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Political communication strategies of local politicians in the political constellation of legislative elections at the Regency/City level

[1]Sitti Nurhidayah*, [2]Dani Fadillah

[1,2] Universitas Ahmad Dahlan, 55191, Indonesia
[1] sitti2100030122@webmail.uad.ac.id*; [2] dani.fadillah@comm.uad.ac.id
*Correspondent email author: sitti2100030122@webmail.uad.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT

This research aims to determine how local politicians carry out the political communication strategy to win the political constellation of district/city-level legislative elections. This research uses a qualitative approach; in collecting data, researchers chose politicians from the Gerindra party named Muhasbih, who fought in the Polewali Mandar district legislative elections in the 2024 elections, as research subjects. Researchers conducted in-depth interviews with the politician and his success team, who actively participated in winning the 2024 election. The results of this study indicate that effective communication in winning political constellations in legislative elections at the district/city level requires understanding the audience and local political dynamics. Through in-depth interviews with politicians and their success teams, it was found that the success of political communication strategies lies in delivering relevant, measurable, and understandable messages to voters. In addition, it was found that the presence of politicians in the field and direct interaction with voters is very influential in building personal relationships and trust. This suggests that the human side and direct involvement in local politics play a crucial role in creating emotional bonds between politicians and voters, which can influence voters' decisions inside the voting booth. Furthermore, the results of this study also highlight the need for adopting strategies that are dynamic and responsive to political and technological developments. Although local politicians such as Muhasbih do not use social media in their campaigns, it is important to continuously monitor trends and adapt political communication strategies as needed as the political environment changes.

1. Introduction

District-level legislative elections play a very important role in democracy and citizen participation. District-level legislative elections are a mechanism that allows citizens to elect their representatives at the local level, who will be their voice in making decisions and policies that affect daily life in the district. These elections provide an opportunity for the community to directly influence the formation of local government and determine the direction of regional

development (Wahidin et al., 2020). The importance of district-level legislative elections also lies in accurate representation. With representation that matches the local community's diversity, the people's needs and aspirations can be better reflected in the resulting policies. These elections also allow the community to monitor the performance of legislative candidates, ensure accountability, and encourage the implementation of transparency principles in government (Kiptiah, 2019).

In addition, district-level legislative elections provide a means to develop active community involvement in the democratic process. Through participation in elections, people can feel responsible for developing their district. It is also an opportunity to increase political awareness and political education among the community so that they can make more informed decisions based on better knowledge and understanding of local and national issues (Mohamad Sudi, 2016). Thus, district-level legislative elections are not only a constitutional right but also a civic duty that encourages the active participation of the people in the democratization process, creating a government that is more representative and responsive to the needs of its people.

Being a representative of the people requires understanding the wants and needs of the people and the aspirations they want to achieve. Muhasbih, a member of the Polewali Mandar Regency DPRD, has aspired since childhood to be a person who benefits many people. Determined, he ran for the Polewali Mandar Regency DPRD to realize his goals (Alvin, 2022).

His commitment and determination from an early age led him to join the Polewali Mandar Regency DPRD for three consecutive terms. Muhasbih's success in the 2014, 2019, and 2024 elections must be balanced with his political campaign efforts before the election.

Political campaign activities are a general strategy political parties or election participants use to promote their messages, vision, mission, and policy direction to voters (Lubis, 2023). Campaigns have a crucial role in the context of political communication. Planning and forming a winning strategy team are important factors that must be optimized in implementing political campaigns.

The legislative elections of Polewali Mandar Regency were followed by 14 political parties with 425 candidates legally registered at the KPUD of Polewali Mandar Regency, which was spread across five sub-districts and divided into five electoral districts (Dapil) in Polewali Mandar Regency. Electoral District I includes Polewali Mandar Sub-district and Binuang Sub-district. Preferred Region II includes Tinambung, Limboro, Balanipa, and Allu sub-districts. Preferred Region III includes Campalagian, Luyo, and Tutar sub-districts. Preferred Region IV includes Wonomulyo, Bulo, and Mapilli sub-districts. Preferred Region V includes Andreapi, Matanga, and Matakali sub-districts.

Of the many legislative candidates spread across five electoral districts of Polewali Mandar Regency, only 40 seats can be occupied for candidates qualified to become Polewali Mandar

Regency DPRD members (Nursidqi & Sofyan, 2023). Muhasbih, promoted by the Greater Indonesia Movement (GERINDRA), occupied a seat as a Polewali Mandar Regency DPRD Dapil IV member. Although Muhasbih continued his periodization as a member of the previous Polewali Mandar Regency DPRD Dapil IV, in the 2024 elections, Muhasbih continued to campaign to maintain public confidence that he deserved to continue his position as a member of the Polewali Mandar Regency DPRD Dapil IV campaign both traditionally and digitally.

Regency-level legislative elections are unique to national-level legislative elections. Uniquely, district legislative elections are more related to the realities and direct needs of the local community. In this context, legislative candidates are closer to and more familiar with local issues that affect the daily lives of the district's residents. District-level elections create a platform where legislative candidates can directly interact with citizens, identify challenges, and offer concrete solutions according to the local context (F & Suramto, 2023).

In addition, district-level legislative elections often highlight issues relevant to a particular region, such as local infrastructure development, local natural resource management, and micro-development programs. This gives district-level legislative elections a more specific and in-depth focus on issues that affect people's lives at the regional level.

Another unique feature is that district-level legislative elections can create leaders who are more directly connected and engaged with their constituents. District legislative candidates often have a closer engagement with their voter base, as most of them come from the same neighborhoods or have similar backgrounds to the communities they represent (F & Suramto, 2023).

As such, district-level legislative elections highlight aspects of a district's diversity, uniqueness, and special needs, allowing district residents to elect leaders who are more connected to local realities and can drive more sustainable and inclusive development at the district level.

Public political participation is a crucial element in a democratic system (Basuki, 2020). It allows people to participate in the decision-making process and influence the direction of state policy. With adequate political participation, political decisions may represent the entire spectrum of society, and a sense of representation will be preserved. Political communication, socialization, image, and public opinion have a significant role in shaping people's political participation (Nursidqi & Sofyan, 2023).

Political communication is crucial in increasing public participation in the democratic process. The importance of political communication lies in its ability to convey clear information, stimulate discussion, and open two-way communication channels between the government and citizens. Through effective political communication, people can better understand political issues and policies that affect their daily lives (Indrawan, 2017).

Political communication can also provide a deeper understanding of citizens' rights and responsibilities in democratization (McCarthy, 2006). Through campaigns, debates, and easily accessible information, people can form informed political views and feel more involved in decision-making. Inclusive political communication can create space for different voices and views, ensuring better representation for diverse groups in society (Indrawan & Ilmar, 2020).

In addition, transparent and open political communication can increase public trust in political institutions. When information is delivered honestly and openly, people feel valued and confident that the government listens to their aspirations. This can create a political climate more conducive to active participation, including attendance in elections, public discussions, and other political activities. As such, effective political communication provides an important bridge between government and society, strengthens citizen engagement in the political process, and maintains the health of democracy by ensuring that every voice is valued and heard in policy formation and decision-making (Mavrodieva et al., 2019).

To design an effective political communication strategy, it is important to do careful planning. One important step is to analyze and monitor media coverage related to competing DPRD candidates from other political parties in the same electoral district (Dapil). By doing so, it is possible to understand the ongoing dynamics of local politics and adjust the communication strategy according to the needs and conditions that exist (Sutharjana & Indrajaya, 1990).

Political communication is often related to political conversations or messages, both verbally and non-verbally, aimed at influencing the opinions of the people and the government in a political system. In simple terms, political communication delivers messages containing political elements from a source to a recipient to create the same understanding and meaning between the two (Susanto, 2013).

Fostering positive and personal relationships with the public is key to running a successful political campaign. By applying traditional campaign methods such as meeting directly and interacting with the public, political candidates can gain a deeper insight into the needs, concerns, and expectations of the people they want to fight for (Nursidqi & Sofyan, 2023).

As a political communicator, Muhasbih needs to pay careful attention to the social, geographical, and cultural conditions in Polewali Mandar City to use them effectively to shape a positive image in the eyes of voters. In dealing with the traditional mindset of the community, a well-planned communication strategy is crucial. With a deep understanding of the social context of the community, legislative candidates can design programs that suit their needs. Communicating directly through face-to-face meetings allows them to deliver political messages more effectively and aim to influence public opinion. In addition, paying attention to the role of the mass media as a

sender of information and shaper of public opinion is important for them as a driver of communication so that the public can accept the programs they offer at large (Awaludin, 2023).

Table 1. PREVIOUS RESEARCH AS SUPPORTING LITERATURE REVIEW

Cites	Authors	Title	Year	Source	Publisher
1	Majid, (2023)	*Strategi Komunikasi Politik Dalam Pemilihan Umum Di Era Digital*	2023	PERSEPTIF: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial dan Humaniora	journal.yazri.com
1	Astuti et al., (2021)	*Strategi Komunikasi Politik Pada Pemilihan Umum Kabupaten Pesisir Selatan Tahun 2020*	2021	Journal of administration nusantara maha	lppmstianusa.com
4	Zunaria & Ruliana, (2022)	*Model Orientasi Pemasaran Politik sebagai Strategi Komunikasi Pemenangan Pemilu Legislatif*	2022	Warta of the Indonesian Communication Scholars Association	warta-iski.or.id
0	Batara et al., (2020).	*Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Politik pada Pemilu Legislatif*	2020	Metacommunication: Journal of Communication Studies	ppjp.ulm.ac.id
6	Andi & Sukri, (2022)	*Strategi Komunikasi Politik Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan pada Pemilu Legislatif 2019 di Pekanbaru*	2022	Journal of Political Communication and Media Juni	journal.rc-communication.com

SOURCE: PROCESSED BY RESEARCHERS (2024)

The research entitled *"Strategi Komunikasi Politik Dalam Pemilihan Umum Di Era Digital"* written by N. Majid in 2023 in the Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities, discusses the phenomenon of the importance of political communication strategies in the context of modern elections, especially amid the shift towards the digital era. Majid identified that with technological advances and widespread internet penetration, politicians and political parties must update and adjust their communication strategies to be relevant and effective. Through this research, Majid analyzes the various approaches and techniques used in political communication in the digital age, including social media, public image building, and data and analysis to understand voter preferences. This research provides valuable insights into how politicians and political parties can optimize their communications to achieve their political goals amidst the dynamics and challenges of the digital age.

The research entitled *"Strategi Komunikasi Politik Pada Pemilihan Umum Kabupaten Pesisir Selatan Tahun 2020"* written by Widia Astuti and Efendi Ardianto in 2021 in the Nusantara Maha

Administration journal, describes an in-depth analysis of the political communication strategy applied in the context of the regional head general election in Pesisir Selatan Regency in 2020. In this study, Astuti and Ardianto explored various communication tactics and approaches that regional head candidates and their campaign teams used to influence public opinion and win voters' votes. Through this study, the researchers uncovered effective and ineffective communication strategies and the factors that influenced the success or failure of these strategies. The results of this study provide a better understanding of the dynamics of local politics and the importance of effective communication in the context of district-level elections.

The research entitled *"Model Orientasi Pemasaran Politik sebagai Strategi Komunikasi Pemenangan Pemilu Legislatif"* written by Y. Zunaria P. Ruliana in 2022 in the journal Warta of the Indonesian Communication Bachelor Association is an in-depth study of the application of the political marketing orientation model as a communication strategy to win in the legislative elections. In this study, Ruliana presents a model that combines political marketing concepts with political communication strategies to increase the attractiveness and influence of political parties on voters. This research analyzes how marketing elements such as market segmentation, targeting, differentiation, and positioning can be applied in a political context to win legislative elections. As such, this research contributes to understanding new and innovative ways to design effective and result-oriented political communication strategies in the contemporary political arena.

The research entitled *"Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Politik pada Pemilu Legislatif"* written by PAL Batara, GF Prisanto, and NF Ernungtyas in 2020 in the journal Metacommunication is an in-depth analysis of communication strategies applied in the context of legislative elections. In this study, the authors outline various political marketing communication strategies political parties or legislative candidates use to influence public opinion and win voters' votes. They critically examine various communication approaches that include using mass media, direct campaigns, social media, and others. The research also identifies factors that influence the success of political communication strategies in legislative elections, such as candidate image, campaign issues, and local political dynamics. As such, this research provides valuable insights for political practitioners and researchers to understand effective communication strategies to win legislative elections.

The research entitled *"Strategi Komunikasi Politik Partai Demokrasi Indonesia Perjuangan pada Pemilu Legislatif 2019 di Pekanbaru"* written by A. Andi and A. Sukri in 2022 in the journal Political Communication and Media, is an analysis that highlights the political communication strategy applied by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) in the context of the 2019 legislative general election in Pekanbaru. In this study, Andi and Sukri investigated in depth the various communication strategies used by PDIP to gain voter support in the region. They analyzed communication approaches, including political campaigns, the use of mass media, social media

presence, and direct interaction with voters. The research also explored how political messages were structured and delivered by PDIP to influence public opinion and win votes in the legislative elections. This research provides a deeper understanding of political communication practices in the local context and PDIP's contribution to Pekanbaru's political dynamics in the 2019 legislative elections.

The research conducted by researchers on the political communication strategy of Muhasbih in the 2024 elections in Polewali Mandar district highlights an important difference from the five previous studies that used social media in political campaigns. In contrast, the local politician studied today relied solely on conventional campaign strategies without utilizing social media during his campaign period. The choice not to use social media reflects an interesting dynamic in local politics in today's digital age. Focusing on politicians who need social media provides a unique picture of the challenges and strategies political candidates face amidst changing technology and communication trends. By highlighting social media inactivity, my research contributes to understanding how local politicians adapt to the changing political environment to achieve their goals. It provides new insights into political campaign strategies at the regional level, which is increasingly important in this digital age.

2. Theoretical Framework

Political communication is a type of communication that aims to achieve certain political goals. Every political communication generally consists of several elements, such as communicators or senders of political messages; political messages (in verbal or non-verbal form); political channels or media used to convey political messages; political message recipients who are generally voters; and the effects or impacts of messages that have been disseminated (Alvin, 2022).

According to Rosidi (2017) Political communication can be likened to the flow of blood that delivers political messages such as demands, protests, and support (in the form of aspirations and interests) to the processing center of the political system. The processing results, reflected in the output functions, are then channeled back through political communication, which becomes feedback for the political system. Thus, political communication plays a role in maintaining the life and dynamics of the political system.

Information plays a crucial role in people's lives in the current era, especially in a democratic country that values freedom of access to information for its citizens. Limitations in access to information can cause significant impacts, such as the low level of knowledge and understanding of the community, which in turn also affects the quality of life of a nation. In addition, from the governance perspective, the unavailability of information that the public can access can lead to the emergence of authoritarian and undemocratic governments (Rosidi, 2017).

Political communication also includes the process of persuasion, where the parties involved try to influence the perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of citizens to align with the desired political goals. In addition, political communication also involves public image building, political branding, and crisis management to ensure that the messages conveyed align with the political interests represented (Dawami, 2022).

In a democracy, political communication is a vital foundation for public participation in the decision-making process. Along with the development of information technology, political communication is increasingly complex and involves various channels that play an important role in shaping people's political views (Fadillah, 2017). Therefore, a deep understanding of political communication is key to understanding political dynamics in a country or society.

Purpose of Political Communication

Political communication is related to political dialog that occurs between conflict and consensus. Differences of opinion in society are discussed through discussions to reach mutual agreement. In this context, there is an interpersonal, political communication process within the group (Indrawan, 2017). One of the goals of political communication today is forming public opinion. Opinions that have been widely expressed in society become actual public opinion, while agreements that have been reached through the communication process are called public consensus. On the other hand, views or agreements that have not been expressed openly and publicly are still considered attitudes. This perspective aligns with the approach of political communication through mass media, where the message is aimed at a general and actual audience. In this context, public opinion refers to views that have been externally expressed or made public and are known by many people (Indrawan, 2017).

Political communication aims to shape, influence, and maintain public perceptions and attitudes toward political activities, parties, candidates, or certain policies. One of the main objectives is to mobilize public support to achieve political goals desired by the parties involved, such as political parties or candidates in an election. Political communication also aims to form a positive public image of political actors and ensure that the messages conveyed are by the desired narrative (Indrawan, 2017). In addition, the purpose of political communication also involves education and information to the public. By delivering accurate and clear information, political communication aims to improve citizens' understanding of political issues, policies, and democratic processes. Thus, people can make more informed and participatory political decisions (Elisabet & Siahan, 2021). Political communication also plays a role in building and maintaining relationships between government and society. Providing open and transparent communication channels creates public trust in political institutions and ensures that people's aspirations are heard in the policy-making

process (Zunaria & Ruliana, 2022). Overall, the objectives of political communication include persuasive, informative, and participatory aspects, with the main focus on shaping people's views, gaining support, and maintaining citizen engagement in the political process.

Political Message

Every communication process involves the communication of a message as an important element. This message becomes integral in ensuring the smooth running of the communication process, which means that the communication process has an expressed content or contents. The message is the main dimension of the communication content, which includes what is communicated. Although communication messages are not only limited to verbally spoken words but also include various forms of nonverbal expressions (Hasan, 2016). Explains that the content dimension refers to the communication message itself. In addition, communication messages are also related to the way or process of delivering messages. This shows the relationship between the message or content of communication with other components such as communication channels and media.

Political messages refer to communications delivered by political actors, such as political parties, candidates, or governments, to influence people's opinions, attitudes, and behaviors toward a political issue, policy, or political figure. Political messages are often strategically designed to create the desired image, build political identity, and mobilize support. Political messages can be delivered through various media, such as speeches, political advertisements, brochures, social media, or media interviews (Hayati, 2021). Political messages usually focus on understanding and emphasizing issues that political actors consider important. This message can be persuasive, informative, or emotional, depending on its purpose and target audience. Political messages are often used in political campaigns to differentiate and highlight the differences between candidates or political parties In addition, political messages also include responses to current and controversial issues, which can shape people's views on the attitudes and policies taken by political actors. Political messages have a significant role in shaping political narratives and influencing people's perceptions of various aspects of politics and governance (Supriadi, 2017). Thus, political messages are not only a tool to convey information but also a strategic instrument for manipulating public opinion, building political brands, and achieving political goals desired by political actors.

Types and Varieties of Political Messages

According to Dan Nimmo, there are several types of political messages:

a. Rhetoric: Rhetoric is using language arts to communicate persuasively and effectively. It involves two-way communication, whether interpersonal gr,oup, or public, to influence the interlocutor to have the same perception as the communicator.

b. Political Advertising: Like commercial advertising, political advertising aims to introduce something to voters so they believe in and vote for the product, in this case, a political party. In essence, political advertising seeks to recruit the most votes for the political party's benefit.

c. Propaganda: Propaganda is a very extreme form of political communication in which messages are constantly delivered to create a strong new public opinion. This public opinion can be directed by the news delivered by the communicator of the propaganda message.

From the explanation above, Dan Nimmo argues that several political messages can shape and influence public opinion. One type is rhetoric, the art of language used to communicate persuasively and effectively. Rhetoric involves two-way communication, both interpersonal and group or public, to influence the interlocutor's opinions and perceptions so that they align with the communicator's views (Fadillah et al., 2019). Using a convincing language style, rhetoric creates emotional and intellectual appeal to strengthen the political message.

Furthermore, political advertising is also an important type of political message. Like commercial advertising, political advertising aims to introduce and convince voters to trust and vote for the product, in this context, a political party. In its essence, political advertising seeks to recruit as much support as possible for the political party's interests (Ulfah, Fajri, & Fadillah, 2016). Through visuals, narratives, and emotional messages, political advertisements create the image that political parties desire to attract voters' attention and gain their support.

Propaganda, as another type of political message, is more extreme. Propaganda aims to create a strong new public opinion through continuous messaging. By utilizing various persuasive methods, such as the selective dissemination of information and the selection of facts, propaganda seeks to manipulate people's perceptions by promoting political interests (Fajri & Fadillah, 2017). Propaganda is often applied in the context of political campaigns or political conflicts to shape views in favor of the party delivering the propaganda message. Overall, the types of political messages proposed by Dan Nimmo include rhetoric, political advertising, and propaganda. Each has different strategies and objectives, but both aim to influence and shape people's views and attitudes towards certain political issues and political figures.

3. Method

This research is a qualitative study that uses qualitative descriptive analysis to obtain a thorough understanding of the communication strategies used by legislative members to win the 2024 legislative elections. This research is a study using an emic perspective (Awaludin Pimay, 2023). Researchers collect data through detailed stories from informants and express them according to

the language and views of the informants. This research was conducted in Polewali Mandar Regency with certain considerations.

Informants in this study were selected using *the purposive sampling* technique, where informants were selected deliberately based on certain criteria set by the researcher, which were in accordance with the research objectives and were considered capable of providing relevant data and information. The total number of informants involved in this research is five people. The data collected will be analyzed using the qualitative analysis method to describe the research results based on the findings in the field. Furthermore, the data will be interpreted and concluded.
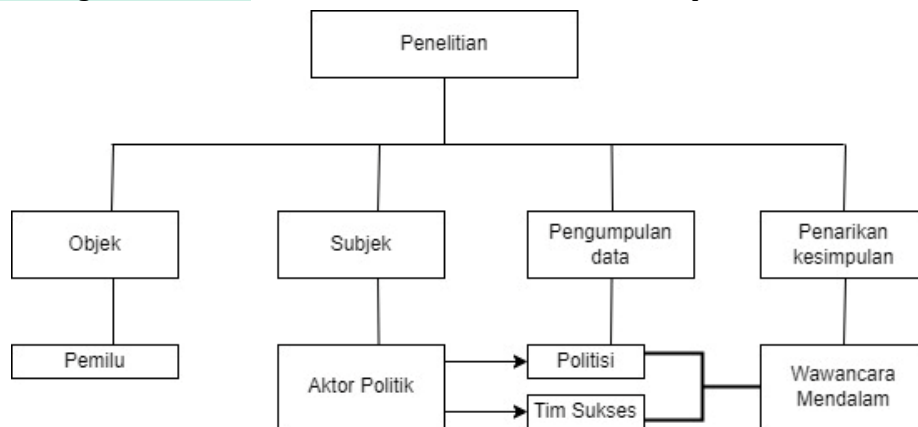

Fig. 1. Flow of research methodology
Source: Processed by researchers (2024)

The chart above illustrates the research framework used to analyze the political communication strategies employed by political actors in the Legislative Election in Polewali Mandar Regency/City. This chart outlines the structure of the research, from the selection of the object and subject to data collection and conclusion drawing.

The Research Object is the election, which serves as the primary context of this study. The Research Subjects consist of political actors, including politicians and their campaign teams, who are directly involved in the campaign.

Data Collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with politicians and their campaign teams to gain a comprehensive understanding of the communication strategies they employed. Conclusion Drawing is based on the analysis of the data obtained from these in-depth interviews, which are then interpreted to understand the effectiveness of the communication strategies used.

Data Validity

To ensure the validity of the data used in this study, triangulation techniques were applied. Data obtained from in-depth interviews with several key informants, including politicians and campaign team members, were compared to identify consistencies and discrepancies in their responses. Additionally, supporting data from secondary sources such as news articles and official reports

were utilized to strengthen the study's findings. This approach helps ensure that the data used is accurate, consistent, and reliable.

4. Result and Discussion

Strategies are steps taken to achieve goals or achieve success in a competition. In the context of this research, the strategy used by one of the legislative candidates aims to win the competition in the 2024 legislative general election in Polewali Mandar Regency. Based on the results of interviews with one of the elected legislative members, several general strategies are carried out, such as conducting face-to-face communication from house to house, conducting direct socialization, forming a successful team of volunteers, providing assistance to the community, and conducting open campaigns.

Socialization is one of the strategies used by legislative candidates to educate, introduce themselves, and introduce their political parties to the voting public. This socialization process is usually carried out long before the start of the campaign period and is often carried out repeatedly from one location to another. Legislative candidates frequently use various media for socialization, including mass media such as newspapers, television, and radio, as well as print media such as stickers, banners, billboards, calendars, tasseled flags, banners, and posters. In addition, social media and the internet are also increasingly becoming important tools in the political socialization process. In Polewali Mandar City, legislative candidates use print media and social media, such as Facebook and Instagram, for political socialization. This media selection is based on assumptions about the effectiveness of the media in reaching the public, including in remote areas, as well as its impact on public perceptions.

The tremendous development of social media has opened a new era in modern society, providing independent access to information. Social media such as Facebook and Instagram have become the primary choice due to their ability to disseminate information to urban communities with access to electricity and the internet. Through these social media platforms, legislative candidates can communicate directly with voters without meeting face-to-face, allowing their political messages to be delivered to the audience. The political messages conveyed include their name, serial number, the political party they represent, and the programs offered to voters in Polewali Mandar City. During the socialization process, muhasbih, as a legislative candidate, also assisted the community by helping with pig contact equipment in several villages in Polewali Mandar as one of the elected candidates. This assistance is given voluntarily in the hope of creating a positive image in the eyes of voters, which is expected to encourage them to vote for the candidate.

Muhasbih, as an elected DPRD candidate, did not happen by chance, but thanks to the success of his campaign team in 2024. In forming a campaign team, Muhasbih took the first step by creating a team first. From here, Muhasbih gave trust to two individuals who already knew him well. After that, Muhasbih asked for recommendations from these two people regarding suitable individuals who were ready to join his campaign team. After getting the recommendation, Muhasbih conducted dialog and discussion with the prospective members of the campaign team. This was done to harmonize their understanding and commitment before joining Muhasbih's campaign team.

While forming the campaign team, there was an agreement between the two parties to harmonize the same goals. The success team formed by Muhasbih has an important role in running the campaign in the field, coordinating the existing conditions to assist Muhasbih in thoroughly understanding the conditions of the community and the political situation. The formation of this success team is based on three main patterns. First, it involves individuals who influence people's opinions and influence them to vote, such as traditional leaders, religious leaders, and officeholders. Second, it involves individuals who are loyal and have integrity, credibility, and political strategy expertise that can effectively support the candidate. Third, it affects individuals with close kinship or friendship with legislative candidates.

Success teams have several levels. First, the core or District-level success team is responsible for planning the campaign strategy. Second, the Kecamatan-level success team comprises individuals who influence the Kecamatan area. Third, the village or sub-district level success team is recruited by the sub-district level success team and is tasked with carrying out the campaign strategy directly at the village, sub-village, or hamlet level. Before recruiting successful team members, legislative candidates should ensure they understand the people's backgrounds, including their influence in the community, credibility, integrity, and loyalty. This is important to ensure the effectiveness and success of the campaign.

Muhasbih's success in achieving his goal of becoming a member of the DPRD is the result of the political communication strategies he successfully implemented. Considering this definition, Muhasbih used several effective methods to obtain his position in the Polewali Mandar DPRD. The political communication strategy implemented by Muhasbih and his winning team is highly dependent on the systematics of the campaign. The campaign's effectiveness depends on the public's trust in the person conducting the campaign. Muhasbih succeeded in gaining public trust, as proven by his election as a member of the DPRD three periods ago. In addition, campaigners must have attractiveness and strength, and Muhasbih has indirectly fulfilled both aspects. Muhasbih also used a dynamic and conditional approach to interacting with the community to expand his reach. The dynamic approach is an approach that is carried out continuously both before and after being elected, such as attending community and religious activities, as well as weddings and celebrations.

Meanwhile, it is conditional because it is not only limited to daily communication with neighbors but also includes unscheduled events such as zikiran, thanksgiving, and so on.

The political communication strategy applied is audience recognition, which refers to understanding and approaching voters or constituents in general elections. Voters in society can be grouped into several categories, such as religious communities, customs, regions, and ethnicities. This approach is done through political segmentation, targeting, and positioning. Political communicators need to understand the physical conditions, personality, group and community influences, as well as the values and norms in the community groups that are the target of political messages. Audience recognition begins with segmentation based on geographic, demographic, psychographic, socio-cultural, behavioral, and causal aspects. Candidates generally focus their attention and socialization in areas that have strong kinship or friendship ties. They map out areas considered potential, reachable, and believed to be the maximum support base. In addition, candidates identify community figures as opinion leaders in the area. These opinion leaders are recruited to be part of the candidate's work team based on their integrity and loyalty.

The message is the core of the information to be conveyed from the communicator to the recipient of the message to create a common understanding among all individuals involved in the communication process. Political messages can be through program promises such as road infrastructure improvements. In addition, political messages can also be in the form of past track records or records of achievements made by candidates to the people of Polewali Mandar City. One concrete example is assistance for farmers and homemakers in carrying out activities such as sewing and making snacks. This assistance gives a positive impression on the community.

Media Selection

Media selection in transferring messages to audiences is based on consideration of the most effective channel. In the process of imaging election contestants, various types of media can be used, such as inter-personal media (face-to-face), mass media (such as newspapers, magazines, TV, and radio), social media (such as Facebook and Instagram), and print media (such as billboards, posters, stickers, banners, and calendars). The interview results show that the media selection is adjusted to the conditions of the community. Informants prioritize conventional media such as stickers, billboards, posters, and the like as promotional tools to the community. In addition, direct media (door-to-door) delivers political messages directly to the community through the intermediary of a previously recruited success team. The consideration of using conventional media and direct communication media (door-to-door) as a promotional tool is more focused on the reach of the media itself. Direct media or door-to-door is chosen because it is considered effective in forming a positive image in the minds of the voting public.

In an effort to build a positive image and connect with the community, I chose to prioritize conventional media as a means of communication in the upcoming election. I explained that this media selection is based on the characteristics of the people in Polewali Mandar, who are more familiar with traditional approaches. "The use of conventional media such as stickers, billboards, and posters is considered more effective for reaching voters. We realize that the community here is more responsive to media that they can see and touch on a daily basis." This indicates that we not only consider the reach of the media but also how well it can be accepted by the local community. Despite facing challenges such as public skepticism towards politics, I remain committed to explaining our campaign goals in a simple and transparent manner. "We want the community to understand that we are the right choice for their future, and we are committed to serving them as best as we can." Through the selection of conventional media and a more personal approach, I strive to create a positive image and build stronger connections. (Interview with Muhasbih, February 5, 2024).

A similar sentiment was expressed by one of Muhasbih's campaign team members during the interview, stating, "We, the Muhasbih campaign team, further explain the strategies we implement in the campaign, emphasizing that the use of conventional media, such as stickers and billboards, is very important for building effective communication with voters. We are aware that the community is more familiar with media that they can see and touch every day, and the door-to-door approach is also an integral part of our strategy." We actively conduct direct visits to voters' homes. "With this direct approach, we can listen to the complaints and aspirations of the community, as well as provide clear explanations regarding our vision and mission." We also highlight the challenges faced in delivering political messages. Despite the skepticism towards politics, we strive to explain our goals in a simple and transparent manner. We want to create trust among voters." With the strategies implemented, we hope to address existing issues and foster better communication with the community. "We believe that a more personal approach will help us reach more voters and build a positive image for Muhasbih." (Interview with AA, February 7, 2024)

McNair's opinion, as cited by Nimmo (1989), states that political communication purely discusses the distribution of valuable public resources, which includes economic power. In this context, political communication is not only concerned with the acquisition of political power but also about how economic power is distributed and maintained through the political communication process.

Political communication strategies are carried out by elected legislators in the 2019 elections through audience recognition, organizing message content, determining message delivery techniques and selecting media. According to Arifin's (2014) communication strategy theory, effective communication can be achieved by taking the first step called audience recognition.

Audience recognition is important because it helps in understanding the conditions of society, including the knowledge possessed, the influence of groups in society, and the situations that exist in it.

According to Wilbur Schramm, quoted by Awaludin Pimay (2023) in his book Political Communication Research, messages in political communication strategies should fulfill several conditions, namely:

a. Messages must be planned and delivered in a way that attracts the attention of the intended audience.

b. .Messages must use symbols that the source and target of communication can understand to have a common understanding.

c. Messages should be able to stimulate personal needs, such as the need for political stability, and suggest ways to fulfill these needs.

d. The message should propose solutions or avenues for acquiring appropriate needs to the group's situation, with an eye toward awareness in providing the desired response.

Appropriate language is important in delivering political campaign messages so that the public can clearly and effectively understand them. Political messages need to be offered simply for ordinary people with low educational backgrounds, while for educated people, messages can be delivered using more detailed data and information. In addition, campaign messages must have a distinctive identity, not just follow the party's ideology. The campaign team must pay attention to the environment in which the campaign is held. In rural areas, where most of the population uses local languages, campaign messages should be delivered in a language that the local community understands. In more heterogeneous urban areas, using Bahasa Indonesia as a common language in daily conversation should be considered to make the messages accessible to different layers of society.

In delivering political messages, Muhasbih emphasizes the importance of political values, including politics based on religious morals and the principle of honesty. Muhasbih believes a politician can commit uncontrollable actions without moral and spiritual foundations. Although she can only sometimes fulfill all the community's aspirations, Muhasbih is dedicated to conveying these aspirations to the community and finding solutions based on his authority and limitations as a candidate for DPRD membership. By doing so, Muhasbih strives to be an effective intermediary between the community and the legislature and to provide constructive responses to the community's aspirations.

5. Conclusion

There is a communication strategy carried out by Muhasbih as a 2024 elected legislator in Polewali Mandar Regency, namely carrying out political socialization directly to the community and forming work teams or volunteers in charge of the field, providing assistance according to the needs of the community in the electoral district, and going directly to the community in open campaigns, focusing on socio-cultural segmentation to select voters who match their characteristics. The political messages conveyed include program promises that will be implemented after being elected and Muhasbih's track record and achievements. Repeated delivery of messages to voters, and delivery of messages through group influence in the community as a medium between legislators and target voters. Commonly used media in political communication include mass media, print media, direct communication or face to face, as well as social media such as Facebook and Instagram.

Suggestions for Future Research. Future research can further explore the effectiveness of the face-to-face communication methods used. For example, conducting a qualitative analysis of how direct interaction between legislative candidates and the public can build trust and influence voters' decisions. In addition, further research can explore the role of volunteers in the field in strengthening the political messages delivered, as well as how socio-cultural segmentation affects effective political communication strategies. Comparative studies that examine the effectiveness of face-to-face communication in various regions with different socio-cultural characteristics would also be very useful. Research Shortcomings. One of the shortcomings of this research is the lack of in-depth analysis regarding the comparison of the effectiveness of various face-to-face communication techniques used. This research focuses more on the overall strategy without dissecting in detail the specific impact of each face to-face communication technique used. A more in-depth analysis of this aspect would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the most effective face-to-face communication techniques to use in the future.

Closing. Muhasbih carries out a communication strategy as a 2024 elected legislator in Polewali Mandar Regency, namely carrying out political socialization directly to the community and forming work teams or volunteers in charge of the field, assisting according to the needs of the community in the electoral district, and going directly to the community in an open campaign, focusing on socio-cultural segmentation to select voters who match their characteristics. The political messages conveyed include program promises implemented after being elected and Muhasbih's track record and achievements. Repeated delivery of messages to voters and messages through the influence of groups in the community as a medium between legislators and the target community of voters. Commonly used media in political communication include mass media, print media, direct communication, or face-to-face, as well as social media such as Facebook and Instagram.

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