

Political Marketing and Gender Relations in Local Election: A Case Study of ASSIFA in Sumenep 2010

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Abstract

This paper seeks to observe, more deeply, the struggles of women in the race for public office rs' position, primarily towards the executive positions such the head of regency (bupati), given that the electoral system has implications for the climate of increased competition among candidates. For women, this high-level competition is resulted from the combination with the cultural background that still tend to give negative stereotypes of women. This paper focuses on the political marketing of Dewi Khalifah in the 2010 Sumenep election, that successfully put Khalifah in the second place . Although defeated, this is one of the achievements in the history of the women struggles as political candidates, since the socio-cultural background of the Madurese community in general is a religious and patriarchal which almost does not allow women to become political leaders. This qualitative research using indepth interview finds the fact that women can compete with men in a democratic manner if they deal with the concept of political marketing on the importance of building a relational connection with the potential voters. By looking at the whole process of marketing strategy, the combination of political products and the delivery process, it appears that even though she is a woman, Khalifah became a dominant figure of in gathering the votes. Khalifah was more able in utilizing her networks, which come from Muslimat NU, Kyai 's network, as well as the students and the alumni networks of the boarding schools.

Key words: political marketing, gender, local election, Sumenep, Madura, Khalifah

Table 1
ASSIFA Segmentation and Targeting

No	Type of Segmentation	Targeting
1	Religion	The group of Islam Nahdliyin, especially Muslimat group, including through PKNU networks. Also, Masyumi groups through PBB networks
2	Gender	Women in general and women in Nahdliyin group, especially those who also members of Muslimat group
3	Geography	Dividing voters into two geographical categories, the land and the islands. ASSIFA campaign was conducted in both places, but prioritizing more on the island.
4	Age	Giving a special attention to the youth
5	Social Class	In several campaigns, ASSIFA concerns of the middle -low class are shown.
6	Psycography	Groups of society who concerns on particular fields such as sports and education.

Soruce: data gathered from interviews

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Conclusion

The challenges that are faced by the women in gaining electoral votes do not only includes the institutional area alone, but also includes cultural problem in the region. In the ASSIFA case, nominating a woman figures as the Vice Regent in the socio-cultural condition in Sumenep that is religious and patriarchal, in fact, still capable to bring this duet to pass through the election up to the second-round.

This certainly gives a reference that as a woman coming from religious and patriarchal culture, in fact, women can compete with men in a democratic manner. As a woman, Khalifah has been successfully implementing one concept of political marketing on the importance of building a relational connection with the potential voters. By looking at the whole process of marketing strategy, the combination of political products and the delivery process, it appears that even though she is a woman, Khalifah became a dominant figure of in gathering the votes. Khalifah seems to be more able in utilizing her networks, which come from Muslimat NU, Kyai's network, as well as the students and the alumni networks of the boarding schools.

ASSIFA, in fact, did not use the standard theory in executing the political marketing process, and thus, it appears that the election campaign process was less effective and inefficient as expected from the use of political marketing methods. In general, however, from this study it can be concluded that this duet has maximizing the methods offered by political marketing. Marketing elements contained in the marketing process, such as marketing strategy, the mix of political products, as well as the delivery process were not run as an integrated whole by ASSIFA. Each element was more likely to be run independently. The lack of adequate understanding of the political marketing process is then resulted on their defeat. Here is the conclusion of ASSIFA political marketing process: 1) Marketing strategies such as segmentation, targeting and positioning (STP) are not executed sequentially. Even, ASSIFA did not perform the segmentation stage, but directly define the targets of their electoral campaigns. Then, related to the positioning statement, namely "manifest the real changes", was not created deliberately by the image that has been attached to the duet. This positioning statement seems to be quite standard but capable enough in representing the image of each candidate that has long formed prior to the election; 2) Similar to the utilization of marketing strategies that were not implemented as a unified whole, the political products that include policy, person, party, and the presentation also were not performed integrately. Among all the existing products, the most benefiting product during the campaign is the person product, meaning each ASSIFA individuals especially Khalifah. While at the party and policy products were not maximally used by ASSIFA. It is apparent that there was a disconnection between the person with the policy and party products. Policy products, for example, was less benefiting in supporting candidate's image, while the party product there was lack of cooperation between the campaigning team with the candidates' parties. Only in the presentation product that was able to support the person product, especially on Khalifah. This is related to the relationalties that have existed long before the election through their community works. Hasan also has enough connection with their potential voters as he has been doing his political campaign since 2007 and he also has conducted various programs before the election raised their popularity and electability; 3) The duet of ASSIFA preferred to use face-to-face campaign (push marketing) with a combination of pass marketing as the main delivery process, compared to a campaign that uses media (pull marketing). However, the processes of implementing the combination of push and pass marketing appear to be more dominant by relying on Khalifah's network.

These stages are offered by political marketing does not guarantee a victory, but promising that the political campaigns and electoral campaigns can be run more effectively and efficiently. Learning from ASSIFA experience, that the credibility of the candidate should be able to increase the level of electability, but due to poor practices of the stages utilization in political marketing, in fact, has implications on the outcome of the campaign.

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