kualitatif*. Jakarta: UI press.

Nimmo, D. (2010). *Komunikasi politik khalayak dan efek*. Remadja Karya.

Nursal, A. (2004). *Political marketing: Strategi memenangkan pemilu: sebuah pendekatan baru kampanye pemilihan DPR, DPD, Presiden*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.

Sayuti, S. D. (2014). *Komunikasi Pemasaran Politik*. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.

Sugiyono, D. (2013). *Metode penelitian pendidikan pendekatan kuantitatif, kualitatif dan R&D*. Bandung: Alfabeta.