

Political Communication Strategy Of Legislative Candidate Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis In The 2024 Medan City Legislative Elections

Einggo Adinata^{1*}, Iskandar Zulkarnain², Syafruddin Pohan³
Universitas Sumatera Utara, Indonesia

Corresponding Author: Einggo Adinata einggo.adinata@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Political
Communication, Political
Branding, Legislative
Election, Medan City, 2024
Election

Received : 15, June

Revised : 30, June

Accepted: 08, July

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ABSTRACT

This articles aims to analyze the political communication strategy of legislative candidate Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis in the 2024 Medan City Legislative Election. This research employs qualitative research methods, using primary data collected through interviews and secondary data sourced from library resources that support the findings of this study. This research utilizes the theory of Political Communication and its conceptual framework, particularly in examining the effects of Political Communication that contributed to Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis's re-election as a Member of the Medan City DPRD for the 2024-2029 Period. Thus, this study concludes that with the application of appropriate political communication, including political branding, political marketing, use of media, and delivery of the right message will have the effect of political communication, namely electability.

INTRODUCTION

The election of legislative members in the 2024 general election cannot be separated from the political communication of each legislative candidate. The legislative election was held simultaneously with the 2024 presidential election and is known as the General Election (Pemilu) which took place on February 14, 2024 (Raihan, 2022). In the 2024 Election, the Indonesian people elected simultaneously, including the President, the Indonesian House of Representatives, the Provincial DPRD, and the City/Regency DPRD. This study aims to analyze how the political communication strategy implemented by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis is able to overcome political challenges, convey political communication, and gain voter support in the 2024 Election. A picture can be drawn through a constructivist paradigm view and become an important framework in understanding the phenomena raised in this study. Constructivism views reality as something that is formed through social interaction, not as something objective and static (Sari, 2022).

Through constructivism, this study views that the campaign messages delivered by candidates are not just one-way information, but are the result of an interaction process between the candidate and his audience. Thus, the constructivism paradigm provides in-depth insight into how elements in political communication are interrelated and can be a strategy in the election of a political candidate. The constructivism paradigm itself is a view that sees the truth in social reality as a result of social construction, not as something that already exists and is objective, and this truth is relative and depends on the experience and interpretation of the individual (Umanailo, 2019).

Political communication is present as a branch of science that combines Communication Science and Political Science, Communication is a branch of social science that studies the process of an action in delivering messages from the sender to the recipient (Dewi., 2018). Meanwhile, according to Supardan in 2024, politics in a social science that discusses the differences between conflict and interaction. Political elements are part of efforts to achieve a good life, because basically politics teaches for the common good (Supardan, 2024). Judging from the objectives of communication science and political science, it can be concluded that these two branches of social science teach each other goodness and are related to each other. In practice, political communication is an inseparable element in a political contest or commonly known as a general election or election (Wulandari, 2022).

Elections as one of the pillars of democracy are the main arena for political communication through candidates as communicators who are required to be able to convey political messages that are relevant and attractive to voters. In this context, political communication not only functions as a tool to convey the candidate's vision and mission, but also as a strategy to build emotional relationships with voters. Political communication also provides branding for the candidate, like a product that is also promoted, marketed, and purchased, a similar picture can represent how the candidate markets himself to the public. Thus, political communication has a function to bridge voters with those who are elected (Vadhea Nuraliza, 2024).

The distribution of political information in political communication is usually closely related to conveying information related to candidates supported by the party (Dwitama, 2022). This is becoming increasingly important in facing complex political challenges, such as voter mapping, dynamics of competition between parties, and the rampant misinformation conveyed as a form of negative campaign or black campaign (Mohammad Muchtarom, 2023). Political communication aims to promote candidates or political parties to the public (Boestam, 2023). This strategy involves various elements, including political branding, use of media, and the preparation of campaign messages that are in accordance with the characteristics of voters. Political branding, for example, plays an important role in shaping the image of candidates in the eyes of the public. Candidates who succeed in building strong political branding tend to be more easily recognized and trusted by voters. This is in line with the concept put forward by Lees-Marshment in 2014, quoted from the Kholisoh journal in 2023, Lees-Marshment's statement states that political branding helps create a clear identity for candidates, thus distinguishing them from competitors (Kholisoh, 2023).

In democratic elections, the success of a candidate is not only determined by the quality of the program being carried, but also by the ability to convey the program to the public effectively (Heryanto, 2019). As political communication forms the image of an individual or political candidate. So, political communication will present political branding which if seen in general terms, the theory states that political branding is the process of building the image of a political candidate in the eyes of the public. The candidate's identity, values, and vision are conveyed through slogans and narratives designed to create positive associations in the minds of voters (Holilah, 2024).

This research has relevance both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research is expected to contribute to the development of studies in political communication science, especially regarding the application of political communication in legislative elections. Practically, the results of this study are expected to be learning materials and the latest understanding for political candidates, political parties, and winning teams in formulating effective communication strategies that are in accordance with the development of communication media and voter characteristics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the current era of globalization, communication is recognized as a very important instrument for all parties in almost all sectors of life and fields of activity, especially in politics (Winarno, 2016). People increasingly believe that in this era of reform, information is power in any field, whether power in the sense of politics, law, economy, social, culture, military, and so on. Power through political communication can be obtained and developed in various ways, including by collecting high-value information, being able to determine who can and cannot obtain information, being able to control access to means of obtaining information and determining assessments of information, control over the truth

of information and including control to manipulate or change information (Sarihati T., 2022).

In terms of terminology, politics can be interpreted with many explanations, such as Laswell's explanation in 1950 (in Goodin, Klingemann, Dieter in 1996) providing a classic formulation of politics, namely "Politics as who gets what, when and how" from which we can draw the conclusion that politics is about who will get what, when, and how (Kaknes, 2019). Miriam Budiarjo in 2012 defined politics as various activities in a political system or state that involve the process of determining the goals of the system and implementing those goals (Adienda, 2025). A more comprehensive understanding of politics is also put forward explaining that politics is the interaction between government and society in the context of the process of making and implementing binding decisions about the common good of the people living in a certain area (Rahman, 2022).

Political communication is actually a study of all kinds of things and political processes that make communication possible (Kartini, 2025). So that at the same time, the study of communication itself by analyzing all kinds of processing, delivering and receiving information. So that it will then affect other things as an impact that influences attitudes, opinions, beliefs, value systems and individual behavior towards political matters or political processes. This influence can be seen both through the media and without the media. In simple terms, political communication is just a combination of two words, communication and politics. If it has been combined into political communication, it has a broader and more complex meaning (Tati Sarihati, 2022).

In political marketing, the activities carried out are more about making political actors or organizations successful through various campaigns. Political marketing is fundamental in political life for political actors, political organizations, governments, to institutions or councils (Chabibi, 2020). Hughes and Danny, one of the experts who explained political marketing in 2012, defined political marketing as a "marriage" between the disciplines of marketing and political science (Haryono A. T., 2023). Political branding is a communication process that aims to create and manage perceptions of political parties or candidates (Geraldly, 2024). The purpose of this type of communication is to introduce and promote political parties or candidates. In communication, the effect or impact of the message conveyed is one of the areas often discussed in communication theory (Ilmar, 2020). The concept of "communication effect" refers to the impact or influence caused by a communication message on the audience, either in the form of changes in attitude, behavior, understanding, or knowledge. Basically, communication effect shows how communication can affect the audience in various ways, from cognitive to deeper such as emotional and behavioral (Dewi Kusumasanthi, 2023).

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach, which aims to explore and understand the political marketing communication strategy implemented by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis in the 2024 Election. The subjects of this study involved several parties relevant to the implementation of the political

communication strategy in the legislative election of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis in 2024. The subjects of the study along with the reasons for selecting the informants above are as follows; First, Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis: As the main actor who carries out the political communication strategy, direct interviews with him are the main source of data. Second, Winning Team: The team responsible for planning and implementing the winning strategy of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis. Third, Voters in the Campaign Target Area: Respondents from voters who are the main targets of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis' political communication. These voters provide perspectives on how they receive messages and respond to campaigns. However, in addition to the voters, the informant in this third category is a member of the NasDem party in the electoral district of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis, namely Electoral District 5. In this case, it strengthens the researcher to choose Anggi Ardiansyah as an informant, this also aims to make the data obtained more accurate because it comes from circles that are not only voters but also part of the supporting party. Anggi Ardiansyah also has no problem with his name being mentioned in this thesis after the researcher asked for his availability to be a research resource.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Political Communication Strategy of Legislative Candidate Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis in Winning the 2024 Medan City Legislative Election

Political communication, which was previously attached to the theoretical basis section, states that political communication is a form of communication that is closely related to politics. This communication usually aims to attract public sympathy in order to increase public participation in politics. As with communication in general, which consists of communicants, messages, and communicators, so too in political communication. Usually the message conveyed in this political communication aims to convey information about politics, form a political image, to stages related to politics, power, and government.

In the process of political communication, it often depends on the media that also develops over time. In research that focuses on political communication towards political victory in legislative elections, this study found several empirical facts during the research. Thus, the research findings that the author has obtained from the results of interviews with informants listed in this study are sufficient to meet several variables in political communication which include the formation of political image (political branding), how to market political candidates to the public through political marketing, then the media used to convey various political communication messages that are included in political platforms and political messages, then about how voters can be formed through the right strategy, namely by segmenting voters, and overall it will have an effect on the voters themselves.

The most important part of political communication is about how political branding is formed at the beginning. Political branding has a certain meaning in the strategy of efforts to build the image and public perception of political figures. In the case of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis, the political branding carried out is

more systematic and personal. The strategy applied is not only to display an international image, but also to the internalization values that he wants to convey to the community. One of the main approaches used by Rizki Lubis is to approach the community or create emotional closeness with the community.

In an interview, he said that it was very important for him to try to portray himself as someone who is active, willing to help, and cares about the situation of the community. Statements like this show us that Rizki Lubis applies a branding strategy that focuses on the person of Rizki Lubis. Because basically, if we look at the results of the researcher's research, there is no particular emphasis on academic achievements or professional conditions that have been achieved by Rizki Lubis. In fact, the image that Rizki Lubis is trying to build is about how a leader who takes a role cares about society and focuses on the interests of the community.

This also became the basis for him in conveying his political communication by explaining that the party change was because he prioritized the people's choice. As far as Rizki Lubis knows, he explained that what he wanted to create in public perception was that he was a visionary and community-centered person. From the interview, it was revealed that Rizki Lubis wanted to be known as a caring and populist person. The main symbol he carries is "youth cares about society".

This is not just a slogan, but a depiction of all his social activities and political narratives. In this context, "youth" becomes a symbol of age, the spirit of change, and modernity, while "cares about society" becomes a symbol of empathy, devotion, and social sensitivity. The combination of these two elements creates an image as a young politician who is relevant to the times but still based on social values. In addition, this political branding is closed by forming a strong image through narrative and repeated and consistent communication delivery. Such as the delivery of the vision and mission which is also part of his branding, so that overall it shows that Rizki Lubis says things as they are and can attract the sympathy of the community and his constituents. This indicates that the branding he built was not sporadic, but rather planned and integrated with the personal values that he formed as his personal image. Therefore, the political branding is not only externally attached, but also reflects his internal character. Thus, he creates the impression of being a politician who is close to the people. As the end of the following interview excerpt as a closing discussion about political branding,

Political Platforms and Political Messages

The use of social media in political communication can be studied through the theory of reality construction which emphasizes that social media is able to construct the reality that exists in society. The Theory of Social Construction of Reality, introduced by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann in their work entitled *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (1966), explains that social reality is the result of interaction and communication processes between individuals in society (Safitri, 2022). In general, social reality in the context of communication involves social interactions, symbols, language, norms, values, and communication patterns that

together form and influence collective understanding of reality in a society. Thus, the theory of reality construction and communication context play a very important role in explaining how social reality is produced and understood in various communication situations (Pane, 2021).

There are several concrete examples of the application of the theory of social construction of reality, including media and political narratives. Through social media, political actors display content that represents their personality, values, ideology, and work programs. This is an early form of expression where political figures try to shape the public's initial perception of who they are and what they stand for through content uploaded to social media.

After the content is published, the public responds through comments, likes, shares, or online discussions. So the political construction that was previously personal begins to be considered a collective reality. The image of a "people's leader", for example, becomes credible because it is continuously displayed and reinforced socially. This political construction is then accepted by the public slowly but surely, and then makes it part of their beliefs, even influencing political preferences. At this stage, the political communication strategy has formed a lasting perception in the minds of voters. The public not only knows who the candidate is, but believes in the image that is built.

The media often shapes how political issues are understood by the public. For example, the way news reports are presented can influence public perception of a candidate or policy (Ritonga et al., 2024). If the media highlights the positive aspects of a politician, this can form a positive public image, while emphasizing scandals can create a negative image.

This can also be seen from the political narrative given by the Amir Hamzah and Hasanul Jihadi pair during the 2024 Binjai City Pilkada campaign period. Their vision and mission were massively disseminated through social media to the public. Promises of change, as well as achievements that have been achieved, became their own narrative that was relied on to increase public sympathy. This narrative was then constructed in such a way that it was then published through social media for consumption by the public.

The theory of social construction of reality also emphasizes the importance of social interaction. This means that a politician or regional head candidate must be able to build good interactions with their citizens. This can be done by having direct dialogue, receiving input and comments to then be realized in development activities. This was also done by the Amir-Jiji pair during their campaign. They often held dialogues with residents, attended invitations to events initiated by residents, and carried out social activities intended for the wider community. These various activities were carried out to increase social interaction between regional head candidates and their communities.

In addition to direct social interaction, the presence of social media can also provide a platform for reciprocal interaction between politicians and the public. Currently, social media users can provide direct responses through comments, likes, or sharing content, which can ultimately influence how politicians respond to various issues. This process creates a situation where the direction of politics can shift along with the public's response. In practice,

reciprocal interaction between politicians and the public can be seen from how the Amir-Jiji pair act and respond to each comment they receive on social media platforms. Based on the results of the interviews conducted, it was found that Amir Hamzah tends to respond to comments he receives on social media directly, without replying to existing comments. According to him, comments on social media will not have any impact if they are not realized. Meanwhile, Hasanul Jihadi utilizes social media features such as replying to comments to interact with his followers. He uses the existing features to give the impression of being close to his citizens.

In the discussion of this research, it is also supported by the existence of a social media platform that is also actively used by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis. Through this platform, Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis also conveys his political message. In this section, talking about the overall political message, Rizki Lubis conveys that he is running again as a candidate for Medan City DPRD member from the same electoral district but from a different party. When viewed from the results of the interview, Rizki Lubis said that there was a difference in how the political message he conveyed during the 2019 period from the Golkar party with his political message in 2024 from the NasDem party.

The message conveyed was more specific that the issue of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis' nomination was oriented towards his figure, no longer his party. This message reflects him who wants change, as this slogan is also in line with the NasDem Party, as well as other messages that orientate him as a representation of young people. Where this message is packaged by himself and also distributed on various media platforms that support Rizki Lubis' campaign process. Various platforms were used by Rizki Lubis during the campaign period, especially utilizing digital platforms, namely social media, to convey his political messages. These social media such as Instagram, TikTok, which are also colored with interesting content that shows that he can be connected to all groups who use social media. However, the researcher asked whether there was a digital marketing consultant used by Rizki Lubis, it turned out that there was none.

As explained in the discussion in the previous section, there are political messages and political platforms that are also an important part of Rizki Lubis' political communication strategy. It turns out that there are several voter segments for Rizki Lubis among several constituents or communities in his electoral district. One of these segmentations is the young generation. Where the results of an internal survey from Rizki Lubis stated that young people are quite dominant in electoral district 5, so that there is a separate strategy in reaching these young voters.

Referring to the explanation of the segmentation of young people who are also the target of Rizki Lubis' voters, it turns out that other groups are also target voters. So it does not mean that Rizki Lubis' voter segmentation is only limited to young people. Other segmentation is in the various social classes ranging from lower middle class, and middle class. This is adjusted to the conditions of the community in Electoral District 5, which in general comes from the economic class or social status group in the middle class. So that other strategies used in promoting himself, usually Rizki Lubis will adjust to the conditions of his

community when he comes to visit. In general, all the explanations that have been explained through theoretical conditions and political communication strategies applied empirically by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis show the effect of the electability obtained. Thus, in the 2024 Legislative Election, Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis was declared the winner as a Member of the Medan City DPRD Electoral District 5 from the NasDem Party. The effect of political communication and the right strategy also led him to return to being a member of the DPRD

Barriers and Challenges to Political Communication of the Amir Hamzah and Hasanul Jihadi Couple on Social Media

Based on the results of the interviews conducted, hoaxes or fake news are one of the most significant challenges in implementing political communication, especially in the digital era where information can spread very quickly through social media. In the context of the Binjai City Pilkada, hoaxes not only spread misleading information, but also have the potential to shape public opinion negatively towards certain candidates, in this case Amir Hamzah, who is the incumbent mayor and regional head candidate.

As a public figure who is currently serving, Amir Hamzah is often the target of hoaxes, one of which is the narrative that says that he does not care about the drug problem in the Binjai City area. There were accusations that he allowed the proliferation of drug barracks as if he had not taken concrete action as a regional head. Narratives like this are a form of black campaign that tries to damage the image and public trust in his leadership.

However, according to informants, these accusations are baseless and were deliberately constructed to influence public perception emotionally, not based on data and facts. In dealing with hoaxes like this, the political communication team from the candidate pair – especially Amir Hamzah – took strategic steps by building a counter-narrative. One approach taken is to emphasize that drug eradication is a collective responsibility, involving cooperation between local governments, law enforcement officers, and the wider community. That way, the drug issue is not simplified as a single failure of the local government, but rather as a systemic problem that needs to be addressed comprehensively.

In addition, as a form of affirmation of the commitment to eradicating drugs, Amir Hamzah actively attended the destruction of drug evidence carried out by the Binjai District Attorney's Office. This direct participation is also part of a symbolic communication strategy, to show the real involvement and concern of the regional head for the problem. Documentation of attendance at such activities is then disseminated through social media as a form of clarification and balancing information, as well as restoring public trust.

Thus, the challenge of hoaxes in political communication cannot be underestimated. Fast, data-based handling, and the use of social media for direct clarification are important elements in a modern political communication strategy. Handling hoaxes is not only about refuting, but also building a stronger, more credible narrative that touches the collective consciousness of society.

Damaged roads are another theme often used to attack Amir Hamzah as the mayor of Binjai. His position as the highest leader in the city government is considered to play a major role in the progress of infrastructure development in Binjai City. To respond to such comments, Amir always coordinates with related parties or agencies to resolve the polemic of damaged roads. The progress of resolving the problem is then published in his personal social media content.

Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis' Political Message in the 2024 Medan City Legislative Election as an Effect of Political Communication

The election was finally obtained by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis in the 2024 legislative election. The election of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis as a member of the Medan City DPRD from Electoral District (Dapil) 5 in the 2024 Legislative Election (Pileg) is a political achievement that not only reflects personal success, but also illustrates the dynamics of modern political communication. This victory did not come suddenly, but was the result of a series of measured strategies, an approach oriented towards constituent needs, and optimal use of various communication channels.

One of the main factors in Rizki Lubis' election was the ability of his campaign team to design and execute targeted political communication strategies. As explained in the previous chapters, the communication carried out was not only one-way or instructional, but also participatory, dialogical, and directly touched on issues that were relevant to residents in Electoral District 5. Through the delivery of consistent, authentic, and easy-to-understand campaign messages, he succeeded in building emotional closeness with voters. The communication strategy developed also takes into account the socio-cultural context of the Medan community, especially in areas such as Medan Johor, Medan Maimun, Medan Amplas, and Medan Kota, which have quite diverse demographic characteristics.

Rizki Lubis' campaign was also supported by the effective use of social media. In today's digital era, social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp have become the main communication channels that are able to reach voters across ages and social classes. He uses this platform not only to convey his work program or vision and mission, but also to display a personal side that strengthens a positive image in the eyes of the public. Active interaction with voters through comments, personal messages, and live broadcasts makes voters feel closer and more appreciated. This approach has been proven to increase participation and expand the reach of the campaign, especially among young voters and the urban middle class.

In addition to communication and technology strategies, Rizki Lubis' success is also largely determined by the role of volunteers and social networks that have been built long before the campaign period. This network consists not only of family or close friends, but also various community groups such as local communities, youth organizations, and religious groups. Volunteers are not only tasked with disseminating campaign information, but also as a bridge between candidates and the community in building more personal relationships. They also function as eyes and ears in the field, providing input regarding the needs

and aspirations of residents. The presence of militant and well-organized volunteers also strengthens the campaign structure at the grassroots level.

Rizki Lubis' personal image as a young, intelligent, and communicative figure also contributed significantly to his electability. He is perceived as a fresh alternative figure amidst public boredom with old figures who are considered no longer responsive to the needs of the people. His success in conveying ideas in a way that is easy to understand, as well as his track record in various previous socio-political activities, increases public trust in his capacity as a legislator. A humble, inclusive, and open approach also strengthens positive perceptions of his integrity and capabilities.

The results of internal surveys and post-campaign evaluations show that the public responded positively to the campaign style and programs offered by Rizki Lubis. Voters in Electoral District 5 appreciate the candidate's active involvement in the social life of the community and his ability to touch on real issues such as access to education, employment, and poverty alleviation. In various face-to-face meetings, residents stated that Rizki's personal approach and two-way communication made them feel more heard and appreciated. This kind of response shows success in building political trust and loyalty amidst the challenges of transactional politics that still often occur in the electoral district.

Overall, the election of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis is the result of a combination of adaptive political communication strategies, effective use of information technology, extensive social networks, and a credible personal image. This victory is not just a matter of the number of votes in the election box, but also a reflection of the success in building strong connections between candidates and the community. The findings in this study show that in local political contests, humanistic, data-based political communication that touches the emotional dimension of voters can be a differentiating factor that determines victory.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Political Communication Strategy implemented by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis in his victory in the 2024 legislative election can be explained in a theoretical framework of Political Communication. In determining his political communication strategy, Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis together with his winning team referred to the sections listed in the theory of political communication which include political branding, political marketing, political message formulation, use of media in political communication, and can determine voter segmentation in order to be accepted political communication according to the conditions of society. The election which is part of the effect of political communication won Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis to become a member of the Medan City DPRD, Electoral District 5 from the NasDem party. The political communication message conveyed by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis, namely about changing parties but not changing his principles towards himself, became the most prominent political message during the campaign period carried out by Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis. The change of party which is a unique phenomenon from this study shows that there is an assessment of the figure of a

political actor that is more dominantly seen by voters compared to seeing other sides of the figure such as the political party supporting him. In this case, it shows that political branding has been formed, making political marketing easier to implement in the political election process.

FURTHER STUDY

Future research could explore the long-term impact of Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis's political communication strategy on voter loyalty and political branding in the post-election period. A longitudinal study could examine how his messaging, media presence, and grassroots engagement affect his public perception and political capital beyond the 2024 legislative election. Additionally, comparative studies involving other legislative candidates in Medan or similar urban electoral contexts could offer deeper insights into which communication models are most effective in shaping public opinion and achieving electoral success in a

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to all parties who have supported the completion of this research. Special thanks are extended to Muhammad Afri Rizki Lubis for his willingness to be the subject of study and for providing valuable insights into his political communication strategies. Appreciation is also given to the academic advisors and fellow researchers who provided constructive feedback throughout the research process. Lastly, heartfelt thanks go to family and friends for their continuous encouragement and support.

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