

## Conference Paper

# Social Media in Political Marketing: A Study of *Teman Ahok*

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## Abstract

Deferring to McCombs and Shaw's agenda setting theory, this research aims to study the power of social media in the political marketing of incumbent candidate Governor of DKI Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok) by *Teman Ahok* (Ahok's Friend). This paper tests the theory that what is considered as important by media will be perceived as important to the public as well. *Teman Ahok* was established long before Ahok was nominated to run for the governorship. *Teman Ahok* organization employed social media as the basis to market its candidate. Social media used were Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, blog, website, and WhatsApp. Social media was considered as effective to reach the general public. Through the message delivered continuously to the public via social media, the proponents expected that the public would consider that the message delivered was important and the candidate they support would be elected during the election of DKI Jakarta's Governor.

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## 1. Background

### 1.1. *Teman Ahok*: Youths in the Election of DKI's Governor

The election of DKI Jakarta's Governor in 2017 is the most important political event in Indonesia. Jakarta is the political barometer. The political heat began in 2015. Candidates for the governorship were nominated by both political party and non-political party. Entering 2016, the circumstance became more volatile to the extent that some people called it the political year for DKI Jakarta. All of these were particularly highlighted in social media. This phenomenon is not accidental, but constructed, developed, and worked on by those having special interest in seeing particular candidate win the votes for governor of Jakarta on February 15, 2017.

In an area with the large population like in DKI Jakarta, the mass media is needed to deliver the information about the candidates and their political experience. Individual candidates have their own proponents, established either by the candidate or by their supporters. They use various ways to market their candidate, including by using mass

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media, particularly social media. *Temam Ahok*, a voluntary organisation emerged as the most prominent.

## 1.2. Social Media for Political Marketing

Firmanzah [7] defined political marketing as the use of marketing methods in the political arena. In political marketing, what is emphasized is the use of marketing methods to help politicians and political party build the two-way relationship with their constituents and public. Ali [2] stated that the use of mass media is very important in the campaign process and modern political socialization. Mass media is not only an integral part of politics, but it also has central position in politics, can construct the reality of various events occurring so that it becomes a discourse having political campaigning power. In order to win the election, the political party candidates compete by applying precise political communication strategy.

Bungin [3] stated that if media gives stress to an event, the media will affect the audiences to consider it as important. So, what is considered as important by the media will be considered as important by the society (public) as well. For that reason, when the mass media pays attention to certain issue and ignore others, it will affect the public's opinion. In the *Temam Ahok's* case, the media used to market its candidate is the social media. The users of social media communicate, interact, and deliver messages to each other, share and build networks [11]. Christakis and Flower [5] described social network as a group of organized people with two elements: individual and inter-individual relationship. Social network evolves organically from every individual's natural tendency to look for many or few friends, to have big or small family, to work in crowded or quiet places. Thus, social media can be effectively utilized for political marketing.

The paradigm of political marketing concept, according to Firmanzah [7], includes: *firstly*, political marketing is more than political communication. *Secondly*, political marketing is applied in entire process, not only limited to political campaign, but also involving how to formulate political product through building symbol, image, platform, and program offered. *Thirdly*, political marketing used the marketing concept broadly involving marketing technique, marketing strategy, publication technique, idea offering and program, product design, and information processing. *Fourthly*, political marketing involves many disciplines (multidisciplinary), particularly sociology and psychology. *Fifthly*, political marketing can be applied from general election to political lobby in parliament.

Lees-Marshment [7] emphasized that political marketing concentrates on the relationship between an organization's political product and market demand. Thus, market

becomes an important factor in the successful implementation of political marketing. In its process, political marketing is not only limited to political campaigning activity toward the election, but also involves the broader political events and – if pertaining to government politics – is sustainable in the attempt of offering or selling political product and building symbol, image, platform, and programs related to public and political policy. The objectives of marketing in politics, according to Gunter Schweiger and Michaela Adami [9] are: (1) to cope with the accessibility constraint; (2) to expand the electorate division; (3) to reach the new target group; (4) to expand the public's knowledge level; (5) to expand the preference of party's or candidate's program; and (6) to expand the electing (voting) willingness and intention.

## 2. Method

The case study and content analysis of *Temam Ahok's* political marketing via the social media of Ahok to be the candidate of Governor of Jakarta from 2017-2022 was conducted around the time when the candidate was just nominated by party and registered with the General Election Commission (KPU). When this article was written, KPU was in the process of examining the preconditions of the nomination for running for governorship. This research employed a secondary data provided in printed and electronic media.

## 3. Findings and Discussion

### 3.1. *Temam Ahok*: The Metamorphosis of Rooter into Volunteer

*Temam Ahok* was a breakaway organisation from *Lawan Begal APBD* (fight against the robber of APBD [Local Income and Expense Budget]) in the case of "*Dana Siluman* (invisible fund)" in APBD of DKI Jakarta. This movement was held on March 2015 in a Car Free Day moment. At that time, Governor of DKI, Basuki T. Purnama alias Ahok, was in conflict with the DKI's Local Legislative Assembly using interpellation right to impeach Ahok who had no party at that time. Meeting intensively after the action in Car Free Day, five youths from different background: Amalia, Singgih, Richard, Bowo, and Toni, decided to establish *Temam Ahok*, a volunteer association established to help and to accompany the Governor of DKI Jakarta, Basuki Tjahaja Purnama, to clean up Jakarta. At that moment, it was concluded as well that Ahok should be supported to be Governor again, although no political party had supported him. Carrying Ahok on an independent channel became the choice of organization named "*Perkumpulan Temam Ahok*" which was registered officially and established on June 16, 2015.

Thus, *Teman Ahok* is a form of organizational campaign supporting Ahok, and determined to see Ahok elected as the governor of DKI Jakarta in the Local Leader election in 2017. To achieve its objective, *Teman Ahok* used a variety of communication media, one of which is social media. Firstly, *Teman Ahok* collected Identity Cards as the requirement of support for the candidate from independent channel. Finally, *Teman Ahok* successfully collected more than 1 million identity cards before the registration of candidate began, far exceeding the minimum requirement of 532,213 (7.5%) out of general election Permanent Electorate List (*Daftar Pemilih Tetap* thereafter called DPT) numbers to be the candidate from independent channel [4]. Finally, 5 political parties supported Ahok to go forward from political party. *Teman Ahok* then affiliated itself with political party, and changed its tagline into *Tetap Ahok*.

### 3.2. Social Media-Political Marketing by *Teman Ahok*

Ellwein et al [6] note that the important reference for a political campaign team is to locate the right media with the most effective communication strategy. The appropriate media choice can help the campaign team predict the probability of promotion after determining the campaign expense (cost), so that the campaign activity can run effectively and efficiently. In addition, the understanding of constituent segmentation is very important to determine the use of media, visual form and campaign advertisement message. The effectiveness of media use can be seen from the extent to which the media can reach the target widely and appropriately, the frequency of media appearance and timeliness, in which the intended segment of constituent see the message of the media. For that reason, the characteristics of media should be used in political marketing.

For *Teman Ahok*, the social media was chosen because it is one of the most efficient way to introduce Ahok and the programs that will be implemented by Ahok if he wins. *Teman Ahok* packaged it as attractively as possible in order to make the electorates interested in and not becoming the white group (abstain). They are expected to vote for Ahok. To convey information about Ahok and his activities, *Teman Ahok* can be accessed through [www.temanahok.com](http://www.temanahok.com).

The political marketing conducted by *Teman Ahok* is studied using five stages in organizing the political marketing strategy, as suggested by Ali [1]: determining the targeted electorate segment, organizing strategy, organizing the candidate's positioning, and monitoring and evaluation.

### 3.2.1. Determining the Targeted Electorate Segment

Electorate segmentation is the first and most important stage of political marketing strategy but it is often missed in developing political marketing strategy. The easiest segmentation conducted was based on demography (age, gender, and etc) and geography, but according to Gareth Smith and Andy Hirst [8], the electorate segmentation model in the world has moved to the psychographic-based one recently.

Communication and Information Department (*Depkominfo*) mentions that the number of internet users in Indonesia reaches 63 million people, with the highest user is the group age of 18 – 24 years. Considering the high number of internet users, it can be understood if *Temam Ahok* uses social media as one of its campaign media.

*Temam Ahok* saw that the beginner electorate is the one of the choices, which are easier to influence. They have different characteristics from the characteristics of the older group who have had voting experience previously. They are assumed to be social users, so that the content of social media use youth concept. They also designed the content of social media for the public, so that it is also attractive to the older age group.

### 3.2.2. Strategy Development

After *Temam Ahok* was established, their target was to collect identity cards as the evidence of supporter for Ahok to go forward through independent channel. The electorate's willingness would be determined by the introduction of electorates to Ahok. For that reason, *Temam Ahok* attempted to collect Identity Cards using political marketing strategy via some ways, including social media. The effectiveness of message delivery to the public should consider the condition of community. It is related to the strategy of choosing appropriate media to deliver political messages [7]. Urban society using internet widely now is considered as relying on internet for searching information. The choice of social media for *Temam Ahok* is the strategy to reach this internet user group. The use of social media is also preferred due to the number of image war increasing rapidly in social media. *Temam Ahok* uses social media to publish any positive things from Ahok to break the negative gossip.

The material displayed not only concerning Ahok, but also the works of *Temam Ahok* to support and to make Ahok's measures successful. *Temam Ahok's* works include book publishing, merchandise and meme in social media. To attract the electorates' interest in collecting Identity Card, *Temam Ahok* also opens the registration, the form of which can be downloaded in *Temam Ahok's* web. Partisans can send a copy of identity card both online and by coming to various addresses published through *Temam Ahok* web. Through this registration, the number of Ahok's supporters increases constantly. The

public's enthusiasm is not only to be Ahok's proponents but also as the volunteer in *Temam Ahok*. This registration can be used to see the public's enthusiasm with Ahok's repeated nomination. Entire information on this can be accessed through social media built by *Temam Ahok*.

### 3.2.3. Positioning

Positioning is how the candidate/party put its image in the electorate's mind. This image should be built in order to have different image from other candidates'. The images developed by *Temam Ahok* are nationalistic, honest, and hard worker. This image is always inherent to any information on Ahok and *Temam Ahok's* activities. The personification of Ahok's nationalistic image, for example, is conducted by holding some art events to impart the society's love to its own culture. Ahok's honest image is personified in the publication of Ahok's property that can be seen clearly in social media. *Ahok* also applies a variety of electronic systems to support the transparent government activities. The personification of hard work can be seen from the dynamics of *Ahok* activity that cannot be slipped away from media show almost everyday. Ahok's daily activity during occupying the position of Jakarta Governor shows that Ahok is a hard worker spending his time with various activities. The slogans emerging were than published by *Temam Ahok* to describe his vision and mission when he is elected to be the Governor. One example of those slogans is: *the river is clean because of Ahok*.

### 3.2.4. Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation is very important in monitoring the performance of political marketing and as the input to improve the implementation of political marketing strategy organized. Generally, the survey conducted for evaluation and monitoring measures 4 aspects: *candidate awareness, candidate image, candidate engagement, and candidate electability*.

*Candidate awareness* of Ahok can be seen in many surveys. Ahok's popularity can also be seen when he interacts directly with society, either scheduled or not. Almost in all of his presences, Ahok is always swarmed over by the members of society seeing him. They want to shake his hand or take picture together in any occasion. This moment is utilized by *Temam Ahok* and always published in its social media. Ahok's *candidate image* that is nationalistic, honest, and hard worker is the positive things attracting the electorates. The activities reinforcing Ahok's image are published continuously by *Temam Ahok*. In relation to *Candidate engagement* of Ahok, it can be seen from his vision, mission and platform. The idea of transparent bureaucracy, clean river and slump area

arrangement can be seen in *Teman Ahok's* web. And then regarding *candidate electability* can be seen from the result of survey. No matter he is coupled with whoever and opposed with whoever, Ahok's electability is always on the top position. This survey result is studied continuously and published by *Teman Ahok*. Positive image is always published aiming to improve Ahok's electability.

## 4. Conclusion

From the discussion of research, it can be seen that political marketing is not only a political communication or selling the candidate of president or local leader to the electorate, but also a series of comprehensive activities to convey and to translate idea and thought to the more appropriate targeted electorates [1]. *Teman Ahok's* ability in using social media for political marketing will contribute to Ahok's success in the election of DKI Jakarta's Governor in 2017.

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