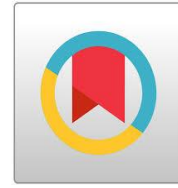


Food for Thought: Rido’s Culinary-Inspired Platform Branding in Jakarta’s 2024 Gubernatorial Campaign



Inspirasi Kuliner dalam Branding Program Kerja Rido pada Kampanye Pilgub Jakarta 2024

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ARTICLE INFORMATION

<p>Keywords <i>Political Branding; Campaign Strategy; Food Metaphors; Jakarta Gubernatorial Election; Political Communication;</i></p>	<p>ABSTRACT <i>This study examines the innovative culinary-inspired policy branding strategy employed by the Ridwan Kamil-Suswono (RIDO) campaign in Jakarta’s 2024 gubernatorial race. Using food-related acronyms for their flagship programs, RIDO aimed to make complex policy ideas more accessible and memorable to Jakarta’s voters. The study analyzes eight creative program names, each forming an acronym of a popular Indonesian dish, designed to capture attention and create positive associations with RIDO’s policy agenda. This approach simplifies policy communication and fosters a sense of local pride and cultural identity. The study explores how this strategy reflects an understanding of Jakarta’s multicultural fabric and may help the campaign appeal to diverse communities. Furthermore, it investigates how this culinary branding serves as a unique form of political communication, potentially increasing voter engagement and recall of key campaign promises. The study considers the effectiveness of this approach in the context of Jakarta’s reputation as a culinary hub and evaluates its potential impact on voter perceptions and campaign success.</i></p>
<p>Kata Kunci <i>Pencitraan Politik; Strategi Kampanye; Metafora Makanan; Pilgub Jakarta; Komunikasi Politik;</i></p>	<p>ABSTRAK <i>Penelitian ini mengkaji strategi inovatif branding kebijakan terinspirasi kuliner yang digunakan oleh kampanye Ridwan Kamil-Suswono (RIDO) dalam pemilihan gubernur Jakarta 2024. Dengan memanfaatkan akronim terkait makanan untuk program unggulan mereka, RIDO bertujuan membuat ide-ide kebijakan kompleks lebih mudah diakses dan diingat oleh pemilih Jakarta. Riset ini menganalisis delapan nama program kreatif, masing-masing membentuk akronim dari hidangan Indonesia populer, yang dirancang untuk menarik perhatian dan menciptakan asosiasi positif dengan agenda kebijakan RIDO. Pendekatan ini tidak hanya menyederhanakan komunikasi kebijakan tetapi juga menumbuhkan rasa kebanggaan lokal dan identitas budaya. Studi ini mengeksplorasi bagaimana strategi tersebut mencerminkan pemahaman tentang keragaman budaya Jakarta dan dapat membantu kampanye menarik berbagai komunitas. Selanjutnya, penelitian ini menyelidiki bagaimana branding kuliner ini berfungsi sebagai bentuk komunikasi politik yang unik, berpotensi meningkatkan keterlibatan pemilih dan ingatan terhadap janji-janji kampanye utama. Penelitian ini mempertimbangkan efektivitas pendekatan ini dalam konteks reputasi Jakarta sebagai pusat kuliner dan mengevaluasi potensi dampaknya terhadap persepsi pemilih dan keberhasilan kampanye.</i></p>
<p>Article History Send 31st December 2024 Review 14th January 2024 Accepted 20th January 2024</p>	<p>Copyright ©2024 Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora) This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC-SA license. Akses artikel terbuka dengan model CC-BY-NC-SA sebagai lisensinya.</p>



Introduction

Political communication in electoral campaigns represents structured attempts to influence specific groups' decision-making processes (Juditha, 2019). In the context of the 2024 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election, candidates Ridwan Kamil and Suswono (RIDO) demonstrated this principle through an innovative approach to delivering their campaign messages. Their strategy exemplified how political communication fundamentally involves messages conveyed by political actors for specific purposes (Saptanti, 2020). Political campaigns increasingly employ creative branding strategies to differentiate themselves and create memorable associations with voters (Needham & Smith, 2015). RIDO's campaign distinguished itself through a distinctive culinary-inspired policy branding strategy, where political promises were delivered through food-themed policy programs, presenting complex issues to the public in a relatable, appetizing format (Fatimah, 2018). This strategic approach served their primary objective as candidates: to persuade voters and gain electoral support (Dhani, 2019). The timing of their campaign coincided with Indonesia's broader political landscape, as the country conducted simultaneous regional elections in 2024 (Patria et al., 2024). While the Jakarta gubernatorial race, like other regional contests, witnessed various political maneuvers and strategic rivalries (Rizal, 2022), RIDO's food-themed approach emerged as a notably innovative strategy in political communication. Culinary politics involves contests over social organization and cultural meanings of food by various actors, making it an effective tool for political communication. Food governance and culinary politics are crucial concepts for researchers examining how individuals and groups construct their identities through food (Chan & Farrer, 2021).

Electoral events rely on political messages to engage voters and shape their decision-making processes (Briandana, 2019; Triono et al., 2018). Candidates communicate these messages to voters through multiple channels, including print media, social media, and outdoor advertising (Briandana, 2019; Budianto & Erlita, 2020). While the core purpose of political messaging is to enhance voter understanding and generate behavioral influence through discourse (Triono et al., 2018), effective political communication goes beyond making promises. Leaders must excel at delivering messages while building authentic connections with constituents through strategic community engagement (Ahmad & Popa, 2014). In this context, political branding emerges as a critical tool for creating distinctive characteristics that set candidates apart in the electoral landscape (Aspinall & Mietzner, 2019). Political branding has become increasingly significant in electoral campaigns, with candidates dedicating considerable resources to develop distinctive brand identities that

resonate with voters (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Political branding differs from commercial branding because it shapes voter perceptions and drives electoral behavior rather than generating profits. Political branding requires sophisticated marketing strategies that carefully segment and target different audience groups based on societal stratification factors, including age, education, occupation, economic status, and cultural context. For maximum effectiveness, these messaging strategies must integrate politicians' track records, empirical data on public issues, current societal concerns, and concrete policy proposals (Pratama et al., 2021).

Political communication strategies must be carefully tailored to different audience segments, accounting for societal stratification and cultural context (Abid et al., 2023). The 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election commanded exceptional attention, surpassing other regional polls due to the capital's political significance. As Indonesia's most populous urban center, Jakarta's electoral dynamics offered crucial insights into the effectiveness of campaign message delivery, particularly in how candidates communicate complex policies to diverse constituents. Political analysts viewed the race as a key indicator of candidates' ability to connect with voters, with RIDO's innovative food-inspired campaign strategy drawing particular scrutiny (Guridno, 2024). Food's growing importance in Southeast Asian political communication and identity formation has given rise to this culinary approach to political messaging (Solleh, 2015). Food is increasingly significant in shaping public perception and cultural identity in contemporary political landscapes, particularly in Asian contexts (Chan & Farrer, 2021). The culinary-focused strategy aligns with broader regional trends, as gastronomy has proven to be an effective tool for strengthening political relationships and fostering cultural understanding across Asia. This phenomenon reflects a larger pattern where Asian culinary globalization has paralleled the trans-nationalization of Asian culinary politics, with various stakeholders - from individuals to industry players and state authorities - promoting Asian cuisine as a vehicle for cultural diplomacy, emphasizing its spiritual traditions and exotic flavors (Chan & Farrer, 2021; Zhang, 2015). Within this context, the delivery of candidates' vision and mission emerged as a critical factor, transforming abstract concepts into concrete, politically measurable work programs tailored to voters' needs (Humaidi, 2022). RIDO's campaign addressed the challenge of effectively communicating its platform to Jakarta's diverse electorate by balancing broad policy goals with specific, actionable promises, all presented through familiar culinary metaphors. The success of their message delivery ultimately depended on providing relevant information

about their competencies and proposed programs, meeting the electorate's desire for substantive policy offerings in an accessible, palatable format (Dhani, 2019).

Strategic communication in culinary promotion has become crucial for effectively navigating public perception and cultural representation (Widjanarko et al., 2024). In their campaign strategy, RIDO developed a distinctive culinary-inspired policy branding approach. Their creative proposals included BAKWAN (Bangun Kota Rawat Lingkungan), which addressed environmental concerns, and ASINAN (Agenda Solusi Hujan Aman), which targeted flood management solutions. While these food-themed acronyms were designed to make complex urban issues more accessible to voters, the campaign faced significant challenges in platform differentiation. Gastropolitical encounters shape political leaders' political and socioeconomic positioning (Low, 2021). The similarity in policy promises among candidates made it difficult for RIDO to establish a unique position in the electoral landscape. Even with powerful endorsements from President-elect Prabowo Subianto and outgoing President Jokowi, the campaign encountered messaging consistency issues. Internal team members expressed uncertainty about the effectiveness of these high-profile endorsements, highlighting a broader communication challenge. This struggle was particularly evident in Jakarta's sophisticated political environment, where successful campaigns must simultaneously resonate with multiple elite groups while engaging an increasingly politically astute electorate.

Political branding strategies are essential for parties to develop distinct, attractive, and appealing political products that resonate with voters (Farhan et al., 2020). The 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election offers a unique lens for academic analysis, presenting distinct sociopolitical dynamics that set it apart from the 2017 gubernatorial race and the 2019 general elections. Jakarta's electorate exhibits a notable dichotomy: while a considerable portion demonstrates sophisticated policy awareness, a significant segment continues to base their voting decisions primarily on candidates' religious identities, socio-cultural values, and public appeal rather than concrete policy proposals. This phenomenon was particularly evident in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election, where candidates' public personas and religious backgrounds emerged as decisive factors in voter decision-making (Romli & Nurlia, 2023). Despite Jakarta's position as Indonesia's former capital and its comparatively elevated educational standards, voter preferences remain strongly influenced by candidates' charisma and perceived alignment with local values, often overshadowing detailed policy platforms. This voting pattern illuminates the intricate balance between traditional value systems and modern political considerations within Jakarta's electoral landscape, effectively positioning

the city as a microcosm of Indonesia's broader political dynamics. These conditions ultimately shaped the electoral environment, prompting candidates like RIDO to develop innovative campaign strategies, such as culinary-inspired branding, to enhance their appeal and memorability among voters.

In the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election, RIDO developed a distinctive campaign strategy by packaging its political platform through food-themed programs. This innovative approach was designed to make complex policy messages accessible to all segments of society, particularly those with lower educational backgrounds, while maintaining the substance of their political agenda. The strategy aligned with evolving trends in Indonesian political communication, where digital platforms have become increasingly central to campaign success. Recent studies of Jakarta's electoral landscape have focused on how campaign teams utilize social media platforms to deliver political messages (Ismawani et al., 2021; Krisnanto & Fitriyah, 2019; Lestari, 2019; Murwani, 2018). Through digital outreach, Jakarta's campaign has effectively connected with young voters, a key demographic shaping the city's electoral landscape (Adila, 2019). RIDO's culinary-themed branding reinforced their digital outreach by delivering consistent, memorable messages while their programs directly tackled Jakarta's challenges and met residents' needs.

Political brand management requires careful tailoring of message packaging to different audience segments, considering various factors, including cultural context and societal stratification (Farhan et al., 2020). This study investigates the innovative campaign strategy employed by Ridwan Kamil and Suswono (RIDO) in the 2024 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election, focusing on their distinctive use of culinary-inspired policy branding. Food and culinary traditions are potent tools for building political relationships and fostering cultural understanding, particularly in Asia (Syahrial & Anjarsari, 2023). In Jakarta's post-capital relocation context, RIDO's campaign team developed a unique approach by packaging complex policy proposals through food-themed programs, making them more accessible to the city's diverse electorate. In complex political landscapes, candidates must deliver clear messages that resonate with elite groups and informed voters. While traditional political messaging often struggles to engage voters less interested in detailed policy discussions, RIDO's food-inspired branding strategy offered a novel solution by leveraging Jakarta's rich culinary culture to communicate its vision for the city's future. Using familiar cultural references and metaphors in political communication can enhance message retention and voter engagement, particularly in environments where campaigns must compete for limited attention spans. This innovative approach to political branding reflects the evolving nature of

campaign communication, where candidates must find creative ways to establish psychological connections with voters (Gutiérrez-Rodríguez et al., 2023). Through this innovative approach, the campaign aimed to bridge the gap between comprehensive urban policy solutions and voter engagement, using the universal language of food to make their platform more relatable and memorable to Jakarta's residents.

Method

This study employs a qualitative method with descriptive analytics to examine RIDO's culinary-inspired policy branding in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial campaign. Qualitative approaches are valuable for analyzing innovative political communication strategies and understanding how meaning is constructed through campaign messaging. The study design prioritizes interpretive analysis to capture the nuanced ways political actors use cultural references and metaphors in their campaign communications. This approach allows for a deep examination of how culinary metaphors function as tools for political persuasion and voter engagement. Data collection involves content analysis of campaign materials, media coverage, and relevant documents, focusing on RIDO's food-themed policy proposals and branding strategies. The study examines RIDO's creative use of culinary metaphors and local food references in its campaign messaging, including its eight flagship programs with food-inspired acronyms such as BAKWAN, KUE PUTU, LAKSA, and SEMUR. This method aligns with recent scholarship emphasizing how cultural elements like food can be strategically deployed in political communication (Chan & Farrer, 2021).

The study also investigates how these culinary-themed policies are communicated across various platforms, including social media, campaign events, and traditional media. This multi-platform analysis helps reveal how food-inspired political branding operates across different communication contexts (Zhang, 2015). Additionally, the study considers how these food-inspired policy brands resonate with varying demographics of voters in Jakarta, recognizing that culinary politics involves contests over social organization and cultural meanings of food by various actors (Chan & Farrer, 2021). Data analysis follows an interpretive approach, comprising thematic coding, comparative analysis, and contextual interpretation, to provide insights into the effectiveness and cultural resonance of RIDO's culinary-inspired policy branding in the Jakarta electoral context. This analytical framework allows for examining explicit and implicit meanings in political messaging, which is particularly important when studying innovative communication strategies.

Literatur Review

Political messages are a cornerstone of electoral processes, functioning as essential for voter engagement and decision-making (Anshori et al., 2021; Matlock, 2012). These messages flow through multiple channels, creating an interconnected network of communication that spans direct candidate interactions, print media, social media platforms, and outdoor advertising mediums. While their primary purpose is to enhance voter understanding and generate meaningful discourse that shapes voting behavior, political messages transcend simple promise-making. As Reyes (2015) emphasizes, effective political communicators must demonstrate proficiency in message delivery and establish credible connections with their audience (Anshori et al., 2021). This dual requirement necessitates adopting persuasive approaches, including tribal strategies that resonate with constituents. In this context, strategic communication emerges as a critical factor in managing the portrayal of cultural and political legacies, particularly when incorporating local cultural elements into political messaging frameworks (Widjanarko et al., 2024).

The relationship between voters and political brands fundamentally mirrors customer-brand relationships in commercial contexts, where brand relationship quality is a critical construct for understanding evaluation processes. In the political sphere, branding has emerged as a central focus of marketing efforts, with parties investing significant resources to develop distinctive identities that genuinely resonate with their target voters. These strategic branding efforts increase political parties' competitive advantage by making their political products more distinct, attractive, and appealing to their constituents (Farhan et al., 2020). While commercial branding aims primarily at profit generation, political branding's core purpose lies in shaping constituent perceptions and establishing evident differentiating characteristics that distinguish candidates in voters' minds. This creative approach to policy presentation enables candidates to stand out effectively in crowded electoral fields while establishing unique political positions (Mulyani, 2021). The true significance of political branding extends beyond mere differentiation - it provides symbolic value, influences public perceptions, and fosters emotional connections between politicians and constituents, making it an indispensable strategic element in modern campaign efforts (Suryawati, 2021).

Political marketing strategies demand sophisticated message packaging tailored to diverse audience segments across societal strata. This segmentation process accounts for multiple demographic variables, including age, education, occupation, economic status, and cultural context, all while integrating politicians' track records, empirical data on public issues, current societal concerns, and proposed policy solutions. In examining the 2017

Jakarta gubernatorial election, Krisnanto and Fitriyah (2019) documented how campaign teams developed parallel content strategies specifically targeting millennial and young voter demographics, emphasizing creative visual elements, entertainment value, accessibility, and age-appropriate language while maintaining political relevance through the integration of factual data and past achievements. This strategic approach to political communication has evolved alongside broader global trends, particularly in how food and culinary elements transcend traditional communication barriers. In today's era of increased mobility, globalization, and technological connectivity, food has emerged as a universal language, leading to the rise of 'gastro diplomacy' as an influential cultural diplomacy tool for nation-building and nation-branding initiatives (Tamba et al., 2024). The effectiveness of this approach is particularly evident in Asian contexts, where food and culinary references have proven to be powerful instruments for fostering political relationships and cultural understanding (Puspita et al., 2023).

Results and Discussion

Program Creative Branding

The message delivery of Ridwan Kamil and Suswono's (RIDO) campaign in the 2024 Jakarta Gubernatorial Election focused on three key aspects: supporting material, message visualization, and emotional appeal. Their campaign strategy leveraged Ridwan Kamil's track record as the former mayor of Bandung and governor of West Java, presenting him as an experienced leader capable of transforming Jakarta. This approach was encapsulated in their slogan "*Jakarta Baru, Jakarta Maju*" ("New Jakarta, Progressive Jakarta"), which aimed to resonate with voters by promising a fresh vision for the city's future post-capital relocation. The pair outlined their vision to transform Jakarta into a global city while enhancing public services and tackling urban challenges. To reach diverse constituent groups, they communicated this agenda through multiple channels - social media, community gatherings, and direct voter outreach. Culinary politics involves contests over the social organization and cultural meanings of food by various actors, both civil and state, the powerful and the grassroots (Chan & Farrer, 2021). A crucial aspect was using strategic communication to control how the local culinary legacy is portrayed online. The rationale behind this phenomenon has been expounded upon by marketing experts, who have provided examples of how strategic communication has prevented misinterpretations or reduced conflicts arising from culinary modifications (Widjanarko et al., 2024).

Ridwan Kamil and Suswono (RIDO) leveraged their executive experience as a key strength in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial race. Their campaign message delivery focused on Ridwan Kamil's image as a creative leader, which served as a unique selling point. The pair employed a multi-faceted approach to reach voters, including direct engagement through impromptu visits ("*blusukan*"), targeting community leaders, organizing events like morning exercises, and leveraging social media. Strategic communication is crucial in controlling how local culinary legacy is portrayed and preventing misinterpretations in digital spaces (Widjanarko et al., 2024). This strategy aimed to appeal to a broad demographic, including Gen Z voters. RIDO's campaign platform centered on reimagining Jakarta's post-capital relocation, emphasizing urban redevelopment, social housing, and community empowerment. Their promise of allocating Rp 200 million per RW per year was a cornerstone of their message, aimed at addressing local issues and empowering communities to design their development plans.

A campaign message is a tool for candidates and teams to keep them focused. Political strategists use the words 'theme' and 'message' differently and sometimes interchangeably. A campaign theme includes issues that capture voters' enthusiasm, embrace what voters wish, and define the candidate or issue-based campaign. At the same time, a campaign message is a single idea, a rational implementation to bring the campaign theme to the voters that cut through to the affective level (Shaw, 2018). People as political communicants may not get the political message through ideas, thoughts, information, and feelings if the communicator does not use an equally understood symbol. They will efficiently and quickly understand messages, which is one of the advantages of statements made from verbal communication (Pureklolon, 2016).

As the national political barometer, Jakarta has a pluralistic society oriented to the job, so the voters are not only attracted to the promise of the campaign and the physical figure but also aspects of the track record and the pattern of political communications become a crucial consideration (Susanto, 2017, p. 319). Candidates successfully provided their campaign themes as concrete ideas and solutions in national election debates. These can also be innovative programs implemented nationally in time (Ardipandanto, 2019). A factor in candidates winning is their campaign's theme: vision, mission, and programs are groundbreaking, innovative, and rational. Their political promise was toned differently, while other candidates were old-fashioned in designing Jakarta development programs.

The campaign team of Ridwan Kamil and Suswono (RIDO) conveyed a message centered on their vision for Jakarta's future, adopting the tagline "*Jakarta Baru, Jakarta*

Maju” (“New Jakarta, Progressive Jakarta”) as their positioning statement. This slogan reflected their aim to redefine Jakarta’s role after it ceased to be the capital city. Political branding has become central to political marketing, as parties dedicate considerable resources to develop and promote their political brand to gain voter support (Farhan et al., 2020). The campaign team translated their mission into eight flagship programs, creatively named after popular Indonesian dishes to make them more memorable and relatable to the public. These included BAKWAN (Bangun Kota Rawat Lingkungan), KUE PUTU (Ke mana Pun Irit dan Hemat Waktu), LAKSA (Pelatihan Siap Kerja), PETIS (Pendidikan Dasar/Menengah Gratis), ASINAN (Agenda Solusi Hujan Aman), RUJAK (Rumah Terjangkau dan Terpadu), KETUPAT (Kredit Tanpa Bunga Akses Cepat), and SEMUR (Sembako Murah). This approach aimed to make their campaign promises more accessible and manageable for voters to remember while addressing key issues such as urban development, transportation, education, housing, and economic empowerment.

The Ridwan Kamil-Suswono (RIDO) campaign employed innovative policy branding in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial race by utilizing culinary-inspired acronyms for their flagship programs. This strategy aimed to make their policy platform more memorable and relatable to Jakarta’s voters who are known for their love of food. The campaign introduced eight creative program names, each forming an acronym of a popular Indonesian dish or food item. These culinary-inspired program names were designed to capture attention and create positive associations with RIDO’s policy agenda. By leveraging Jakarta’s rich food culture, the campaign sought to make complex policy ideas more digestible for the average voter. Culinary politics involves contests over social organization and cultural meanings of food by various actors, making it an effective tool for political communication (Chan & Farrer, 2021). The cultural competition among nation-states, regions, and cities for influence and fame has also resulted in state programs that advance national, regional, and local cuisines within a global culinary field (Chan & Farrer, 2021).

This approach aligns with previous political communication studies, suggesting that using familiar concepts and metaphors can help simplify policy messages and increase voter engagement. Strategic communication is crucial in controlling how messages are portrayed and preventing misinterpretations arising from cultural modifications (Widjanarko et al., 2024). Food-related branding is particularly apt in Jakarta, given the city’s reputation as a culinary hub. The RIDO campaign’s culinary-inspired policy branding covered various issues, from environmental concerns to economic development. Each program name formed a memorable acronym and encapsulated the policy’s essence. This clever wordplay served

dual purposes: making the policies more straightforward to remember and creating a sense of local flavor in the campaign messaging. Below is a table outlining the eight flagship programs introduced by the RIDO campaign, showcasing their culinary-inspired names and the policy areas they address:

Table 1 RIDO’s Culinary-Inspired Policy Programs for Jakarta’s 2024 Gubernatorial Campaign

Program Name	Full Name	Policy Area	Description
BAKWAN	Bangun Kota Rawat Lingkungan	Environmental Development	Comprehensive urban environmental program focusing on green infrastructure and sustainable city development.
KUE PUTU	Kemana Pun Irit dan Hemat Waktu	Transportation	An energy-efficient public transportation system is designed to reduce travel time and costs across Jakarta.
LAKSA	Pelatihan Siap Kerja	Workforce Development	Comprehensive job training program to enhance workforce capabilities and employment readiness.
PETIS	Pendidikan Dasar/Menengah Gratis	Education	Free access to quality primary and secondary education for all Jakarta residents.
ASINAN	Agenda Solusi Hujan Aman	Flood Management	Integrated flood prevention and management system to address Jakarta’s flooding challenges.
RUJAK	Rumah Terjangkau dan Terpadu	Housing	Integrated affordable housing program to improve residential access for Jakarta citizens.
KETUPAT	Kredit Tanpa Bunga Akses Cepat	Financial Access	Interest-free microcredit program with streamlined access for small businesses and entrepreneurs.
SEMUR	Sembako Murah	Food Security	Subsidized necessities program to ensure affordable food access for residents.

(Source: Data from "Campaign Platform Document" by Ridwan Kamil-Suswono Campaign Team, 2024, ridwankamil-suswono.id)

Political branding provides knowledge about voter’s choices, preferences, and behavior to help parties design their political platforms to achieve desired results (Farhan et al., 2020). Programs mentioned in Table 1.1 cover a wide range of issues, including environment, transportation, employment, education, flood management, housing, financial access, and food security, all aimed at improving the quality of life for Jakarta residents. Ridwan Kamil-Suswono (RIDO) campaign creatively used food-themed names for their key programs to connect with Jakarta’s diverse population. This approach leverages the symbolic

power of culinary traditions to unite different cultural groups within the city. Food and the symbols it represents can be used to communicate ideas, values, identities, attitudes, and other social classes (Puspita et al., 2023). Food evokes and marks culture and identity while serving as a medium to overcome differences and soften hard emotions in politics. Strategic communication is crucial in controlling how local culinary legacy is portrayed and preventing misinterpretations or conflicts arising from culinary modifications (Widjanarko et al., 2024). The campaign's core message addressed Jakarta's pressing urban challenges, particularly in the post-capital relocation era. RIDO's platform emphasized creating a "New Jakarta" ("*Jakarta Baru*") that balances economic growth with quality of life improvements. Their key promises included tackling traffic congestion (KUE PUTU), flood management (ASINAN), affordable housing (RUJAK), and economic empowerment through micro-credit programs (KETUPAT). By framing complex urban issues using familiar food names, RIDO aimed to make its policy proposals more accessible and memorable to voters across Jakarta's socioeconomic spectrum. This branding strategy served multiple purposes: increased memorability, cultural resonance, simplification of complex ideas, and differentiation. Brand management strategies increase political parties' competitive advantage by making their political products distinct, attractive, and appealing (Farhan et al., 2020).

Memorability of Food-Inspired Messaging

RIDO's use of food-inspired acronyms for their flagship programs demonstrates a creative approach to policy branding that leverages Jakarta's rich culinary culture. The campaign taps into the city's collective memory and cultural identity by associating complex policy initiatives with familiar local dishes. This strategy likely enhances the memorability of their policy platform among voters. Food and its symbolic representation can communicate ideas, values, identities, and attitudes (Zhang, 2015).

The acronyms BAKWAN, KUE PUTU, LAKSA, PETIS, ASINAN, RUJAK, KETUPAT, and SEMUR derive from popular Indonesian dishes or food items, making them instantly recognizable to Jakarta residents. Food has become increasingly central to defining urban identities and branding places (Joassart-Marcelli & Bosco, 2024). Using familiar cultural references and food metaphors in political communication can enhance message retention and voter engagement (Luša & Jakešević, 2017; Wulandari, 2020). This familiarity may help voters recall the associated policies more quickly than if presented with traditional, bureaucratic program names.



Figure 1. ASINAN (Agenda Solusi Hujan Aman) and RUJAK (Rumah Terjangkau dan Terpadu) Campaign Programs Addressing Flooding and Housing Issues in Jakarta.

(Source: E-book "Vision, Mission, and Programs of RIDO" by Ridwan Kamil-Suswono Campaign Team, 2024, ridwankamil-suswono.id)

The use of culinary metaphors in RIDO's campaign serves to simplify complex policy ideas, making them more digestible for the average voter. This aligns with Mio's (1997) argument that metaphors are crucial in simplifying complex ideas by associating them with more tangible concepts, aiding voter comprehension (Petrović, 2024). For instance, ASINAN (Agenda Solusi Hujan Aman), which addresses Jakarta's perennial flooding issues, draws a clever parallel between the pickled fruit dish and the city's water management challenges. Similarly, RUJAK (Rumah Terjangkau dan Terpadu) likens the mixed fruit salad to an integrated approach to affordable housing, as shown in Figure 1. This food-inspired messaging strategy may be particularly effective in Jakarta, where food is central to daily life and social interactions. By framing its policies within this culinary context, RIDO's campaign creates a sense of local authenticity and cultural resonance that could strengthen its connection with voters.

Moreover, using these food-inspired acronyms in campaign materials and speeches may facilitate word-of-mouth dissemination of RIDO's policy platform. Voters might find it easier and more engaging to discuss these creatively named programs with friends and family, potentially increasing the reach and impact of the campaign's messaging. This strategy resonates with Charteris-Black's (2011) observation that metaphors in political context are frequently used for ideological purposes since they activate unconscious emotional associations and thereby contribute to myth creation (Petrović, 2024). However, while this approach may enhance memorability, it is essential to consider whether it also

effectively communicates the substance of the policies. The challenge for RIDO's campaign will be to ensure that voters not only remember the catchy food-inspired names but also understand and engage with the policy proposals behind them. In the context of political communication study, RIDO's strategy aligns with theories suggesting that using familiar cultural references and metaphors can enhance message retention and persuasion. This approach may be particularly relevant in an era of information overload, where campaigns must compete for voters' limited attention spans. Overall, RIDO's culinary-inspired policy branding represents an innovative attempt to make its campaign platform more memorable and relatable to Jakarta's voters. By leveraging the city's food culture, they have created a unique messaging framework that sets their campaign apart in the crowded field of Jakarta's gubernatorial race.

Cultural Connections Through Culinary Branding

RIDO's culinary-inspired policy branding strategy demonstrates a creative approach to connecting with Jakarta's diverse population through familiar food references. Using popular local dishes as acronyms for their flagship programs, the campaign taps into the city's rich culinary heritage and creates an immediate cultural resonance with voters. Strategic communication is crucial in controlling how local culinary legacy is portrayed and preventing misinterpretations or conflicts arising from culinary modifications (Widjanarko et al., 2024).

The use of food-inspired names like LAKSA (*Pelatihan Siap Kerja*) for workforce development and PETIS (*Pendidikan Dasar/Menengah Gratis*) for education initiatives showcases how the campaign leverages Jakarta's food culture to make complex policy proposals more accessible and memorable, as shown in Figure 2. These culinary references serve as mnemonic devices, helping voters easily recall and associate specific policies with familiar dishes they encounter daily. LAKSA, a popular noodle dish in Jakarta, becomes a metaphor for equipping the workforce with the necessary ingredients (skills) to thrive in the job market. Similarly, PETIS, a fermented shrimp paste commonly used as a condiment, represents the campaign's commitment to enhancing the flavor of Jakarta's education system by making it more accessible and flavorful for all residents.



Figure 2. LAKSA (Pelatihan Siap Kerja) and PETIS (Pendidikan (Dasar/Menengah) Gratis) Campaign Programs Strengthening Workforce Skills and Education Access in Jakarta

(Source: E-book "Vision, Mission, and Programs of RIDO" by Ridwan Kamil-Suswono Campaign Team, 2024, ridwankamil-suswono.id)

This culinary branding approach simplifies policy communication and fosters a sense of local pride and identity. By anchoring its proposals in Jakarta's food culture, RIDO's campaign creates an emotional connection with voters, presenting their vision for the city's future through a lens that is both familiar and cherished by its residents. Food and the symbols it represents can be used to communicate ideas, values, identities, attitudes, and different social classes (Puspita et al., 2023). Food has the 'power' and influence to soften hardliners and move people to the tables. It evokes and marks culture and identity while serving as a medium to overcome differences and soften hard emotions in politics (Chan & Farrer, 2021). The strategy also reflects an understanding of Jakarta's multicultural fabric, as many of these dishes have roots in various ethnic traditions that have blended over time in the city's melting pot. This inclusive approach through culinary references may help the campaign appeal to Jakarta's diverse communities, transcending ethnic and social boundaries.

Moreover, using food-inspired branding for serious policy proposals demonstrates creativity and cultural awareness that may set RIDO's campaign apart from traditional political messaging. It suggests an attempt to break down barriers between politicians and the public, using the universal language of food to make governance more relatable and approachable. In essence, RIDO's culinary-inspired policy branding is a unique form of political communication that goes beyond mere sloganeering. It represents an innovative attempt to embed policy proposals within the cultural fabric of Jakarta, potentially increasing voter engagement and recall of key campaign promises.

Simplifying Complex Policies with Acronyms

RIDO's use of culinary-inspired acronyms to brand its policy initiatives represents an innovative approach to simplifying complex policy ideas for the Jakarta electorate. This approach aligns with emerging trends in political communication where symbolic representation and cultural references are used to build trust and engagement with voters. Political branding requires careful tailoring of message packaging to different audience segments, considering various factors, including cultural context and societal stratification. By leveraging familiar food terms, the campaign has created a memorable and accessible way for voters to engage with their proposed programs. Such creative political branding approaches can strengthen psychological connections with voters while making complex policy ideas more accessible (Athahirah, 2024). Political branding strategies incorporating cultural elements can help create distinctive brand identities that resonate with voters (Pich & Newman, 2020). Two notable examples of this strategy are BAKWAN (*Bangun Kota Rawat Lingkungan*) and KUE PUTU (*Kemana Pun Irit dan Hemat Waktu*), as shown in Figure 3. BAKWAN, which refers to a popular Indonesian fritter, is used to encapsulate the campaign's environmental policy. This clever wordplay connects a well-known local dish with building a city that cares for its environment, making the policy more relatable and easier for the average voter to remember. Similarly, KUE PUTU, a traditional Indonesian steamed dessert, is repurposed to represent the campaign's transportation policy. The acronym is "*Kemana Pun Irit dan Hemat Waktu*," which promises efficient and time-saving public transportation. This association helps voters quickly grasp the essence of the policy - that it aims to make commuting as sweet and satisfying as enjoying a kue putu.



Figure 3. KUE PUTU (Kemana Pun Irit dan Hemat Waktu) and BAKWAN (Bangun Kota Rawat Lingkungan) Campaign Programs Addressing in Optimizing Transportation and Improving Urban Environment in Jakarta

(Source: E-book "Vision, Mission, and Programs of RIDO" by Ridwan Kamil-Suswono Campaign Team, 2024, ridwankamil-suswono.id)

The use of these culinary-inspired acronyms serves multiple purposes. Firstly, it simplifies complex policy ideas into digestible concepts that are easier for the general public to understand and remember. Political branding through simplified messaging helps parties differentiate themselves and maintain their identity with voters (Farhan et al., 2020). Secondly, it creates a sense of familiarity and cultural resonance using terms from local cuisine, potentially fostering a stronger connection between the voters and the proposed policies. Food has become increasingly significant in political communication and identity formation as a powerful tool for building political relationships and cultural understanding (Proesmans et al., 2023). Lastly, this approach adds a touch of creativity and humor to the campaign, which can help capture public attention and generate positive associations with the RIDO ticket. Using familiar cultural references and metaphors in political communication can enhance message retention and voter engagement (Mialon & Mialon, 2018). Using food-related acronyms to brand policies demonstrates RIDO's understanding of the importance of effective communication in political campaigns. By bridging the gap between complex governmental initiatives and everyday experiences through culinary references, RIDO is attempting to make its platform more accessible and appealing to a broad spectrum of Jakarta's voters. Political marketing managers must design communication strategies to make their political products distinct, attractive, and appealing to voters (Farhan et al., 2020).

Differentiating Campaign Messaging from Competitors

RIDO's culinary-inspired policy branding strategy is a unique differentiator in Jakarta's 2024 gubernatorial campaign landscape. By leveraging food-themed acronyms for its flagship programs, RIDO has created a memorable and relatable way to communicate complex policy initiatives to voters. This approach sets its campaign apart from competitors who may rely on more traditional policy presentation methods. Brand management strategies increase political parties' competitive advantage by making their political products distinct, attractive, and appealing (Farhan et al., 2020).



Figure 4. KETUPAT (Kredit Tanpa Bunga Akses Cepat) and SEMUR: (Sembako Murah) Campaign Programs Addressing Boosting Financial Access and Food Security in Jakarta

(Source: E-book "Vision, Mission, and Programs of RIDO" by Ridwan Kamil-Suswono Campaign Team, 2024, ridwankamil-suswono.id)

Political branding strategies must balance distinctiveness with cultural authenticity to resonate with voters (Scammell, 2015). Using familiar Indonesian dishes as mnemonics for policy programs helps RIDO's campaign resonate with Jakarta's diverse population, as shown in Figure 4. For instance, the KETUPAT (*Kredit Tanpa Bunga Akses Cepat*) program, which offers interest-free micro-credit, is easily remembered due to its association with the popular rice cake dish often consumed during festive occasions. This clever branding makes financial access more approachable and memorable for voters from different socioeconomic backgrounds. Similarly, the SEMUR (*Sembako Murah*) program, aimed at providing

affordable essential food items, leverages the name of a well-known Indonesian stew to communicate its goal of ensuring food security and affordability. This branding strategy makes the policy more memorable and creates an emotional connection with voters by invoking the comfort and sustenance associated with the dish.

By framing their policies through the lens of familiar culinary experiences, RIDO's campaign creates a unique narrative that distinguishes them from other candidates. This approach allows voters to quickly grasp and recall the key components of RIDO's platform, potentially increasing engagement and support for their candidacy. The culinary-inspired branding also aligns with Jakarta's rich food culture, strengthening the campaign's local appeal and relevance. Moreover, this innovative messaging strategy demonstrates RIDO's creativity and ability to personally connect with voters. It showcases their understanding of local culture and commitment to making complex policy ideas accessible to the general public. This approach may be particularly effective in reaching younger voters or those less engaged with traditional political messaging. Contemporary political marketing has adopted novel conceptual frameworks, explicitly examining how human branding can enhance the visibility and distinctiveness of leaders, parties, and policies (Manek & Fadah, 2024). Political branding provides knowledge about voter's choices, preferences, and behavior to help parties design their political platforms to achieve desired results (Farhan et al., 2020). In a crowded field of candidates, RIDO's culinary-inspired policy branding is a powerful tool for differentiation. It creates a unique, informative, and engaging campaign identity, potentially giving them an edge in capturing voter attention and support in the competitive Jakarta gubernatorial race. In the era of nationalist and exclusionary movements, food has become a potent symbol of identity (Parasecoli, 2022).

Conclusion

RIDO's use of food-inspired acronyms to brand their policy programs in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial campaign represents an innovative approach to political communication. This strategy serves multiple purposes, making complex policy ideas more accessible, memorable, and culturally resonant with Jakarta's diverse population. By associating policies with familiar local dishes, RIDO has created a unique way to differentiate its platform and potentially increase voter engagement and recall. The effectiveness of this culinary-inspired branding lies in its ability to simplify complex governmental proposals into catchy, easy-to-understand concepts. This approach may help bridge the gap between policy wonks and the average voter, potentially leading to a more informed electorate. However, this

study has several limitations that future studies should address. First, a quantitative analysis measuring the actual impact of culinary-inspired branding on voter recall and comprehension would provide valuable empirical evidence. Second, comparative studies examining similar creative branding strategies in other regional elections could offer broader insights into the effectiveness of such approaches. Third, a longitudinal study tracking how food-themed political messaging influences voter decision-making over time would be beneficial. Fourth, studies investigating potential demographic variations in response to culinary-inspired political branding could help optimize campaign strategies. Studying how social media amplifies or modifies the impact of food-themed political messaging would be valuable in our increasingly digital political landscape. While this study demonstrates the innovative nature of RIDO's approach, future studies should also examine whether such creative branding strategies risk overshadowing substantive policy discussions. As political communication continues to evolve, understanding the balance between engaging presentation and policy substance becomes increasingly crucial for practitioners and scholars in political marketing and communication.

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