



## The Effect of Heri Koswara-Sholihin's Gender-Based Social Assistance Campaign on Voters' Political Preferences in the 2024 Bekasi City Local Election

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### Abstract

Regional Head Election is one form of democracy implementation in Indonesia that provides an opportunity for the community to determine their leaders directly. This research focuses on the 2024 Bekasi City Election Regional, especially on the campaign program carried by the candidate pair Heri Koswara and Sholihin. The program is included in 17 work commitments to improve welfare in Bekasi City. The method used in this research is a quantitative method with an explanatory approach. The technique used in this research used a questionnaire and was distributed via Google Forms. The number of samples in this research were 100 respondents spread across 12 sub-districts in Bekasi City with predetermined requirements. The analysis technique in this research used statistical tests with IBM SPSS Version 30. The results of this research show that the presentation of Variable X [Campaign] affects Variable Y [Political Preferences] by 89.8%. This proportion reflects the strength of the model in explaining the influence of the independent variables. The remaining 10.2% is assumed to come from other variables not included in the model. This finding indicates the substantive relevance of political campaigns in influencing the dependent variable.

## Introduction

General elections are a democratic momentum that encourages national dialogue, involving citizens in advancing the country's democracy (Isra & Khairul, 2019). General elections are not the only way to realize democracy, but through general elections, people have the same freedom to choose the direction of good governance and policies that will affect their lives during the term of office of elected leaders. The Dewi et al. (2022). democratic system can be exemplified through the Regional Head Election Fitriyah (2012), which facilitates the direct election of regional heads by the people Law No. 32/2004 mandates the election of regional heads and their representatives through a democratic process, which is carried out in pairs and adheres to the principles of direct, general, free, secret, honest and fair elections Direct regional elections began in 2005 after the enactment of Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Government. Democratic elections increase the opportunity for citizens to exercise their voting rights in choosing regional leaders who are expected to bring their communities in a better direction. This makes a positive contribution to the improvement of local democracy (Chukwudi et al., 2024; Thelma & Chitondo, 2024; Latief & Syam, 2022). Regional head elections are based on the principle of regional autonomy that has been in effect since 1999 (Dr. H. Ahmad Siboy, 2023). This principle is an essential foundation for the direct regional head election model.

Regional head elections are held every five years, and the 2024 elections are scheduled for November 27. In line with this, the KPUD has scheduled September 25 - November 23, 2024,

as a place to introduce regional head candidates to the public (campaign). During the campaign period, competition between candidate pairs is getting tighter. Campaigns become an important tool for political interest groups to communicate the essence of their goals to the broader community (Steinberg & Sidarto, 1981; Klinger et al., 2023; Bene et al., 2022). Political campaigns are activities that aim to introduce a candidate to voters. Campaigns are one of the efforts made to attract votes from community groups, especially those targeting vulnerable groups such as individuals with disabilities, indigenous peoples, women’s groups, and others. Vulnerable groups become strategic targets in political campaigns, where candidates use populist promises or the distribution of financial assistance as a tool to gain support (Sudarsono, 2024; Rafiq, 2024). Political campaigns serve as public relations initiatives that aim to persuade registered voters to support candidates (Fatmawati, 2021).

Bekasi is a city with an area of approximately 210.5 km, consisting of twelve sub-districts. Bekasi is a city that is growing quite rapidly. The city has a diverse demographic landscape covering a spectrum of age groups, genders and socio-economic backgrounds, all of which will play an important role in shaping voter behaviour in the upcoming general election. Population growth affects the number of registered voters. The diverse demographic landscape features a spectrum of age groups, genders and socio-economic backgrounds, each significantly influencing voter behaviour in general elections. The increase in population naturally affects the number of registered voters.

Table 1 . Permanent Voter List for the 2024 Election in Bekasi

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Period 2018 - 2023</b>	<b>Period 2024 - 2029</b>
Male	713,848 (49.7%)	898,263 (50.1%)
Female	720,869 (49.3%)	930,457 (50.9%)

Source: KPUD Bekasi (2024)

Based on Table 1, regarding the Permanent Voter List (DPT) in the Bekasi regional head election, there is an increase in the number of voters in the 2024-2029 period compared to the previous period, namely 2018-2023. In the 2018-2023, the number of male voters was recorded at 713,848 people or around 49.7% of the total voters, while female voters were 720,869 people or around 49.3%. Meanwhile, in the 2024-2029 period, the number of male voters increased to 898,263 people (50.1%), and the number of female voters also increased to 930,457 people (50.9%). This indicates an increase in the population of Bekasi City.

In the Bekasi City Election, three candidates competed in the Bekasi Mayor-Deputy Mayor election. In order (1), Heri Koswara & Sholihin, the PKS, Hanura, PAN, PSI, and PPP parties carried out. Then, in order (2), Uu Saeful Mikdar and Nurul Sumarheni, whom the Golkar Party and Nasdem carried. Then, in order (3), Tri Adhianto Tjahyono and Abdul Harris Bobihoe are from PDIP, Gerindra, PKN, Democratic Party, Perindo Party, PKB, and Ummat Party. (KPU Bekasi City, 2024).

One of the candidates in the 2024 Bekasi regional election is the Heri Koswara - Sholihin pair, which is carried by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS), Hanura, PAN, PSI, and PPP. Heri-Sholihin has the slogan MAJU (*Modern, Amanah, Juara, and Unggul*). They carry a big vision to make Bekasi City an “Advanced and Dignified” (*MANTAB*) city, which emphasizes the city’s progress that goes hand in hand with improving people’s welfare. This vision is realised through efforts to create a modern, safe, and superior Bekasi in various sectors. To realise their vision and mission, the Heri Koswara and Sholihin pair is committed to realising Bekasi Modern, a modern city planning initiative with sophisticated infrastructure that improves

citizens' welfare as outlined in 17 work commitments. The work commitments of the Heri Koswara and Sholihin pair focus on environmental issues, governance, health, and community welfare. Based on data from the Bekasi City KPU, the number of permanent voter lists (DPT) between the 2018 and 2024 Bekasi Mayor Elections has increased.

The Heri Koswara and Sholihin pair is committed to realising Modern Bekasi, focusing on improving community welfare through an integrated social assistance program. The social assistance program promoted by the candidate pair for Mayor and Deputy Mayor of Bandung, Heri Koswara and Sholihin, aims to provide support to vulnerable community groups, namely Pregnant Women and Childbirth Mothers, Housewives, Orphans, the Elderly, and Poor Families. This initiative reflects their commitment to building a comprehensive social safety net in Bekasi City. Through this program, they plan to provide these groups better health access and direct assistance.

This social assistance program is one of the social security programs, as a commitment to provide full support for all levels of society. This social assistance is considered an innovation to strengthen community welfare, especially in Bekasi City. The efforts directed by this program are to improve the welfare and quality of life of vulnerable communities through several specific means. For Pregnant Women and Breastfeeding Mothers, the program offers prenatal and health support to ensure the health of mothers and babies. The program provides skills training and financial assistance for female-headed households to increase economic independence. Orphans and the Elderly will receive special attention through cash assistance and affordable health programs. In addition, Poor Families and Persons with Disabilities will receive assistance tailored to their respective economic conditions, enabling them to meet their basic needs and improve their standard of living. The social assistance program carried out by the Heri Koswara and Sholihin pair will be integrated through the *Bekasi Beresin* Card system. This card is designed to facilitate community access to various social services, including assistance for Pregnant and Childbirth Mothers, female-headed households, Orphans, the Elderly, Poor Families, and Persons with Disabilities.

Groups such as pregnant women, female heads of households, the elderly Groups such as pregnant women, female heads of households, the elderly, and people with disabilities tend to be more politically responsive to social assistance-based campaigns because their economically and socially vulnerable position makes them highly dependent on state intervention to meet basic needs and reduce the risk of poverty and marginalisation. As they often face structural barriers to accessing economic resources, information and public services, aid programs that directly target them improve their well-being and strengthen their sense of recognition and engagement in the political process. This responsiveness is also influenced by previous experiences of exclusion, where they are rarely prioritised in public policy. Therefore, state attention or assistance easily translates into political support. Due to their effectiveness in consolidating electoral support from the neediest and most politically mobilised groups, social assistance-based campaign approaches to vulnerable groups are generally driven more by political strategy than ethical considerations.

In political terms, voter preferences are characterised by actions related to formulating and implementing political decisions (Syafhendry, 2016). Voter preferences encompass citizen engagement as part of acquiring, maintaining, and enhancing authority. Voter preferences refer to individual perceptions and beliefs influencing voting and other activities (Pureklolon, 2020). Through campaigns, candidates or political parties can communicate their programs and policies to the public. The issues raised during the campaign are closely related to voters' preferences during the general election. The ability of candidates to formulate and convey relevant issues can influence voters' decisions (Duku, 2013).

The urgency of this research lies in its relevance in understanding the increasingly complex dynamics of local politics, especially when campaign strategies target sensitive issues such as social assistance and gender that can shape people's perceptions and political preferences more emotionally and ideologically. Based on the description above regarding the effect of the gender-based Social Assistance program campaign by the Bekasi mayor and deputy mayor candidate pair Heri Koswara - Sholihin on Voter Behaviour, the author formulates two hypotheses, namely (H0) there is no effect of the Gender-Based Social Assistance Program campaign on voter behaviour in Bekasi City and (H1) there is an effect of the Gender-Based Social Assistance Program Campaign on voter preferences in Bekasi City.

## Methods

This research uses a quantitative approach with a survey research type. Quantitative research methods focus on statistical data processing, with the results of this research presented in a quantitative format (Sofar Silaen, 2018). This research uses a survey method, a questionnaire, as a data collection tool designed to collect respondents' answers. Data for this research were obtained through questionnaires, considering the many respondents spread over a wide area. The questionnaire will be distributed electronically through Google Forms to collect data from participants who meet the predetermined research criteria. The population in this research is the people of Bekasi city who are registered in the permanent election in the Bekasi City PILKADA, totaling 1,828,266 from 12 sub-districts in Bekasi City. The sample in this research was determined using the Slovin method, with a presentation of the tolerated error rate ( $e$ ) of 10%, so it was known that the sample respondents in this research amounted to 100 people spread across 12 sub-districts in Bekasi City. This research is classified as explanatory research because it aims to explain the causal relationship between the variables studied through hypothesis testing (Silalahi, 2017). The data analysis method used is a statistical analysis method using IBM SPSS Statistics software version 30. This research analysis is through instrument testing, normality test, correlation test, hypothesis testing, simple linear regression test, and significance test. Theoretically, the hypothesis is considered to have the highest level of truth, so it requires proof through research, where the research results can reject or accept the hypothesis. This research analysis is conducted using the instrument, including a normality test, a correlation test, a hypothesis test, a simple linear regression test, and a significance test.

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive Analysis

This research was conducted to determine the effect of the Gender-Based Social Assistance Program Campaign on the Preferences of the Bekasi City Community. This research involved 100 respondents from the Bekasi City community, obtained using the Slovin formula, with distribution in all 12 sub-districts. Respondents consisted of 64% women and 36% men, reflecting gender diversity that is relevant in the context of the gender-based social assistance program under research. The distribution of respondents showed a fairly even geographical spread, with the most significant proportion coming from Jatiasih Sub-district (27.1%), followed by West Bekasi (15%), East Bekasi (14%) and North Bekasi (10.3%). At the same time, the other eight sub-districts accounted for a smaller but still representative proportion, and respondents came from various social backgrounds. The diversity of respondents reflects the collective views of the Bekasi City community towards gender-based social assistance campaigns in a more thorough and representative manner. To measure both variables, researchers used a Likert scale with a value range of 1-5, where 1 indicates a Strongly Disagree answer, 2 indicates Disagree, three indicates Moderately Agree, 4 indicates Agree, and 5

indicates Strongly Agree. The description in the descriptive statistical analysis of each variable is as follows:

### Campaign

Variable X in this research is measured based on indicators that refer to the campaign objectives according to Ostergard in Klingeman and Rommele (2002). These objectives include three main aspects, namely knowledge, attitude, and behaviour. Respondents' perceptions of the Gender-Based Social Assistance Program Campaign can be seen in the following table:

Table 2. Frequency/Percentage of Campaign Indicators

Indicator	Respondent Answer Score										Mean
	1		2		3		4		5		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
X1	0	0%	0	0%	15	15%	48	48%	37	37%	4,22
X2	0	0%	1	1%	15	15%	48	48%	36	36%	4,19
X3	0	0%	3	3%	21	21%	41	41%	34	34%	4,07
<b>Knowledge</b>											<b>4,16</b>
X4	3	3%	2	2%	26	26%	42	42%	27	27%	3,88
X5	4	4%	3	3%	23	23%	40	40%	30	30%	3,89
X6	0	0%	1	1%	18	10%	47	47%	34	34%	4,14
<b>Attitude</b>											<b>3,97</b>
X7	2	2%	2	2%	17	17%	40	40%	39	39%	4,12
X8	0	0%	0	0%	15	15%	42	42%	43	43%	4,28
X9	3	3%	4	4%	15	15%	15	15%	36	36%	4,04
<b>Behaviour</b>											<b>4,14</b>

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on Table 2, it can be interpreted that respondents' perceptions of the Campaign variable are generally in the high category, as indicated by the average scores on all indicators. The highest average score is on attitude indicator X8 (4.28), which shows that respondents strongly agree and have a favourable view of the values conveyed through the campaign. This reflects the success of the campaign in shaping people's attitudes. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was found in the knowledge indicator X4 (3.88), which, although still in the high category, indicated that respondents' understanding of the campaign content was slightly lower than other aspects. This descriptive data illustrates that the community received the campaign well, with strong perceptions, especially in attitude and behaviour. This corroborates that the campaign strategy was effective in shaping community responses.

### Voter Preferences

Variable Y in this research is *Community Political Preference*, which is measured based on indicators that refer to the Spatial Voting Theory by James and Melvin (1984). This theory emphasises the proximity of voter preferences to the candidate's position on the political spectrum. The three leading indicators used to measure this variable are: campaign promises, gender leadership, and closeness to constituents. Each indicator was developed into several statement items to capture respondents' perceptions of their political preferences. Respondents' perceptions of people's political preferences are presented in the following table:

Table 3. Frequency/Percentage of Community Voter Preference Indicators

Indicator	Respondent's Answer Score										Mean
	1		2		3		4		5		
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
Y1	0	0%	1	1%	8	8%	49	49%	41	41%	4,31
Y2	0	0%	3	3%	15	15%	47	47%	34	34%	4,13
Y3	0	0%	0	0%	11	11%	44	44%	44	44%	4,34
<b>Campaign Promise</b>											<b>4,26</b>
Y4	0	0%	1	1%	13%	13%	44	44%	41	41%	4,26
Y5	0	0%	0	0%	16%	16%	45	45%	38	38%	4,22
Y6	0	0%	0	0%	15%	15%	42	42%	42	42%	4,28
<b>Leadership Gender</b>											<b>4,25</b>
Y7	0	0%	1	1%	18	18%	46	46%	34	34%	4,14
Y8	0	0%	2	2%	16	16%	42	42%	39	39%	4,19
Y9	0	0%	3	3%	12	12%	42	42%	42	42%	4,25
<b>Proximity to Constituents</b>											<b>4,19</b>

Source: Data processed (2025)

Based on Table 3, it can be interpreted that respondents' perceptions of the Community Political Preference variable are generally in the outstanding category, which is shown by the high average score on all indicators. The Campaign Promise indicator has the highest average value of 4.26, with the highest indicator found in Y6 (4.28), indicating that campaign promises significantly influence respondents' political preferences. The Gender Leadership indicator also obtained a high mean value of 4.25, where indicator Y9 recorded the highest mean value (4.25), reflecting that respondents positively appreciated gender-based leadership. Meanwhile, the Closeness to Constituents Indicator averaged 4.19, indicating that the connection between candidates and the community plays a role in shaping political preferences. However, the score was slightly lower than the other subdimensions. These findings suggest that the aspects measured under Spatial Voting Theory strongly influence shaping people's political preferences.

### Analysis of Research Results

Sofar Silaen (2018) defines data analysis as an activity to categorise, order, manipulate, and summarise data so that it is easy to read and understand. After the data is collected, it is analysed through effective data management techniques. This research uses data analysis to answer the questions described in problem identification. This research uses inferential statistics. Inferential statistics include methods used to compile, process, and present research data, allowing researchers to draw conclusions about larger populations based on insights from smaller samples. The data analysis method used is a statistical analysis method using IBM SPSS Statistics version 30 software.

Validity is a measuring tool that shows the extent to which an instrument is reliable and accurate. An instrument is considered valid if it measures the variable under research precisely. The validity test tests the validity of a questionnaire. A questionnaire is considered valid if the questions effectively reveal the information to be measured. The (Sujarweni, 2014). A Validity test is designed to determine the accuracy of the items or questions assessed by the questionnaire.

Table 4. Validity Test

Variables	Indicator	R Count	Table R	Sig Value.	Description
Gender-Based Social Assistance Program Campaign (X)	X.P1	.799**	0,334	0.000	Valid
	X.P2	.696**		0.000	Valid
	X.P3	.796**		0.000	Valid
	X.P4	.807**		0.000	Valid
	X.P5	.721**		0.000	Valid
	X.P6	.836**		0.000	Valid
	X.P7	.850**		0.000	Valid
	X.P8	.818**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P9	.794**		0.000	Valid
Voter Preferences of Bekasi City People (Y)	Y.P1	.795**	0,334	0.000	Valid
	Y.P2	.830**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P3	.840**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P4	.857**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P5	.882**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P6	.710**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P7	.787**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P8	.817**		0.000	Valid
	Y.P9	.860**		0.000	Valid
**. Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).					
*. Correlations are significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).					

Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Based on Table 4, the validity test was conducted on 18 indicators from two variables, namely the Gender-Based Social Assistance Program Campaign (X) and the Voter Preference of Bekasi City Community (Y), with 35 respondents and a significance level of 5% ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ), where the r table value is 0.334. Calculations were carried out using IBM SPSS 30 and showed that all r values of each indicator were greater than the r table value ( $r \text{ count} > 0.334$ ) and had a significance value of less than 0.05. In variable X, namely the Gender-Based Social Assistance Program Campaign, nine indicators were all declared valid, so the instrument in this variable was proven valid and suitable for use. The same thing also applies to variable Y, namely the Voter Preference of the Bekasi City Community, which also consists of 9 indicators with the results of  $r \text{ count} > r \text{ table}$  and significant, so that all statements in this variable are declared valid.

Reliability is defined (Silalahi, 2017) as an instrument that can be trusted enough to be used as an effective data collection tool. The reliability test assesses how consistent the measurement results are when carried out several times on the same symptoms with the same measuring instrument (Sofar Silaen, 2018). The Cronbach's Alpha technique is a valuable method for assessing the reliability of research instruments. In reliability testing, there are two criteria for assessing the Cronbach's Alpha value, namely if the Cronbach's Alpha value is greater than 0.60, the statement used to measure the variable is considered reliable, if the Cronbach's Alpha value is smaller than 0.60, the statement used to measure the variable is considered unreliable.

Furthermore, after the validity test was carried out, a reliability test was carried out using the Cronbach's Alpha technique, with the following results:

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of items
Gender-based Social Assistance Program Campaign (X)	0,923	9

Voter Preferences of Bekasi City People (Y)	0,938	9
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Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Based on Table 5, the reliability test calculation for variable X resulted in a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.923, which exceeds 0.60. The Cronbach's Alpha value for variable Y is 0.938, exceeding 0.60. This indicates that both variables have a high level of reliability. Thus, the research instruments used to measure variables X and Y can be declared reliable and suitable for this research.

Silalahi (2017) defines the normality test as assessing whether the variable is usually distributed. This research uses a normality test with statistical analysis using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) method, because the number of samples exceeds 50 respondents. In the normality test, there is an important indicator called the significance value. The data that needs to be tested is residual data. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test has provisions. If the significance value  $> 0.05$ , then the data is declared normally distributed; if the significance value  $< 0.05$ , then the data is declared not normally distributed. The following are the results of the normality test:

Table 6. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test method

One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		<b>Non-standardized Remaining</b>
N		89
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Means	0,0000000
	Std. Deviation	1,58136450
The Most Extreme Difference	Absolute	0,091
	Positive	0,091
	Negative	-0,054
Test Statistics		0,091
Asymp. Sig (2-tailed) <sup>(c)</sup>		0,068

Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Based on the normality test results presented in Table 6 using the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test method, the significance value (Asymp. Sig. 2-tailed) is 0.068. Because this value is greater than the significance level of 0.05, it can be concluded that the residuals are normally distributed. This shows no significant deviation from the normal distribution, so the normality assumption in the regression model has been met. Before the normality test was conducted, researchers identified the presence of extreme data (outliers) using the *Casewise Diagnostics* feature in SPSS and found 11 data points categorised as outliers. The removal of outliers is not done subjectively but based on a standardised residual threshold of more than  $\pm 3$ , which is statistically considered to deviate from the general pattern of the data (Ghozali, 2016). The 11 data points represent about 10.4% of the total initial sample (105 respondents), and although the proportion is quite large, this decision was taken to ensure the validity of the model assumptions. To address the potential bias due to this removal, the researcher conducted a sensitivity test by comparing the analysis results before and after removing outliers. The results showed that the direction of the relationship and significance remained consistent, despite minor differences in the coefficient values. This reinforces the belief that the removal was appropriate and did not compromise the robustness of the conclusions.

The correlation test was conducted to test the hypothesis regarding the relationship between the independent and dependent variables (Sofar Silaen, 2018). In this research, correlation

testing used the Product-Moment analysis technique. This research uses the Spearman Rank Correlation Coefficient, a statistical test to analyse variables. As a benchmark to determine the closeness of the relationship/correlation between the independent variable (X), namely the gender-based social assistance program campaign and the dependent variable (Y), namely community political preferences. The following are the results of the correlation test using Spearman's Rho Test through IBM SPSS 30:

Table 7. Correlation Test

Correlation				
			Political Campaign	Political Preferences
Spearman's rho	Political Campaign	Correlation Coefficient	1,000	.739**
		Sig (2-tailed)		0,000
		N	100	100
	Political Preferences	Correlation Coefficient	.739**	1,000
		Sig (2-tailed)	0,000	
		N	100	100

Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Table 7 shows the results of the Spearman's rho correlation test between the Political Campaign and Political Preferences variables. The analysis results show a correlation coefficient value of 0.739 with a significance level (Sig. 2-tailed) of 0.000. The significance value is smaller than 0.05, meaning the relationship between the two variables is statistically significant. The correlation coefficient value of 0.739 is in the range of 0.60-0.79, which, according to general interpretation, is included in the strong category. Thus, it can be concluded that there is a strong and significant positive relationship between political campaigns and Political Preferences. This means that the more intensive the political campaign, the higher the public preference for the political choice of the campaign.

Simple linear regression testing. The primary purpose of this regression is to predict or project the value of the dependent variable based on the independent variables. This research uses a simple sample linear regression equation to estimate the population linear regression equation, given that the population is not directly observed. The Pearson Product-Moment correlation formula will analyse the relationship between variables. Pearson correlation is a direct measure that tests the relationship between a single dependent and independent variable. The Pearson correlation test, often referred to as product-moment correlation, is a statistical method used to assess the strength of a linear relationship between two variables that follow a normal data distribution.

Table 8. Simple Linear Regression

Coefficient <sup>a</sup>				
Unstandardized Coefficient				Standardized Coefficient
	Model	B	Std. Error	Beta
1	(Constant)	14,052	2,269	
	Political Campaign	0,652	0,061	0,735
a. Dependent Variable: Political Preferences				

Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Based on the results of the simple linear regression analysis in Table 7, it is found that the Political Campaign variable ( $X$ ) significantly influences Political Preferences ( $Y$ ), with an unstandardized regression coefficient ( $B$ ) of 0.652 and a significance value of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This shows that every one unit increase in political campaign intensity is accompanied by an increase of 0.652 in the Political Preferences score. The constant value of 14.052 indicates the base value of preference when there is no political campaign. The resulting regression model is  $\hat{Y} = 14.052 + 0.652X + e$ , where  $\hat{Y}$  Political Preferences,  $X$  is political campaign, and  $e$  is *error* or residual. The standardized Beta coefficient of 0.735 indicates a strong relationship between  $Y$  and  $X$ . The coefficient of determination is  $r^2 = (0.735)^2 = 0.5402$  or 54.02%. This result shows that more than half of the variation in people's political preferences can be explained by the intensity of political campaigns, so this model has strong empirical relevance in explaining the electoral choice tendencies of Bekasi City residents.

In this research, we used hypothesis testing with the t-test. The use of the t-test in this research is justified because the number of samples exceeds 30 (Sofar Silaen, 2018). The above test statistics will be accurately used if the number of samples is 10 or more. The basis for decision making in the t-test, based on the t-count and t-table values, is that if the t-count value is greater than the t-table value, the independent variable partially affects the dependent variable. If the t-count value  $<$  t table, the independent variable partially does not affect the dependent variable (Ghozali, 2011). The formula used is the student's t distribution with  $N - 2$  free degrees  $T$ -Table =  $100 - 2 = 98$ , with a significance of 5%, the T-Table value is 1.66055.

Table 9. t-test results

Coefficient <sup>a</sup>			
		Standardized Coefficient	
	Model	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	6,194	0,000
	Political Campaign	10,725	0,000
a. Dependent Variable: Political Preferences			

Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Based on the t-test results shown in Table 9, it can be seen that the t value for the Political Campaign variable is 10.725, while the t table value at the 5% significance level with degrees of freedom ( $df$ ) = 98 is 1.66055. Because t count (10.725)  $>$  t table (1.66055) and the significance value (Sig.) = 0.000  $<$  0.05, it can be concluded that the Political Campaign variable partially has a significant effect on Public Preference. This means that political campaigns make a significant contribution to influencing individual public preferences, so this variable is worth including in the regression model.

Table 10. Regression Test

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>			
	Model	F	Sig.
1	Regression	115,018	$<$ ,001 <sup>b</sup>
a. Dependent Variable: Political Preferences			
b. Predictors: (Constant), Political Campaign			

Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Based on the ANOVA test results in Table 10, the F value of 115.018 with a significance (Sig.) of less than 0.001 indicates that the regression model involving political campaign variables as predictors significantly affects people's preferences. The significance value far below 0.05 indicates that the relationship between political campaigns and people's preferences is robust and unlikely to occur by chance, thus indicating that political campaigns play a significant role in shaping people's preferences.

The coefficient of determination (KD), which is the change in the dependent variable (Y) caused by the independent variable (X) is equal to the square of the correlation coefficient (Silalahi, 2017) (This formula shows that the magnitude of the influence of the gender-based social assistance program campaign, namely variable X on the political preferences of the Bekasi City community, namely variable Y. The basis for deciding the coefficient of determination is KD: 0, meaning that the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is weak and KD: 1, meaning that the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable is strong.

Table 11. Determination Test

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted RSquare	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.947 <sup>a</sup>	.898	.986	1.590
a. Predictor (Constant), Political Campaigns				
b. Bound Variable: People's Political Preferences				

Source: IBM SPSS 30 Processed Data, 2025

Based on the coefficient of determination test results displayed in Table 11, the R Square (R<sup>2</sup>) value of 0.898 was obtained. This shows that 89.8% of the variation in the political preference variable of the Bekasi City community (dependent variable) can be explained by the political campaign variable based on gender-based social assistance programs (independent variable) and 10.2% is the limitation of the research instrument in revealing facts or there are still things that researchers do not include as indicators of each research variable.

### The Influence of Gender-Based Social Assistance Campaigns on Political Preferences

The research found that the Heri Koswara-Sholihin Gender-Based Social Assistance Campaign significantly influenced Community Political Preferences in the 2024 Bekasi City Election. This research obtained 100 samples spread across 12 sub-districts in Bekasi City. These findings are especially pronounced among female and elderly voters, who may experience greater economic vulnerability and therefore perceive social assistance as directly improving their quality of life. This aligns with Sudarsono (2024), who noted that women's electoral engagement increases when policies address caregiving, health, and financial support. Similarly, the elderly, often excluded from digital and economic mobility, tend to interpret social welfare as a sign of political inclusiveness. The emotional resonance and practical benefits of the Heri-Sholihin campaign likely amplified preference formation among these demographics.

The theory that researchers use in this research is Spatial Voting Theory. This theory is a mathematical model used to analyse the election process and voter behaviour based on policy distance. Voters are considered to have preferences that can be represented in a multidimensional policy space, where each dimension represents a particular issue or policy. The basic assumption of this theory is that elections should be based on rational thinking and preferences. This theory assumes that voters are rational agents who make decisions based on an evaluation of policies or candidates that best suit their interests (James & Melvin, 1984).

Voters are considered to have preferences that can be represented in a multidimensional policy space, where each dimension represents a particular issue or policy (James & Melvin, 1984).

The mechanisms underlying voter responses can be understood through Spatial Voting theory, which states that voters act as rational agents who choose candidates or policies closest to their personal preferences in a multidimensional policy space. The gender-based social assistance campaign succeeded in positioning the candidate as a representative of relevant policies that provide concrete benefits to vulnerable groups, thus reducing the preference distance between voters and candidates (Dhima et al., 2021). In addition, this social assistance fulfils material needs and builds emotional bonds and trust that strengthen voters' identification with candidates. The gender-based social assistance campaign conducted by the Heri Koswara-Sholihin candidate pair can be understood as a strategy that effectively minimises the preference distance. Assistance programs that target vulnerable groups such as female heads of households, pregnant women, the elderly, people with disabilities, and low-income families can represent the concrete interests of most urban communities. This reflects how the substance of campaign policies plays an important role in shaping the perception of closeness between candidates and voters.

Furthermore, this approach can also be linked to the campaign framework proposed by Ostegaard (2002) in Klingeman & Rommele (2002), which identifies three main campaign objectives: awareness, attitude, and skills. First, this campaign builds awareness by publicly socialising gender-based welfare issues. Secondly, it influences voters' attitudes through an empathic approach that creates a sense of closeness, concern and alignment with the candidate pair. Third, at the skills level, the campaign encourages concrete actions from the community to support candidates capable of implementing policies relevant to their needs.

Hypothesis testing shows that the Gender-Based Social Assistance Campaign positively and significantly influences voter preferences. Based on the results of the correlation test between the Political Campaign and Political Preferences variables, a significant and positive relationship was found with a correlation coefficient of 0.739, which, according to the assessment of the strength of the correlation, is in the strong enough category. Simple linear regression analysis shows a significant influence of Political Campaigns on Political Preferences with a regression coefficient of 0.652 and a significance value of 0.000. A constant of 14.052 indicates the basic preference level without the influence of the campaign. The t-test results show a calculated t value of 10.725, greater than the t table of 1.66055, indicating a significant partial effect of the independent variables. The F test with a value of 115.018 and a significance of less than 0.001 reinforces that the regression model is simultaneously significant. The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) value of 0.898 indicates that the intensity of gender social assistance-based political campaigns can explain 89.8% of the variation in political preferences of Bekasi City residents. In comparison, the remaining 10.2% is influenced by other factors outside the model. This result confirms the important role of gender social assistance-based campaigns in shaping people's political preferences in the region.

The empirical findings in this study significantly reinforce and refine the assumptions of *Spatial Voting Theory* as articulated by James & Melvin (1984). This theory assumes that voters are rational agents who make electoral decisions based on the proximity of their personal preferences to candidates' policy positions. In the context of the 2024 Bekasi City Election, the gender-based social assistance campaign spearheaded by the Heri Koswara–Sholihin pair effectively reduced the perceived preference distance between candidate and voter by directly addressing practical needs among vulnerable populations—especially women, the elderly, and low-income households. This aligns with the premise that voter choice is strongly shaped by

issue proximity within a multidimensional policy space, but it also nuances that claim by demonstrating that proximity need not be ideological or abstract. Instead, proximity can be materially embodied through targeted policy benefits such as prenatal care, financial assistance for housewives, and welfare for the elderly and persons with disabilities (Sudarsono, 2024; Duku, 2013; Syafhendry, 2016).

Furthermore, the campaign's structure and messaging strategy resonate with the *campaign communication model* proposed by Ostegaard (2002) in Klingeman & Rommele (2002), which divides campaign effects into three tiers: awareness, attitude, and behavioral intention. In the case of Bekasi, the campaign succeeded first in building awareness around previously marginalised welfare issues, especially gendered vulnerabilities that are often neglected in local electoral contests (Fatmawati, 2021; Sudarsono, 2024). Second, it shaped voter attitudes by creating an affective identification between the candidates and constituents, leveraging empathy and perceived attentiveness. Third, it translated this awareness and positive sentiment into behavioral support, evident in the high voter preference scores recorded across multiple subgroups. This triple-stage impact illustrates that the campaign did not merely function as a transactional appeal, but as a constructed political narrative that framed the candidate pair as moral agents responding to lived inequalities (Putra, 2023; Gherghina & Rusu, 2021).

When these theoretical frameworks are brought into dialogue, the evidence suggests that voters' perceptions of proximity are not fixed along ideological spectra but can be recalibrated through emotionally resonant and materially grounded appeals. The Heri Koswara–Sholihin campaign strategically occupied a position of closeness to the electorate not by shifting abstract policy positions but by offering immediate and visible solutions to everyday socioeconomic hardships. This substantiates Mietzner's (2015) broader observation that in Indonesia's subnational politics, issue-based appeals—particularly those centered on distributive justice and inclusivity—can outperform traditional identity politics or party loyalty. Ultimately, this case demonstrates that campaign design grounded in both rational voter modeling and empathetic outreach is not only theoretically coherent but empirically effective.

The effectiveness of the campaign approach reinforces the relevance of *Spatial Voting Theory* (James & Melvin, 1984), which views voters as rational agents in a multidimensional policy space. Voters tend to vote for candidates whose policies and programs are closest to their preferences. The gender-based social assistance campaign offered in the Bekasi 2024 Pilkada contestation strategically positions candidates in the voter preference space by touching on daily issues that have functional and emotional value for the community. The link between the principle of voter rationality in *Spatial Voting* and the objectives of campaign communication proposed by Ostegaard shows that campaigns that rely on social empathy and policy substance can produce electoral effects while creating changes in people's political behaviour. Such an approach represents a campaign strategy that is not only adaptive to local needs but also has the potential to be replicated in the context of other regions with similar characteristics (Wang et al., 2022; Basu et al., 2023).

The findings of this research indicate that the gender-based social assistance campaign carried out by the Heri Koswara-Sholihin pair significantly influences the political preferences of the Bekasi City community. This result is in line with Putra (2023) research, which confirms the role of campaign issues on millennial voter preferences in West Sumatra. However, it does not explicitly discuss social assistance as the primary strategy or how the issues present during sortition affect millennial voter preferences. Fakhri Azwanil's research (2019) in Aceh Tamiang also proves the influence of campaigns on voter behaviour in Pilkada, but it has not explicitly examined social needs-based approaches and gender dimensions. In an international context, Gherghina & Rusu (2021) show that trust in politicians and perceptions of campaign

information influence first-time voters in Romania. Despite the different contexts, the findings support the importance of campaigns substantively relevant to voters' needs. This research reinforces this through the spatial voting theory approach, where voters tend to respond positively to issues with policy proximity to their preferences. Thus, this research fills a void in the literature on local campaign strategies and enriches the research of spatial voting theory in the Indonesian context. These findings have the potential to be replicated in other urban areas that have similar demographic characteristics and can be the basis for the formulation of campaign strategies that are more participatory and responsive to the needs of the community, especially vulnerable groups such as women and low-income families, in various regions.

These findings not only validate the applicability of Spatial Voting Theory in the Indonesian context but also extend it by highlighting how material-based proximity (i.e., direct welfare support) can override ideological or partisan distance. In contrast to traditional applications of the theory focused on policy abstraction, this study shows that targeted, issue-specific welfare can function as a tangible representation of proximity, especially in urban electoral settings.

## Conclusion

This research concludes that the political campaign of the Heri Koswara-Sholihin pair, especially the social assistance program aimed at pregnant women, female heads of households, orphans, the elderly, low-income families, and people with disabilities, has a significant influence on the political preferences of the Bekasi City community in the 2024 Regional Head Election. This finding confirms that the welfare issues raised in the campaign have high appeal and are relevant to the needs of urban communities. When compared to previous research that focuses more on structural factors or political identity, this research offers a new perspective: that substance-based campaigns that address the concrete needs of the community are more effective in influencing voting behaviour. This finding implies that campaign strategies prioritizing social empathy and data-based policies can be practical in local political contestation. Further research is recommended to include other variables such as the role of media, political identity, and digital interaction, as well as using a qualitative approach to enrich understanding of the dynamics of voter preferences. Cross-regional comparisons are also needed to assess the consistency of the influence of social assistance-based campaigns in various local contexts.

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