

## STRATEGIC POLITICAL COMMUNICATION OF THE WINNING CANDIDATE IN CIREBON CITY'S REGIONAL ELECTION

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### *Abstract*

The election of the Cirebon Mayoral Candidate and the Cirebon Deputy Mayoral Candidate in 2024 provides an important picture of the implementation of political communication strategies in regional head election campaigns. Choosing the right communication strategy plays a vital role in attracting public sympathy and determining their political choices. This study aims to explore how Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati design and implement communication strategies that can build emotional connections with voters and influence the political preferences of Cirebon residents. Political communication theory is used to analyze media selection, narratives, and the relevance of messages conveyed to the public. A qualitative research method with a case study approach was chosen to obtain data through interviews with the campaign team and analysis of social media content and campaign materials. The results of the study show that Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati succeeded in establishing emotional closeness with the community through a local-based approach that focuses on community empowerment, thus impacting voters' political choices.

**Keywords:** *Political communication, campaign strategy, communication strategy, strategic role, community empowerment.*

## INTRODUCTION

Local elections (Pilkada) are an important moment in the democratic process, providing an opportunity for the public to elect leaders who can bring change and progress to their region. In the context of the Cirebon Mayor and Deputy Mayor elections, effective political communication strategies are key to gaining public sympathy and support. Candidate Pair (Paslon) 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati will compete against three other candidate pairs in the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada: Paslon 01 Dani Mardani and Fitria Pamungkaswati, Paslon 02 Eti Herawati

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and Suhendrik, and Paslon 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati. In the Cirebon City Regional Election on November 27, 2024, the candidates participating in this contest need to develop a communication approach that not only conveys their vision and mission but also builds strong emotional connections with voters. Effective political communication strategies can serve as a means to uncover public aspirations, address the challenges faced, and offer solutions that align with the needs of Cirebon City residents.

Amid the dynamics and challenges faced, especially in the face of intense competition in the 2024 local elections, well-planned political communication will have a significant impact on public perception of the candidate pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati. This is crucial for creating a positive image, building trust, and guiding the political choices of the community. Gaining public sympathy is not just about advertising promises, but more than that, it is through a more personal, in-depth approach based on local issues that concern the people of Cirebon. In this regard, it is important to conduct transparent, data-driven communication and use various appropriate communication channels, both directly and through social media and digital campaigns. Candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, can develop and implement effective political communication strategies with a focus on building strong emotional ties with the community. This strategy is not only aimed at gaining sympathy but also at creating a positive and sustainable impact for the progress of Cirebon City. By prioritizing values of justice, transparency, and active community participation, Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati can strengthen their bond with residents, thereby increasing the likelihood of securing the long-term support of the people of Cirebon.

The background of this research on the political communication strategies of the winners of the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada focuses on the increasingly complex dynamics of local politics and the importance of effective communication in winning voters' hearts. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of communication strategies. The research methods used were case studies, in-depth interviews, content analysis, participant observation, and media analysis. The results of this study on the political communication strategies of the winners of the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada demonstrate the importance of persuasive approaches and media interaction in campaigns. This study highlights how candidates utilize various communication channels to reach voters and build a positive image.

A limitation of this study is the inability to examine in more depth the influence of other external factors that can influence voter decisions, such as the economy or government policies. Future research could expand on this research by identifying

other elements that contribute to the success or failure of local political campaigns. Political development in Indonesia continues to evolve, in line with the increasing awareness of the importance of participation in general elections, both at the national and regional levels. In regional head elections, political campaigns are an important tool for candidates to build their image and attract voter sympathy. One crucial aspect of a campaign is the communication strategy used to effectively convey political messages to the public.

In line with the importance of communication in political campaigns, the effectiveness of message delivery is a determining factor in attracting public attention and support. The effectiveness of a campaign depends heavily on how political messages are packaged and delivered. Candidates who can tailor their messages to the social context of the community will find it easier to gain support. In this regard, political communication strategies are key, encompassing the selection of media, narrative, delivery style, and the relevance of messages to public needs. Political communication theory explains that the success of political messages depends not only on content, but also on the manner, timing, and media of delivery.

In this case, the 2024 Cirebon City Regional Head Election is a relevant case study for examining political communication strategies in more concrete terms. The 2024 Cirebon City Regional Head Election is an interesting moment in local politics to study. Cirebon City has unique social and cultural characteristics that influence patterns of political communication. In this election, candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, presented a different communication approach compared to other candidate pairs, emphasizing the empowerment of local communities and equitable development. This approach is interesting to analyze further, especially in the context of how the communication strategy was developed, delivered, and received by the community.

Previous studies have also reinforced the importance of media and local values in political communication strategies. Based on the results of the study (Amir & El Adawiyah, 2022), the power of the media in reaching and disseminating information widely is a significant contributor to the success of political communication (Amir & El Adawiyah, 2022). Additionally, research (Abda & Zulfikar, 2024) shows that effective communication strategies must reflect local values such as customs, religiosity, and the use of inclusive language. This locally-based approach is considered capable of building emotional closeness between candidates and the public and increasing the impact of political messages (Abda & Zulfikar, 2024).

Considering this background, this study departs from questions regarding the political communication strategies used by candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti

Farida Rosmawati. Based on this, the research question in this study is: How do the political communication strategies implemented by Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati attract the sympathy of the people of Cirebon City? What are the key elements that form these communication strategies, and how do they influence the political choices of the people?

This study is expected to contribute theoretically and practically to understanding the dynamics of local political communication. This study aims to examine the political communication strategies of Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati in the 2024 Cirebon City Regional Head Election and assess their impact on voter preferences. This study is expected to provide an overview of political campaign practices at the local level and contribute to the development of political communication theory, particularly in the context of regional head elections in Indonesia.

## **Method**

This study uses a qualitative research method that aims to explore in depth the political communication strategies employed by candidate pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati in gaining public sympathy in the 2024 Cirebon City Regional Head Election (Pilkada). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain a broader and deeper understanding of the political communication process that takes place, as well as to analyze the elements that contribute to the success of Effendi Edo's campaign. This approach also provides flexibility in capturing the nuances of communication used in local political campaigns. Wilbur Schramm's Interpersonal Communication Theory explains the importance of the communication process as an interaction between the sender and receiver of a message. In a political context, winning candidates can use this approach to create effective dialogue with voters. Candidates can hold face-to-face meetings and discussion forums to listen to public aspirations, thus creating more interactive and responsive communication.

This research, using a case study approach for the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada, will focus on demonstrating that a communication strategy focused on interpersonal communication can be key to success in the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada. By building strong relationships and listening to public aspirations, winning candidates can increase voter support and participation, ultimately contributing to election victory. The application of this theory can serve as a model for other candidates in designing more effective and responsive political communication strategies to meet public needs. Data management in the political communication strategy for the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada winner is crucial to ensuring that the campaign is effective and responsive to voter

needs. Data is managed through in-depth interviews with various parties involved in the campaign, such as campaign teams, Cirebon residents, and community leaders.

Data sources for the political communication strategy for the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada winner can include voter sentiment analysis, preference surveys, and voter demographic data. Furthermore, election evaluation reports and public participation are also important references in formulating an effective strategy. The validity of the data in the context of the political communication strategy for the 2024 Cirebon City Pilkada winner is tested through various data collection methods, such as interviews and document analysis, to obtain a more comprehensive picture.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, employed various approaches to gain public support, focusing on social media, door-to-door campaigns, and public outreach. Based on data obtained through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and survey analysis, several key findings were uncovered, summarized as follows:

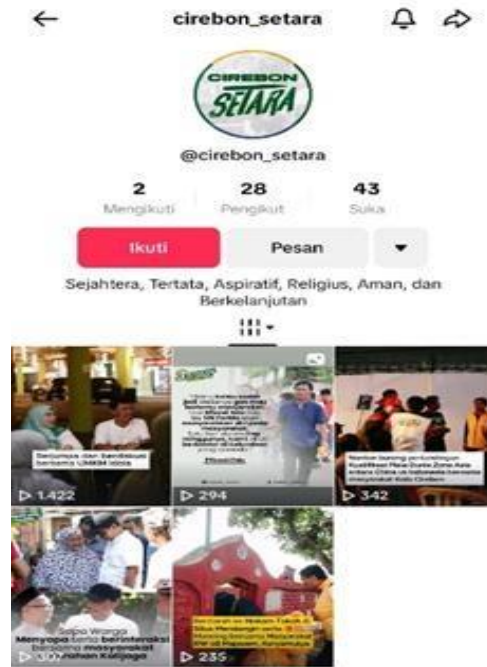
### 1. Effective Social Media Strategy

Candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, utilize social media as their primary campaign platform, using Instagram and TikTok accounts to reach various segments of society, especially the younger generation. The following image shows the campaign accounts of candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, on social media platforms:



**Figure 1 Candidate Pair 03 Campaign Account on Instagram  
(Source: Instagram, 2024)**

Figure 1 shows the Instagram account of candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, which is used to share information about the candidates' vision,



mission, and flagship programs

**Figure 2. Campaign account for candidate pair 3 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati on TikTok (Source: TikTok 2024)**

Figure 2. showcasing TikTok accounts that utilize more interactive and engaging content for young voters.



**Figure 3. Pamphlet for Candidate Pair 03, 2024 (Source: Instagram)**

Figure 3 shows campaign pamphlets distributed through social media, providing information that is easily accessible to the public. The results of the analysis show that the high level of engagement on this platform contributed to the formation of a positive image of candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, who successfully created an emotional connection with young voters.

Wilbur Schramm's Interpersonal Communication Theory explains the importance of the communication process as an interaction between the sender and receiver of a message. In a political context, winning candidates can use this approach to create effective dialogue with voters. Candidates can hold face-to-face meetings and discussion forums to listen to the public's aspirations, thus creating more interactive and responsive communication.

**2. Interactive Communication and Direct Engagement**

Candidate pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati also utilized two-way (interactive) communication through door-to-door campaigns and public open campaigns. Figures 4 and 5 show the interactive campaigns conducted in Harjamukti Village and Lemahwungkuk Village, where Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati spoke directly with residents to listen to their complaints and aspirations.



**Figure 4. Interaction campaign with the Harjamukti Village Community (door to door), 2024**

This approach gives the impression that candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, care about the issues facing the community and are ready to listen and provide solutions. Door-to-door campaigning has proven effective in building closer relationships and trust with the community



**Figure 5. Interaction campaign with the Lemahwungkuk Village Community (door to door), 2024**

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**Figure 6. Public Campaign**

**(Source : instagram)**

In addition, Figure 6 shows the public campaign activities carried out by Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati. This campaign involved direct meetings with the community on a larger scale, allowing Candidate Pair 03 to convey their message directly to voters. This activity reinforces the interactive approach implemented through door-to-door campaigns, providing space for the community to ask questions and obtain direct clarification on issues they consider important. The open campaign also allows Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati to further highlight their vision and mission to the public.

This approach can be explained through Solomon Asch's social perception theory, which states that a person's perception of others is shaped by the information they receive. By directly involving the community in the campaign, Candidate Pair 03 successfully built a consistent positive perception of their character and integrity, which strengthened their political appeal.

### **3. Image Management and Branding**

Candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, successfully built a consistent image through clear branding, emphasizing integrity, community engagement, and innovation in the programs they offered. Figure 7 shows one of the campaign programs of candidate pair 03 that focused on community empowerment.



**Figure 7. Campaign Program for Candidate Pair 03 (Source: Instagram)**

By showcasing real social activities and empowerment programs, candidate pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati successfully demonstrated their commitment to community welfare. This study shows that consistent positive image management and the relevance of programs to community needs are very important in building public sympathy, especially among voters who prioritize candidate integrity.

These findings support the notion (Kiousis & McCombs, 2004) that public perception of a candidate's image significantly influences the level of support they receive. Effective image management, achieved through consistent messaging and the relevance of programs to local values, is a key factor in gaining voter trust.

#### **4. The Role of Social Media in Political Communication**

Candidate pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati also strategically utilized social media, in line with the findings (Arsyad Arsyad et al., 2024) which highlight how social media enables candidates to interact directly with voters and form emotional bonds. (Boulianne, 2015) reinforces this finding by showing that

social media has become a dynamic arena where political opinions and decisions can develop rapidly. Thus, social media is not only a channel for information but also a means to build emotional connections with voters, which is an essential element in a successful political campaign.

## **5. Inclusive and Emotional Communication Strategies**

Inclusive and participatory communication is also an important part of the campaign of candidate pair 03, Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati, in line with the views of Mendelberg et al. (2014). A campaign that not only conveys information but also listens to the aspirations and concerns of the community creates a sense of involvement and ownership of the political process. This is reinforced by (Brader, 2005), who demonstrates that emotions play a significant role in influencing the public's political responses. By designing a campaign narrative that is not only informative but also capable of evoking positive emotions such as hope and pride, the 03 candidate pair Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati can establish a strong emotional connection with voters.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis, the political communication strategy implemented by Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati in the Cirebon Mayoral Election successfully created a positive image and gained public sympathy through an approach based on local values and effective use of social media. Through the use of social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, Candidate Pair 03 Effendi Edo and Siti Farida Rosmawati successfully reached the younger generation with messages that were easily accessible and relevant to local needs. Additionally, interactive communication that directly involved the community, such as door-to-door campaigns and public meetings, was also proven effective in strengthening the relationship between the candidates and voters, as well as building emotional closeness.

These findings align with political communication theory, which emphasizes the importance of media in shaping public perception and creating closeness between candidates and voters. The implications of this research suggest that communication strategies based on social context and local wisdom can enhance the effectiveness of political campaigns at the local level. This research makes an important contribution to the development of political communication theory, particularly in the context of political campaigns in Indonesia, by showing how the messages conveyed, the manner of delivery, and the media used can influence people's political choices.

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