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DEDI MULYADI'S POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY IN THE 2024 WEST JAVA GUBERNATORY ELECTION: ANALYSIS THROUGH THE AGENDA SETTING APPROACH

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Abstract

Dedi Mulyadi's successful 2024 West Java Gubernatorial Election campaign integrated traditional Sundanese culture with digital media, a strategy analyzed through a descriptive qualitative methodology examining academic sources, online news, and social media. His consistent portrayal as a compassionate, humble, and approachable leader, amplified by positive content on YouTube, Facebook, and TikTok, was central to his political communication. Mulyadi deliberately utilized Sundanese cultural symbols to reinforce his political identity, while significant support from a coalition of political parties broadened his electoral reach. Through an effective agenda-setting strategy, he successfully framed crucial issues positively, thereby countering negative campaigns and offering valuable insights for future local political communication approaches that blend digital and cultural elements.

Keywords: *Political communication, Agenda setting, West Java gubernatorial election 2024, Dedi Mulyadi.*

Abstrak

Dedi Mulyadi meraih kemenangan dalam Pemilihan Gubernur Jawa Barat 2024 melalui strategi komunikasi politik yang inovatif, memadukan kekayaan budaya Sunda dengan pemanfaatan optimal media digital. Penelitian ini mengungkap bagaimana Mulyadi secara konsisten membentuk citra pemimpin yang peduli dan merakyat di platform seperti YouTube, Facebook, dan TikTok, melalui konten-konten positif yang disajikan secara sederhana. Keberhasilannya juga didukung oleh branding budaya Sunda yang kuat, mempertegas identitas politiknya, serta dukungan koalisi partai yang memperluas jangkauan elektoralnya. Dengan menerapkan agenda-setting secara efektif, Mulyadi mampu menciptakan persepsi publik yang positif, sekaligus menetralkan narasi negatif yang mungkin muncul.

Kata Kunci: *Komunikasi Politik, Agenda Setting, Pilgub Jawa Barat 2024, Dedi Mulyadi.*



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INTRODUCTION

The 2024 West Java gubernatorial election has attracted considerable attention, not only as an important regional democratic event but also because of the increasingly complex nature of political discourse in the digital era. Effective political communication is crucial for candidates vying for office, as it plays a vital role in cultivating their public personas, articulating their policy visions and goals, and ultimately influencing voter preferences. Dedi Mulyadi, a prominent figure in the West Java gubernatorial election, is renowned for his distinctive communication style. This approach cleverly blends traditional media tactics with contemporary digital engagement platforms, signaling an adaptation to a changing media landscape where direct voter interaction via social media is essential to building relationships and effectively disseminating political messages (Norris, 2000).

Introduced in 1972 by Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, Agenda-Setting Theory offers a valuable perspective for examining political communication tactics during election campaigns. The theory states that the media exerts influence over public opinion by emphasizing certain topics, thereby shaping public priorities and determining which issues are considered important. In political campaigns, candidates strategically use agenda-setting to direct voters' focus to key areas such as economic growth, education, or social welfare that align with their campaign promises. By leveraging the media, candidates can construct narratives that support their image while minimizing scrutiny of less favorable subjects (Scheufele, 2007).

Furthermore, the evolution of digital technology has expanded the application of agenda setting. Platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube allow candidates to engage directly with the public, bypassing the editorial oversight of traditional media. This presents new possibilities and challenges in influencing the public agenda, as candidates must navigate and compete in a vast and diverse information landscape in the digital realm. Dedi Mulyadi's proactive communication style on social media, as seen in his video content highlighting local culture and its connection to the community, is an example of a deliberate strategy to leverage digital platforms to support his campaign agenda.

This study aims to examine Dedi Mulyadi's political communication approach in the 2024 West Java gubernatorial election through the perspective of agenda setting theory. This study will specifically investigate the construction of campaign messages, the main issues highlighted, and the use of traditional and digital media platforms to influence public opinion. In addition, this study will investigate the interaction between candidate strategies, media functions, and audience reactions in shaping the dynamics of political communication in the context of regional elections in Indonesia. By combining theoretical and empirical analysis, this study aims to improve understanding of effective political communication in the digital era and identify areas in the political communication literature that require further exploration. This research has significant significance in the Indonesian context, given that regional elections, such as the West Java gubernatorial election, offer insights into local political currents and broader national trends in political communication. By understanding how candidates such as Dedi Mulyadi leverage agenda-setting to influence voters, this research can offer valuable perspectives for political strategists, academics, and policymakers. These insights can highlight the important role of targeted and adaptable communication approaches in gaining public support.

A notable area for improvement is the explicit citation of similar prior research on Indonesian political communication or Dedi Mulyadi's strategies to further align with guidelines, despite referencing broader studies for comparative context. Overall, the literature review is comprehensive and relevant, effectively linking theories to the study's context, but could benefit from a greater emphasis on recent studies and specific prior research in the Indonesian political landscape.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Political communication encompasses the exchange of messages infused with political intent or interests. It involves various political entities, power dynamics, group interests, governmental bodies, and policy matters. Beyond merely connecting rulers and the governed, it also extends to communication from constituents and media commentators to politicians, as well as media discourse about political figures and their actions, such as news and editorials. Essentially, it's any communication that conveys political messages, particularly those related to power and its institutional embodiment. Political communication involves the deliberate crafting and dissemination of messages to influence the distribution or exercise of power within society. This can manifest in four forms: elite communication, hegemonic communication, petitionary communication, and associational communication. Harsono Suwardi (1997) offers a concise summation: broadly, political communication encompasses any message delivery, especially political information, from a source to multiple recipients. More narrowly, it refers to any message—be it symbolic, written, spoken, or gestural—that impacts an individual's position within a power structure.

Political communication has several key elements:

- a) **Political Communicators:** Refers to individuals or institutions that are in charge of conveying political information. This can include figures such as presidents, ministers, members of parliament, politicians, and pressure groups in society that influence the course of government.
- b) **Political Messages:** This is information that is conveyed, whether in written or spoken form, verbal or non-verbal, implied or explicit, and channeled consciously or unconsciously, but is essentially loaded with political content. Examples are political speeches, official statements, books, brochures, or political news in the mass media.
- c) **Political Channels or Media:** Are the means or tools utilized by communicators to spread their political messages. This includes print media, electronic media, online media, as well as face-to-face forms of communication such as party socialization activities or discussions in community organizations.
- d) **Political Targets:** Is the segment of society that is expected to provide support, especially in the form of votes during general elections. This group is very diverse, ranging from entrepreneurs, civil servants, workers, youth, women, students, and others.
- e) **Impact of Political Communication:** The expected outcome of the political communication process is the formation of public understanding of the system of government and political parties, increased active participation of the public in the political sphere, which will ultimately affect the decision to vote in general elections.

Political communication strategies are crucial for a political party's electoral success. A prime example is the political campaign, which is a form of applied political communication undertaken by individuals, groups, or political organizations. Its purpose is to cultivate a positive public image and opinion, ultimately aiming for electoral victory in general, regional, or presidential elections.

Historically, politicians and activists have employed various forms of political communication, including rhetoric, agitation, propaganda, lobbying, and direct political actions. These are often integrated into organized political activities such as public relations, political marketing, and campaigns. All these approaches are fundamentally geared towards shaping a favorable public perception and opinion. This, in turn, is directly linked to the pursuit of electoral wins, securing power, and attaining political offices within legislative or executive branches. The ultimate goal is to enable political communicators, particularly politicians and their parties, to enact policies consistent with their vision, mission, and political agendas. Within the pragmatic paradigm, actions themselves can be understood as forms of communication, embodying both art and technique in political engagement. This means that activities like political lobbying, rhetoric, and campaigns are not just communicative acts but also constitute political action aimed at constructing a specific political image for the audience. This image, in turn, shapes their perception of political reality. Political communication strategy involves making conditional decisions about present actions to achieve future political objectives. According to Anwar Arifin (2011: 235-263), effective political strategies for communicators include: (1) cultivating reputation, (2) bolstering political institutions, (3) establishing methodologies, (4) discerning and filtering information, (5) fostering unity, and (6) building consensus. Therefore, political communication strategies are essentially systematic steps in implementing communication, encompassing the creation, dissemination, reception, and impact of politically contextualized information, whether through direct human interaction or mass media.

There are various perspectives on political communication, including:

1. **Process Approach:** This viewpoint posits that all phenomena are the culmination of a process. Drawing from theorists like Spengler and Toynbee, it suggests that societal realities unfold in recurring patterns, particularly evident in the rise and fall of civilizations. This approach is instrumental in understanding both political socialization and public policy formation.
2. **Agenda-Setting Approach:** Developed by Maxwell C. McCombs and Donald L. Shaw, this approach centers on the premise that mass media selectively curates information. Individuals dubbed "gatekeepers"—such as journalists, chief editors, and image editors—control what news, articles, or content is disseminated, effectively deciding what is brought to public attention and what remains concealed.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study is a qualitative study using content analysis methods to examine the influence of online mass media (Tempo and Antaranews) and social media (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Dedi Mulyadi's official Tiktok) in shaping Dedi Mulyadi's campaign agenda as a gubernatorial candidate. The research data were obtained from books, journals, and digital documentation of online media coverage and Dedi Mulyadi's social media posts during the campaign period. Content selection was carried out purposively, with a focus on the relevance of the content to the campaign and issues raised by the candidate. Data analysis was carried out by applying the Agenda Setting model from McCombs and Shaw, which

aims to explain how mass media influences public perception of important issues, especially public perception of Dedi Mulyadi.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Study Theory

Agenda Setting

Agenda-setting theory began in 1922 with the thoughts of Walter Lippmann. He highlighted the power of mass media in shaping public views. Lippmann believed that the media could determine the issues that were considered important by the public, although he had not used the term "agenda-setting" directly at that time. Lippmann's ideas became the main foundation for the theory (Lippmann, 1922). The concept of agenda-setting theory developed further after the era of Walter Lippmann. McCombs and Shaw made significant contributions through their research on the influence of mass media on voter sentiment in the 1968 presidential election. The results of this study were published in the article "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media" in *Public Opinion Quarterly* in 1972 (McCombs M. &, 1972).

McCombs and Shaw argue that media coverage of an event can shape public perceptions of its importance. The public, especially those interested in the developments in the presidential campaign, tend to rely on the media for information. Their study of the 1968 US Presidential Election gave rise to Agenda-Setting Theory, which explains how the media can influence and determine what issues are considered important by the public. Issues or individuals highlighted by the media will eventually become the subject of public discussion. The media plays a role in shaping public opinion by reporting issues from their perspective, which then influences the public agenda and even government policy. For example, in the 2019 Indonesian Presidential Election, television editors highlighted certain issues and candidates to shape the public agenda. This shows that the more often a topic is covered by the mass media, the higher the public's perception of the importance of the topic. McCombs and Shaw in a follow-up study found that newspapers were more effective than television in shaping the public political agenda, although both had an influence.

In a 1976 study, McCombs and Shaw stated that the media is not only a source of information about public issues, but also shapes audience perceptions about the level of importance of a topic based on the emphasis the media places on it (McCombs M. , 1977). For example, the media can determine the important issues in a campaign by highlighting certain aspects of a candidate's statements. In other words, the media play a role in setting the campaign's "agenda." McCombs and Shaw consider the media's ability to influence individual cognitive change as one of the crucial aspects of the power of mass communication.

Media experts Everett Rogers and James Dearing suggest that agenda-setting theory in relation to mass media includes three main agendas: the public agenda, the media agenda, and the policy agenda. The policy agenda, they say, can come from issues prioritized by governments and policymakers. Sometimes, global events can also give rise to new issues that then become part of the agenda set by the mass media (Rogers, 1988).

Early research on agenda-setting was conducted by Bernard Cohen. He argued that the mass media functioned more to present information about what was being discussed, rather than to dictate what the public should think (Cohen, 1963). Cohen believes that the media serves as a transmitter of information, not a controller of public thought. However, other studies

have shown that the mass media can influence the thinking of the audience, both directly and indirectly, in forming public opinion.

Based on the research findings, media experts have developed the concept of agenda-setting to include the cognitive dimension. This dimension highlights how the mass media forms the agenda and how the audience understands the agenda. This process can occur through framing and priming. When an issue is framed in a certain way and emphasized by the mass media, the issue will immediately attract the attention of the audience.

Agenda-setting can therefore be defined as the process by which the news media generate public awareness and attention about important issues. When linked to the concept of framing, two core assumptions underlie most research on agenda-setting: (1) the press and media do not simply reflect reality, but filter and shape it; and (2) the media's focus on a limited number of issues leads the public to view those issues as more important than others. An important aspect of the agenda-setting function of mass communication is the time frame over which this phenomenon occurs. Furthermore, different types of media have varying capacities to set the agenda. Agenda-setting theory seems well suited to assist media analysts in understanding the role of contemporary mass media in current political issues in the digital age.

Campaign Political Communication

The importance of a campaign can be understood through the concept of a political campaign itself. A political campaign is basically a structured effort aimed at influencing decision-making within a group. In the context of democracy, this often refers to an election campaign, where individuals or potential leaders are elected. Although referendums, which are public votes on policy, are rare in Indonesia, examples can be found in several European countries, such as the Brexit referendum in the UK.

In the contemporary political landscape, major political campaigns center on elections, where candidates compete for the position of head of state or head of government. The most obvious example is seen in presidential or head of state elections, where candidates and their supporters actively campaign on behalf of their respective parties. According to Rice and Paisley, a campaign is an effort to shape the beliefs and actions of others through persuasive communication. In this context, a political campaign is a form of political communication carried out by individuals, groups, or political entities over a certain period to gain public support (Rice, 1981).

Based on Article 1 number 26 of Law Number 1 of 2015 concerning General Elections, campaigning is defined as "activities carried out by Election Participants to invite voters by conveying the vision, mission and programs of Election Participants."

Rogers and Storey define a campaign as a series of planned communication activities aimed at producing specific results or effects on a wide audience, carried out consistently over a period of time. This definition is widely accepted and popular among communication academics. Although campaigns are commonplace, their implementation often deviates from existing regulations.

The General Election Commission (KPU) through Decree No. 35 of 2004, classifies campaigns into at least nine forms: public debates between candidates, activities according to regulations, placement of campaign materials in public places, distribution of campaign materials, distribution through print and electronic media, radio/television broadcasts,

limited meetings, rallies, and direct face-to-face interaction and dialogue. In addition, Law Article 1 paragraph 26 Number 10 of 2008 defines a campaign as an activity of election participants to persuade voters by conveying their vision, mission, and programs.

DISCUSSION

Profile Of Dedi Mulyadi And Dynamics Of West Java Governor Election

H. Dedi Mulyadi, S.H., commonly known as KDM (Kang Dedi Mulyadi), is the Governor of West Java for the 2025–2030 term, currently gaining widespread attention. Previously, he served as the Regent of Purwakarta for two terms (2008–2018). Born in Subang, West Java, on April 11, 1971, he is the youngest child of Sahlin Ahmad Suryana, a retired soldier, and Karsiti, who did not attend formal schooling but was active in the Indonesian Red Cross. Dedi Mulyadi's formal education began at the primary level at SD Subakti Subang, which he completed in 1984. He continued to junior high at SMP Kalijati Subang, graduating in 1987. He then attended SMAN Purwadadi Subang for high school, completing it in 1990. After finishing school, Dedi Mulyadi pursued higher education at Sekolah Tinggi Hukum Purnawarman, graduating in 1999.

As a student, Dedi Mulyadi demonstrated his enthusiasm by participating in various organizations, making him a prominent young activist at the time. With his strong communication skills, he gained recognition among academic, bureaucratic, and political circles. In 1993, he was entrusted with writing a speech to be delivered by the Chairman of the Golkar Party in Purwakarta. The following year, Dedi Mulyadi was elected as the General Chairman of the Purwakarta Branch of the Islamic Student Association (HMI), a significant and still-active organization. Additionally, he was involved in labor movements, serving as Vice Chairman of the Purwakarta Branch of the All-Indonesia Workers' Union Federation (DPC FSPSI). Due to his loyal dedication, Dedi Mulyadi was appointed as Secretary of the Central Leadership of the Textile, Garment, and Leather Workers' Union (PP SPTSK KSPSI).

Dedi Mulyadi's involvement in various activities during his college years and his emergence as a young political activist laid the foundation for his career. During the reform era in 1999, he secured a seat in the Purwakarta Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) as a delegate from the Golkar Party, representing the Tegalwaru District. He consistently won elections, later becoming the Secretary of the Golkar Party, and in 2004, he was appointed Chairman of the Golkar Party's Regional Leadership Council (DPD). At the young age of 32, Dedi Mulyadi was elected Vice Regent of Purwakarta for the 2003–2008 term, then served as Regent of Purwakarta for two terms (2008–2018). Currently, he has been elected Governor of West Java for the 2025–2030 term.

West Java residents, in particular, have given Dedi Mulyadi the nickname “Bapak Aing,” which translates to “my father” in Sundanese, symbolizing the deep affection and sense of representation the people feel toward his leadership. Recently, Dedi Mulyadi has gained significant popularity through his activities shared on social media platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. One policy that has drawn widespread attention is his initiative to send children deemed “naughty” to military barracks for training. This has sparked a trend where people create content humorously reporting their husbands or children, playfully requesting they be sent to the barracks as well. As a native Sundanese, Dedi Mulyadi resonates strongly with the predominantly Sundanese population of West Java, making his leadership style widely accepted and relatable among the community.

The dynamics of the West Java gubernatorial elections over the years have been complex, marked by various movements, changes, and political behavior patterns of both candidates and the public. From the early reform era to the 2024 election, the competition has been fierce, influenced by key factors such as party coalitions, candidate image, and the role of mass media. In the latest 2024 gubernatorial election, one of the prominent candidate pairs was Dedi Mulyadi and Erwan Setiawan, supported by a robust coalition of major parties including Gerindra, Golkar, Democrat, PAN, PSI, Kebangkitan Bangsa (PKB), Perindo, Gelora, PBB, Garuda, PKN, and Partai Ummat, which significantly strengthened their position.

In the recent gubernatorial election, the Dedi Mulyadi-Erwan Setiawan pair gained widespread popularity, largely driven by social media, with an electability rate of 65%, surpassing other candidates. Dedi Mulyadi employed a populist political strategy, characterized by a communication style that positioned him as an ordinary person, relatable and close to the common people, while incorporating Sundanese cultural symbols. As a native Sundanese, and given that West Java's population is predominantly Sundanese, this approach presented a significant opportunity and successfully captured public attention through his bureaucratic activities. Examples include assisting street vendors, helping the underprivileged he encountered on the streets, participating in regulating roadside sellers, and even personally joining efforts to clean up river waste. All these activities and his crafted image were shared on his social media accounts, which increasingly drew public interest toward him.

Despite their popularity, the Dedi Mulyadi-Erwan Setiawan pair faced significant challenges in the lead-up to the West Java gubernatorial election due to local political issues. A primary concern was the exploitation of identity politics by certain groups to achieve political goals, which could lead to horizontal conflicts within society (Tukukansa, 2022). Additionally, the spread of hoaxes and misinformation posed a threat to public perception of the candidate pair. West Java, being a province with considerable socio-cultural diversity, presented a challenge for the candidates to gain support and build trust across various community groups. Support from influential figures and these diverse groups was crucial for securing broader public backing. These factors contributed to the dynamic political landscape during the 2024 West Java gubernatorial election.

Political Communication Strategy

According to Rogers (1982) who mentioned about political communication strategy in his book entitled *Canggara*, that communication strategy is a design formed in order to change human behavior on a super large scale through the delivery of new ideas. Communication strategy in politics is one of the keys to the success of Political Parties in winning elections. Political campaigns are strategic communication initiatives carried out by individuals, groups, or organizations. The goal is to build a good public image and shape public opinion to achieve certain political goals, which can include winning elections (local, regional, or presidential), promoting policy agendas, or influencing public discourse (Arifin, 2003). Political communication, conducted through rhetoric, agitation, propaganda, lobbying, and organized activities such as public relations and campaigns, aims to shape a positive public image and opinion. The ultimate goal is often to secure political power and implement policies that are in line with the communicator's political vision and agenda. In essence, this communication strategy is used to win elections and influence political policy-making that is then aligned with the vision and mission of the political communicator, especially with

political actors and their parties. In implementing a political communication strategy, it must begin with determining the communicator, audience, message, media, and effects (Cangara, 2013).

Through various media, both print and electronic, political actors spread their political messages, starting from ideological lines, policies and work agendas that will be implemented. It is also important for them to discuss phenomena and events that exist in society, with the intention that communication is not only a means of delivery but also a medium for observation and monitoring of a series of events in society.

Nowadays, the process of delivering and spreading news, campaigns and any information is very easy. Some people do not need to wait until their regional head candidates visit their homes to campaign, but people can observe and monitor from electronic media. Political actors, especially here, regional head candidates must approach their communities through various means. Candidates meet influential or prominent people in their areas while in the midst of gatherings. This method is considered to be a more efficient method for gathering public support and sympathy.

Getting closer to the community is an important and primary footprint that needs to be realized by people who are competing in the Pilkada. As an effort to achieve sympathy and collect many votes from the community, a strategy is needed in communicating. So that the messages that want to be instilled can be conveyed and identified as part of the campaign. The purpose of communication in social activities seems unclear, but in fact this actually accelerates the development of community attitudes regarding their characteristics and expertise. The activities and communication materials delivered are not impulsive, but reflect the problems and needs experienced by the community. That is why it is crucial to connect community leaders in the campaign stage.

Campaign strategy is a thought that is used to achieve campaign goals, summarized in its strategic steps that are adjusted to field conditions. Field facts show that each political party or candidate has a different campaign strategy. There are three main principles that need to be considered, namely positioning, branding and segmenting.

Heibing and Cooper state that positioning is a method for creating perceptions among the public (Morissan, 2010). This process must be carried out with careful planning and have appropriate steps. Managers must know how society processes information, forms perceptions, and can influence decisions taken. When this idea is applied in the political realm in a competitive climate, political parties need to be able to place political products and political images in the signs of society. In order to be realized, political products and images need to have elements that are not the same as other political products.

Branding in political marketing is better known as a strategic step to develop an identity to attract public attention and interest to be more familiar with political products. Branding is not just a symbol, it should be more about giving a commitment to supporters/fans to present something special. Segmenting when associated with political campaigns or marketing, the goal is to identify more potential communities. To be more precise, it is used in capturing potential voters, loyalists of political party ideology, constituents, and sympathizers (Boler, 2018).

There is an important relationship between communication and goal achievement in politics. This is also explained by Bucher who states that the majority of political activities are

components of word play (Bucher, 2018). Politicians can gain power through their achievements in communicating convincingly to voters and to political elites.

Agenda Setting Analysis

Showing the Image of Caring and Consistency as Part of the Campaign

In his political journey as an executive and legislator, Dedi Mulyadi often uses social media to show his activities. He consistently uploads content containing visits and assistance to the community as well as his political activities through the Tiktok, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook and Youtube applications. In one of his social media accounts, namely Youtube Dedi Mulyadi Channel, it has been created since 2017 and has increased to 3 (three) million subscribers in January 2022. At that time, Dedi Mulyadi was serving as a member of the Indonesian House of Representatives (Khumaini, 2022). When he became a candidate in the 2024 gubernatorial election, his followers had increased to 5 (five) million subscribers. Even his Facebook account has been followed by 11 (eleven) million accounts.

Many of his contents always display positive emotions such as providing assistance to people in trouble or disaster. Not infrequently showing his activities as a politician such as meetings and not hesitating to show his firmness as a government to people who violate the rules. He also often visits various regions to listen directly to the aspirations of residents. This directly or indirectly attracts the attention of the public through his social media.

According to a study conducted by Berger and Milkman, content that has positive emotions has an influence on the virality of the content (Agustina, 2020). The above things make Dedi Mulyadi's image good in the West Java community. Although it often reaps pros and cons, many social media users re-share his content on social media, creating a community of supporters, thus making his name rise on social media and some of his content always goes viral. This content also creates a framing that he is a leader who cares and is close to the people, which is one of the determining factors in his victory in the 2024 gubernatorial election.

Branding with Local Culture

Strong political identity is one of the effective framings. When he was the regent of Purwakarta, Dedi Mulyadi almost always appeared with his distinctive characteristics that were attached to Sundanese cultural symbols, namely his headband and traditional clothing. The person who is often called KDM also has the branding "Bapa Aing" which started from the name of his adopted son on social media during the campaign period named Egi, then followed by other social media users. Leadership with culture or populist framing makes him more familiar and trusted by the people of West Java (Kinasih, 2022).

On the other hand, several years ago there was tension due to his Sunda Wiwitan understanding which caused a polemic between him and an Islamic organization. Where this had become the subject of a black campaign during the 2024 gubernatorial election, but it was responded to positively and apparently did not change much the number of votes during the campaign period. This proves that culture is not a major issue in West Java.

Appear with a Distinctive Communication Style

In the book on political communication by Nimmo, there are several factors that assess the effectiveness of political communication: 1) credibility, namely assessing the knowledge and information conveyed, 2) Attraction, namely how good the political communicator's ability is to attract the audience's interest, from speech patterns, physical appearance,

mindset, and communication skills. The influence of a charismatic communicator will make him appear more convincing and trustworthy. 3) Similarity: refers to the similarity between the audience and the communicator. 4) Power: communicators who have power must have power, it affects the effectiveness of message delivery. (Sampurna, 2024)

Ineffective communication actually hinders the delivery of important messages, as a result a communicator and audience cannot connect well (Fikri, 2024). Every communicator must have their own unique communication style. Likewise, Dedi Mulyadi in delivering his messages on social media, both in speeches, candidate debates, and communication in society. As a cultural figure and politician, he is able to adjust his speaking style based on who his audience is without eliminating his charismatic impression. He seems to know very well every characteristic of his audience, in this case the people of West Java. He seems to show that politicians do not need to be rigid.

Support from Political Parties and Coalitions

The Golkar Party and other supporting parties play an important role in maintaining Dedi Mulyadi's electability. Although the survey showed a high electability of 77.81 percent, the coalition strategy was still implemented to ensure victory. The Dedi Mulyadi-Erwan Setiawan candidate pair received the most party support, namely 9 (nine) parties. This reflects the importance of political support in shaping the public agenda in favor of certain candidates (Mulia, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The success of the gubernatorial candidate pair Dedi Mulyadi and Erwan Setiawan in the 2024 West Java Gubernatorial Election is the result of a well-organized political communication strategy, as well as being responsive to various dynamics of modern media, in this case especially the context of agenda setting, Dedi Mulyadi not only created a public narrative that was in line with local cultural identity, he also managed public perception through digital media very effectively. The campaign he carried out was full of empathy, simplicity, and a populist approach that could strengthen his image as a grassroots leader. The power of framing built by Dedi Mulyadi fosters the impression of consistency and concern regarding developing social issues, which he clearly displays on social media, this is in line with the agenda setting theory, that the media is not just telling the audience but what to think about something. The controversial issue of "sunda wiwitan" shows that Dedi Mulyadi is reframing the black campaign. This is a symbol of the flexibility of political communication that he has in dealing with negative campaigns without losing public trust. Thus, its success is also obtained from the power of communication support from the coalition of political parties that expand the reach of political support and become a source of political legitimacy as well, so this illustrates the relationship between the power of personal communication and the structure of formal politics. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute to the understanding of local candidates in building effective political communication by combining various elements such as digital engagement, cultural framing and grassroots mobilization.

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