PERSONAL BRANDING OF PELALAWAN REGENT H ZUKRI AS A POLITICIAN SERVING THE PEOPLE

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Article Info

Abstract: The level of public trust in the political elite is decreasing day by day, so that only a few politicians are able to maintain their image in society, the Regent of Pelalawan H Zukri being one of them. H Zukri's success in the 2009, 2014 and 2019 legislative elections, and continued with his victory in the 2020 Pelalawan Regional Election is an indicator that H Zukri is a figure who truly protects society, including the poor. This of course cannot be separated from H Zukri's personal branding, as a politician who is able to be a beacon of hope for poor people. This research uses a qualitative approach using the concept of personal branding by Montoya & Vandehey. Before becoming a politician, H Zukri was known as a humanist and often paid attention to the poor, and he gave this attention consistently according to his authority, whether direct or policy. It is hoped that this research will provide inspiration and benefits for politicians who want to shape their image and also the results of this research can help H Zukri to evaluate the process of forming his image.

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INTRODUCTION

After being headed by HM Harris for two terms, the Pelalawan Regency elected new leaders in the 2020 Pelalawan Regional Election. The majority of people in Pelalawan Regency selected the H Zukri - H Nasarudin pair after they outperformed three other pairs. The contest featured four running pairs: Zukri-Nasaruddin (serial number 2), Husni Tamrin-T Edy Sabli (serial number 3), carried by PDIP, PKB, and PPP; Adi Sukemi-Muhammad Rais (serial number 4), carried by Golkar; and Abu Mansur Maturidi-Habi Hapri (serial number 1), carried by PAN, PKS, and Hanura (Febri, 2020).

The H Zukri - H Nasaruddin pair won with a percentage of 40.01 percent or 68,021 votes, beating three competitors, namely Adi Sukemi - M Rais with a percentage of 24.14 percent or 41,036 votes, Husni Tamrin - T Edy Sabli with a percentage of 22.57 percent or

38,372 votes, and finally Abu Mansur Maturidi - Habibi Hapri with a percentage of 13.28 percent or 22,569 votes. (Farikhin, 2020).

H Zukri's success in the 2020 Pilkada is part of a series of successes in the political world. In his political journey as a Riau DPRD member, Zukri has relatively good popularity. Zukri's success in three Legislative Elections (PILEG) from the Siak-Pelalawan Dapil with large votes, namely in the 2009 General Election, the 2014 General Election, and the 2019 General Election, coupled with Zukri's votes in the 2015 Pelalawan Regional Election and the 2020 Pelalawan Regional Election are certainly indicators that Zukri is a politician who is liked and loved by his community. This should not be seen as something easy, especially when there is currently a decline in public trust in political elites and political parties..

One of the factors in Zukri's success in captivating the public is of course inseparable from the Personal Branding that has been built by Zukri for a dozen years. Personal branding is an effort to form a self-image, through personal branding a person displays character, ability, and uniqueness in himself into an identity to create an impression of himself that others want to perceive. (Haroen, 2014).

Personal branding can be said to be something positive that aims to get a positive view from others to continue to trust and other actions. Personal branding is also referred to as the main requirement in supporting one's success, especially for a public official. In short, if a public official has good personal branding, it will be easy for the public official to gain support. Public support is one of the major assets for the success of a public official, support that is not only through words but up to real action. (Haroen, 2014).

According to (Wasesa, 2011), personal branding is the process of people using themselves or their careers as brands. Personal branding is the art of actively attracting and maintaining public perception which can be built through people, names, symbols or designs that can be used as a differentiator from competitors. According to (Temewu, 2020 personal branding is an impression related to expertise, behavior and results that a person builds intentionally or unintentionally, the goal is to show his self-image. personal brands are used as an identity to use when others remember a person.

The Personal Branding built by Zukri so far is certainly inseparable from the values instilled by his party, namely the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDI Perjuangan), where PDI Perjuangan has been known as a party that has the image of "Wong Cilik", which means that PDI Perjuangan is very concentrated on small people who have been neglected. And this self-image was built by H Zukri over a very long period of time. Even in this era of technological advancement, H Zukri also maximizes social media to bring himself closer to the community. This has an impact on H Zukri's existence as a regent who cares about the poor in the eyes of the younger generation, so H Zukri's popularity is quite good in young groups. The social media that H Zukri utilizes are Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook.

Based on the explanation above, researchers are interested in the figure of the Pelalawan Regent, Zukri, who is considered to be very close to the poor, and is the foundation of the hopes of the poor to improve their welfare.

RESEARCH METHODS

Researchers use qualitative research methods, and a descriptive approach. Descriptive qualitative research is a study that tries to answer existing problems based on data. The analysis process in descriptive research, namely, presenting, analyzing, and interpreting the data. (Narbuko & Achmadi, 2007).

The subject of this research is H Zukri as Regent of Pelalawan Regency, while the object of this research is H Zukri's self-image. In collecting data, researchers use qualitative data, qualitative data, namely data that is not in the form of numbers but is described in the form of sentences (Mulya, 2008). The types of data sources used in this study are divided into two types, namely primary data sources and secondary data sources.

To obtain primary data, researchers used semi-structured interviews as primary data. According to Ardianto, interviews are data or information collection techniques by making and conducting questions and answers between sources and interviewers face to face. Meanwhile, secondary data is data obtained from data collection techniques that support primary data. In this study, it was obtained from the results of a literature review conducted by the author (Ardianto, 2011). It can be said that this secondary data can come from graphic documents such as tables, notes, SMS, photos and others (Arikunto, 2010).

In obtaining data validity, researchers use source triangulation. Source triangulation utilizes several other research sources as a reference for comparison and confirmation with other sources. Sugiyono explained that data source triangulation is triangulation used to test the truth of data and by checking data from several sources that have been obtained (Sugiyono, 2019). External sources used as source triangulation are Ferly Azhari as Chairman of Repdem PDIP Pelalawan, Asnaldi as TA of the PDI-P Faction of the Riau Provincial DPRD, and people who have been close to H Zukri.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Timothy P.O'Brien, who is the author of the book The Power of Branding, reveals that a personal brand is a personal identity that is considered capable of creating an emotional response to others about the qualities and values that the person has (Haroen, 2014). Meanwhile, according to (Wasesa, 2011), personal branding is the process of people using themselves or their careers as brands. Personal branding is the art of actively attracting and maintaining public perception which can be built through people, names, symbols or designs that can be used as a differentiator from competitors. According to Montoya & Vandehey, there are eight concepts of personal branding formation as the foundation of strong personal branding, namely: 1) Specialization (the law of specialization), great personal branding is the accuracy of a specialization, concentrated only on a particular strength, expertise, and achievement. 2) Leadership (the law of leadership), personal branding is equipped with a leadership figure who can decide something in an atmosphere full of uncertainty and provide a clear direction. 3) Personality (the law of personality), personal branding is based on a personality that is as it is and comes with imperfections. A person must have a good personality, but does not have to be perfect. 4) Differences (the law of distinctiveness), effective personal branding must be presented in a way that is different from others. Differences are needed in order to distinguish between one another. In addition, with differences a person will be better recognized by the audience. 5) Visible (the law of visibility), personal branding must be seen consistently and continuously until one's personal branding is recognized. One needs to promote oneself and use every opportunity to make oneself visible. 6) Unity (the law of unity), the personal life behind personal branding should be in line with the moral ethics and attitudes that have been determined from personal branding itself. Personal life should be a reflection and image that is desired in personal branding. 7) Persistence (the law of persistence), personal branding cannot happen instantly, it takes time to grow. During the process, it is important to always pay attention to each stage and tranding

that occurs. 8) Goodwill (the law of goodwill), personal branding will give good results and last longer if the person behind it is perceived with a positive image. That person must be associate with a value or idea that is generally recognized as positive and beneficial (Tamimy, 2017).

The first concept is specialization. Specialization consists of several aspects, namely ability, behavior, lifestyle, mission, and profession. H Zukri has a very effective way of approaching groups of orphans and the poor. H Zukri has never had any difficulty in reaching out to these groups, as he has mentored quite a number of poor people during his political career, and he seeks to improve their welfare through fundamental sectors, such as education and the economy (Interview with H Zukri, 2023).

H Zukri's concern for the children of the poor, orphans is also evidenced by several posts on his Instagram, which several times uttered the words poor and orphans. One of them is a post on January 9, 2023. The following caption in the post shows a photo of H Zukri distributing Healthy Indonesia Cards (KIS):

"Roh kepemimpinan itu rakyat sejahtera, lalu barometer dari kesejahteraan itu tidak ada lagi masyarakat miskin. InsyaAllah kami akan memaksimalkan priode kami ini dengan berbagai program yang telah dan mulai kami realisasikan mepada masyarakat, kami juga membutuhkan suport kita semua sebab negeri ini tak dapat dibangun oleh seorang Bupati." tulisnya di akun @zukribupatiku.

The second concept is leadership. As a leader in Pelalawan Regency, H Zukri created a program to collect zakat from the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) and later Baznas will distribute zakat with a total value of Rp 8 billion to the poor in Pelalawan Regency on an ongoing basis. (Interview with H Zukri).

The third concept is personality, H Zukri is very familiar with the poor and is always present when they are in need, and the touch he gives has no political motive, but purely to people who are really given help. Riau Education Figure, who is also a close friend of Regent H Zukri, Dr. Muhammad Syafi'i, said that he saw firsthand how serious H Zukri was in helping the poor, one proof of which was the regular provision of basic food assistance, even in a place with minimal votes for H Zukri in the 2015 Pelalawan Pilkada (Interview with Syafi'i, 2023).

H Zukri, who is an alumnus of Darun Nahdhah Islamic Boarding School in Kampar Regency, is also very aware of the importance of helping the poor, because in the Qur'an and hadith, there are many commands that oblige us to help the poor, especially providing food for them. (Interview with H Zukri, 2023)

The fourth concept is diversity. H Zukri, has a different way of approaching the poor, as conveyed by the Chairman of Repdem Pelalawan, Ferly Azhari, according to him, personal assistance is often provided by H Zukri, especially when going to the field. H Zukri has even gone on a night outing by using the toilet, eating a side dish at a poor person's house, and then leaving some money under the dinner plate.(Interview with Ferly, 2023).

In the declaration of the H Zukri - H Nasarudin pair as the 2020 Pelalawan Cabup and Cawabup, H Zukri did not hold a festive event in an open field as many candidates usually do, he chose to declare himself at a poor man's house, and then registered with the KPU using angkot with his wife. In addition, H Zukri also inaugurated his winning team on a damaged bridge (Interview, 2023).

The fifth concept is visible. H Zukri consistently posts on social media every day, even when he is not in Indonesia, posts continue to run, one example is when H Zukri and his family performed Umrah in 2023. Of all the activities posted on his social media, H Zukri always takes

the time to attend symbolic handover activities to the poor and with children at school, so that H Zukri's concern for the poor can be felt directly.

The sixth concept is unity. H Zukri's closeness to the poor is actually very natural and has never been made up, and is indeed a personal characteristic of him. In fact, he said, one of the reasons he entered politics was to become a defender of the poor and orphans. Ferly even revealed that since he was still the Chairman of the Pelalawan Regency Youth Organization, H Zukri has routinely given a touch to these poor people.

The seventh concept is Firmness. H Zukri's determination in helping the poor has been very tested, because he has a very long track record in dealing with the poor. Asnaldi, an expert from the PDIP faction in Riau DPRD, said that in faction meetings, H Zukri always said that all faction members must prioritize the fate of the poor in their respective constituencies, especially their education and health insurance (Interview Asnaldi, 2023)

The eighth concept is Good Name. In maintaining his image as a politician who cares about the fate of the poor, H Zukri consistently carries out various activities that are very touching to the community, both from government funds and from his personal funds. This is done consistently and continuously so that H Zukri is very dear to the people with the lower middle economic class, and is respected by other politicians.

The Chairman of the Riau Provincial DPRD, Yulisman, acknowledged that H Zukri is a young politician who has had a brilliant career from the past until now, because H Zukri has a good name in his community, and H Zukri's consistency in maintaining constituents is the key to H Zukri's political career being able to survive so far, even though H Zukri does not come from a family with a political elite background (Interview, 2023).

CONCLUSION

As mentioned above, from the 8 concepts of personal branding, H Zukri succeeded in showing his image as a politician who is ready to become the foundation of the hopes of the poor, who is always present to help the poor in every momentum, and maximizes all existing potential, one of which is by distributing ASN zakat to the poor. H Zukri's personality as a friendly and humble figure makes him respected by many people, both ordinary people and political elites.

The figure of Pelalawan Regent H Zukri is seen as a politician who is very close to the poor, and orphans. H Zukri's closeness to the poor is inseparable from the doctrine of his party, PDI Perjuangan. Where, PDI Perjuangan is the party of the little people, and this is what makes H Zukri choose PDI Perjuangan as his political struggle platform. Because long before becoming a PDI Perjuangan cadre, H Zukri had often provided assistance to the poor, because he realized there was a religious command to help these poor people. H Zukri also has a different and very humanist way of getting closer to the poor.

H Zukri's consistency in paying attention to the poor then made H Zukri a very popular leader, because his closeness to the poor was not seen as a political motive. This is because his outreach to poor areas was carried out over a very long period of time. This is what then made H Zukri's votes in the 2020 Pelalawan Pilkada able to outperform the votes of other Paslon. All things related to him are also always raised through official social media, this is certainly a form of his interaction with his community, including to receive complaints and input on the course of government.

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