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## POLITICAL COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE CANDIDATE PAIR AL HARIS AND ABDULLAH SANI IN WINNING THE 2020 JAMBI GUBERNATORIAL ELECTION

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### ABSTRACT

#### KEYWORDS

Strategy,  
Communication,  
Political Communication  
Strategy, Candidate Pairs

The purpose of this study was to determine the political communication strategy and the inhibiting factors and opportunities for political communication of the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani winning teams. To obtain victory in the contestation of the Governor's Election in Jambi Province in 2020, which is pursued through careful political communication planning, the dissemination of issues regarding the candidate pair competing for the number one seat in the government is important to achieve victory. This research uses a qualitative descriptive method. Researchers use Political Marketing theory with three approaches, namely: push marketing, pull marketing, pass marketing. In this study the author took four informants as samples. Data collection in this study was collected from observations, interviews, and documentation. From the results of the study, there were several roles performed by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani winning team during the campaign period, the campaign strategy was carried out in three ways: face-to-face campaigns, campaigns using social media, and open campaigns. The obstacles experienced by the winning team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani in the field are semantic factors, namely the lack of solid coordination and communication between the winning team and perceptual distortion, namely errors caused by the narrow thinking of novice voters so that it is quite difficult to convey the programs and vision and mission of the candidate pair.

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#### INTRODUCTION

Secondly, it facilitates the balance of power separation and checks and balances between the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and the regional head or deputy head. A government based on balanced power separation and mutually beneficial separation is characterized by the direct election of both parliament and the executive by the people (Arifin, 2003). Both have balanced strength in position and power differences, with control efforts executed through regional budgets and regulations, legitimized by the people. The common language used by local elites suggests that the direct election of regional leaders in elections aims to ensure that these leaders can have an equal partnership with the DPRD. Therefore, the interaction between the DPRD and regional leaders should not only be dynamic but also productive in realizing the welfare of all regions (Agustino, 2009).

On December 9, 2020, the province of Jambi held its five-yearly democratic event to choose leaders who would govern the province for the next five years. Three pairs of candidates competed in the 2020 Jambi gubernatorial election: Cek Endra and Ratu Munawaroh, Fakhrori Umar and Syafril Mursal, and Al Haris and Abdullah Sani. These candidates were considered the chosen ones with experience and competence in line with their duties (Umar, 2008). The people of Jambi had the right to contribute to this election, choosing the pair they deemed most suitable to lead.

The local political dynamics leading up to the Jambi Gubernatorial Election were highly discussed (Cangara, 2011). Pro and contra opinions about the election reflected various

political maneuvers by all gubernatorial candidates. The nomination of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani gained support from three political parties forming the "Solid Jambi Coalition." The gubernatorial election process involved stages such as candidate screening, filtering, and determination, with a focus on the political communication strategy of the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair (Widjaja, 2000).

Although the five-year democracy event ended on October 9, 2020, allegations of fraud colored media reports. The Jambi Provincial Election Commission announced the vote results on December 19, 2020, declaring Al Haris and Abdullah Sani as the winners. However, the Cek Endra and Ratu Munawaroh pair rejected the results and filed a lawsuit with the Constitutional Court (MK), which ordered a re-vote (PSU) in several polling stations. The PSU results confirmed the victory of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani in the second round, with vote counts in various districts and cities in the province. This pair was officially declared the winner of the 2020 Jambi Governatorial Election (Curtis & Winsor, 2006).

Based on the above data, the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair won the Jambi Governatorial Election in 2020 by obtaining 600,773 votes or 38.26%. This result is intriguing, prompting a deeper examination of the political communication strategy played by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair. Considering other pairs also had significant voter bases, such as the Cek Endra and Ratu Munawaroh pair, predicted to win due to Cek Endra's two-term position as the Regent of Sarolangun and strong financial backing, as well as the Fakhrori Umar and Syafril Mursal pair, considered strong due to Fakhrori Umar's incumbent status and strong political influence (Nimmo, 2011).

The victory of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani in the 2020 Jambi Governatorial Election has sparked serious attention from the researcher to delve into the political communication strategy of the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair that led to their success in the 2020 Jambi Governatorial Election.

Given the background issues outlined above, the researcher is keen to conduct an in-depth study on the Political Communication Strategy of the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair in winning the Jambi Governatorial Election in 2020.

Reviewing the formulated problems, the researcher has identified the following issues:

1. What is the political communication pattern employed by the campaign team to win the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair in the 2020 Jambi Governatorial Election?
2. What are the inhibiting factors and opportunities in the political communication process carried out by the campaign team of the 2020 Jambi Governatorial Election candidates Al Haris and Abdullah Sani?

The meaning of the research objectives is the most crucial aspect of the study, as it encompasses the essence of the conducted research. Some objectives to be achieved include:

1. To provide an overview and analyze the political communication strategy implemented by the coalition's campaign team and volunteer team in the process of electing Al Haris and Abdullah Sani as governor and deputy governor of Jambi Province for the 2021-2024 period.
2. To analyze the factors that hinder the campaign team in the campaign process in the field and to find out what opportunities were utilized by the Al-Haris and Abdulah Sani pair to gain support in the 2020 Jambi Governatorial Election.

To avoid research duplication or similarities, the researcher explains the results of the literature review related to the research. The researcher found similarities with the research conducted by Erick W. Besman Napitupulu, which focused on the political communication strategy of the Hulman Sitorus, H.E. and Dr. Koni Ismail Siregar pair during the 2010 Pematang Siantar regional head election. The researcher observed the political communication

strategy of Dr. Al Haris and Abdullah Sani during the regional head election in the Jambi province in 2020 (Alo, 1991; Kriyantono, 2006; Muhamad, 2005). For the differences noted by the researcher in this study, refer to Erick W. Besman Napitupulus' research on the 2010 local general election in Pematang Siantar. Meanwhile, the researcher in the 2020 provincial regional head election in Jambi Province.

In the research conducted by Muhamad Rosit, there are similarities in the political communication strategies employed by Ratut Atut Chosiah to win the hearts of the people. However, the difference in this study is that Muhamad Rosit outlined the political communication strategy of the Ratut Atut Chosiah pair, who were incumbents, while in this study, the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair were new candidates and not popular among the people of Jambi Province.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research adopts a qualitative approach because the topic is complex and vague, in accordance with the definition of qualitative research that emphasizes descriptive and observed human actions (Moleong, 2005). Political communication strategy research not only involves difficult strategy concepts but also prioritizes qualitative evaluation, following the principle of theory identification both formally and substantively (Moleong, 2000: 29). The applied research paradigm is an interpretive frame of mind. The focus is on how people interpret social interactions and their understanding of elections, politicians, and victories. This paradigm includes the way researchers perceive reality, the methods used, and the way of interpreting results (Moleong, 2007).

The research uses a qualitative approach and comes from case studies that are aligned with the research objectives. The qualitative approach here is based on the paradigm and phenomenology of constructivist knowledge building. The characteristics of qualitative research include the construction of reality with sociocultural significance, situation analysis, and the use of sampling (I. Gunawan, 2022; HADI, 1989; Hamdi, 2014; Usman & Akbar, 2022).

This research is included in descriptive research that aims to describe situations and conditions in society without changing its social reality. The aim is to obtain factual information, analyze existing problems, and identify similar problems for learning and future planning (Burhan, 2006). The process of data analysis uses an inductive method. The analysis is based on a certain framework that allows the identification of variables and the understanding of the subjectivity of informants. More emphasis on "why" than "what" (Bahruddin & Hamdi, 2014).

Primary data collection methods include in-depth interviews and direct observation. The interviews were conducted mainly with strategic figures involved in the campaign, such as Governor Al Haris, coalition team leader H. Bakrie, Media Center director Musri Nauli, and expert council Robert Samosir. Direct observations were made to identify the behavior of the successful team as well as the message of political communication in the candidates of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani. Secondary data collection is carried out through literature studies related to political communication, marketing strategies, political archives, and documentary studies which include campaign media and photos of campaign activities.

Information was obtained from interview subjects consisting of Al Haris (Jambi Governor Candidate), H. Bakrie (Team Leader of Paslon Al Haris and Abdullah Sani Coalition Party), Robert Samosir (Expert Council of Paslon Al Haris and Abdullah Sani Winning Team), and Musri Nauli (Director of Media Center Paslon Al Haris and Abdullah Sani).

Table of interview subjects:

| No | Speaker        | Title                                              |
|----|----------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Al Haris       | Jambi Governor Candidate 2020 (Governor-Elect)     |
| 2  | H. Bakrie      | Team Leader of the Coalition Party Paslon Al Haris |
| 3  | Robert Samosir | Expert Hall of Fame Winning Team Paslon Al Haris   |
| 4  | Musri Nauli    | Media Center Director Paslon Al Haris              |

With this method, the research obtained very relevant and in-depth information related to political communication strategies in the 2020 Jambi Regional Election.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Political Communication Strategy of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani

In terms of carrying out political communication strategies, the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani couple, prioritize the approach to the lower class with the aim of identifying the causes of obstacles that caused the previous government to have difficulty realizing them in Jambi Province. Furthermore, the problem was explained back to the community in the form of a work program, in order to provide the best solution to build a more stable and advanced Jambi Province in the future. This condition is in line with the exposure from Al Haris as follows:

"When campaigning or going to the field of our community has a commitment from the beginning not to blaspheme each other, explaining some things that are considered actual and cover the entire needs of the people of Jambi Province. We also has analyzed the overall root of the problem in Jambi Province and found a series of alternative solutions that are and will be faced by Jambi Province. From the problems that arise, we filter then find the right solution for us to include in a real work program". Results of an interview with Jambi Governor Al Haris (On July 5, 2022).

During the campaign activities, a series of political messages presented by Paslon Al Haris and Abdullah Sani were always oriented towards several leading projects which were expected to solve some of the problems experienced by the people of Jambi Province through program offers related to efforts to overcome road infrastructure problems which have so far always been an obstacle for the people of Jambi Province, free internet network for every village, offering a house renovation program, two billion one sub-district (DUMISAKE), reducing unemployment, providing scholarships to the best sons and daughters of Jambi Province and a series of other programs that were previously covered by the vision and mission. In line with what Al Haris explained as follows:

"We are not neko-neko, Alhamdulillah, what we touched directly the needs of the people of Jambi Province. All of the projects that distributes to the community are pursued through easy-to-understand delivery, applying simplicity of language and logic. So that we refer to the community immediately understands. Although at first found it difficult to digest the information conveyed. However, after the evaluation, thank God the community's

understanding has increased and the excellent programs delivered can be directly enjoyed and felt by the community". Results of an interview with Jambi Governor Al Haris, on July 5, 2023)



Figure 1. Al Haris and Abdullah Sani couple program

(Source: <https://www.brito.id/>)

In addition to mainstream media, the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani couple also took advantage of the use of social media and online media during the campaign, this is part of the strategy carried out by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani couple in winning the 2020 regional election contestation in Jambi Province. The level of quality of the media is controlled by a series of violations that have been established by KIP. With the existence of print media, social media, online media and television at major events, strong competition is formed against political rivals. This condition will be an attraction if supported by the diversity of issues published during the campaign period, as described by Al Haris as follows:

"In winning this regional election, we also utilize various social media, such as Instagram, Facebook, etc., including print, online and electronic media because in the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic yesterday, the presence of the media is very important in conveying messages to the public. Now in the use of social media, there is often direct contact with the party next door, and thank God we never use an obscure account, the social media account of our team is all, this is what we convey from the beginning to the entire winning team. Although sometimes we have been accused of using a fake account. we were attacked by the opposite party using a fake account. But this kind of dynamic is commonplace in local elections, we face it with a cool head and a peaceful heart (Danesi, 2013). Then we also use online media, social media and other forms of media when there are important events, television is also presented so that people really know our vision and mission for Jambi Province" Results of Interview with Jambi Governor Al Haris, July 5, 2023.





Figure 2. Online media campaigns

(Source : <https://www.jernih.id>)

## Campaign Team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani

### *Recruitment Process of the Campaign Team*

In forming the campaign team for the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair, the system involved the assistance of volunteers in conveying their programs and visions to the wider community. More than 15 volunteers were found under the command of the success team, implementing an approach strategy aligned with their competencies. The recruitment of volunteers was conducted voluntarily from the community where they aimed to provide support to the candidates and had a desire to bring progress to Jambi Province in line with a series of flagship programs and visions conveyed during the campaign period by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair among the people of Jambi Province (R. H. Gunawan, 2020; Medita & Hanifah, 2020; Napitupulu, 2013).

The purpose of forming the volunteer team is to support and secure the victory of the Al Haris & Abdullah Sani pair in the 2020 Jambi Provincial Election, working under the coordination of the core campaign team (coalition team) or the campaign secretariat. As expressed by H. Bakrie (2023):

"The duties of volunteers are diverse in the field, such as assisting the work of the central coalition party campaign team on a voluntary basis, but with different approaches. Some are active among students, to fathers and mothers in households, specific organizations, or communities such as certain sports communities like cycling, futsal, and nature lovers, and others. Clearly, the presence of volunteer friends really helps the campaign team in the field. Volunteers are also part of the campaign team. At that time, I was the head of the coalition campaign team, so I had to know and nurture all the volunteer friends in the field so that the mission to achieve victory could be realized. That's what we did." (Excerpt from an interview with H. Bakrie, June 26, 2023)



**Figure 3. Volunteer couple Al Haris and Abdullah Sani**  
(Source: Radarjambi.co.id)

### **Internal and External Strengthening of the Campaign Team for Al Haris and Abdullah Sani**

In the implementation of political communication strategies by the campaign team, there are inevitably obstacles and challenges. Therefore, specific methods or efforts are required to anticipate and ensure the team remains solid and cohesive, ensuring that the campaign strategy is executed effectively and hits the target. Throughout the campaign stages until the voting process, the researcher identified efforts or strategies implemented by the campaign team to secure victory for Al Haris and Abdullah Sani, categorized into internal and external strengthening (Farraz, 2015; Sugiprawaty, 2009).

#### ***Internal***

Through various efforts in implementing internal changes and victories by candidates Al Haris and Abdullah Sani, including:

##### a. Consolidation of the campaign team

In response to the ongoing political dynamics, the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team immediately consolidated all team members and conducted evaluations regarding any weaknesses or obstacles encountered during the campaign. One serious concern was the preparation of the budget for the campaign. Wise budget utilization is crucial because having a budget impacts the improvement and smooth implementation of all activities and policies in the field. Campaign costs can be used wisely for accommodation, transportation, and other expenses. Al Haris expressed this as follows:

"We have consistently conveyed that we are the candidates with the least financial resources, so it must be used wisely according to the team's needs in the field. Even though we are limited in financial resources, all team members are aware of it, and they maximize what is available. It means that the use of money for the daily needs of the team can be fulfilled according to the requirements. I conveyed to all team members that we must work hard and not lose spirit just because we have financial limitations. Instead, we have a high fighting spirit to achieve victory."

Results of an interview with Al Haris on July 5, 2023



**Figure 4. Consolidation of Campaign Team**

(Source : [jambiseru.com](http://jambiseru.com))

### *External*

During the campaign process, up to the voting stage, several efforts were carried out by the campaign team with the aim of strengthening the relationships initiated by themselves or by the supported candidate. In practice, one of the external efforts implemented by the campaign team of candidates Al Haris and Abdullah Sani was to minimize the emergence of attacks from other rival candidates or, in other words, counteracting issues that raised doubts for the team or supporters. Until the first-round voting and the re-election process took place, although campaigning was not allowed, wise socialization to the public was consistently conducted while adhering to all applicable regulations.

The candidate pair and the campaign team naturally have different methods based on their characteristics, namely being among the community by attending community invitations. This is similar to what Musri Nauli stated:

"Mr. Al Haris is indeed a leader who is close to the community. Every time we go down to the field, he immediately mingles with the community, sleeps in people's homes. This is something natural, not something contrived. That's the true character of Mr. Al Haris. In the course of the campaign process, there are certainly many challenges and obstacles, but we can overcome them with a pure heart. We continue to advocate for a clean campaign by not tarnishing any opposing party. This is a common practice in the election contest; we uphold the cultural values of Jambi."

Results of an interview with the Director of the Media Center, Musri Nauli, on June 7, 2023.



**Figure 5. The atmosphere of the couple Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani attending the community invitation event**

(Source : [uhttp://Jernih.id](http://Jernih.id))



## Strategies and Approaches Used by the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani Campaign Team

In the context of the political communication strategy, the campaign team of Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani organized their program into four (4) stages: Pre-Campaign, Campaign H-7 Voting, and H+7 Voting. (Arni, 1995)

### a. Pre-Campaign Stage

The pre-campaign program stage involves activities presented and controlled by the election organizing body, in this context, entrusted to the Regional General Election Commission (KPU - Komisi Pemilihan Umum) of Jambi Province through the implementation of a single open debate held on October 24, 2020.

### b. Program During the Campaign

In the campaign phase, the success of the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team was categorized into three types of work programs: face-to-face campaigns, the utilization of social media, mainstream media, online media, and direct but limited open campaigns due to the Covid-19 pandemic. This condition aligns with the statement made by H. Bakrie (2023) during an interview:

"The campaign in the 2020 local elections was very different from previous ones because in the 2020 election, we were facing the Covid-19 pandemic. So, our campaign was very limited, unable to gather large crowds. We focused more on face-to-face meetings and campaigns through social media. All teams moved to every corner to conduct limited campaigns, which were also attended by the candidates. The strategy was to share campaign locations between the Governor and the Vice Governor because of limited time and movement due to the Covid-19 situation. However, the spirit of the entire team was commendable; they worked tirelessly. Interview with H. Bakrie on June 26, 2023."

During the campaign process led by the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair, a series of approaches were implemented to ensure success and persuade the people of Jambi Province at each stage of the campaign. Here are two approaches employed:

#### a) Push Marketing

Push Marketing is a direct marketing process targeting voters. In this strategy, the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team implemented face-to-face campaigns and direct but limited open campaigns. Face-to-face campaigns involved door-to-door meetings with community leaders, dialogues, and interactions with various layers of society and prominent figures in Jambi Province. Open but limited campaigns were conducted at the homes of supporters who provided space for local residents to engage in a dialogue with the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair.

During this stage, Al-Haris divided the electoral districts to be reached en masse. There were two maps dividing the eastern region, specifically managed by Al-Haris, who, being a former civil servant in the eastern region, was considered capable of mobilizing political machinery through colleagues in the bureaucracy in the eastern region. Meanwhile, Abdullah Sani managed the western region, dominated by pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools), making him suitable as he is a renowned NU (Nahdlatul Ulama) cleric in Jambi Province (Sastradipoera, 1994).

Additionally, the crucial role of the endorsing party, especially in the western region, including Tanjab Timur, Tanjab Barat, Muaro Jambi, and Batanghari, was highlighted. This area was heavily influenced by Islamic parties, namely PKB and PAN. PKS dominated voters in the city of Jambi. The coordinated political movements in these areas contributed significantly to Al-Haris's victory.

During limited meetings, Al-Haris listened to the aspirations and complaints of the people to study and find the best solutions. These concerns were then incorporated into the pair's work program. As expressed by Musri Nauli:

"In our campaign, we used a more direct approach by being present in the midst of the community to convey the programs that Al Haris and Abdullah Sani would implement if entrusted by the Jambi community. There were several steps we took at that time. Firstly, we visited community leaders so they would know what the program of the Al Haris pair really was. So, we involved these community leaders more because what they conveyed would be well-received. Secondly, what the campaign team did was involve mothers in the village who had significant influence in their communities. This was the strategy we employed to win Al Haris and Abdullah Sani. Interview with Musri Nauli, Media Center Director, on June 7, 2023."

b) Pull Marketing

Pull Marketing is a political product marketing strategy executed by using mainstream media such as television, newspapers, billboards, and other media advertisements targeting voters. This strategy is commonly employed by candidate pairs, especially in the current era of information and technology advancement, with easy and rapid access to reach voters or the general public. In terms of mass media, social media, and online media, the Al-Haris Abdullah Sani campaign team maximized the use of various media such as leaflets, calendars, and other campaign materials like T-shirts, campaign pins, and stickers for homes and vehicles. The team also maximized the use of online media portals to release information about their activities.

In this strategy, Al-Haris focused on using Facebook and Instagram to secure votes from the youth in Jambi Province. For the Jambi Province youth, Instagram and Facebook are still familiar social media platforms for accessing election information. To capture the attention of young social media users, Al-Haris packaged content in the form of short animated videos that presented the pair's work programs in a simple and easily understandable way for the young people of Jambi Province. Meanwhile, to attract older voters, Al-Haris utilized mainstream media such as television with periodic advertisements since the older generation still accesses information through local television in Jambi Province.

As stated by Musri Nauli (2023):

"The use of social media, online media, and other types of media is crucial for our campaign activities, considering that in the 2020 elections, we were facing the Covid-19 pandemic. So, many voters used social media and online media to follow the 2020 local elections. Additionally, we maximized the use of other media such as banners, billboards, stickers, and TV ads. One unique thing about Al Haris's team that other candidates didn't have was a campaign in the form of a regional song. Moreover, many young people, including students and various communities, voluntarily participated in social media activities without our command. They moved based on their own desires to promote the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair. Interview with Media Center Director Musri Nauli on June 7, 2023."

c) Pass Marketing

Definition of Pass Marketing is a political product marketing strategy through the utilization of secondary figures (secondary figures), namely organizations, institutions, or groups considered to have a positive contribution in gathering the masses.

In facing the 2020 Regional Elections (Pilkada), the campaign team of Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani approached influential figures in the community, both from party figures and other local community figures, who were appointed as campaign spokespeople to persuade voters (Abdul Asri, 2005). For the western region dominated by pesantrens (Islamic boarding schools), the Al-Haris pair appointed KH. Anwar Sadat as a campaign spokesperson because, in addition to being an active regent from the PAN party, KH. Anwar Sadat is an Islamic scholar and the leader of a pesantren, which undoubtedly gives him a close relationship with several figures in the western region. Besides Anwar Sadat, the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair also appointed Abdullah Hick as a mover to secure victory in the western region. Abdullah

Hick is a former two-term regent in Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency and a senior cadre of the PAN party in Tanjung Jabung Timur. His presence is crucial to gaining votes from the community in Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency and the Muhammadiyah community. Meanwhile, for the eastern region, the Al-Haris pair engaged the Himpunan Jawa organization, represented by Bapak Martono, who is the Chairman of the Association of Javanese Community Abroad. This move is essential to secure votes in the eastern region, which is predominantly inhabited by transmigrant communities.

In addition to the individuals mentioned above, the coalition of supporting parties and total supporters includes four parties: PKB (National Awakening Party), PKS (Prosperous Justice Party), PAN (National Mandate Party), and Berkarya Party. These parties supported the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair based on their track record and achievements, as stated by H. Bakrie (2023) in an interview:

"The Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair indeed have characteristics that are attractive, allowing them to attract major parties in the Jambi Province without any doubt. In the end, there were three supporting parties and one supporting party that rallied behind Al Haris, namely the National Mandate Party, PKB, PKS, and the Berkarya Party. The reason we ultimately agreed to support Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani is, first, both of them have a good track record when leading before. Like Mr. Al Haris, his track record of development in Merangin is quite good, and Abdullah Sani, besides being a renowned Islamic figure in the Jambi Province, was also the former Deputy Mayor of Jambi. The two of them are a complete package that is very suitable to lead the Jambi Province." Results of an Interview with the Coalition Chairman, H. Bakrie, on June 26, 2023.



**Figure 6. Al Haris and Abdullah Sani Friendship with the Coalition party**

Source: SigapNews.

In addition, the political marketing pass strategy to figures was also implemented by the successful team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani both from political party figures, Jambi community leaders, from academics and scholars. This condition is in line with the exposure of Robert Samosir's opinion (2023), namely:

"Jambi is a diverse province, so in the campaign we involve many well-known figures to convey the great vision and mission of the Al Haris couple. Starting from figures from political parties such as former Regents, local community leaders of each region, religious leaders are also involved. We believe that when these figures convey messages to the community, they are easily accepted by the community because they already have their own experience and closeness with the bottom community. Without their role, of course what we do is not optimal,

everything works together." Results of Interview with the winning team's expert board, Robert Samosir on June 27, 2023.



**Figure 7. Al Haris and Abdullah Sani  
Together with Jambi Province community leaders**

(Source: radardesa.com)

Another factor that played a role in influencing the victory of Al Haris and Abdul Sani is related to the issue of clean leadership publicized by the community during the regional elections (Pemilukada). The emergence of this issue led to controversy within the community, as the previous governor of Jambi was arrested by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK). This issue gained prominence on social media, with people expressing a desire for Jambi to be free from corruption. Al Haris addressed this issue in an interview session, stating:

"We cannot deny that the issue of corruption has become a very hot topic in the community. When I went down to the field to meet with religious and community leaders, they expressed their concerns or conveyed messages about the condition of Jambi facing the corruption disaster involving the Governor and several members of the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). I assured them that we would be committed to realizing a Jambi Province free from corruption. This is indeed part of our program to clean up our bureaucracy in the future." Results of an interview with Al Haris, Governor of Jambi, on July 5, 2023.

### **c. H-7 Election Day**

During the H-7 election period and the campaign silence period conducted by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair, along with several of their campaign teams, they refrained from engaging in activities that could influence voters. However, their efforts focused on instilling confidence in voters to choose a future leader for Jambi who could bring about tangible change. During the campaign silence period, the Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani pair initiated a campaign to clean their campaign paraphernalia scattered at various points across the entire province of Jambi simultaneously in each district and city. Al Haris (2023) stated:

"I conveyed to my entire team that during the campaign silence period, we must adhere to the applicable regulations and avoid any violations. During this period, we filled our time with positive activities, such as a campaign paraphernalia cleaning movement installed throughout the province of Jambi. I instructed all teams in districts and cities to carry out this



activity simultaneously. This is part of our efforts to realize a safe, peaceful, and clean regional election." Results of an interview with Al Haris on July 5, 2023.



**Figure 8. Campaign team of Al Haris-Abdullah Sani cleaning campaign paraphernalia**  
(Source: <http://Antara News Jambi>)

#### d. H+7 Election Results

During the H+7 period, the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair achieved victory based on the plenary session of the Jambi Provincial Election Commission (KPU) that reported that the candidates were elected as regional leaders with a percentage of votes slightly different from their rivals. This led the team to quickly conduct an evaluation related to the campaign period they had gone through.



**Figure 9.**

**Evaluation meeting of the campaign team of Al-Haris and Abdullah Sani post-election**  
Source: Jernih.id

#### ***Obstacles Faced by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani Campaign Team During the Campaign***

During the campaign period, the pair with ballot number three, the campaign team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani, encountered several obstacles in the field, both internally and externally, in conveying their vision and mission among the public. The obstacles faced were as follows:

##### a. Semantic Factor

In this semantic factor, the obstacle faced was in the process of effectively conveying meaning or ideas to a highly heterogeneous electorate. When the language used is not well understood by the communicant, the message delivery process will not proceed as desired, resulting in ineffective communication. The campaign team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani felt the impact of strong coordination and communication within the campaign team, leading to occasional miscommunication between the leadership and volunteers, as stated by Musri Nauli (2023):

"In the process of this regional election campaign, we are aware that we will encounter obstacles in the field, such as obstacles in the campaign team in the field. There have often been miscoordination and communication issues within the team itself because many people

join, and sometimes there are many opinions, even though the goal is the same. But this becomes a problem because when there is miscommunication within the team, it will affect the work of the campaign team in the field." Results of an interview with the Director of the Media Center, Musri Nauli, on June 4, 2023.

#### **b. Distortion of Perception Factor**

The factor of distorted perception or premature conclusions drawn about others, this factor causes distorted perceptions due to misconceptions resulting from narrow perceptions. The campaign team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani admitted to facing difficulties when trying to communicate a series of programs along with the candidate's vision and mission to novice voters, as encountered in the field where these novice voters had limited knowledge and minimal political education awareness. This certainly had an impact on the campaign process in the field. This situation is in line with the statement made by Musri Nauli (2023):

"At the beginning of the campaign period, we faced difficulties in gaining the votes of young or millennial voters because millennials nowadays access information more from social media. In terms of seeking information about the regional election, they seem less interested in speeches or face-to-face lectures. In the end, we followed their wishes, campaigning for the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair through social media, which is widely used by young voters." Results of an interview with the Director of the Media Center, Musri Nauli, on June 7, 2023.

### **Field Findings Analysis**

#### ***Political Communication Strategy of the Al Haris-Abdullah Sani Campaign Team***

In the political aspect, marketing activities refer to the process of disseminating information related to the party, candidate, and a series of programs implemented by various political actors (communicators). This involves appropriate communication channels aligned with the target orientation, carried out through efforts to change attitudes, perceptions, behaviors, and knowledge of each candidate, synchronized with the informants' desires.

These efforts align with the goals of commercial marketing, involving stages of pricing and planning, promotion, and distribution of various goods and services to facilitate exchanges for the fulfillment of organizational goals and individual desires (Hafied Canggara, 2009). In the subsequent phases of political marketing, four approaches are found: Product, Place, Price, and Promotion.

The elements of the approach implemented by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair in their effort to solidify themselves in the regional head election process in Jambi Province can be examined through Product by conveying the vision and mission of each candidate and a series of promised programs to create a better Jambi in line with their tagline "Jambi MANTAP" (Solid Jambi). One prominent program representing their "product" is the Dumisake Program (Two Billion One Sub-district), where funds from the Jambi Province Regional Budget (APBD) will be allocated to sub-districts, addressing issues like inadequate housing, providing scholarships to the less privileged, supporting SMEs, and providing agricultural tools. This flagship program is what Al Haris and Abdullah Sani are selling to the people of Jambi.

The Place element in the approach utilized by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair to achieve success in the regional election campaign involves the utilization of various media, including social media, mass media, and online platforms. For the younger generation or novice voters, Al Haris' team focuses on using social media platforms such as Facebook and Instagram to promote their programs directly addressing the needs of novice voters, such as scholarship programs.

Next is the Price element applied by the candidate pair, involving efforts to gain party support, whether as the supporting or endorsing party. Al Haris and Abdullah Sani received support from several parties such as the National Awakening Party (PKB), the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), the National Mandate Party (PAN) as endorsing parties with seats in the Jambi Provincial DPRD (Regional People's Representative Council), and the supporting party, the Berkarya Party. The support from PKB, PKS, and PAN proved vital for Al Haris and Abdullah Sani in their campaign activities due to the substantial and massive political machinery of these three parties in the Jambi province, minimizing the campaign costs for the candidate pair.

Finally, the Promotion element in political marketing involves the efforts undertaken by Al Haris and Abdullah Sani's team in designing campaign programs. Political Marketing is a narrower scope within political communication, focusing on strategic, planned, and systematic activities in the short and long term. Its primary orientation is to disseminate political meaning to each voter (Hamad, 2008). To win the regional election, candidates and their campaign teams must establish mature and accurate strategies to achieve their ultimate goal. This aims to instill and shape the attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and hopes of voters, hoping they will lend support through various dimensions and, especially, focus their choice on a particular candidate.

Political Marketing approaches according to Lees-Marshment's model, as described by Nursal (2008), include Product Oriented Party (POP), Sales Oriented Party (SOP), and Market Oriented Party (MOP). From the research conducted by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team during the previous regional election campaign, it can be identified that their marketing strategy applied the Sales Oriented Party approach.

This approach is represented by the campaign's design and strategy implemented by the candidate pair through observations and the team's confidence. Additionally, the research analyzed from the interview results indicated that the campaign team did not initially involve market research. Several ideas originated from the internal concept level and were then campaigned to each voter to provide them with the intended image. During the campaign period, the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team implemented three campaign programs: face-to-face campaigns, campaigns through social media, and direct limited open campaigns (limited open meeting campaigns). Furthermore, the formation of volunteers aimed to support the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair was based on community initiatives, working under the coordination of the campaign team to support the candidates' success.

Nursal classifies three strategies that candidate pairs can use to implement political marketing: Push Marketing, Pull Marketing, and Pass Marketing (Nursal, 2008). The Al Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team, in their campaign process, focused more on the Push Marketing strategy. In this context, it can be observed through active participation from both the candidate pair and their campaign team, volunteers, and community figures in door-to-door campaigning, followed by dialogical meetings and audiences with various people and figures in Jambi. They also conducted visits to several markets in the Jambi province. They then organized communal events. The Pull Marketing strategy employed by the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair consisted of two types: mass media and online media, with social media accounts such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter being prominent. Finally, in the Pass Marketing phase, the success team applied a strategy by involving campaign speakers from various parties to provide support and endorse the pair, comprising four parties and using campaign speakers from local figures, community figures, academic figures, and not forgetting religious scholars deemed to have high selling points to attract and convince the people of Jambi to choose Al Haris and Abdullah Sani as the leaders of Jambi Province during the 2020-2024 period.

The issue of a clean Jambi, which became a pro-contra matter among the people of Jambi, especially on social media, was not caused by the campaign team but arose due to public sentiment. Based on the research findings, these issues were not created to ease the path to victory but were a result of the trust placed in Al Haris and Abdullah Sani by the people of Jambi to win the 2020 regional election.

### ***Barriers and Opportunities for Political Communication of the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani Campaign Team***

The aspect of noise is defined as characteristics closely related to communication that can interfere with and alter the perception of a message, causing the communication goals to not proceed smoothly. According to Muhamad Mufid in his book "Communication Regulation and Broadcasting," the definition of noise is the overall aspects that can lead to message deviation or hinder message reception (Muhamad Mufid, 2005).

During the political communication delivery throughout the campaign period, obstacles were consistently encountered when providing information related to the candidates' work programs and vision-mission. The Al Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team also faced a series of obstacles both internally and externally. Internal obstacles included Semantic Factors, such as the lack of solid coordination and communication among the winning team, leading to misunderstandings among volunteers and organizers. External obstacles encountered in the field included perceptual distortion, i.e., misconceptions caused by narrow thinking of novice voters or their lack of political education.

#### **1) Semantic Barriers**

In delivering political communication during the campaign period, of course, there are always obstacles in providing information related to the work program and vision and mission of the candidate couple. The winning team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani also found several obstacles on the field both internally and externally. Internal constraints are Semantic Factors, namely, the lack of solid coordination and communication between the winning team, so that several times there have been communication misses between management and volunteers. While the external obstacles encountered in the field are distortions of perception, namely errors caused by the narrow thinking of novice voters or the lack of political education they get.

#### **2) Perception Barriers**

The factor of perceptual errors or premature conclusions about others is one of the factors causing perceptual distortion. The confusion is caused by narrow thinking in forming perceptions but is not accompanied by an open mind to see the causality of the encountered facts. The Al Haris and Abdullah Sani campaign team admitted to facing considerable difficulty in conveying programs, vision, and mission to novice voters, as many novice voters did not understand and lacked education about political education.

### ***Political Communication Opportunities***

Meanwhile, the opportunity for the winning team lies not only in the public's interest in the vision and mission of the candidate pair but also in the simplicity of both figures in the midst of society. Moreover, the fact that Al Haris's partner is a renowned NU cleric in the Jambi Province makes it easier to build political communication among NU followers in the province. Additionally, the opportunity for the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair lies in the highly competent political marketing movement that can contribute significantly to the votes compared to their opponents.



## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings presented in this thesis, the following conclusions can be drawn: In the political communication strategy implemented by the campaign team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani in the 2020 Jambi Provincial Election, the team utilized a political marketing approach. They organized their team's work program into four stages: 1. Pre-campaign period, 2. Campaign period, 3. H - 7 Voting day, and 4. H+7 Post-election. During the campaign period, the campaign team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani divided their work program into three components: face-to-face campaigns, campaigns using social media, and direct but limited open campaigns (in the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic). One key factor that contributed to the success of this pair and attracted the people of Jambi Province was the Dumisake program (Two Billion One Subdistrict), which resonated with voters. The Dumisake program directly addressed basic community needs such as decent housing, free higher education for low-income families, and support for micro, small, and medium enterprises (UMKM). Additionally, the pair was perceived as simple and close to the lower-class community. Al Haris, born into bureaucracy, was accustomed to serving the people, while his partner Abdullah Sani was a renowned religious leader known for a simple life and closeness to his congregation.

Meanwhile, in facing obstacles or challenges experienced by the campaign team of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani in the field, including semantic factors, such as the lack of integration of coordination and communication among the success team, leading to frequent misunderstandings among volunteers and organizers. Another factor is the distortion of perception due to the lack of political education among young voters, making it challenging to convey the work program, vision, and mission to these voters. An opportunity for the campaign team lies in the public's interest in the vision and mission, as well as the track record of the Al Haris and Abdullah Sani pair, considered suitable to lead Jambi Province. The campaign also benefited from a highly effective and massive political marketing movement led by political figures, local community leaders, religious leaders, traditional leaders, and youth leaders, contributing to the victory of Al Haris and Abdullah Sani in the 2020 Jambi Provincial Election.

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