



Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman Couple Campaign Strategy in the 2020 Surabaya Mayor Election

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Abstract

Background This study aims to determine the campaign strategy of the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair in the 2020 Surabaya Mayoral Election. The campaign strategy is a system developed by the campaign team that is used in the battle for voters' votes, in its implementation political marketing is used. Political marketing itself has a meaning as a marketing management theory that is applied in the political arena, political marketing is not a concept that sells political parties or candidates to the public. But political marketing is a concept to solve actual problems with programs and issues that are being developed. In political marketing theory, there are four stages that must be carried out by political actors, these stages are known as the 4Ps, namely product, promotion, price (price), and place (place).

Methods The research method used in this study is descriptive qualitative, while the data collection techniques used are observation, interviews and documentation.

Results The results of this study indicate that there was a big job done by the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair before developing a campaign strategy, through the success team the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair first conducted voter segmentation. After conducting voter segmentation, the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair determined the products to be promoted, there were three products sold by the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair, namely political parties, track records and characteristics of candidates, while promotion was carried out through social media and conventional campaigns, for the selling price or value, Mr. Machfud Arifin in particular as a candidate for Mayor is seen as a figure who is firm, authoritative and charismatic, but the negative impact is that because of his police background Mr. Machfud Arifin can get a negative image in society, for his own place can be seen in various platform and to increase the selling price, the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair invited several influencers such as Atta Halilintar, Sara Fajira and others. There are two campaign strategies used, namely ground attack and air attack.

Conclusions There were at least four activities carried out in the ground attack, including party consolidation, the second was forming a winning command post, the third was forming a team of volunteers, and the fourth was blusukan. While the airstrikes were carried out through social media such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube.

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Keywords

Key words: Campaign Strategy; Political Marketing; Mayor Campaign; Surabaya Election; Influencers

Introduction

Elections are a mandatory agenda that must be carried out by countries that adhere to a democratic system. According to Abraham Linchon election is a tool to realize people's freedom by expressing their aspirations, in that there are two methods of election, namely direct and indirect. Indonesia itself has a long journey regarding its electoral system, both general and regional head elections. There are two aspects that become a reference in the implementation of elections in Indonesia, the first is referring to Law no. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections and Law No. 10 of 2016 concerning the Election of Governors and Deputy Governors, Regents and Deputy Regents, Mayors and Deputy Mayors. Since it was held in 2005, direct Regional Head Elections (Pilkada) have been held four times ([Sartika & Adrison, 2021](#); [Ulum, 2021](#)). The city of Surabaya is one of the participants in the 2020 simultaneous direct local elections consisting of 270, with details of 9 Provinces, 224 Regencies and 37 Cities.

In the 2020 Mayor Election (Pilwali) there are two candidates competing, the first pair namely Eri Cahyadi-Armuji is supported by the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI-P) and the Indonesian Solidarity Party (PSI) with a total of 19 seats in the Surabaya City DPRD, the second pair namely Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman Sukirno, supported by 8 political parties. Among them are the National Awakening Party (PKB), the United Development Party (PPP), the National Mandate Party (PAN), the Working Group (Golkar), the Great Indonesia Movement (Gerindra), the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the Democrats and the Democratic Nationalist Party (Nasdem) with a total of 31 seats in the Surabaya City Council ([Faizal & Belarminus, 2020](#); [Faizal & Khairina, 2020](#); [Pangestika, 2020](#)).

Elections in Surabaya from year-to-year experience different dynamics. However, in strength the candidates promoted by PDI-P have always won the Surabaya Pilwali battle, this can be seen from the data on Surabaya Pilwali winners from each period. In the 2005 Surabaya Election, from a valid vote of 960,40 votes, it was won by the pair carried by PDI-P Bambang DH-Arif Afandi with 492,999 votes (51.34%), in second place was occupied by the pair carried by the National Awakening Party (National Awakening Party or PKB) Alisyahbana-Wahyudin with 199,057 votes (20.73%), the third position was occupied by the pair supported by the PD Democratic Party and the National Mandate Party (PAN) Erlangga Satriagung-AH Thony with 179,255 votes (18.67%), the fourth position was occupied by the pair carried by the Golongan Karya party (Golkar) and the Prosperous Peace Party (PDS) Sudjito-Benyamin Hilli with a vote of 88,929 people (9.26%).

The 2010 Surabaya election was attended by five pairs of candidates. Among them are the Bagio Fandi Sutandi-Mazlan Masrur pair supported by PKB and the Gerindra Party, the Arif Afandi-Adies Kadir pair supported by PD and the Golkar party, Tri Rismaharini-Bambang DH pair supported by PDI-P, Fandi Utomo-Yulius Bustami supported by PKS, PDS and PPP, the Fitradjaja Purnama-Naen Soeryono pair came from independent candidates. The 2010 Surabaya Pilwali was again won by the candidate promoted by the PDI-P, namely Tri Rismaharini-Bambang DH with a vote of 358,187 people (38.53%), the second position was occupied by the pair Arif Afandi-Adies Kadir with a vote of 327,516 people (35, 25%), the third position was occupied by the Fandi Utomo-Yulius Bustami pair with 129,172 votes (13.90%), while the Bagio Fandi Sutandi-Mazlan Masrur pair took fourth place with 61,648 votes (6.63%) and the pair Fitradjaja Purnama-Naen Soeryono, who are an independent

couple, took fifth place with 53,110 votes (5.71%).

There were two candidate pairs in the 2015 Surabaya Pilwali, namely Rasiyo-Lucky supported by the Democratic Party, Gerindra, Golkar, PKS, PAN, and PKB who jointly fought the incumbent candidate, the second was the pair Tri Rismaharini- Whisnu Sakti Buana who was a pair the incumbent is supported by PDI-P. The supporting parties formed the Majapahit coalition to make it easier to introduce the Rasiyo-Lucky pair. The Majapahit coalition has 29 seats or 58% of the seats in the Surabaya City DPRD while the PDI-P only has 15 seats. The rest of the other political parties at that time June 15 2015 such as Hanura which had 3 seats, Nasdem 2 seats, PPP 1 seat had not yet joined one of the bearers because they were still groping for a strength map ([Priatmojo, 2015](#)). Looking at the composition of the coalition, according to calculations the Rasiyo-Lucky pair is superior to the Tri Rismaharini-Whisnu Sakti pair, but the Rasiyo-Lucky pair who are members of the Majapahit coalition must recognize the superiority of the incumbent pair.

The Rasiyo-Lucky pair won 141,324 votes, while the incumbent Tri Rismaharini-Whisnu Sakti won 893,087 votes. The 2015 Surabaya Pilwali should be a reference for candidates and political parties competing in the Surabaya Pilwali, especially in the 2020 Pilwali. Because the Surabaya Pilkada in 2020 was almost the same as the conditions for the 2015 Pilwali, where there were two pairs of candidates competing and challenging the PDI-P party as a party that always wins battles in the Surabaya Pilwali. The first pair is Eri Cahyadi- Armuji supported by PDI-P and PSI with 19 seats in the Surabaya City DPRD, while the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman Sukirno pair is supported by PKB, PPP, PAN, Golkar, Gerindra, PKS, Nasdem with a total of 31 seats Surabaya City Council.

The Surabaya election is predicted by some political observers to run very fiercely, this can be seen from several survey results from various institutions. The independent Survey Institute Accurate Research and Consulting or ARC Indonesia chose the results of a survey of residents' choices in the election for the mayor of Surabaya. The survey results released that the electability of the Machfud Arifin and Mujiaman pair was superior at 89.81 percent, while the electability of the Eri Cahyadi-Armuji pair was superior at 41.27 percent. The difference between these two numbers is at 8.54% percent, and the respondents who answered they did not know were 8.92% ([VOI, 2020](#)).

Meanwhile, the electability survey conducted by Cyrus Network which was held from 23 to 27 November produced different results from ARC. The survey said that the Eri Cahyadi-Armuji candidate pair was at 55.3%, while the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman candidate pair had electability at 33.8%. The difference in the numbers of these two candidates is 21.5% percent and respondents who do not answer are 8.4% percent ([Utomo, 2020](#)). Many surveys that release the results of this electability survey release different results. Of the 10 survey institutions that released their results ahead of the 2020 Surabaya mayoral election, they said that candidate pair number 1 Eri Cahyadi-Armuji excelled in 7 survey institutions and the rest said that candidate pair number 2 Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman was superior ([Faizal & Khairina, 2020](#)).

The fierceness of the 2020 Surabaya Pilwali cannot be separated from the candidate's profile. Machfud Arifin, the candidate for mayor who is supported by eight coalitions of political parties, is a respected figure. Apart from being a former KAPOLDA and POLRI general, Pak Machfud Arifin is also the former head of the Jokowi-Ma'ruf Amin Success Team in the 2019

presidential election in the East Java region. Mr. Mujiaman as Mr. Machfud's deputy is also the former director of the PDAM Surabaya city and was a former subordinate of Risma's mother who knows the management of the city of Surabaya. On the other hand, the candidate favored by the PDI-P is also a strong candidate. Eri Cahyadi, who was put forward as a candidate for mayor, is Mrs. Risma Trihariani's 'golden' child and the last position she held was head of Bappeko or the Surabaya City Development Planning Agency. Pak Eri's deputy mayoral candidate is Armuji. Armuji is a senior PDI-P politician and former chairman of the DPRD or Regional People's Legislative Assembly for the City of Surabaya ([Antara, 2020](#)). If you look at the profiles of the candidates running in the mayoral election this time, it can be said that PDI-P is the incumbent, and the elephant party has an equal opponent in this mayoral election.

Seeing the background above, the researcher wants to know the extent of the campaign strategy carried out by the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair in the 2020 Surabaya Pilkada. This is interesting for further research considering that Eri Cahyadi is a genuine bureaucrat paired with a senior politician from PDI-P, namely Armuji. While Machfud Arifin is a senior politician with experience at the national and local levels, one of Machfud Arifin's experiences is being the head of the Jokowi-Amin East Java success team, while his partner, Mujiaman, has no experience in politics. In addition to the profiles of the candidate pairs, another interesting factor in this study is the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair, there are similarities between the 2015 and 2020 Surabaya Pilkada, namely they are both against the PDI-P. This should be an important capital for the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair in formulating a campaign strategy for the 2020 Surabaya Pilkada. Another interesting thing about this research is that researchers are more focused on the strategies of candidates who lost in the Pilkada than on researching the strategies of candidates who won ([Alistya & Nuh, 2024](#); [Assiddiq & Ambarwati, 2021](#); [Hanifah Islamiyah & Umaiyyah, 2024](#); [Hendri Suwarsono et al., 2025](#); [Syahputra, 2018](#); [Widyaprasetya et al., 2025](#)). This study uses political marketing theory ([Ormrod et al., 2013](#)) to analyze the campaign strategy of Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman. In this case, the analysis related to political marketing theory will also be elaborated from the Marketing Mix (4P) theory in politics, namely through the indicators of political product, promotion, and place ([Niffenegger, 1988](#); [Sutrisno et al., 2018](#)).

Methods

This study aims to describe accurately, factually, and systematically the campaign strategy of the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman pair for the 2020 Surabaya mayoral election. which describes the phenomena and conditions, phenomena, and social reality of the people who are the object of research. Qualitative descriptive research method is a method used by researchers to find knowledge or theory of a study at a certain time. A qualitative descriptive research method or what is called Grounded Theory is a qualitative research method that uses a number of systematic procedures to find theories. The theory also does not start from variables derived from a theory but starts from the data obtained to finally be able to formulate a theory. This means that the data obtained will be analysed and then described naturally according to the phenomena that occur without any manipulation ([Cresswell & David Cresswell, 2018](#)).

Data collection was conducted through multiple qualitative techniques to ensure data richness and credibility. First, in-depth semi-structured interviews were carried out with key informants, including members of the campaign team and individuals involved in the election

process, to capture their perspectives on campaign planning and implementation. Second, non-participant observation was employed to document campaign activities, such as political consolidation, public outreach, and grassroots mobilization. Third, document analysis was conducted on campaign materials, media reports, official documents, and social media content related to the Machfud Arifin-Mujiaman campaign.

Results and Discussion

Political Marketing

Within the perspective of political marketing theory, electoral competition is understood as a contest over voter markets in which political actors must strategically identify, segment, and mobilize voters in order to gain electoral support (Ormrod et al., 2013). The election for the mayor of Surabaya, where eight political parties joined forces and fought the PDI-P in this electoral battle, was certainly not an easy thing. PDI-P has long been in power in the city of Surabaya because it won the elections in 2005 to 2015 in the last decade which shows its extraordinary strength and dominance. This will of course be a challenge for Machfud Arifin and his group in compiling segmentation in order to win and seize power. This is not impossible, but possible. In 2018, in the election for the Governor of East Java Khofifah Indar Parawansa and Emil Dardak who ran as candidates for the Governor of East Java won in the Surabaya city area with a total of 579,246 votes and their opponents Gus Ipul and Puti Guntur Soekarno Putri received 560,848 votes (Antara, 2018).

Mrs. Khofifah is from the PKB party and Ms. Emil is from the Democrat party who are competing with Gus Ipul and Ms. Puti from the PDI-P, and winning in the Surabaya city constituency gives hope for political parties outside the PDI-P to be able to compete and win in the city of Surabaya. even though in the previous mayoral elections the PDI-P always won. The results of the interview that the researchers obtained with Escha Islami Anwar or who is usually called Mas SK, the former private secretary of the Supreme Court on Wednesday, November 10, 2021, said that one of the voice segments that Mr. MA and his team want to achieve is to get the votes that were previously obtained by Mrs. Khofifah. According to Sari (2019) said that the voter segmentation owned by Khofifah- Emil in the 2018 gubernatorial election was 37% of the millennial or youth segment in East Java, and 59% of the NU Muslim women voter segment. Other voter segments such as the NU male segment prefer Gus Ipul, who became Khofidah's opponent in the gubernatorial election because of his closeness to PBNU. The voter segment that Mr. MA and his team want to get is also the market segment owned by Mrs. Khofifah to win her in the 2018 Governor election. Not only that segment, but overall Mr. MA and his winning team are also targeting various community groups, both youth, laborers, workers, and other community groups.

Above is a photo documentation of Mr. MA's efforts to be close to the target segment of voters, both NU and millennials. The segmentation that Mr. MA and the team want to achieve can be seen from the segmentation that they want to achieve apart from acquiring the Mrs. Khofifah segment also want to get other segments of community groups. Targeting in this segmentation can be seen from the placement of the image and political branding of Mr. MA with his efforts to be close to a number of figures from different community groups. As an example of his efforts to get close to pastor Phillip Mantofa, the leader of the Mawar Sharon church (Sur, 2020). The positioning developed by Mr. MA and the team can be reflected in the program design that has been made. Such as efforts to prevent flooding in

Surabaya by adhering to the drainage master plan correctly, closing rivers with box culverts accompanied by the right technology, and cleaning water control holes so they don't get clogged and dirty.

Another program in Mr. MA's promise is to make Surabaya not jam with alternative transportation that you want to build. In spatial planning in the city of Surabaya, Mr. MA is committed to revitalizing traditional markets in Surabaya so that they are comfortable and can be enjoyed by everyone. Improving the number of flats in the city of Surabaya is one of the programs so that middle and lower-class housing can be better and more comfortable. Apart from that, there is also a plan to make a place for recreation that is comfortable and affordable by building a number of points that have the potential to become an iconic vacation in Surabaya. The slogan created by Machfud Arifin, namely "Mbiyen Risma, saiki MA" wants to convey to residents that Pak MA or Machfud Arifin is trying to brand himself to continue the legacy left by Mrs. Risma, as a former mayor ([Eko, 2020](#)). The banding built by Mr. MA aims to make Surabaya a better city. The development results that have been made by Ms. Risma want to be carried out and repaired by Mr. MA. So, from there, Mr. MA also made the motto "Forward the city, Prosper the citizens" which describes his vision to build the city of Surabaya and its citizens.

Marketing Mix

Within the marketing mix framework, the political product encompasses party affiliation, candidate characteristics, track records, and policy programs offered to voters ([Niffenegger, 1988](#); [Sutrisno et al., 2018](#)). Furthermore, according to the marketing-mix concept in 4P several things can be understood from the phenomenon of Machfud Arifin's campaign strategy in the 2020 mayoral election. The political product that was built can be seen from three elements, namely political parties, track record prior to nomination, and characteristics. There are eight political parties that support Pak MA, which support either the PKB party or the National Awakening Party, PPP or the United Development Party, PAN or the National Mandate Party, Golkar or Golongan Karya, Gerindra or the Great Indonesia Movement, PKS or the Prosperous Justice Party, Democrats and the Nasdem or Democratic Nationalist Party. From the many political parties that support Pak MA, it can be seen that Mr. MA is a pluralist figure who is supported by many kinds of parties with different party styles. MA's track record too no need to doubt again. Before Mr. MA's nomination period, in 2018 Mr. MA served as chairman of TKD Jokowi-Mahruf Amin, East Java. From 2016 to 2018 he became KAPOLDA or head of the East Java regional police. From 2015 to 2016 he served as KADIV IT POLRI MABES. From 2013 to 2015 he served as KAPOLDA for South Kalimantan or South Kalimantan. In 2013, he became the Chief of Police for North Maluku or North Maluku. MA's track record has also earned him the nickname "Father of Development at the National Police Institution". The characteristics of Pak MA, who was born and raised in the city of Surabaya, also support his track record. An egalitarian character, 'arek suroboyo', and firm character is the image of Mr. MA.

The promotion carried out by Mr. MA was carried out on several platforms, both through social media and conventional campaigns. The promotion carried out by Pak MA and the team was carried out on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and YouTube by making interactive videos to introduce themselves to constituents. The price or price to pay is of course a lot. Both financially and psychologically. Psychologically, the price that must be paid is the track record of Mr. MA as a KAPOLDA which can be assessed both positively and negatively.

Positively, of course, Mr. MA is seen as a firm, authoritative and charismatic figure because he is a former East Java Regional Police Chief. Unfortunately, on the other hand, there is a negative image of the police in society.

The place for distribution of the campaign from Mr. MA is on various platforms. The platform for distribution is carried out on social media, either by collaborating with influencers who are invited to chat with Mr. MA. Like Atta Halilintar, Sara fajita and others. Distribution was carried out by bicycle. Mr. SK, Mr. MA's personal secretary, said that every morning Mr. MA always took the time to ride a bike with his team to go around a number of points in Surabaya. This is done in addition to introducing oneself to the residents, as well as absorbing the aspirations of the residents directly. The areas that were focused on during this campaign were said to be in West and North Surabaya which were expected to become the basis for Mr. MA's vote.

There are two forms of the strategy implemented in the MA campaign, namely ground and air attacks ([Zhang & Chung, 2020](#)). The ground attack in question is a campaign effort that is carried out and can be seen. Ground attacks there are four activities carried out. The first is the consolidation of political parties. Considering that many political parties support Pak MA, Pak MA and the team often consolidate with each party that supports this mayoral election. Where each supporting party has its own way of winning the MA pack, which makes as many volunteer posts as possible in carrying out the campaign for the MA pack. In addition to consolidating parties, the Supreme Court also formed a core team with volunteers that he himself formed to win over the Supreme Court. These volunteers are also growing with support from various community groups. The community group also formed a group of volunteers to support Mr. MA. Apart from the consolidation that was carried out, Mr. MA often visited residents' villages. This blusukan is done well by cycling every morning with the team around several areas. Also, Mr. MA was present in several villages and held campaign events to introduce himself to the villages.

This air strategy is carried out through social media ([Zhang & Chung, 2020](#)). The social media that was formed to win Mr. MA is carried out on the Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and YouTube platforms. In each of these platforms, Mr. MA actively develops his social media by covering news about the 'physical' campaign that has been carried out by Pak MA. Not only that, Mr. MA also collaborates with influencers. Like Atta Halilintar, Sara Fajira, and others. This collaboration in the realm of social media exists so that Mr. MA will be better known in the digital world. The results of the air strategy went well where Mr. MA was more popular than Eri Cahyadi, who was his opponent in the general election. The two forms of the strategy carried out by Mr. MA can be said to be forms of offensive strategy during his campaign. Given the 2020 Surabaya mayoral election, the PDI-P as the incumbent is playing a defensive strategy. This offensive strategy is good with its efforts to penetrate the digital market through the many social media campaigns that have been carried out. Not only that, Mr. MA too often wrote narratives about the issue of green letters which were a problem in the era of Mrs. Risma ([Suminar, 2020](#)). Through this example of the green letter narrative, it can be seen that Mr. MA is trying to expand the market for the voter segment. This expansion was aimed at groups of people who were dissatisfied during the reign of Mrs. Risma. Apart from that, efforts to penetrate this market can be seen from the preparations for the campaign by Pak MA, who has introduced himself to the people of the city of Surabaya since 2019.

Conclusion

The conclusion of this paper reviews that Pak MA's camp in the mayoral election is present as a challenger to the PDI-P camp as the incumbent. This electoral battle is not impossible and can still be carried out considering that in 2018 in the gubernatorial election, Ms. Khofifah who came from the PKB party was able to win in the city of Surabaya. This victory gives hope to the political parties supporting the Supreme Court to win in the city of Surabaya. Because of this, the voter segmentation taken by Mr. MA and the team wants to take the segmentation of voters who previously voted for Ms. Khofifah in the last gubernatorial election. Not only that, Mr. MA made a program specifically for other voter segments. The real form of this segmentation positioning can be seen from the program design and vision and mission made by the MA.

The formation of Pak MA's political identity cannot be separated from the party that supports him, his track record as a former KAPOLDA and his characteristics. These three elements form his political identity as a figure that is pluralist, egalitarian, assertive, and 'arek suroboyo'. This political brand that was built can be seen from two sides. Both positively because Mr. MA is imaged as a former KAPOLDA who is firm, and negatively because of the negative stigma that society has towards the police. This formed political identity is campaigned in two forms of strategy. Two forms of strategy in air attack and ground attack. The land attack was carried out in several ways, namely consolidation and blusukan. Consolidation was carried out both to political parties that support Mr. MA, as well as to community groups that support him. Mr. MA and the team often do blusukan either by cycling around a location or holding events at a number of points. The airstrikes that were made were carried out on social media which actively introduced themselves to the people of Surabaya about the figure of Mr. MA. This strategy is an offensive strategy. The offensive strategy was made considering that Pak MA's camp was a challenger against the PDI-P. Therefore, the form of the campaign being carried out is to create new markets and seize the existing voters' markets. This study is limited by its qualitative approach and focus on a single candidate pair, which restricts the generalizability of the findings and precludes comparative analysis. Moreover, it does not quantitatively measure the impact of ground and air campaign strategies on voter behavior. Future research should adopt comparative and mixed-methods approaches to better assess the effectiveness of these strategies, particularly in the context of digital political campaigning.

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