

Spreading the Charm of 'Feelings of the Presidential Election' through TikTok Ahead of the Nahdlatul Ulama Congress

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Abstract

The research was conducted by observing two candidates for general chairmanship of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU), each KH Said Aqil Siroj (Kiai Said) and Yahya Cholil Staquf or Gus Yahya in implementing political marketing strategies through TikTok social media. All observation data were collected from the beginning of the month, until December 20, 2021, ahead of the 34th Congress in Lampung Province. Observations were made using netnographic techniques, analyzed by qualitative research methods. The TikTok social media channel is part of changing people's behavior in the current digitalization era. This was also done to Kiai Said and Gus Yahya, two candidates for the general chairmanship of PBNU in democracy in the digital space. Spreading mutual charm, similar to the battle for the Presidential Election (Pilpres) in conveying messages to the public or netizens, including nahdliyin residents.

Keywords

Digital era; tiktok; political marketing; nahdlatul ulama; democracy



I. Introduction

Development is a systematic and continuous effort made to realize something that is aspired. Development is a change towards improvement. Changes towards improvement require the mobilization of all human resources and reason to realize what is aspired. In addition, development is also very dependent on the availability of natural resource wealth. The availability of natural resources is one of the keys to economic growth in an area. (Shah, M. et al. 2020)

Updating technology that accompanies the development of the times and continues to this day. Creating a pattern of community participation that also changes, accelerating an idea, democracy, or simply an idea that is fed to the public through digital media channels which are now increasingly diverse. Including the TikTok social media channel, which indulges the public in interacting in the digital space. Manuel Castells, a figure who studies the development of information technology, revealed that today's society has transformed into a network society.

The digitalization of communication networks is the backbone of the network society. Network society manifests itself in various forms, according to culture, institutions, with their respective backgrounds in this era. (Castells & Cardoso, 2005). The formation of a network society whose social structure is created and activated by information, processed digitally. A social structure whose infrastructure is based on digital networks, has the potential capacity to become global (Castells, 2009). He emphasized, network power refers to the power of actors and organizations included in the network which is the core of the global network society of human collectives or individuals. (Castells, 2011).

While democracy is a form of the rights of all citizens, participate in discussions in making a decision. Democracy also provides a space that covers all aspects of life in all

social conditions that develop in society, including the digital space utilizing existing social media channels. In the economic sector, as well as in culture in the current era of digitalization.

A democracy that can also be interpreted as a justice. In the political context, democracy is defined as the practice of freedom of expression freely and equally. The main principle in a democracy is that its people can openly, freely express their aspirations in every political and social policy. The principle that becomes the starting point in exercising a freedom of expression in a country. (Pureklolon, 2019).

Network society in today's digital era, which causes not only individuals, but community organizations, inevitably have to enter into it. This includes Nahdlatul Ulama (NU), the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia which is also part of a networked group or society in utilizing its democratic rights in the digital space. It is unavoidable, during the contest for the chair of the general chairman, the largest religious organization in the republic utilizes the digital space as a place for democracy, implementing its political marketing strategy with the hope of approval from the public and the nahdliyin.

Marketing is a process of planning and execution, starting from the conception stage, pricing, promotion, to the distribution of goods, ideas and services, to make exchanges that satisfy the individual and his institutions (Dianto in Asmuni et al, 2020). According to Tjiptono in Marlizar (2020) marketing performance is a function that has the greatest contact with the external environment, even though the company only has limited control over the company's environment. In the world of marketing, consumers are assets that must be maintained and maintained their existence in order to remain consistent with the products we produce (Romdonny and Rosmadi, 2019).

The marketing concept that was originally used with the business objective of competing to market products, is now a marketing concept that is applied in politics. (Anugerah, 2011). Politics which is also understood as a separate institution but interacts with, media including social media. (Stoll, Graham, & Schwanholz, 2018). Mainstream media and online media (social media) are increasingly difficult to separate as time goes by to integrate with each other in the digital space.

The ongoing implementation of political marketing strategies was also caused by a shift in the way to recruit constituents, which initially used conventional methods, such as campaigns in the open field, motorized parades, to impassioned speeches by campaigners (jurkam). In line with changes in the socio-technological environment, politicians, community organizations including figures, artists and public figures, use social media as a campaign event. Want to reach and convince the public as much as possible through the digital space in implementing marketing strategies, including political marketing.

II. Review of Literature

2.1. TikTok

TikTok social media, is now also a place for democracy as well as marketing political marketing strategies between candidates. Not only young people, TikTok is also spreading the 'virus' to those who are old or aged. The battle ahead of the 43rd PBNU Executive Conference held in Bandar Lampung City, Lampung Province, one of these digital media channels has become an arena for political marketing strategies for candidates in the race for the chair of PBNU general chair. Strategize each other, to get support in the digital space. Spreading charm between candidates, democracy is similar to the events in the presidential election (pilpres).

In Indonesia, social media TikTok is increasingly popular. Laris is downloaded by Indonesian people who can enjoy the interesting features of this application which was released in September 2016. Although at the time of its release, it was not available on IOS or Android until 2018. However, after joining musical.ly, TikTok then expanded to more than 150 countries and broke the record with the most downloads. At a time when almost all countries have imposed a lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the popularity of TikTok is increasing. In 2020 TikTok became the most downloaded digital media worldwide. (Winona, 2021). Digital media TikTok, also known as the lip-sync application, is currently at the peak of its popularity. This video-based application has received a lot of attention from young people.



Figure 1. TikTok logo (Named, 2021).

Before the digital media TikTok existed, in January 2009 one of the digital media Facebook was already global first. At that time, Facebook had more than 175 users worldwide. And at the same time, every minute of the ten hours various content is uploaded through another digital media channel, namely YouTube. Research conducted by Forrester, almost 75 percent of social media users surf the internet in the second quarter of 2008. (Haenlein & Kaplan, 2010).

Both define social media as an internet-based group that allows the creation and exchange of content between users. Each individual can feed, create an idea then connect to the internet. And data processors designed by humans for certain reasons, under certain conditions create cognition. This later became a social activity. Social media is a complex term with multiple meanings. (Fuchs, 2014).

In 2020, becoming a global trend in the country, the non-gaming application TikTok was the second most downloaded application in 2019. Namely, there were 1.5 billion downloads on the App Store and Google Play. The official Tiktok account tiktokofficialindonesia released, the digital media channel based in Beijing, known as Bytedance, Indonesia is ranked fourth in the world, with around 30.7 million users. (Isaac, 2021). The extraordinary popularity of TikTok has become the latest platform for voicing political aspirations.

As many as 49% of teenagers use the Tiktok platform. Interestingly, parents have started to join and use Tiktok during the Covid-19 pandemic. (Irwansyah, 2021). TikTok is also not just for entertainment and a democratic arena, but is also used as a propaganda channel. Preachers have a TikTok account, produce short videos to convey religious knowledge and da'wah in a more attractive form so that they get high views and enter FYP (For Your Page). (Named, 2021).

2.2. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU)



Figure 2. Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) Organization Logo

The largest Islamic organization in Indonesia was formed January 31, 1926, to represent the traditional ulama. This teaching is sourced from the Qur'an, Sunnah, Ijma (decision of the scholars' earlier). (Wikipedia).

(Machfudz) released the founding figures of NU, among others; KH Hasyim Asy'ari, KH Bisri Syamsuri, KH Abdullah Wahab Chasbullah, KH Abdul Chamid Faqih, KH Ridwan Abdullah 1884-1962. Then KH Abdullah Halim Leuwemunding, Abdul Aziz, Surabaya, KH Ma'shum, KH A Dachlan Achjad, KH Nachrowi Thahir, KH R Asnawi, Sheikh Ganaim, KH Abdullah. In addition, there are several well-known figures who are behind the scenes, namely KH Kholil Bangkalan who incidentally was a teacher of KH Hasyim Asy'ari and KH As'ad who became his fellow teacher when he was a student at KH Kholil.

Political guidelines for NU citizens. (NU online)

1. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama means the involvement of citizens in the life of the nation and state as a whole in accordance with Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.
2. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama is politics that has a national perspective and leads to national integration with steps that always uphold unity and integrity to achieve common goals, namely the realization of a just and prosperous society physically and mentally and carried out as a charity of worship towards happiness in the world. this world and the life in the hereafter.
3. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama is the development of essential and democratic values of independence, educating the nation's maturity to realize the rights, obligations and responsibilities to achieve the common good.
4. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama must be carried out with morals, ethics and culture that believes in the Almighty God, has a just and civilized humanity, upholds the unity of Indonesia, is a populist led by wisdom in deliberation/representation, and social justice for all Indonesian people.
5. Politics for Nahdlatul Ulama must be carried out with honesty of conscience and religious morals, constitutional, fair in accordance with agreed rules and norms, and can develop a deliberation mechanism in solving common problems.

2.3. Theoretical Framework

This study seeks to show a democratic process, the application of political marketing strategies through TikTok carried out by two candidates for the general chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama Executive Board (PBNU). Both are incumbent KH Said Aqil Siroj. This NU figure from Cirebon, who is often called Kang Said, has served as chairman of the PBNU twice and is eager to run again as a candidate. His competitor, the former spokesman for the 14th President KH Abdurrachman Wahid or Gus Dur, Yahya Staquf. The politician who now serves as Head of the PBNU Aam, often called Gus Yahya,

declared himself to be advancing and hoped to get support from all parties, including the political elite.

Both Kang Said and Gus Yahya are marketed through political marketing strategies through social media TikTok. Democracy through digital space ahead of the fight which will be held in Bandar Lampung City, Lampung Province, at the 34th PBNU Congress this year.



Figure 3. KH Said Aqil Siroj or Kang Said. Photo source tribunnews.com



Figure 4. Yahya Staquf or Gus Yahya. Photo source tribunnews.com

Hunt, (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2009) explains, political marketing is basically an interdisciplinary subject of marketing and political science. Political marketing techniques that must be allied with technology, in this case digital media, in order to expand their reach. Not only for the basis of party membership but also to get creative input in the context of implementing policies. Existing social media, including TikTok, have become a digital platform for creating new ways of marketing, or campaigning for politics. Become a good new channel for candidates, including their supporters, to potential voters and to interact. (Williams & Newman, 2018).

The democratic process seems inseparable in the implementation of political marketing strategies. Moreover, the strategy is carried out in the digital space. A marketing concept that was originally used in the business world, has now penetrated the world of politics which is currently being facilitated by various forms of digitalization that are growing. Various digital media, including existing social media, make it easier for the political marketing process to be delivered quickly. The era of digitalization has also shifted public behavior, not only campaigning with the old pattern. The classical theory of democracy is based on the belief that citizens should be adequately informed by various

information channels. Social interaction is necessary in fostering respect, trust between different communities. (Dennis, 2019).

In the next era, it is possible that the political world will give birth to many studies, including those from academics. The world of progressive politics, which can present all possibilities. And actually, the implementation or strategy of political marketing is nothing new. This application has already been carried out in several countries on the European and American continents. At the beginning of the 20th century, America has implemented a political marketing strategy as part of the consequences of the development of democracy which is growing to this day.

In 1980, political marketing had begun to develop, which was marked by the conventional channel at that time, television as a channel for delivering messages to the public. One example of political marketing at that time was when British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher came to power. Utilizing television and radio as campaign media. Meanwhile in Indonesia, the implementation of political marketing has been open since 1998. At that time, it was known as the reformation era which was accompanied by the emergence of various political parties (parties) which reached 150 parties. (Firmanzah, 2007).

III. Research Method

This research is an attempt to find out how democratic practices occur in implementing political marketing strategies through TikTok social media. In particular, the activities of two candidates for general chairmanship of PBNU, KH Said Aqil Siroj or Kang Said, and Yahya Stafuq are often called Gus Yahya. Through an online observation approach with the Netnographic method, with a qualitative research approach. Observations were made at the beginning of the month until December 20, 2021 or three days before the congress took place.

Netnography method that is understood, one of the advantages is surfing through the internet without being confined by space and time in observing the object under study. Obtain detailed information as well as apply intelligence patterns in this research process. Conduct searches without being known by the subject under study. According to Jorgen Skageby in (Annisa, 2019), online ethnographic is a qualitative method in understanding what is happening in virtual space in the digitalization era. (Mawardi, 2019) explains that ethnographic research is qualitative research that provides space for researchers to describe and interpret behavioral values and various forms of communication.

According to (Semiawan, 2010), the purpose of a qualitative approach is an in-depth search for symptoms or facts that are not seen on the surface. Depth in revealing a fact is a feature of this research which cannot be revealed without observation. Using a simple definition, qualitative research is interpretive or interpretive, using many methods in examining what is being studied.

Qualitative researchers usually conduct studies of natural things around them. Understanding, interpreting the meaning of the things in question. (Mulyana, 2018). Qualitative research also aims to provide a conceptual understanding of the phenomenon under study. Through qualitative, it can also be used as a place to refute existing theories. Theories are needed in their capacity to provide conceptual understanding linked to the research focus.

(Kozinets, V Robert, 2010) emphasizes, technique or methodology Netnography is a form of ethnography. The only difference is the virtual space used in conducting research. A social method approach with new techniques in ethnographic research. (Evelina, 2018)

also concludes simply about ethnography and netnography. Ethnogafi is the basis for sociologists in photographing human behavior. Conducting field observations with the consequences of a long time because it requires field observations and open interviews. Meanwhile, netnography is an adaptation of ethnographic techniques in conducting observations to study a community in a digital space, utilizing social media space mediated by the internet network in this era.

Focused on this research, by observing the two candidates for the general chairmanship of PBNU. What are the various information in the form of text, video or images on the TikTok social media page ahead of the 34th PBNU Congress in Bandar Lampung City. Both of them are based on observations made, marketed through a persuasive communication approach in order to persuade and influence the public through the digital space ahead of the 34th PBNU Congress.

Richard L. Johannesen in (Larson, 2010) explains that persuasive communication is a basic human trait, related to ethics. Persuasion also aims to determine rhetorical choices (rhetoric) to achieve goals. Persuasive communication which of course requires the involvement of individuals or groups. The recipient or sender of the message, is responsible for applying ethical standards in a persuasive communication process.

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IV. Result and Discussion

In the observations made on KH Said Aqil Siradj or Kang Said and Yahya Staquf or Gus Yahya, some information in the form of images and videos was fed through TikTok social media. Political marketing strategy through TikTok which is not carried out through their personal accounts, but is carried out by other account owners, who then feed the results of the information obtained to the public through TikTok social media. In the observations made, it was also found that various texts that were fed through the official PBNU account on TikTok social media were against both of them.



Figure 5. The screenshot results are in the form of informational text ahead of the 34th PBNU Congress. (TikTok)



Figure 6. The screenshot results are in the form of informational text ahead of the 34th PBNU Congress. (TikTok).

Observations were then made through the TikTok social media account with the keyword PBNU congress. Two accounts belonging to the nahdliyin, #nahdlatul_ulama and #nu_online participated in providing information ahead of the 34th PBNU Congress which will be held in Lampung Province. The #nu_online account found text in the form of a video comparing two figures of the candidate for the general chairmanship of PBNU, Kiai Said or Kang Said and Gus Yahya. At the beginning of their narration, they began with information that they both knew NU through their father. The text in the form of a video on TikTok from the observations made was liked by 2302 netizens and as many as 53 various comments on the text of this video.



Figure 7. Screenshot of Kang Said and Gus Yahya's narration video on TikTok account #nu_online. (TikTok, 2021).

Meanwhile, from further observations with the keyword KH Said Aqil, the #nu_channel account appeared, almost all of which were text in the form of videos baiting Kang Said's various activities ahead of the congress. Various texts via video uploads about Kang Said's activities were fed to the public ahead of the PBNU congress through this account.



Figure 8. Screenshot of KH Said Aqil Siroj's narration video on the #nu_online TikTok account. (TikTok, 2021).

Observations continue on the figure of Yahya Cholil Staquf or Gus Yahya. With the key words, the congress, Gus Yahya. An NU Flash News account emerged that was intensely broadcasting about Gus Yahya's activities ahead of the 34th PBNU Congress.



Figure 9. Screenshot of Gus Yahya's narration video on the #NU Flash News TikTok media account. ((TikTok).

4.1 The Independence of NU Said Aqil Siroj Versus Turns Gus Dur a la Yahya Cholil Staquf

KH Said Aqil Siroj or Kiai Said and Yahya Cholil Staquf or Gus Yahya (TikTok, 2021). Both were pitted against political marketing strategies through social media. And both of them, Kiai Said and Gus Yahya, both share the vision and mission that is fed through TikTok social media. Kiai Said, for example, one of his visions is to improve the quality of NU's independence. Including financially independent. Meanwhile, Gus Yahya wanted to get the blessing of all circles and wanted to continue Gus Dur's struggle.

Kiai Said's Vision and Mission:

"Not begging, including in the construction of mosques, madrasas and Islamic boarding schools. For example, there are 1 million NU members who donate IDR 1,000 a day, multiplied by a month and multiplied by one year. So, how much money will NU have with this donation? NU does not side with the left and right. Always be in the middle"

Gus Yahya's Vision and Mission:

"Gus Dur must have felt pain, but he was able to manage and endure the pain, continue the struggle no matter what. He is a person who is not self-interested, even the interests of his body are not considered. What he thinks about, what he believes is the truth and benefits the people."

4.2 Discussion

A democratic process that is interpreted by researchers, a freedom to express opinions is included in the digital space. Determining a choice by linking a concept of political marketing strategy. Democracy in a thought interpreted by researchers, a freedom to express opinions, voice what they want, including participating in making political choices as well as implementing political marketing strategies. Political marketing can help community leaders, including politicians, in making early detection so that they are efficient and effective. (Henneberg, 2008).

In applying political marketing theory, it is not only about marketing activities, but is integrated into the political environment. This provides an advantage for the political elite, including supporting netizens, to get targeted support while implementing political marketing strategies. (Henneberg & O'Shaughnessy, 2009) explains that political marketing strategy is currently a new way of doing research. His presence encourages the expansion of space in the application of marketing concepts by political actors, success teams, bureaucrats, including academics.

Researchers think that the 34th Congress is vulnerable to political interests in 2024. Moreover, NU as the largest mass organization in Indonesia, is sexy and highly considered by political actors who will fight in the upcoming presidential election. So it is not surprising that the presidential election air was so felt at this congress. Although not present in person, and not as a congress participant, the public is spoiled by the digital space to get information quickly about the congress held in Bandar Lampung City, Lampung Province. Technology in the digital era makes it easy for the world community to access the internet, get information and feed any information in their daily lives, including in democracy. With a network of high-speed computers running through the virtual space, public easily access information channels. View news, watch videos, listen to music, and hang out with family, friends. (Straubhaar & LaRose, 2004).

The internet era offers new characters and patterns in communication, namely direct, decentralized, two-way, interactive and networked (Hasfi, 2019). Changing the structure of social, political, and economic institutions. Digital transformation also creates new challenges and opportunities for politicians, journalists, political organizations, and conventional media to use the internet to feed messages or information to other networked communities. (Schwanholz, Graham, & Stoll, 2018). Marshal McLuhan, had predicted the birth of the internet era long before the era of digitalization existed as it is now. Which has a characteristic, the formation of a community or group of people because it is connected by technology which he calls a global village. When this era arrives, everyone can access the same information by utilizing technology.

V. Conclusion

The information that was fed to the two candidates for general chairmanship of PBNU, KH Said Aqil Siroj and Yahya Cholil Staquf was carried out by implementing a political marketing strategy. The vision and mission of the two, which are similar to the strategy applied during political battles at the presidential and vice presidential elections. The battle of 'election flavors' at the 34th congress this time. The era of democracy in the

digital space, including through social media TikTok, cannot be separated from it, inevitably being associated with the implementation of a pattern of political marketing strategies. Although, Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) is not a political organization, the aura of political struggle is felt and often occurs at the PBNU Congress which is held every five years.

In the current era of digitalization, which allows the political realm to give birth to many studies. The world of politics is progressive and can give birth to all kinds of possibilities, combined with ways of communicating to influence the public through the digital space. With regard to the research conducted, both Kiai Said and Gus Yahya both display charm, both seek the blessing of the nahdliyin, especially those who vote ahead of the congress. Implementing a political marketing strategy by feeding ideas in the form of narratives, images or uploaded videos. They both want to advance NU to be better, as the largest Islamic organization in Indonesia, with different narratives, different visions and missions but with the same goal. One, Kiai Said wants to retain his seat as general chairman of PBNU for the third time.

The TikTok social media channel is part of changing people's behavior in the current digitalization era. This was also done to Kiai Said and Gus Yahya, two candidates for the general chairmanship of PBNU in democracy in the digital space. Spreading mutual charm, similar to the battle for the Presidential Election (Pilpres) in conveying messages to the public or netizens, including nahdliyin residents.

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