

## **Popularity, Media and Electability: Study of Alfiansyah Komeng in the Election of Members of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) in West Java**

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### **ABSTRACT**

In 2024 Indonesia will again hold general elections to fill executive and legislative positions. One of the legislative member elections was to elect members of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) as the institution representing each province in Indonesia. An interesting phenomenon in this election was Alfiansyah Komeng's election as a DPD member representing West Java Province, surpassing the other candidates with the highest vote acquisition of 5,399,699 votes. Using a qualitative approach and data collection techniques through literature studies, the results showed that Komeng's electability was based on popularity, integrity, people's dissatisfaction with conventional politics, photos on ballot papers and the benefits of holding elections simultaneously. Meanwhile, according to the author, the media and the message conveyed are minor factors in Komeng's choice.

Keywords: General Election, Legislative Institution, Popularity, Media, Electability

## **INTRODUCTION**

On February 24 2024, Indonesia will again hold general elections to elect the President and Vice President, People's Representative Council (DPR), Regional Representative Council (DPD) and Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD). Election participants in the presidential and vice presidential elections are Presidential and Vice Presidential Candidate Pairs proposed by Political Parties, Political Parties for the DPR and DPRD elections and Individuals for the DPD member elections. This election is held simultaneously throughout Indonesia, where voters who already have the rights and are registered as voters go to the Polling Station (TPS) directly to exercise their voting rights.

In this research, the author only focuses on the election of DPD members, with the research locus being in one of the provinces in Indonesia, namely West Java Province. The selection of West Java as a research locus was based on several considerations as follows:

1. Based on the number of Permanent Voter Lists (DPT) released by the KPU, West Java is the region with the highest number of voters in Indonesia compared to the number of voters from other provinces, reaching 35,714,901 people. (KPU RI, 2023)
2. Alfiansyah Komeng, who received the highest number of votes in West Java and even Indonesia, was one of the candidates elected as a member of the DPD for the 2024-2029 period in West Java.

As stated previously, DPD member candidates are individual candidates who are elected based on a district system, with the provincial area as the basis of election. Candidates elected in the DPD member election are determined based on the results of the most votes. For each province in Indonesia, the quota given to fill the DPD membership is four representatives each.

In the 2024 West Java Province DPD election, there were 54 contestants with the following list:

1. AA Ade Kadarisman, S.Sos., M.T.
2. Aanya Rina Casmayant, S.E.
3. Abas Abdul Jalil
4. H Aceng HM Fikri, S.Ag.
5. Dr. Aep Saepudin Muhtar, M.Sos
6. Agita Nurfianti, S.Psi.
7. A Irwan Bola
8. Aji Saptaji
9. Alfiansyah Komeng
10. KH Amang Syafrudin,
11. Ambu Usdek Kaniawati
12. Andri Perkasa Kantaprawira
13. Annida Allivia
14. A Ogi Sos
15. Arif Rahman Hidayat

16. A Taupik Hidayat
17. KH A Wawan Ghozali
18. Biben Fikriana
19. Budiyanto
20. Budiyono
21. Dede Amar
22. Dedi Rudiansyah
23. Denda Alamsyah
24. Deni Rusyniadi,
25. Dian Rahadian
26. Djumono
27. Edi Kusdiana
28. Elan Heryanto
29. Hj Eni Sumarni
30. Ernawaty Tampubolon
31. H Adil Makmur Santosa
32. Haidan
33. Hendrik Kurniawan
34. Hj Ifa Faizah Rohmah
35. Imam Solahudin
36. Imam Sugiarto
37. Jahenos Saragih
38. Jajang Kurnia
39. Jihan Fahira
40. Muhamad Dawam
41. Muhammad Murtadloillah
42. Muhammad Yamin
43. Mulyadi Elhan Zakaria
44. Ria Sugiat
45. Rifki Kartini
46. Robby Maulana Zulkarnaen
47. Rusdi Hidayat
48. Sitti Hikmawatty
49. Sonny Hersona GW
50. Suratto
51. Suroyo
52. Tedy Giantara
53. Wawan Dede Amung Sutarya
54. Yunita Dian Suwandari  
(KPU RI, 2023)

The results of the vote recapitulation carried out by the General Election Commission (KPU) on March 18, 2024, regarding the results of determining the elected DPD member candidates as representatives of West Java Province, four names were determined: Alfiansyah Komeng, who received 5,399,699 votes; L Aanya Rina Casmayanti, who received 1,976,561 votes; Jihan Fahira, who received 1,823,907 votes; and Agita Nurfianti, who received 1,168,837 votes. (CNN Indonesia, 2024)

Alfiansyah Komeng's very high vote results in West Java have more or less attracted the attention of political observers and the public in West Java. Even though 2024 will be his first career debut in politics, as a comedy artist, Komeng is already very popular and known to the public through various shows on various television stations. So, in this nomination, Komeng has a sizeable social capital advantage over other candidates.

Another interesting phenomenon in Komeng's candidacy was during the campaign. Unlike other candidates who carry out massive campaigns through various media, Komeng is a candidate who carries out minimal political campaigns in the media. According to CNBC Indonesia, "People were surprised because Komeng never had a campaign, and there weren't even any billboards." (CNBC Indonesia, 2024) Then, on hot.detik.com, Komeng said, "I don't have any ambitions, I'm just normal," said Komeng at Studio Trans 7, Mampang, South Jakarta, "I (if) went in, thank God, I didn't go in, thank God. I was just busy filming ." (Tim Detikhot, 2024) This is, of course, a paradox in the implementation of general elections, which are synonymous with the efforts of a candidate who tries as much as possible to optimize the role of the media in carrying out his political campaign to gain popularity in society.

Based on the background above, the author is interested in finding out in-depth how the role of popularity and media is related to the election of Alfiansyah Komeng in the election of DPD RI members in West Java. Some previous research that is relevant to this research includes research written by Peba Rasaki Syafrizal and Yunia Wardi entitled. *The Impact of Social Media Campaign and Personal Branding on Electability: Case Study of Regional Head Elections in West Sumatera*. The research instrument is a questionnaire made using Google Form with a 5-point Likert scale. The method used in this research is the accidental sampling method. The data analyze with using applications SmartPLS 3.0. The results of this research state not all campaigns through social media can increase the electability of candidates for the Governor of West Sumatra, equivalent to Instagram and YouTube. However, campaigns through social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube have a significant effect on the personal branding of the candidates for the Governor of West Sumatra in other words, the more interesting the information content on social media will enhance the image of the candidates for the Governor of West Sumatra in the eyes of voters. Personal branding is a very important factor in increasing candidate electability on social media, with the formation of an attractive image on social media will increase the candidate's electability level. (Yunia Wardi, 2022)

Suardi conducted the following research titled *Examining People's Choices Between Popularity and False Integrity*. This research begins with the phenomenon and the author's concerns regarding popularity-based politics in Indonesia, which is currently popular in Indonesia and has a significant chance of giving rise to instant leaders who are incompetent

and have poor integrity. The research results show that the popularity of "packaging" is one of the things that is criticized as artificial. However, with a proportional attitude in accepting the impact of mass media information, popularity is no longer just about false integrity. However, it can be used as energy to make practical changes.(Suardi, 2017)

Other research relevant to this research was written by Mesy Supit, Marlien Lopian and Trilke Tulung with the title *The Role of Social Media in Increasing the Electability of Candidates for Legislative Members in the 2019 General Election (Study in Mobuya Village, East Passi District, Bolaang Mongodow District)*. In this article, researchers specialize in researching the role of social media in increasing the electability of legislative candidates in the 2019 legislative elections in Mobuya Village, East Passi District. By using a qualitative approach, the results of this research conclude that the use of social media in increasing the electability of a prospective council member in Bolaang Mongondow Regency, especially in Mobuya village, is used as a source for the community to obtain information about a candidate and also becomes a forum for prospective council members and their success teams. To disseminate information about the candidate's history, achievements and also their vision and mission.(Trilke Tulung & Marlien Lopian, 2022)

Lastly, research that is relevant to this research is an article written by Syafiatul Umma and Holilah entitled "Study of the Popularity, Acceptability and Electability of Muhaimin Iskandar in the 2024 Presidential Election Among Alumni of the Mamba'ul Ma'arif Islamic Boarding School Denanyar Jombang". This research approach uses descriptive quantitative methods. The results of this research show that Muhaimin Iskandar's popularity level in the 2024 presidential election among alums of the Mamba'ul Ma'arif Denanyar Islamic boarding school students is 84.7%, acceptability is 73.5%, and electability is 65.3%. Muhaimin Iskandar's electability is considered lower than his popularity and acceptability. This shows that there are alums of students at the Mamba'ul Ma'arif Islamic boarding school in Denanyar Jombang who only know or accept it not to elect Muhaimin Iskandar as president in 2024. Alums of students at the Mamba'ul Ma'arif Islamic boarding school in Denanyar Jombang are also considered multi-party, but the party with the highest electability is the National Awakening Party (PKB).(Holilah, 2023)

Several studies have been carried out, and there are differences with the research currently being carried out by researchers. Apart from the candidates and loci used as research sites, this research also tries to find out the extent of the role of popularity and the media in the electability of candidates, especially in the election of DPD members.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Komeng in the Election of Members of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) in West Java), the author uses a descriptive method with a qualitative approach. This research precisely describes and explains the conditions or symptoms encountered. According to Sugiyono (Sugiono, 2020) qualitative research methods are used to examine the conditions of natural objects, where the researcher is the key instrument. Data are collected through literature studies, which are carried out by searching for written sources, such as books, social media, press

reports, various opinions and analyses therein, and other documents related to research phenomena.

### **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

In the General Indonesian Dictionary, popularity means the fame a person has (W.J.S. Poerwadarminta, 2009). Popularity has the same meaning as familiarity. Familiarity means being seen often or being well known. In Communication Science regarding Popularity, there is a sentence that says “He doesn’t communicate what he says, he communicates what he is” He (the communicator) cannot tell the listener to pay attention only to what he says; the listener will also pay attention to who is saying it. (Riswandi, 2009)

In the current era of communication, popularity, of course, has a close relationship with both conventional media and digital media. In general elections, the media is vital in introducing people, groups or organizations to the public to increase their popularity. If we refer to the study of the impact of mass media on communication, there are three stages of the impact of mass communication messages on the public. The first stage is called cognitive impact. Cognition is the stage where the message is conveyed in someone's mind. Readers or viewers remember, know and are familiar with what the information conveyer conveys. It is at this stage that popularity seekers play their role. Various methods are used; the important thing is that he can instil his figure in the minds of readers or viewers. The target, of course, is the general public, who are still trapped in believing everything conveyed in the mass media is actual. Meanwhile, they have no critical power regarding what they are being told. In communication studies, this is known as the hypodermic needle theory, the Magic Bullet theory, or the Stimulus Response Theory. According to this theory, mass media directly, immediately, and strongly impacts mass audiences.

The second stage is called the affective aspect. This affective aspect is more about feelings or emotional attitudes. For example, when viewers or readers receive communication messages in mass media, they don't just know or remember. But it continues to give rise to feelings, either liking or hating the message or the sender of the message. This is where popularity seekers who "do anything" must be careful. On the other hand, readers or viewers must also further and wisely process the information they receive at the affective stage, not just at the cognitive stage. So that viewers or readers are not trapped by false popularity and integrity. The fame or popularity of the sender of the message. However, it continues with appreciation or sympathy, whether or not the sender of the message is worthy of being liked or even more worthy of being hated. So apart from remembering, it also creates an attitude.

The third stage is called the conative aspect, where this aspect is more concerned with actions or behaviour. After being known and felt with feelings, finally, we arrive at conative or natural action. What is our action towards the message or the messenger or communicator? When he is a candidate, with the information received from the mass media so far, is it appropriate for us to choose him or not? With all the integrity and competence attached to it. (Markus Utomo Sukendar, 2017)

The aspects above have benefits when a person or political party contests in general elections. Popularity has a strong influence in influencing electability in general elections.

Because electability is a person's strong tendency to vote, popularity inevitably precedes the idea of electability. According to Dendy Sugiono (Sugiono, 2008), , electability is the level of electability adjusted to the selection criteria. Electability can be applied to goods, services, people, bodies or parties. Electability is often discussed ahead of general elections. Popularity is the level of recognition of a candidate or a political party by the general public. How will a candidate or political party be chosen if they are unknown? That's why it wasn't selected as a postulate in this case. So, these two concepts cannot be separated, like coins. Working on consistent, neat, measurable, and continuous socialisation and political communication is the key to increasing a person's popularity and electability. The use of communication media cannot be ruled out either.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

Alfiansyah Komeng, known as Komeng, is popular among the people of West Java as a comedian. Komeng's popularity as a comedian must be connected to his work in various television programs in the comedy genre. Some of these programs include: Spontan (1996-2003), Redaktur Hebooh (2000), 30 Meter (2000) Goyang Inul (2003), Hahaha Hihihhi (2003-2005) ,A Lights 100% Enjoy (2004-2005), Kembang Api (2005), Pulang Sekolah bersama Komeng (2005), Anak Band (2005), Show Time (2006), Catatan si Komeng (2007),Gong Show (2007-2012), Wara-Wiri (2008-2011), Sahur Semua Sahuur (2011), Komeng Acak Adul (2013), Indonesia Lawak Klub (2013-2017), Keluarga Komeng (2015), Stand Up Comedy Academy (2017), Pesbukers New Normal (2021), Stand Up Comedy Indonesia (2022), Xtra Show (2023), Arisan (2023) dan Pesbukers (2023). (IDN Times, 2024)

Apart from actively starring in several television shows, according to researchers' research, Komeng is also active on several social media, including YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and Komeng, as a medium to convey messages in the campaign. From several social media platforms, the author found that Komeng actively used the channels for campaigning. First, Komeng uses Facebook to carry out campaigns, which can be accessed at [https://www.facebook.com/people/Alfiansyah Komeng/61550598836679/](https://www.facebook.com/people/Alfiansyah-Komeng/61550598836679/). Second, Instagram with the account @ alfiansyah.komeng and third on X with the account @ Alfiansyah\_DPD. The three social media were observed to be active from August 24, 2023, to February 14, 2024.

On Facebook, Komeng succeeded in gaining 5,900 followers and posted 25 pieces of content in the form of images or videos containing campaign messages. Of the 25 pieces of content, the average number of likes obtained was 71, comments 23, and shares one time. Then, on Instagram, Komeng got 2648 followers by posting 12 video content, which on average got 258 likes and 13 comments. Meanwhile, on account X, with 2180 followers and posting 17 campaign content, Komeng, with 2180 followers, got an average view of 10,194, 10 likes, three reposts, and two comments.

Meanwhile, from the results of monitoring social media, including Blogspot, which was used as campaign media, the author found the campaign material which was used as a tagline by Komeng, namely Working Happily Towards Prosperity, which is further described as Developing West Java by making the community prosperous through its culture with the path arts such as South Korea which develops its arts with K-POP music and its culture through

traditional dances and traditions, which generates foreign exchange for the country. (Team ALFIANSYAH KOMENG, 2023) In several media interviews, Komeng also said he wanted to make it to September 27 National Comedy Day. (Rizky L. Pratama, 2024)

Based on the results of tracing campaign activities carried out by Komeng via social media, the author concludes that voters need to widely access the political communications carried out by Komeng to convey messages to voters. This means that social media does not play a special role in electability because the number of people accessing social media and the vote results obtained by Komeng are very different quantitatively. This raises the question, why was Komeng able to get 5,399,699 votes?

To answer this question, the author explores several opinions spread in several media outlets, which are why Komeng was elected with a very high vote, leaving its competitors far behind. According to Realino Nurza, quoted in Kumparan.com, the four factors that caused Komeng to be elected as a member of the DPD in West Java were as follows:

1. **Popularity:** Komeng is very popular. As a famous comedian, he has built a loyal fan base over the years. His popularity helps attract public attention and support, especially from voters who may not be very interested or involved in politics.
2. **Powerful communication:** Komeng's communication skills, honed through his career as a comedian, are a potent tool in his political campaign. He has the ability to articulate his political messages in a manner that resonates with a broad audience, making his campaign more accessible and engaging. This skill could be instrumental in securing voter support and ultimately, electoral victory.
3. **Effective Campaigns:** Komeng is supported by a professional and well-organized campaign team. The team could utilize social media and other platforms to spread messages, reach potential voters, and mobilize support for Komeng. Creative and innovative campaigns can also be an important factor in winning.
4. **Dissatisfaction with Conventional Politics:** Amid dissatisfaction with conventional politics and political elites deemed not representing the people's interests, Komeng's victory can be seen as a form of protest or alternative for voters seeking change. Komeng may be considered a refreshing figure who is not tied to specific political interests (Realino Nurza, 2024).

Another opinion was expressed by Hadi Nur, who stated:

...from a psychological perspective, there are some exciting things too. First, there is what is called the halo effect. This happens when we see someone is good in one aspect; then, we assume that he is good in other aspects, too. So, because Komeng was cute and liked by many people, people thought he would also be a good leader. Then, we all need to feel connected to others. Commenting more relaxed and humorously made many people closer to him. This seems to relieve us from all the political tension we usually feel. Political fatigue is also an essential factor. Many of us are starting to get bored with all the endless political drama. Komeng, with its different approach, gives us a kind of oasis amid an arid political desert. Lastly, about social identity. Many may see Komeng as representing “ordinary people” rather



than traditional politicians. This makes many people feel more represented by him. (Hadi Nur, 2024)

The opinion above, seen from a psychological perspective, shows that Komeng's election is not only due to conventional aspects in every general election, such as popularity, communication skills, effective campaigns, or dissatisfaction with conventional politics. Hadi Nur said that Komeng, as someone who has a good track record as a comedian, is considered to be able to become a good leader. Komeng, who is popular and is considered to represent ordinary people, is also considered by voters to be their representative in the DPD.

Another attraction of Komeng in this election is the display of photos on the ballot papers. The photo on the ballot paper used by Komeng differs from the other candidates' photos. In this ballot, Komeng used a funny photo that brought out his characteristics and identity as a comedian.



Figure 1  
Komeng's photo on the ballot

According to Firman Manan, quoted in detik.com, the photo factor is crucial. It is a strategic tool to make a candidate stand out when voters open the ballot. This opinion was further confirmed by Handoko Gani, a Body Language Expert, who also commented as follows:

Komeng was able to attract many votes by using this photo. It is believed that Komeng deliberately posted this photo to make it easier for people to choose and recognize it with its distinctive characteristics. "I'm 100% sure he intentionally put up this photo so that people

connect. He already understands the concept of public image. This (quirky) photo is to make ourselves relevant to society in the sense of being recognized." (detik Jabar, 2024)

Even though it seems simple, Komeng uses photo images on ballot papers to make them easily recognized by voters and to influence their behaviour toward the candidate they choose.

The results of this research apart from the opinions above, according to the author, Komeng's election also benefits from the election model, which is carried out simultaneously, where at the same time, the public must elect the President and Vice President, DPR members, DPD members and DPRD members. In the 2024 general election, the election for President and Vice President will attract more public attention and concentration than other elections. The large number of candidates proposed to fill seats in the DPR, DPD and DPRD means that the public needs to receive complete information about the profile of each candidate. This condition will undoubtedly benefit candidates already known or popular in society.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of this research, the author concludes that Komeng's choice in the 2024 DPD member election in West Java is based on:

1. Popularity, integrity and public dissatisfaction with conventional politics.
2. Factor in the photo on the ballot which depicts your identity as a comedian.
3. Elections held simultaneously mean that the public needs to receive complete information about the profile of each candidate.

The search results on social media, which Komeng uses as a political communication medium to convey messages to voters, show that not many voters have accessed them quantitatively. The message conveyed as campaign material is also quite simple and does not make many promises to the public.

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