

Political dynamics behind Ridwan Kamil's electoral performance in the 2024 Jakarta special region election

Annisa Nadya Putri^{1*}, and Jerry Indrawan²

¹Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia, email: annisanadya234@gmail.com

²Universitas Pembangunan Nasional Veteran Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia, email: jerry.indrawan@upnvj.ac.id

*Corresponding author

Article Info

Article history:

Submission: 2025-04-30

Accepted: 2025-06-17

Published: 2025-06-20



This is an open access article distributed under the CC BY-SA 4.0 license

Copyright © 2025, the author(s)

ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the factors causing Ridwan Kamil's failure in the 2024 Jakarta Special Region (DKJ) Regional Head Election (Pilkada). The research employs a qualitative approach with an explanatory type, gathering data through literature study, media documentation, and in-depth interviews with key political actors, local figures, and Jakarta residents with direct relevance to the political dynamics in Jakarta. The results indicate that Ridwan Kamil's failure was primarily due to weak political communication strategies, particularly in addressing local concerns, and the lack of strong socio-political networks at the local level. Based on Gabriel Almond's political communication theory, Ridwan Kamil failed to effectively engage in all three stages of political communication—input, conversion, and output. Additionally, Edward Aspinall's clientelism theory highlights the necessity of establishing a patron-client network, including support from strategic communities such as The Jakmania. These findings underscore that electoral success in metropolitan areas such as Jakarta demands not only a solid communication strategy but also a profound understanding of the voters' cultural identity and local sensitivities. This research contributes to the development of political communication studies and offers practical insights for future political campaigns in urban Indonesia, emphasizing the need for adaptive communication strategies and the importance of local socio-political networks.

Keywords:

DKJ election; political communication; electoral failure

Please cite this article in APA style as:

Putri, A. N., & Indrawan, J. (2025). Political dynamics behind Ridwan Kamil's electoral performance in the 2024 Jakarta special region election. *Jurnal Inovasi Ilmu Sosial dan Politik (JISoP)*, 7(1), 120-131. <https://doi.org/10.33474/jisop.v7i1.23728>

INTRODUCTION

The simultaneous regional elections (Pilkada) in Indonesia, scheduled for November 27, 2024, represent a significant moment in the nation's political landscape, as mandated by Law No. 10 of 2016, Article 201, Paragraph (8). Among the regions holding these elections is

the Special Capital Region of Jakarta (DKI Jakarta), which, despite no longer being the national capital, continues to hold a critical strategic role in the nation's political and economic dynamics. Jakarta's gubernatorial election is historically one of the most fiercely contested political battles in Indonesia, attracting significant attention from both the public and political analysts. While Jakarta is no longer the capital of the country, it remains a central hub for government activity, symbolizing political and economic power, with local issues that often have national implications (Ahmad et al., 2024). Jakarta's political environment is particularly complex, marked by a dynamic mix of social, cultural, and economic factors that influence political behavior and policymaking.

One of the candidates in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial race is Ridwan Kamil, the former Governor of West Java, whose public image has been predominantly positive. During his tenure as the Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil was recognized for his democratic leadership style and his effective use of digital innovations to improve governance. His administration introduced several initiatives, such as the Jabar Quick Response Platform, which centralized citizen complaints through a website, significantly improving response time and transparency in addressing public concerns (Dermawan & Nugraha, 2024). His success in using technology to streamline public services established him as one of the most prominent political figures in Indonesia, making him a strong contender for the Jakarta gubernatorial race.



Picture 1. Electability graph of Jakarta governor candidates

At the outset of his campaign, Ridwan Kamil's candidacy was met with enthusiasm, and he led early electability surveys. His popularity was primarily driven by his record of good governance, including his leadership in digitalization and public service innovation. However, as the campaign progressed, his electability began to decline due to shifting political dynamics and mounting criticisms of his campaign approach. Although Ridwan Kamil was well-regarded for his technical achievements and leadership in West Java, his campaign did not sufficiently address the primary concerns of Jakarta's voters, many of whom prioritize emotional and identity-based connections with their leaders, rather than just technical qualifications or development programs (Afnissa et al., 2025).

In an attempt to address these concerns, Ridwan Kamil's campaign team decided to rebrand him from "Kang Emil," a term used in West Java, to "Abang Emil," a term more commonly associated with Jakarta's Betawi culture. This rebranding was meant to foster a closer emotional connection with Jakarta's voters. However, this change was perceived as inauthentic by many, and without a deeper, more substantial approach to understanding the city's unique identity and aspirations, the rebranding was largely ineffective (Ramadhan, 2025). Many voters, including some analysts, viewed the change as a political strategy that failed to resonate, especially amidst the increasingly competitive and dynamic political

landscape of the city. In the face of strong opposition candidates offering more segmented and culturally relevant narratives, Ridwan Kamil struggled to build the emotional rapport that could have boosted his popularity among Jakarta's urban voters.

A notable example of this struggle was Ridwan Kamil's inability to connect with key community groups such as The Jakmania, the passionate supporters of Jakarta's football club, Persija Jakarta. This group not only holds significant influence in the world of sports but also plays a vital role in the city's social and political fabric. Ridwan Kamil, who hails from West Java, a region with a large base of Persib Bandung supporters, found it challenging to engage with the Jakmania due to the longstanding rivalry between the two football clubs. This rivalry, which symbolizes a larger inter-regional cultural competition, presented an obstacle to Ridwan Kamil's political strategy, as his personal branding and approach failed to overcome these deep-rooted cultural divides. Such a disconnect demonstrated that political strategies based solely on personal branding and technical competence were insufficient to bridge the cultural and emotional gaps between Ridwan Kamil and Jakarta's urban voters.

Moreover, the demographic, socio-political, and cultural differences between West Java and Jakarta further complicated Ridwan Kamil's ability to tailor his approach to Jakarta's unique voter base. Jakarta is a diverse city with a highly complex social fabric, where voters are influenced not only by pragmatic policy considerations but also by cultural identity and emotional connections with their leaders. Ridwan Kamil's leadership style in West Java, while successful in his home province, did not translate well to Jakarta's complex political environment. This mismatch in strategy contributed to his declining electability as the election day drew closer, particularly as new controversies began to emerge.

One such controversy was the resurfacing of Ridwan Kamil's old tweets on X (formerly Twitter), which were deemed controversial and insensitive by some Jakarta residents. On June 6, 2011, Ridwan Kamil posted a tweet in which he referred to Jakarta's people in a manner that many considered negative, calling them "arrogant, trendy, glamorous, boastful, stingy, status-conscious, selfish, hardworking, resilient, showy, hedonistic" (Winanto, 2024). This tweet was seen by some as a derogatory remark, undermining his image as a candidate for Jakarta's leadership. The controversy surrounding these old tweets only intensified when Ridwan Kamil made a controversial remark about single parents during a campaign stop in East Jakarta in November 2024, which many perceived as demeaning (Henry, 2024). These incidents damaged his public image and further alienated a portion of Jakarta's electorate, particularly those sensitive to issues of social equality and inclusion. As a result, the negative press and the backlash against his statements weakened the political message he was attempting to convey, further eroding his support base.

The competitiveness of the Jakarta gubernatorial election was also shaped by the strong presence of other candidates, notably Anies Baswedan and Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (Ahok), both of whom had established loyal support bases. Anies Baswedan brought a different brand of leadership, one rooted in political and religious identity, while Ahok's tenure as governor of Jakarta left him with a solid following despite his controversial departure. These two candidates offered not only political experience but also powerful symbolic representations that resonated with large segments of Jakarta's electorate. In comparison, Ridwan Kamil struggled to carve out a clear and distinct political identity, particularly as he faced off against candidates who had strong political narratives and substantial backing. The dominance of these narratives significantly limited Ridwan Kamil's ability to differentiate himself, and his failure to clearly communicate his vision and approach left him at a disadvantage.

In this highly competitive political environment, it is important to recognize that the success of a candidate in a regional election is not only determined by their technical achievements or popularity but also by their ability to understand the local culture and build a political communication strategy that resonates with the emotional and identity-based concerns of the electorate. Ridwan Kamil's failure in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election can be attributed not only to the strength of his opponents but also to his inability to adapt his political communication to the unique socio-political dynamics of Jakarta. The Jakarta election is not only a political contest but also a reflection of national political trends, with public expectations for a leader who can manage administrative tasks effectively while also embodying symbolic leadership that connects with the people. By failing to reach the emotional and symbolic aspects of urban society, Ridwan Kamil's campaign lost relevance, and his ability to build a strong electoral base was undermined.

Therefore, it is crucial to analyze the factors that contributed to Ridwan Kamil's failure in the 2024 Jakarta election, particularly in terms of his campaign strategy, political communication, and his failure to understand and engage with Jakarta's diverse socio-political dynamics. This analysis offers important insights into the role of political branding and communication strategies in urban elections, especially in highly competitive environments where identity politics and emotional connections play a significant role. Ultimately, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the dynamics of political campaigns and the importance of cultural sensitivity in building successful political narratives in urban settings like Jakarta.

METHOD

Considering the issue under study, this research examines Ridwan Kamil's failure in the 2024 Jakarta Special Region Election as its primary focus. This phenomenon is significant to investigate because Ridwan Kamil, a national political figure with substantial popularity and backing from a major political party, experienced an unexpected failure. Understanding this paradox offers insight into the dynamics of Indonesian politics and electoral processes. The study utilizes a qualitative approach with an explanatory research design. This approach was chosen to provide a comprehensive and in-depth explanation of the cause-and-effect relationships involved in the political failure experienced by Ridwan Kamil. According to [Creswell & Creswell \(2018\)](#) in their book *Research Design*, qualitative research is particularly suited for exploring and interpreting social issues as understood by individuals or groups of people. Explanatory research in a qualitative context seeks not only to describe events but also to answer the "why" and "how" of those events ([Rosyada, 2020](#)). This approach is appropriate for explaining the interactions between political actors, the perceptions of voters, and the socio-political context that influenced the outcome of the 2024 Jakarta Regional Election. Specifically, this study explores Ridwan Kamil's political communication strategies, the tactics used during his campaign, and the role of local political dynamics and clientelism networks in Jakarta in shaping the election results.

The data sources for this study consist of both primary and secondary data. Data sources are defined as the factual or descriptive information that will be processed for research purposes ([Indrawan & Yaniawati, 2016](#)). Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews conducted with several key informants. These interviews were semi-structured, with a set of pre-prepared questions aimed at guiding the interview process while allowing flexibility for informants to provide more detailed insights. The key informants included the deputy chairperson of the Jakarta Regional Legislative Council, the chairperson of Ridwan Kamil's volunteer campaign team, the deputy chairperson of the youth campaign team, and a researcher with expertise in political studies. This method of in-

depth interviewing enabled the researcher to explore the informants' perspectives and gather rich, detailed information about Ridwan Kamil's campaign strategies during the 2024 Jakarta Regional Election.

Secondary data were collected through a documentation study, which included news articles, mass media reports, survey results, official documents from the General Election Commission (KPU), and materials from Ridwan Kamil's campaign across various platforms. Additionally, indirect observations were made regarding the political discourse developing in public spaces and digital media throughout the election period. These diverse sources of secondary data allowed the researcher to contextualize and cross-reference the primary data with publicly available information to enhance the comprehensiveness of the analysis.

The data collected from these various sources were analyzed using [Miles et al. \(2014\)](#) interactive model analysis technique. This approach consists of three primary stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was performed by filtering and sorting the data in line with the research focus to identify relevant themes and patterns. During the data presentation stage, the findings were organized into narrative descriptions or thematic matrices to facilitate understanding and testing of relationships between key variables. The collected data were then analyzed in relation to [Almond et al. \(1960\)](#) Political Communication Theory, which emphasizes the significance of communication between political actors and society. This theoretical framework guided the interpretation of Ridwan Kamil's campaign communication strategies and their effects on voters' perceptions. Additionally, the analysis was informed by [Aspinall & Berenschot, \(2019\)](#) Clientelism Theory, which helped explain the influence of patron-client networks in Jakarta's political landscape. By applying these theories, the researcher was able to contextualize the political communication strategies and clientelist practices that played a role in the campaign's failure.

Through systematic interpretation and correlation of the findings, conclusions were drawn that explain the causes of Ridwan Kamil's failure in the 2024 Jakarta Regional Election. The analysis uncovered several key factors, including strategic missteps in his political communication, the complexities of local political dynamics, and the dominant role of clientelism networks, which ultimately affected the election results. The findings also reveal the complex interplay between political actors, their strategies, and the socio-political environment in which they operate, which contributed to the unexpected outcome of the election.

In terms of data validity and reliability, triangulation techniques were employed to cross-verify the findings derived from multiple data sources. This approach enhanced the credibility of the conclusions by comparing insights obtained from interviews with key informants, documentation studies, and indirect observations. The use of multiple data sources and triangulation techniques helped ensure a comprehensive and robust analysis of the factors leading to Ridwan Kamil's electoral failure. Additionally, ethical considerations were addressed through informed consent procedures for all interview participants, ensuring that their participation was voluntary and that their responses were confidential.

By applying these methods and theories, this research provides a thorough examination of Ridwan Kamil's failed campaign in the 2024 Jakarta Regional Election, offering valuable insights into the complexities of political communication, clientelism, and electoral strategies in Indonesia.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Ridwan Kamil's defeat in the 2024 Jakarta Special Region Election was the result of a disconnect between the structural strengths he possessed and the cultural-political realities

of Jakarta. As a national figure with a strong leadership track record in West Java, Ridwan Kamil entered the race with high electability and the backing of the large KIM Plus coalition (Afnissa et al., 2025). However, this advantage failed to translate into electoral support in Jakarta due to a number of specific structural and cultural factors.

Structurally, Ridwan Kamil's campaign was unable to penetrate Jakarta's well-established local power networks. Despite having a strong national political infrastructure, his campaign team seemed disconnected from the grassroots dynamics of the capital. The Jakarta electorate, characterized by highly fluid and segmented voter bases, was not effectively engaged through adaptive approaches. Jakarta's electoral landscape is exceptionally dynamic, with political loyalty shaped not only by supporting parties or elite endorsements but also by emotional and cultural proximity to the candidate. This is where Ridwan Kamil struggled to build direct and meaningful connections with Jakarta's diverse and politically critical urban population.

In terms of political culture, Ridwan Kamil's leadership style was perceived as not fully aligned with the expectations of Jakarta residents, who tend to be politically assertive and expressive in voicing their aspirations. His casual and popular communication style, which had proven effective in West Java, was insufficient to build the image of firm and solutions-oriented leadership sought by Jakarta voters. In contrast, the Pramono-Karno ticket was able to articulate key urban issues such as inequality, traffic congestion, and public services in a more concrete and relatable manner, enabling them to win over the electorate.

The voting data reinforces this analysis. The Ridwan Kamil-Suswono ticket secured only 39.40% of the votes, while Pramono-Karno won with 50.07% (KPU DKI Jakarta, 2024). Ridwan Kamil's defeat was consistent across all regions of Jakarta, including South Jakarta (39.24%), East Jakarta (40.96%), West Jakarta (38.80%), Central Jakarta (36.47%), North Jakarta (39.20%), and even the Thousand Islands (44.79%), an area that typically records lower voter participation but still delivered a lead for Pramono-Karno (KPU DKI Jakarta, 2024).

Table 1. Results of the 2024 Jakarta special region election

Kabupaten/Kota	Ridwan Kamil-Suswono	Dharma-Kun	Pramono-Karno
Jakarta Selatan	39.24%	9.44%	51.32%
Jakarta Timur	40.96%	10.47%	48.57%
Jakarta Barat	38.80%	10.98%	50.22%
Jakarta Pusat	36.47%	10.75%	52.79%
Jakarta Utara	39.20%	11.55%	49.25%
Kep. Seribu	44.79%	4.45%	50.77%
Total Votes	39.40%	10.53%	50.07%

Overall, this defeat demonstrates that electoral success in Jakarta does not rely solely on elite endorsements or national image-building, but is largely determined by a candidate's ability to adapt to the city's unique and complex local political culture.

Ridwan Kamil failed to establish a political communication strategy that truly resonated with the diverse layers of Jakarta's society during the 2024 Jakarta Special Region Election. Although he made some efforts through impromptu visits to local communities and participating in citizen dialogues, these approaches were not systematically organized into a broad, participatory movement. His communication efforts were sporadic and lacked continuity, ultimately failing to build emotional closeness or long-term public trust. Moreover, his heavy reliance on the support of major party coalitions became a hindrance rather than an advantage. The KIM Plus coalition that endorsed him was considered too large and fragmented, with sharp differences in political agendas among its member parties. Instead of strengthening his political machinery, the coalition struggled to understand and

adapt to Jakarta's political culture, which is rich with local nuances and informal kinship networks (Bangun, 2024).

This situation led to uneven distribution of logistics and campaign resources. In many areas, campaign materials and billboards for Ridwan Kamil–Suswono were scarcely visible, particularly in densely populated districts such as East Jakarta and North Jakarta. As a result, their political messages failed to effectively reach lower-middle-class voter groups, which constitute the largest voter base in Jakarta. Poor coordination among coalition parties further weakened campaign organization, with volunteers and party cadres often working separately and inconsistently in delivering the campaign's narratives and flagship programs.

According to the analysis of Prof. Firman Noor, one of Ridwan Kamil's main mistakes was his overly normative political communication, dominated by symbolic messages or generic slogans that did not engage with the concrete issues faced by Jakarta residents. Everyday concerns such as rising basic food prices, recurring floods, and difficulties accessing employment were not addressed in specific or practical terms throughout his campaign (Safrudin & Aini, 2024). As a result, his messages came across as vague and lacked strong differentiation from his political opponents, particularly Pramono–Karno, who presented more applicable programs that directly responded to the needs of the electorate.

In addition, Ridwan Kamil failed to build strategic alliances with local elites, including community leaders and influential figures. He relied too heavily on his inner circle—consisting primarily of technocrats and loyalists from outside Jakarta—and neglected to engage key figures from the Betawi community, which holds significant symbolic influence in Jakarta's political landscape. This created both social and political distance, making local communities feel excluded and reluctant to offer their support. The absence of prominent local figures in his campaign only reinforced the perception of Ridwan Kamil as an outsider who lacked a deep understanding of Jakarta's social and political dynamics.

According to Gabriel Almond's theory of political communication, the effectiveness of political communication is determined by the integration between the message conveyed, the medium used, and the characteristics of the intended audience. In the context of the 2024 Jakarta Special Region Election, Ridwan Kamil failed to effectively carry out the three main functions of political communication as described by Almond et al. (1960), namely the functions of input, conversion, and output.

Table 2. Political communication functions according to Gabriel Almond

Function	Brief Explanation	Concrete Evidence	Form of Failure
Input	Absorption of community aspirations	Blusukan, student forums, and open dialogues.	Limited aspirations and lack of approach to local figures.
Conversion	Transforming aspirations into political programs	Smart city programs, neighborhood funds, and KAMU cards.	Elitist programs that are abstract, normative, and lack emotional connection.
Output	Delivering messages to the public	Social media, mobile counseling, and debates.	Not reaching the grassroots level, lacking adaptability and gimmicks, resulting in one-way communication.

In terms of the input function the absorption of public aspirations Ridwan Kamil did engage in grassroots visits, organized student forums, and held open dialogues. However, these activities were not followed by a systematic and inclusive process of gathering public input. Many local figures, particularly from grassroots communities such as Betawi leaders, felt excluded from the formulation of the campaign agenda. The interactions that were built were largely symbolic and insufficient to genuinely capture the real needs of Jakarta's residents.

For the conversion function transforming public aspirations into concrete programs Ridwan Kamil's campaign introduced several initiatives, such as the development of the smart city concept, environmental funding schemes, and the KAMU Card as a tool for accessing public services. Nevertheless, these programs were perceived as elitist, abstract, and emotionally disconnected from the broader community. Lower-middle-class voters, who prioritized concrete issues like the cost of daily necessities, job availability, and transportation problems, found these programs detached from their daily realities.

The output function delivering political messages to the public was also far from optimal. Despite utilizing social media intensively, conducting mobile counseling sessions, and appearing in public debates, Ridwan Kamil's communication approach remained largely one-way and failed to effectively reach grassroots voter bases. The campaign's heavy reliance on digital media was not balanced by interpersonal engagement, which was essential for reaching segments of society that are more traditional and less connected to digital platforms.

The failure to carry out these three communication functions was further compounded by an overreliance on personal branding narratives and the "Smart City 2.0" vision (Afnissa et al., 2025). Although Ridwan Kamil's technocratic approach was modern and forward-looking, it inadvertently widened the gap with constituents who were expecting tangible, immediate solutions to their everyday problems. The campaign's overly digital and futuristic narrative failed to build cultural and emotional resonance with the majority of Jakarta's citizens, who remain deeply influenced by traditional values, community ties, and social proximity.

Ridwan Kamil's defeat in the 2024 Jakarta Special Region Election was significantly influenced by his failure to comprehend and respond to the distinctive cultural dynamics of the capital city. Jakarta is not merely the administrative center of Indonesia; it is also a political arena shaped by strong social networks and complex symbols of identity. While Jakarta's population is demographically heterogeneous, it is highly sensitive to figures perceived as representing local identities culturally, religiously, and socially (Ramadhan, 2025). In Jakarta's political landscape, party strength alone is not the decisive factor. Support from local mass organizations such as FBR and Forkabi, religious figures like Betawi ulama, informal economic networks such as market trader communities, and football supporter groups like The Jakmania all play significant roles in shaping political opinions and voter preferences.

Ridwan Kamil, a figure who rose to prominence in Bandung and was widely recognized through his leadership in West Java, failed to integrate himself into the collective identity of Jakarta's citizens. He entered the contest with the image of a modern technocratic leader but did not carry symbols or narratives that were emotionally or historically relevant to Jakarta's populace. This stood in stark contrast to his political opponents, who actively cultivated an image of closeness to Betawi culture and urban Islamic communities. The Pramono-Karno ticket, for instance, adopted a locally grounded approach by collaborating with Betawi figures, delivering programs in language familiar to residents, and incorporating religious issues into their campaign narrative (Bangun, 2024).

One of the most damaging blows to Ridwan Kamil's campaign came when his opponents exploited a black campaign strategy by resurfacing his old tweets, some of which were deemed sensitive, particularly on religious and social issues. Although these tweets originated from previous years, they were effectively mobilized to shape public perception that Ridwan Kamil lacked respect for the religious values held by a significant portion of Jakarta's electorate. His public apology proved insufficient to mitigate the impact, especially

among conservative voters who tend to associate ideal leadership with personal piety and carefulness in public communication (Winanto, 2024).

His image as an outsider perceived to be indifferent to local sensitivities, combined with a campaign narrative that failed to engage key communities such as the Betawi and religious groups, cost Ridwan Kamil the grassroots support he needed to strengthen through cultural approaches. His lack of active involvement in clientelistic relationships such as patronage toward local organizations or traditional figures further reinforced the perception that he was not firmly rooted in the community. In Jakarta, politics is still heavily influenced by patron-client dynamics, where personal proximity, emotional loyalty, and the symbolic role of local figures determine the direction of political support. Without a culturally grounded strategy addressing these elements, Ridwan Kamil was unable to build the social legitimacy crucial for securing the votes of Jakarta's electorate.

Ridwan Kamil's defeat in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election cannot be separated from his failure to build relationships with The Jakmania, the Persija Jakarta supporter group that plays a crucial role in the city's socio-political configuration. The Jakmania is not merely a football community; it has evolved into a solid and loyal mass force, frequently participating in political activities by supporting candidates they perceive as being "in sync" with their identity as Jakarta residents. In Ridwan Kamil's case, his strong association with Persib Bandung Persija's archrival became a significant symbolic obstacle. Culturally, he was perceived as "a Bandung figure," which, in the collective memory of The Jakmania, signifies a rival rather than an ally (Farhan et al., 2024). No significant efforts were made by Ridwan Kamil's camp to bridge this symbolic divide, such as by involving key figures from within The Jakmania or by making gestures of respect toward the community.

In Jakarta's political landscape still heavily influenced by patron-client relationships rooted in local identity and emotional proximity, as described by Aspinall & Berenschot (2019) Ridwan Kamil's failure to become part of that network was a critical strategic weakness. He did not establish relational entry points with informal leaders such as neighborhood heads (RT/RW), Betawi community leaders, local religious clerics, or field coordinators of supporter groups. Instead of cultivating trust through direct social relationships, Ridwan Kamil tended to rely on elitist and institutional approaches, hoping that the support of major political coalitions and programmatic narratives would be sufficient to attract public sympathy.

In contrast, the Pramono-Karno ticket employed a highly calculated clientelistic approach. They systematically engaged with support bases inherited from Anies Baswedan and Ahok, including mosque networks, former governor volunteer communities, and ethnic groups like the Central and Northern Betawi communities. Pramono even openly attended events organized by The Jakmania and, on several informal occasions, wore Persija attributes to foster symbolic closeness. His running mate, Karno, was a local figure well-known among Jakarta's middle urban communities and had a long-standing history of involvement in social and religious activities in South Jakarta, further strengthening the pair's legitimacy in the eyes of culturally driven voters.

Pramono-Karno's approach did not rely solely on programmatic promises but was also rooted in concrete interpersonal relationships. They offered direct access to the distribution of social assistance, local job programs, and influence over regional policy through informal networks that had been cultivated long before the campaign period. In this regard, Ridwan Kamil's technocratic strategy centered on digital platforms and innovation-driven urban governance such as public service apps, smart cards, and big data integration failed to compete with the strength of social connections and emotional loyalty offered by their opponent's clientelistic approach (Ladopurap et al., 2025).

As a result, Ridwan Kamil not only failed to mobilize votes from communities like The Jakmania but also lost critical opportunities to establish distribution hubs of electoral support. In Jakarta's political arena, electoral mobilization still heavily depends on personal proximity, symbolic representation, and direct interpersonal connections as the primary mechanisms for securing voter support.

The defeat of Ridwan Kamil in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election clearly reflects a failure in political communication that was misaligned with the social, cultural, and psychological characteristics of Jakarta's residents. Although he received endorsements from two influential national figures Joko Widodo and Prabowo Subianto these endorsements did not translate into electoral support. This outcome demonstrates that elite endorsements are not always effective in Jakarta unless accompanied by physical presence, emotional consistency, and narratives that resonate with the everyday realities of the people.

Ridwan Kamil's campaign emphasized the vision of "Smart City 2.0," digitalization of public services, and technology-driven urban planning. However, this approach was abstract and technocratic, failing to directly address the concrete issues that preoccupied residents, such as soaring food prices, recurrent flooding in densely populated areas, and problems of unemployment and unequal access to education. In several public forums, his campaign messages prioritized structural innovation, such as the use of big data for social policy and the launch of the KAMU Card, but lacked emotional connection with community groups that value direct engagement and social sensitivity from their leaders.

Ridwan Kamil's communication strategy was also confined to the digital space, which did not effectively reach key voter segments in Jakarta. While he was highly active on social media, his messages were often one-way and occasionally perceived as satirical or lacking seriousness. In public debates, for instance, he consistently presented technocratic narratives rather than addressing citizens' concerns on populist issues. Conversely, his opponents delivered their campaigns in more relatable language, invoking local symbols such as Betawi traditions, religious study groups (*majelis taklim*), and social actions like accompanying residents during floods or fires.

This failure aligns with the observations of [Aspinall & Sukmajati \(2016\)](#), who argued that in urban electoral contexts such as Jakarta, political power is heavily influenced by identity politics and clientelistic networks. The Pramono-Karno campaign, for example, systematically consolidated support by engaging local communities, including neighborhood mosque committees, women's religious study groups, neighborhood association forums (RT/RW), and volunteer networks from the previous campaigns of Anies Baswedan and Ahok. They utilized informal relationships and symbols of emotional closeness to secure voter loyalty, rather than merely offering grand visions. This was precisely what Ridwan Kamil's communication strategy lacked the ability to navigate micro-political dynamics and tailor his messages to the language and culture of his target audience.

Ridwan Kamil's defeat was not due to a lack of popularity or competence, but rather because he failed to render himself culturally and emotionally relevant within Jakarta's unique political context. Without a communication strategy that is contextual, participatory, and emotionally resonant, even a popular figure like Ridwan Kamil can be marginalized in an electoral arena that demands more than image-building and innovation.

CONCLUSION

The defeat of Ridwan Kamil in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election was the result of an interplay between structural and cultural factors. Despite possessing a solid leadership track record and initially high electability, Ridwan Kamil failed to establish emotional and

cultural connections with Jakarta's electorate. This was primarily due to an inauthentic personal branding strategy and a lack of sensitivity to local cultural nuances in his political communication. Referring to Gabriel Almond's theory of political communication, Ridwan Kamil failed to effectively implement the three essential functions of communication input, conversion, and output rendering his campaign messages unable to adequately address the concrete issues faced by Jakarta's residents, such as flooding, unemployment, and the rising cost of living.

From a cultural perspective, Ridwan Kamil failed to build emotional proximity with Jakarta's populace, characterized by strong ethnic diversity and deeply rooted local identities. Analysis through the lens of clientelism, as articulated by Edward Aspinall, further reveals that this failure was rooted in his inability to establish robust patron-client networks, which are critical in fostering voter loyalty. His inability to engage with influential local figures and strategic communities, such as The Jakmania, further reinforced his weakness in developing and maintaining the socio-political networks essential in Jakarta's political landscape.

These findings demonstrate that electoral success in metropolitan areas like Jakarta is determined not merely by personal popularity, but by a candidate's ability to construct symbolic representation, understand local culture, and articulate political messages that resonate with the aspirations of urban communities. Therefore, a deep understanding of political communication and local political dynamics is essential to explain the factors contributing to Ridwan Kamil's defeat in the 2024 Jakarta gubernatorial election. Further research may offer recommendations on how future political candidates can become more adaptive to Jakarta's cultural and socio-economic sensitivities, as well as highlight the importance of local networks in shaping effective electoral campaigns.

REFERENCES

- Afnissa, D. D., Amarilis, P. K., Renova, V. D., & Putranto, A. (2025). Analisis kegagalan strategi kampanye Ridwan Kamil - Suswono dalam Pilkada 2024. *Jurnal Indonesia : Manajemen Informatika Dan Komunikasi*, 6(1), 632-642. <https://doi.org/10.35870/jimik.v6i1.1292>
- Ahmad, N., Pohan, K., Alfira, S., & Aufia, K. (2024). Analisis strategi komunikasi politik Ridwan Kamil di media sosial instagram dalam membangun citra diri menuju pilgub DKI Jakarta 2024. *Jurnal ISO Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Politik Dan Humaniora*, 4(2), 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.53697/iso.v4i2.1992>
- Almond, G. A., Coleman, J. S., Pye, L. W., Weiner, M., Rustow, D. A., & Blanksten, G. I. (1960). *The politics of the developing areas* (Center for). Princeton University Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt13x19q7>
- Aspinall, E., & Berenschot, W. (2019). *Democracy for sale: Pemilihan umum, klientelisme, dan negara di Indonesia*. Yayasan Pustaka Obor Indonesia.
- Aspinall, E., & Sukmajati, M. (2016). *Electoral dynamics in Indonesia: Money politics, patronage and clientelism at the grassroots*. NUS Press. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1xxzz2>
- Bangun, I. C. (2024). The politics of power: Ridwan Kamil and the dynamics of the 2024 Jakarta election. *Jurnal Lanskap Politik*, 3(1), 107-133. <https://doi.org/10.31942/jlp.2025.3.1>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. In H. Salmon (Ed.), *Writing Center Talk over Time* (Fifth Edit). SAGE. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429469237-3>
- Dermawan, S. F., & Nugraha, A. R. (2024). Pengelolaan media sosial

- instagram@jabarsaberhoaks oleh tim Jabar Saber Hoaks dalam menanggulangi berita hoaks terhadap masyarakat Jawa Barat. *Socius: Jurnal Penelitian Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial*, 1(12), 396–405. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.12788096> Pengelolaan
- Farhan, F. B., Revita, I., & Oktavianus, O. (2024). Persuasive languages on political billboard of the 2024 Indonesian General Election in Padang City West Sumatra, Indonesia. *Cogent Arts and Humanities*, 11(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23311983.2024.2325679>
- Henry. (2024). *Candaan Ridwan Kamil soal janda saat kampanye tuai kecamatan, Susi Pudjiastuti ikut angkat bicara*. Liputan6. <https://www.liputan6.com/lifestyle/read/5799725/candaan-ridwan-kamil-soal-janda-saat-kampanye-tuai-kecamatan-susi-pudjiastuti-ikut-angkat-bicara?page=2>
- Indrawan, R., & Yaniawati, P. (2016). *Metodologi penelitian kuantitatif, kualitatif dan campuran untuk manajemen, pembangunan dan pendidikan* (Revisi). PT Refika Aditama.
- KPU DKI Jakarta. (2024). *Rekapitulasi hasil penghitungan perolehan suara pemilihan Gubernur dan Wakil Gubernur Daerah Khusus Jakarta tahun 2024*. Kpu.Go.Id. <https://jakarta.kpu.go.id/blog/read/rekapitulasi-hasil-penghitungan-perolehan-suara-pemilihan-gubernur-dan-wakil-gubernur-daerah-khusus-jakarta-tahun-2024>
- Ladoporap, N. S., Kusumojati, K. P., & Irwansyah, I. (2025). Social media and issue framing: How Pramono Anung utilized instagram as a political campaign tool in the 2024 Jakarta elections? *Buana Komunikasi (Jurnal Penelitian Dan Studi Ilmu Komunikasi)*, 6(1), 97–118. <https://doi.org/10.32897/buanakomunikasi.2025.6.1.4252>
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldana, J. (2014). *Book Review: Qualitative Data Analysis. A Methods Sourcebook* (3 (ed.); Vol. 28, Issue 4). SAGE Publications, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1177/239700221402800402>
- Ramadhan, A. K. (2025). Identitas regional dalam kontestasi pilkada Jakarta 2024. *Journal Politique*, 5(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.15642/politique.2025.5.1.1-20>
- Rosyada, D. (2020). *Penelitian kualitatif untuk ilmu pendidikan* (Murodi & I. Fahmi (eds.)). Kencana.
- Safrudin, M. S., & Aini, S. (2024). Sentiment analysis of DKI Jakarta 2024 election (Case study: Anies Baswedan and Ridwan Kamil). *Jurnal Buana Informatika*, 15(2), 133–141. <https://ojs.uajy.ac.id/index.php/jbi/article/view/9864>
- Winanto, M. (2024). *Penjelasan Ridwan Kamil soal viral twit lama terkait warga Jakarta*. CNN Indonesia. <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20240826065124-617-1137389/penjelasan-ridwan-kamil-soal-viral-twit-lama-terkait-warga-jakarta>