

# Political Communications Strategy of “Success Team” in Regional Head Election: A Case Study of Bireuen, Aceh

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Keywords: Political Communication, Success Team, Election, Bireuen Regency

Abstract: The dynamics of the implementation of regional head election (Pilkada) in Bireuen district had interesting stages. The victory of the regent pair who held this position gave an interesting political process. The couple was initially declared not qualified for the health test by the Independent Election Commission (KIP), but various efforts were made by the success team. The pair was able to follow the 2017 Aceh Pilkada Stage. This study aims to understand the political communication strategy of the winning team. It was conducted in Bireuen District with a qualitative approach and case study methods. Data collection is done by Interview and documentation. The results of this study indicate that the political communication strategy of the winning team was able to stimulate the community to support to the candidate's regent pair. The results yielded 1) the emergence of support groups such as the Youth Poros Team, the Gampong Team and Tim Srikandi (women's representatives) who consolidated each other in winning the Bireuen Regent pair. 2) Political communication carried out using the “Door to Door mechanism” and dialogue by describing the vision and mission and presenting the profile of prospective head district who make people sympathize and chose them in the election.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

A win of a regional head candidate is related to a political communication conducted by the campaign team of regional head candidate in the 2017 Regional Election. In 2017, Aceh province held Pilkada (regional election) of regency and province. However, there were several regions that showed interesting phenomenon in holding Pilkada. For example, Pidie regency with *Kopiah Merah* (red hat) phenomena, Aceh Besar regency with *Pasangan Putih* (white partner), and Bireuen regency with a partner did not pass a medical test. It illustrates that political communication strategy conducted by campaign team makes people understand. The role of campaign team could make a candidate win. The political communication strategy shows that the campaign team's work in making a candidate win must be maximum.

The campaign team attempts to show an urgency in making a candidate win in regional election by seeking people's support. Their work requires strategy with initial plan so that they can map the win of a candidate who is supported by partisans. The regional election in Aceh showed various ways done by campaign team to win their candidate. The

political communication strategy toward people is the important role of campaign team so that they could consolidate all team members in winning the candidate and could gain sympathy from people hence plan could meet expectation. The win of regional head candidate is related to the role of campaign team and their way to arrange the strategy to make their candidate win.

Aceh province, in holding regional election, provides an opportunity for candidates to compete nicely and win honestly, fairly and not cheat. The regional election in Bireuen regency was different from other regions. It started from the registration of the candidates of regent and deputy regent in Independent Election Commission (KIP) of Bireuen Regency. In medical test, one of the regent candidates, H. Saifannur, S.Sos, was sentenced fail to be a candidate of regent. This political phenomenon became more interesting when the candidate later underwent a medical test personally and was said physically healthy.

On the record, the candidacy of H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si as the candidate of regent and deputy regent was first failed on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 because the duo did not meet the requirements. However, H. Saifannur, S.Sos set a

lawsuit to Election Monitoring Committee (*Panwaslih*) to State Administrative Court (PTUN) in Medan and to Supreme Court (*Mahkamah Agung*). The Supreme Court approved the lawsuit by H.Saifannur, S.Sos (Serambi Indonesia, 2016). This candidates of Bireuen head regency did not willingly accept the decision of KIP, they along with campaign team made effort to suit, therefore they earned the result by being appointed as the candidate of Bireuen Regent for 2017-2022 period. The process of regional election kept going after H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si was established as one of the candidates.

H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. were not taken into account by other candidates. The map of the political power in Bireun regional election described that there were two candidates predicted to win the election namely H.M. Yusuf Abdul Wahab (Tu Sop) with dr. Purnama Setia Budi. Sp.Og and H. Ruslan M. Daud along with Drs. H. Djamaluddin Idris with their political chant *Harus Djadi*. However the regional election went on, the candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. kept compete despite the long process and underwent legal process. Moreover, the campaign team worked uneasily, so that they needed an outdoor and persuasive approach.

The regional election became more interesting when the election in Bireuen regency was held in the same time as other regencies in Aceh on February 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2017. The result was unpredicted by all sides that H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. won the regional election in Bireuen regency. As described in the table below:

Table 1: Recapitulation of the Regional Election of Bireuen Regency 2017

No	Candidates Name	Total Votes	Percentage
1	2	3	4
1	H. Ruslan M. Daud and Drs. H. Djamaluddin Idris	31.086	14.60 %
2	Dr. H. Amiruddin Idris, Se., M.Si and Drs. H. Ridwan Khalid	9.269	4.35 %
3	H. M. Yusuf Abdul Wahab And Dr. Purnama Setia Budi, Sp.Og	60.971	28.65 %
4	H. Khalili, SH and Yusri, S.Sos., M.Si., M.S	29.934	14.6 %
5	H. Husaini M. Amin, SE and Azwar, S.Pd	6.936.	3.26 %
6	H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si	74.650	35.07 %
<b>The voters who vote</b>		<b>212.846</b>	<b>75.35%</b>
<b>Absent Voters</b>		<b>127.098</b>	<b>25.65 %</b>
<b>Fixed Voters List</b>		<b>339.944</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Data Source: KIP Kabupaten Bireuen

Some people at first were not sure that the candidate could win the Bireuen regional election 2017. Surprisingly, the candidate could gain people's support. It was very interesting because the candidate was believed to be unable to win the contest. Surely, the role of the campaign team of H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. in obtaining support from people with various strategies was performed to win. In regional election, the role of a campaign team is very important to promote the candidate. The campaign team was the most influential organ to win the candidate of H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. as the regent and the deputy regent in Bireuen regency for 2017 – 2022 period. Basically, the candidate, H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si., had a way to stir the campaign team in achieving the position as Bireuen regent.

## 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Political Strategy

The term "strategy" is often used to describe as a plan, tactic and way to achieve something. Basically, strategy is a planning and management to achieve a purpose. However, to achieve the purpose, a strategy does not only work as a map to show the direction, but also shows how the operational tactic is (Onong Uchjana Effendy, 2007, p. 32). J salusu (2006, 84) says that etimologically strategy is from Greek *strategos* or *streteus* as the plural of strategy. *Strategos* itself has generalship or a thing performed by a war general in making a plan to win a war.

Brecker (Heene, A. & Desmidt, S, 2010, p.83) explains that *Strategos* could be defined as a plan or an extermination of enemies by using effective way relying on available resources. Rangkuti (2009, p.9) describes that strategy is an instrument to achieve a purpose. Its main goal is to make a company able to objectively see internal and external conditions, so that that company could anticipate external environment.

A political strategy is a strategy used to realize political ambitions such as an enactment of a new regulation, an establishment of a new structure in governmental administration or an implementation of deregulation and privatization or decentralization (Peter Scrooder, 2009, p. 6). A political strategy is very important to know a communication strategy so that it could be obviously advantageous for an individual or a discounted one. A target image is in a process of implementation, shortcomings of a government and an executive, particularly in public relations division, target image could establish a foundation for public relation, and all public relations' actions are to spread this image and grow the image in the mind of target groups. The expected image is related to a theme, style, confronting way and human recourse offer.

### 2.2 Teamwork

A political process in a winning is determined by a solid teamwork. However, it could be understood that a teamwork shows a movement to achieve a goal by using various strategies which are planned earlier. Therefore, a coordination should exist and consolidation makes the teamwork become solid. In a regional election, a teamwork could be called as a campaign team working to make a supported candidate win in an election. Tracy (2006) describes that a teamwork is an activity managed and

performed by a group of people in an organization. A teamwork could improve a cooperation and communication in or inter divisions of a company. Usually, a teamwork consists of people from different expertise hence it is used as power to achieve a goal of a company (Rainer Adam, 2010, p.34)

A teamwork is a cooperative effort and coordination run by some individuals who work in a group which consists of general background that need a division of talents and leadership to make a role (Kenneth Stott and Allan Walker, 2011, p.27). According to Dishon and O'Leary (1994, p.36), a teamwork is a group of two to five students who are tied together by a common purpose to complete a task and to include every group members. In this context, a major premise of a team is that every person in teamwork must function as a cooperative and productive player to achieve an expected result.

An activity of a political marketing should be initiated with an activity of establishing a teamwork, which is usually called a campaign team. A campaign team is recruited from several potential individuals corresponding to their tasks and functions. A campaign team usually consists of First, **An Advisor** who functions to give advice in term of strategies and steps taken by a party or a candidate to achieve a goal, like winning an election and embracing determinant sides to vote. Second, **An Expert team**, a group of experts appointed based on their expertise. Usually, the expert team works to arrange a program which will carry to a candidate, Third, **A Research and Development Team**, a group of researchers working to collect relevant information from a party, like perception of people about a party, opinion of people about candidate's capability, political map of voters, and conduct trainings for cadres in required fields to improve the performance of a party (Hafied, Cangara, 2009, p. 225)

Fourth, **The Funding Collector**, one who knows sources of fund they could utilize. Fifth, **The Campaign Team** who plans and holds campaign to show the candidate who has been appointed by parties, this team has a good relationship with media and coordinates all steps and communication strategies to win a candidate or a party. Sixth, **The Mass-Gathering Team**, people who work to gather mass, either for collecting votes or for showing the power of a party to people and voters. Seventh, **The Inter-Region Relation Team**, this team consists of people who are trusted to handle a relation among central, regional, and branch organizers based in cities of province and regencies. Eighth, **The Intelligence Team**, a group established to observe and watch the performance of political enemy that

could be dangerous to a party and a candidate. Ninth, **The Security Team**, an important team, especially to protect a candidate appointed by a party. Tenth, **The Voter-gaining Team**, this team consists of people recruited based on their great influence among people. They commonly have fine social and economical position or good reputation among people (Hafied, Cangara, 2009, p. 225-227).

### 2.3 Regional Election (Pilkada)

A Regional Head Election called *Pilkada* is a mechanism to elect a leader directly by people and this system goes very well in Indonesia. *Pilkada* is an instrument which is expected by people to give born an ideal leader or regional head either in regency or province. The process of a regional election is significantly reviewed and becomes a system of liberalization-democracy in the regional or local level. The phases of regional head election is similar to a presidential election, but it is held at regional level.

Luki Sandra Amalia (2016, p. 8) says that an election could be formulated as a mechanism of delegating the people's sovereignty to the participants of an election and/or the candidates of the members of House of Representatives, Regional Representatives, president and vice president, Regional Head/Deputy Regional Head to make and establish political decision based on people's will. An election is also a mechanism of a political change related to a public policy pattern and an aim, or related to an elite circulation which is conducted periodically and orderly. Cakra Abras (2012, p. 31) describes that a Regional Head Election (*Pilkada* or *Pemilukada*) is an election to elect a regional head and deputy regional head directly by the eligible people in a region in Indonesia.

Janedri M. Gaffar. (2012, p. 85) explains that *Pemilukada* has three important functions establish a regional government, as follows:

1. Electing a regional head based on a common will of people in region, so that it is expected to be able to understand and realize regional people's will.
2. Through a regional election, it is expected that people's preference is based missions, visions, programs, quality, and integrity of regional head candidates which will really determine the success of government in a region.
3. A regional election is an instrument of political responsibility, an evaluation and a control toward a regional heads and their supporting political powers.

## 3 RESEARCH METHOD

The approach employed by the researcher in this study is qualitative. Qualitative is usually called a field method because it is conducted factually natural or as it is, it is not manipulated by researchers, so that the condition before, during, after in which the researcher is involved does not change (Sugiono, 2014, p. 5). Bogdan and Taylor in Moloeng (2007, p. 4) define that qualitative research is a research procedure which results in descriptive data in form of written or spoken words from the observed people or subject in a phenomenon.

Furthermore, Moleong (2007, p. 11) explains that a descriptive research emphasizes on data in form of words and illustrations resulted from the implementation of qualitative method, not in form of numbers. Moreover, all collections are possible to become a key of what have been researched. Sampling and selecting data sources in this study were conducted purposively and the range of sample was determined with snowball technique, data collecting technique was in-depth interview, documentation, and later on the data were analyzed.

Data analysis was qualitative and the research result emphasized on generalization meaning. In addition, data interpretation was conducted so that there was data reduction which could reveal data accuracy, all analyzed data were coded so that focusing on the theme of this research. It becomes a foundation in doing this research so that there were concrete data which could lead to directed research focus.

## 4 RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Political Strategy Conducted by Campaign Teams of The Candidates of Bireuen Regent in the 2017 Regional Election

Independent Election Commission (KIP) established the candidates of Bireuen Regent for 2017-2022 period that provided options for People in Bireuen Regency. Surely, it could give an opportunity for the candidates to seek supports from people in order to get elected as a regional head in the regency. According to the Data from Bireuen Independent Election Commission, there were six candidates of Regent and Deputy Regent who competed to achieve the position as the Bireuen's regional head. Political strategies were employed by the campaign teams in order to make their political jargon able to win them in the 2017 Bireuen Regional Election. The data

below show the candidates of Bireuen Regional Head in the 2017 Regional Election.

Table 2: The Candidates of Bireuen Regent and Deputy Regent in the 2017 Regional Election

Serial Number	Name of Candidates	Supporting Parties
1	2	3
1	H. Ruslan M. Daud And Drs. H. Djamaluddin Idris	Independent
2	Dr. H. Amiruddin Idris, Se., M.Si And Drs. H. Ridwan Khalid	PPP, PKS and PAN
3	H. M. Yusuf Abdul Wahab And Dr. Purnama Setia Budi, Sp.Og	Independent
4	H. Khalili, SH And Yusri, S.Sos., M.Si., M.S	Partai Aceh
5	H. Husaini M. Amin, SE And Azwar, S.Pd	Independent
6	H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. H. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si	Partai Golkar, Nasdem, Demokrat and PDA

Source: Independent Election Commission (KIP) of 2017 Bireuen Regency Election

Based on the data above, the composition is balanced that there are three independent candidates and three party-supported candidates. That balanced political process described that the implementation of the regional election in Bireuen Regency was very competent. The opportunity of each candidate was very great and the campaign team's work was very maximum in seeking supports and sympathy from people in Bireuen Regency. The process of the Regional election in Bireuen Regency was conducted based on the decree of Bireuen Independent Election Commission No. 9 Year 2006 about The Implementation of Regional Election in Bireuen.

The performance of the campaign team of H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si emerged an elegant strategy by establishing some groups in the team. The campaign team was also successful to execute mass mobilization to support their candidates, H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si, to be the next Bireuen Regional Head. The strategy pattern conducted by the team of Saifannur – Muzakkar A. Gani was able to influence the people as Voter Interest in Bireuen Regency. The campaign team highlighted the figure of H. Saifannur, S.Sos as a respected community

figure who was known by the people of Bireuen. H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si had a qualified electability and were well-known all over Bireuen Regency.

The combination of a businessman and a bureaucrat was synergized with the work of campaign team in the ground. The campaign team attempted to promote the candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si to the people. The political strategy performed by the campaign team is by dividing the main team into three groups as explained below:

#### 1. Suborganization of The Saifannur Youth Axis Campaign Team

This suborganization of the campaign team of H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si described about young voters or influenced them in Bireuen Regency. Surely, the Saifannur Youth Axis empowered the young voters who supported the candidate, H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. The coordination of the Saifannur Youth Axis was expected to be able to gain votes from the youth especially the intellectuals in university or the university students, so that they could win this candidate, H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si to be Bireuen Regional Head for 2017 – 2022 period.

#### 2. Suborganization of The Saifannur *Gampong* Campaign Team

The *Gampong* Campaign Team (village campaign team) for Saifannur was a mobilization to win the candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si in the 2017 Bireuen Regency Election. The organization empowerment was conducted equally throughout villages, so that many people around Bireuen were interested in this candidate. This village movement for Saifannur more increased, so that people's enthusiasm also increased. The mobilization of the campaign team in the level of village was successfully conducted therefore it could attract people's sympathy. Building Bireuen from village is an importance so that it could advance Bireuen Regency, it is what was promoted by the Saifannur Village Team.

#### 3. Suborganization of The *Srikandi* Saifannur Campaign Team

The most important suborganization was the Saifannur *Skrikandi* (Heroine) in which women dominated, especially the mothers. This movement includes women because the number of women were massively significant. Surely, the involvement of women as part of the campaign

team of H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. was very important to win this candidate. The *Srikandi* Saifannur was dominated by women and it could strengthen the female supporters. This suborganization was established in order to ease the women to be involved and support the candidate of Bireuen Regional Head H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. in 2017 Regional Election.

The establishment of the three sub-teams was a strategy conducted to win the candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. in the 2017 Bireuen Regional Election. Surely, those suborganizations have made H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. win a position as Bireuen Regent 2017 – 2022 period. The teamwork in campaigning H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A. Gani, SH., M.Si. as the candidate of Bireuen Regents gained various reactions from people. However, with full confidence, the campaign team succeed to introduce and promote the candidate of regent and deputy of regent in Bireuen Regency who would be able to realize the visions, missions and goals.

The campaign team of H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A.Gani, SH., M.Si admitted that establishing campaign teams in every side was very effective to win the regional election (Pilkada). It has been proven by the strategy run by the campaign team to win H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A.Gani, SH., M.Si as the candidate of Bireuen Regent in the 2017 Regional Election. Establishing teams in every lines showed an elegant political strategy, so that the supported candidate won as Bireuen Regent. In addition, the charisma of H.Saifannur,S.Sos as the rich man also made people support him. At first people are not interested in politics, later on they were interested in it and support the candidate.

## 5 CONCLUSIONS

The political communication strategy by the campaign team of the regent candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A.Gani, SH., M.Si was able to convince people to win the 2017 regional election. Moreover, the three groups which were involved in the campaign team also worked maximally so as to be able to provide a great opportunity for thr win of the candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A.Gani, SH., M.Si as the regent and the deputy regent of Bireuen Regency. In addition, the figure of H. Saifannur, S.Sos also gave a new hope of a better change in Bireuen in the future. It also maximized the

efforts which would be done once being a regent and deputy regent of Bireuen Regency. A strategy of campaign by the campaign team was by activating the three groups in the winning team of the candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A.Gani, SH., M.Si.

The process of *Pilkada* in Bireuen Regency showed the competitive rivalry among the candidates of Bireuen regent and deputy regent. Furthermore, the candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A.Gani, SH., M.Si was very familiar among Bireuen people. It provided a good opportunity for the team to succeed the regional election who later could win their candidate H. Saifannur, S.Sos and Dr. Muzakkar. A.Gani, SH., M.Si, therefore the process of *Pilkada* has resulted in a good potency done by the campaign team in Bireuen regional election. The political communication process of the campaign team was run maximally.

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