Political Marketing Conducted by Legislative Candidates in Indonesia: Study of Public Transportation as Transit Media in Medan on Presidential Election 2014

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Abstract

Indonesian legislative election might be the largest election in the world. Many legislative candidate competes to win legislative positions in national or provincial and regional level. Political marketing strategies should be implemented to gain public trust and image. Many methods are used as political marketing media, such as using public transportation as transit media. This paper discusses the effectiveness of using public transportation as transit media as political marketing media by legislative candidates. From the observation, the usage is ineffective because the characteristic of Public Transportation. Moreover, this campaign method brings consequences such as public ignorance, discomfort, and horizontal conflict.

Keywords: Legislative candidate; political marketing; public transport; transit media; *bentor*

1. Introduction

1.1. Political marketing in legislative election in Indonesia

Indonesian general elections consist of two types of election. The first election is the legislative election, and the second is president and vice president election. On the ninth of April 2014, Indonesia simultaneously will hold the

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legislative election to select members of the House of Representatives (DPR) and members of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) at the central level, and the Regional Legislative Councils (DPRD) at the provincial and regional level.   This probably the world's largest single day election process (Snowdon, 2014). In total (nationally), there are almost 200 thousand candidates competing to grab the 19.699 legislative chair positions in 2.471 election area (Iqbal, 2014). Meanwhile, there are nearly 190 million Indonesian registers to vote and choose the new parliament (Thatcher, 2014). That is why; the legislative candidates must work hard to win the voter's heart.

A bit different with the 2009 election, in 2013, the Indonesian general election commission (KPU), as the institution authorized to organize the election, issued new rules. These rules are called General Election Commission regulation (PKPU), Number 15 Year 2013 about the Guidelines for the Implementation of the General Election Campaign for legislative member. Inside this rules, there is regulation about the utilization of campaign props. Campaign props is a term to describe all medias or other form that contains vision, mission, program and/or other information that installed for election campaign purposes and intended to persuade the voter to vote for the legislative member (PKPU No.15 year 2013).

This new rules regulate that each legislative candidates could only place one billboard in each one village or a political district for DPD. For DPR, DPD, and DPRD candidates, each candidates could only place one 1,5 meters x 7 meters banner in one zone or area that already decided by KPU. This rules of course limiting the legislative candidates to campaigning themselves mostly for DPR and DPD candidates. They must creatively seek for the strategy to be recognizable by the society. This is important because DPR and DPD legislative will occupy a strategic position that brings regional aspiration to national level. Here, the legislative candidates must create the most effective political marketing media to gain public trust and image.

Because of the very vast area that must be covered by the legislative candidates and the limitation by PKPU rules, some of these candidates use transit media as campaign props for their political marketing. Transit media is a kind of transit advertising. Transit advertising, as described by Kyoritz Advertising is the name given to ads seen in various types of public transport or their associated facilities and integrally involved in consumer's life as they move from place to place (kyoritz-ad.co.jp). In Indonesia, legislative candidates using mass transportation such as bus and other traditional vehicles as transit media and placing their campaign props there so that the constituent recognize them.

1.2. Public transport as transit media advertising by legislative candidates

One of the cities in Indonesia where many legislative candidates use public transportation as transit media as political marketing media is in Medan, the capital city of North Sumatera Province. In Indonesia, the election of legislatives divided into electoral districts or election areas. For provincial and district election, Medan is divided into 5 districts for DPRD Seat with total 50 DPRD seats to compete. While for national legislative election, North Sumatera is divided into three major electoral areas with total 30 DPR seats to compete. Medan is included in electoral area one (I) which consist of cities such as Medan, Deli Serdang, Serdang Berdagai and Tebing Tinggi with 10 DPR seats to compete.

This is the illustration of Medan as electoral area. Medan consists of 2.122.804 citizens according to 2012 bps data. There are 1.7 million voters with 170 thousand or 10 percent of them are beginner voters. These young voters are the potential voters who become legislative candidates' target. Another illustration, as the third biggest capital city in Indonesia, Medan is one of the most multicultural city in Indonesia. Medan is influenced by various cultural elements such as the ethnics of Karo, Melayu, Toba Batak, Chinese, Javanese, Acehnese and other entrants group of ethnic that have come and migrated to Medan. Medan is well known as an area that has many natural resources such as oil mine and plantation. Thus, Medan becomes the foundation of hope by many ethnic.

Among the cities in the election area I in North Sumatera, Medan is the biggest city. Some of the mass media have already predicted that this area will be one the most fierce battle arena in Indonesia for the legislative candidates to fight over voters' voice. The reason is because there are a lot of famous elite and officials from political party competing in this area and is predicted to increase the number of voters (Khair, 2013). With the amount of citizen and voters, that has very multicultural backgrounds and the new regulation from PKPU, legislative candidates in Medan must be creative so they could win the competition over other candidates without breaking the rules.

Many legislative candidates in Medan utilize public transport as transit media for their campaign since the lists of the fixed candidates (DCT) established by KPU. This kind of campaign is actually smart and creative because there are no rules from PKPU that regulate about campaign props via public transport as transit media. Moreover, the mobility of transit media of course will help the candidates to promote them self to areas that very vast to cover. This phenomenon is interested to examine whether this transit media as campaign method is effective to attract the constituent. One of the reason is there is limitation in using public transport as transit media to reach and deliver information to the constituent. This paper will discuss the effectiveness of using public transport as transit media usage as political marketing media by legislative candidates.

2. Method

This research is using qualitative approach. Qualitative research was applied to express a commitment to viewing events and the social world through the eyes of people studied. The social world must be interpreted from the perspective of people being studied, rather than as though those subjects were incapable of researcher's reflection on the social world (Bryman, 2008). This research objective was to describe public transport as transit media in Medan on 2014 election. In summary this research question was generally divided into two big questions: (1) what is the consequences of using public transport as transit media for political marketing medias in Medan; and (2) how the public transport effectiveness as transit media advertising for political marketing medias in Medan?.

The selection of location, Medan, was chosen when the researcher focused on complex micro process. The criterion of location is very essential as it has to comply with the research objective. So the research was conducted in Medan. The data was collected through observation of public transport as transit media usage in Medan for two month (October 2013-November 2013).

In accordance with the objective of this research, sampling in this qualitative research using purposive sampling. Purposive sampling is choosing the case that rich of information to examine and explored (Patton, 1990). The research finds people, group, place and event that give a lot of information to examine. There are three criteria in selecting the sample (1) The vehicle must be public transport; (2) The vehicle as public transport must has Medan city's vehicle plat license, and operating in Medan City; and (3) The vehicle as public transport must use as transit media with political advertisement on it.

3. Discussion

Based on the researcher observation, In Medan, during periods of October until November 2013, many legislative candidates already using transit advertising to introduce themself to voters' long way before the campaign period officially begin. This legislative candidates use traditional mass and their own car as campaign props as they glued their candidacy posters in it. Based on observation, the most public transport as transit media that used by legislative candidates is *bentor*. *Bentor* is a motorized pedicab that becomes traditional vehicle in Medan (Miscellany, 2014). As the public transportation, *bentor* could load two or three passengers and will drive the passenger around Medan. In Medan, there are 26.900 unit of *bentor* and some of them used as transit media for political campaign.

3.1. The consequences of using public transport as transit media for political marketing medias

From the theoretical perspective, political marketing involves the application of business marketing concept to the practice and study of politics and government (Giasson et al., 2012). Voter behavior has been studied much in the same manner as consumer behavior. Both the voter and the consumer are views as individuals who are receiving and possibly seeking out information, processing and finally responding toward the product and the candidates in question (Shama, 1975). If it is applied to politics, marketing entails a political organization using business techniques to inform and shape its strategic behavior that are designed to satisfy citizens' needs and wants (Giasson et al., 2012).

For the legislative member candidates in Medan, using media transit as campaign medias seems like the easiest way out to avoiding the PKPU rules that restrict the candidates to promote them self by using banner and in the same time possibly could increase the votes. Moreover, most of Indonesian voter tends to fond to the nonverbal communication in political communication (Subiakto & Ida, 2012). Political marketing using media such as posters

and pictures and other symbols are more likable to the voters than campaigning through dialog or public speech. However, most of these candidates did not anticipate that using public transportation as transit media brings many consequences.

Fig.1. Examples of *bentor* usage as transit media for campaign props in Medan

The pictures above illustrate how the candidates legislative promote themself and try to be recognized by voters. There are three consequences for using this media transit as campaign props. The first, if they put the poster on mass transportation such as *bentor*, it could make the passenger hesitate to ride the *bentor* especially if the passenger is supporter from a certain candidates, while the *bentor* put the poster of the rival of that certain candidates. This might sound funny, but it could happen and it could be bad for the *bentor* rider as they might losing earnings.

Second, to make things worse, putting campaign poster on vehicles or mass transportation might evoke and trigger the horizontal conflict, as Medan is very multicultural. According to the statement form Governor of North Sumatera, even until today the situation and condition relatively save and peaceful, there are 226 spots in North Sumatera that prone to conflict. This data was conducted and analyzed by an integrated team handling security threats during year 2013. This means, every possibility that might cause conflict must be anticipate. If the *bentor* with a picture of certain candidate with certain electoral areas comes to the area that not his, or the area that considering as rival, it could trigger a conflict at least create a sense of discomfort and dislike for voters. This is something that not expected by the candidates.

By using transit media, the emotion of voters exploit, but their intellectuality is not. Here, voters are not views as individuals that experienced the process of receiving and finally responding toward the product. Transit media does not stimulate or invite the voters to be more involved in political activity as transit media that did not educate them or give the voters enough perspective about the candidates' political platform or program.

3.2. Effectiveness of public transport as transit media advertising for political marketing medias

Based on researchers' observation and analysis, the utilization of *bentor* as one of political marketing media is not effective. First, the vehicle is always moving. Therefore, the voters might forget the candidates easily as the might only catch a glimpse the campaign props. The second, the poster that the candidates put in public transport as transit media is only their photos and their order number in the election. There is no other clue about the candidate's background and the program that they offer to the voters. Yet all these candidates remind and ask the voter to vote for them. This could lead the public to ignore the candidates.

Although political marketing implement some of business marketing concepts, according to O'Shaughnessy (2001), political marketing is different from commercial marketing. Political marketing is not a concept to sell political party or candidates to voters. It is a permanent concept that sustainably must be done by a political party or contestant in building public trust and image. Not only up to political campaign, but also formulate the political product through establishing image, platform, and program that offer (Firmansyah, 2008)

To be effective, the political marketing must implementing the marketing mix (product, place, price, promotion) and segmentation of voters correctly (Niffenegger, 1989).

- Product - In political marketing, the real political product is the campaign platform that consists of four elements. The first is the general election program of the candidate based on the guidelines of party they belong. The Second, their position on the most important problem appears during the campaign. The Third is the image from

candidate. And the fourth is the reference of the candidates political background and their supporter voters (Newman, 1994), Medan, this kind of platform did not appear in the public transport as transit media for campaign props because the limited size of campaign props

- Place - To win the competition in election, political party must satisfy the need of public. The public need work programs, ideology, hopes and leader figure that gives them confidence in facing the future. This, of course only could be seen when the candidates doing their activity or when the candidates doing activity together with the voters to actualizing their platform. This, of course cannot be seen transit media using public transport
- Price - There are hidden psychological costs associated with most candidates such as how the voters feel with the candidate religious and economical background. According to Niffenegger (1989), Kennedy successfully minimized this potential cost in being the first catholic president that made some non-Catholics' feel uneasy by utilizing TV spots that shown him meeting the protestant audience. With public transport as transit media, this kind of cost must exist. Whereas in Medan and most part of Indonesia, this kind of hidden psychological cost is hard to avoid as the voters has various religion and ethnical background
- Promotion - Promotion is the specific mix of mass media advertising, specialized media advertising, and personal selling that are used to reach his target voters (Sharma, 1975). Based on the researchers' observation, public transportation as transit media could easily reach their target voters. However, it could not reach the discourse of public thought about the political platform or the personality of the candidates.
- Voters Segmentation - To reach the target of potential voters, political marketing utilizes the concepts of market segmentation and target groups to increase the votes. Political market segmentation distinguished voters and potential voters by mapping homogeneous group and selecting some of them as target in order to offer campaign program and achieve the party goals (Shama, 1975). In Medan, using *bentor* as transit media of course did not calculate this voter segmentation. Unlike buses that have specific routes, *bentor* goes everywhere the passenger want to go. So sometimes the *bentor* goes to the place, where there is no potential voters exist. It could be concluded that this is only money wasting for placing campaign props on public transport as transit media.

4. Conclusion

Political campaign is one the closest ways for voters or constituents to educate themselves about the political condition in their country and their region. Through political campaign as one of political marketing media, the voters could identify the platform and working program that offered by the legislative candidates. Ideally, the voter could find the background of political activity from the candidate that they desired. However, in the reality, for the Indonesian citizen that their political understanding is still low, getting this kind of information is hard. The facility of information about the legislative candidate via KPU's official website is very limited. Most of the political marketing media are non-verbal using symbols and other non-verbal sign such as using transit media. This, in one side did not educate the society, and in another side this kind of political marketing only wasting money and ineffective.

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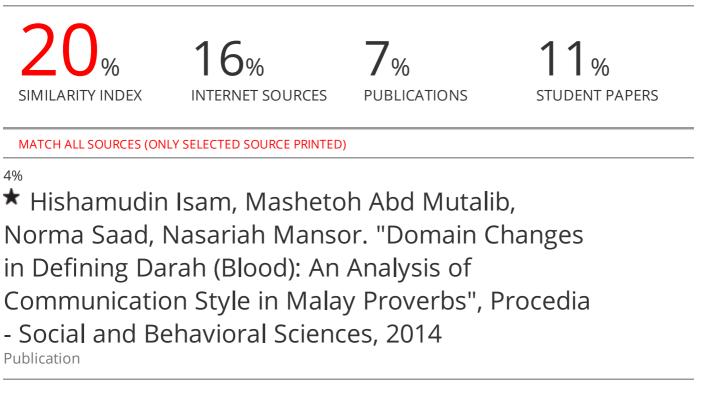
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