

The Potential of Social Media in Strengthening Interpersonal Relations between the Legislature and Constituents during a Pandemic

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Abstract

Restrictions on social interaction during the pandemic are aimed at stopping the spread of the virus, which generally occurs due to local transmission in a crowd. As a result, all sectors of community life are restricted. Trading, banking, educational activities including politics must avoid face-to-face interactions, even if they are carried out they must apply extra strict health protocols. The pandemic situation forced legislative members to look for innovations and strategies in order to establish communication and maintain relationships with their constituents. At the same time, the use of digital telecommunications equipment in Indonesia reached 202.6 million users (Riyanto, 2021). The implementation of Distance Education (PJJ) and internet-based public services has attached society to digital tools and social media. Members of the legislature (DPD, DPR and DPRD) who are observant see social media as a channel for mass communication and counseling as well as establishing interpersonal relationships with constituents. The use of social media is not just a media campaign, socializing various regulations, the agenda of the session is also a means of establishing interpersonal communication with the masses of voters.

The research aims to find out which social media has the most potential to support legislative performance and what are the discussions on social media as well as the responses of council members about the choice and effectiveness of social media in strengthening interpersonal relationships with constituents. Methodology: The positivistic paradigm, a type of quantitative research, in the form of survey analysis. Respondents are members of the DPD, DPR and DPRD who are active social media users during 2019 - 2020. Results: Shows that the social media application WhatsApp is the choice of the majority of politicians as much as 95.5 percent. For the intensity of the use of social media, almost half of the active members use social media every opportunity, namely 45.5 percent. The content of interaction in an effort to establish interpersonal communication with constituents is at most 77.3 percent regarding social and community.

Keywords: social media, interpersonal communication, legislature, constituents

Introduction

In the past, socialization problems encountered many obstacles due to limited means of communication, especially related to conveying government programs to the people. Especially in Indonesia in the 1980s - 1990s, limited outreach activities were carried out only using mass media under state control such as TVRI and RRI or through printed media with the Koran Masuk Desa (KMD) program, namely Pelita and Suara Karya newspapers. Or in the form of dialogue at the kelurahan, village level by holding a Village Meeting which involves lighting and counseling from related government agencies.

Now advances in information and telecommunications technology have provided wider and more varied space for state administrators to disseminate information to the public. The progress of the communication sector is much faster than the development of infrastructure and the development of transportation means. The presence of internet-based media legality technology has accelerated the flow of communication and dynamic interactions between people. An information in the hemisphere is immediately spread in other parts of the world in a short time through a gadget (cellphone, tablet and android). Modern communication technology is developing rapidly, with extraordinary social implications. The main innovations introduced by this technology include increasing the range and richness of the nature of information transmitted digitally

The positive impact of social media is that it makes it easier for humans to integrate with many people, expand relationships, while distance and time are no longer a problem, so that it can be easier to express themselves, then in terms of information dissemination it can take place faster and cheaper (Cahyono, 2016) Previous research on "The Influence and Effectiveness of Social Media Users as Political Communication Channels in Forming Public Opinions" (Jurnalistik et al., 2015) where in this study discussed the function of social media as part of mass communication as a political communication channel for politicians to build public opinion. Where in this study discussed the function of social media as part of mass communication as a political communication channel for politicians to build public opinion. Meanwhile in international journals politicians in Sweden use social media as part of a political communication strategy aimed at strengthening constituent political identities (Nilsson, n.d.)

Seeing the positive potential and benefits of the presence of social media in the context of socialization and dissemination of information about programs, policies and regulations of state officials, researchers are motivated to know the extent to which politicians use social media based on elections and the intensity of their activities in order to establish interpersonal communication with the public. So the question arises "What is the choice and intensity of using social media by politicians as an interpersonal communication channel with constituents (analysis of the survey of DPD / DPR-RI members of social media users 2019 - 2020)."

The urgency of research on the use of social media by politicians is: a) What are the following options for potential arguments or public officials using social media to establish communication with constituents? b) What is the intensity of social media use activities among politicians or public officials? The aim is to find out the role of social media with its intensity, benefits and relevance to socialization activities regarding regulations or policies designed by the legislature. Furthermore, several concepts are described as follows:

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Mass communication-The mass media itself is an intuition that connects all people to one another by using the mass media products produced (Apriadi Tamburaka, 2012). It was concluded that the dissemination of information can be done by using mass media, either in print, electronically or via the internet, which indirectly the sender of the message and the recipient, so that it can be connected between humans. American research shows the use of communication technology (CT) in close relationships creates interdependence. The proximity is indicated by the increasing use of video calls, phone calls and text messages. However the use of text messages is higher (Ruppel, 2017)

Socialization and Dissemination of Social Media-The existence of a politician as a public official cannot be separated from their role as state administrators to succeed programs, policies or all kinds of regulations that have been set by the government. Their existence is not only as community leaders with strategic positions but also carry out the task of conveying the mandate of the government to its people. The positions of both politicians are in the Regional Representative Council (DPD), the People's Representative Council (DPR), the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) as a legislative institution has the obligation to formulate, design and ratify laws proposed by factions and the government.

Dissemination and dissemination of information through social media is a research study that show different use of media in different groups and influence the tendency of people to participate politically. More specifically, it investigates the impact of using social media for political purposes and attention to political news in traditional media, on political interests and offline political participation(Holt, 2013).

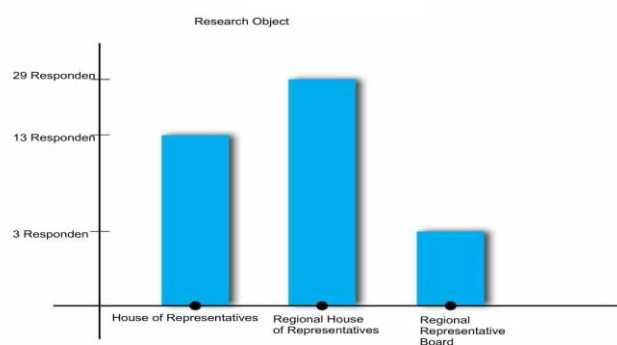
The relationship in Asia between media users and political ideology is reflected in the public's trust in mass media or online media as well as individual participation and interaction using the internet can help explain the complexity of political ideology in a transitional society (Lu, 2016). The development of political communication in the country has entered the third generation where it is possible for anyone to become a producer and consumer of information. Three generations of political communication also refer to three generations, namely the first generation, political rhetoric, if you see almost all messages of political communication are directed by one's speaking ability, the second generation is marked by the dominant role of mass media which is often referred to as mainstream media, the third generation is marked by developments new media. This is in line with the strengthening of social media such as social networking sites and interactive weblogs (Heryanto, 2018).

Gun Gun Heryanto said that the emergence of three generations of political communication created a phenomena the use of social media is increasingly being used, especially by political actors, including politicians, political figures, political figures, bureaucrats, interest group activities, pressure groups, and mass media journalists. Because through the internet all information including the socialization of ideas, calls for demands to protests and suggestions for alternative policies can be published quickly. It can be concluded that social media relations as an alternative channel for internet-based communication are currently an important choice in a political communication process. Social media is a channel for politicians, political parties, community leaders, public officials, especially the government as a means of disseminating information, socializing and publishing public policies or regulations.

Interpersonal Communication- Interpersonal communication is an act of communication that is carried out directly, both in verbal and non-verbal forms. Interpersonal communication is the face-to-face interaction of two or more people where the sender can convey messages directly and the recipient and respond directly (Hardjana, 2003), while Wood says that interpersonal communication is a selective and systematic process that allows people to reflect on and build personal knowledge of each other and create shared meaning. It can be concluded that interpersonal communication is communication between two or more people that is done face-to-face, With the interaction of interpersonal communication it produces a selective and systematic way to build personal knowledge from one another so as to create shared meaning. This research uses Henry Jenkins' theory of Participatory Media Culture where the media offer audiences to jointly take the role of media consumers and media producers. all at once. Jenkins argues in Participatory Media Culture, people are able to creatively respond to media content by creating their own cultural commodities as their efforts to describe and find meaning in existing media products and messages. This research uses Henry Jenkins' theory of Participatory Media Culture where the media offer the audience to take the role of both media consumers and media producers together. Jenkins argues in Participatory Media Culture, people are able to creatively respond to media content by creating their own cultural commodities as their efforts to describe and find meaning in existing media products and messages. This research uses Henry Jenkins' theory of Participatory Media Culture where the media offer the audience to take the role of both media consumers and media producers together. Jenkins argues in Participatory Media Culture, people are able to creatively respond to media content by creating their own cultural commodities as their efforts to describe and find meaning in existing media products and messages.

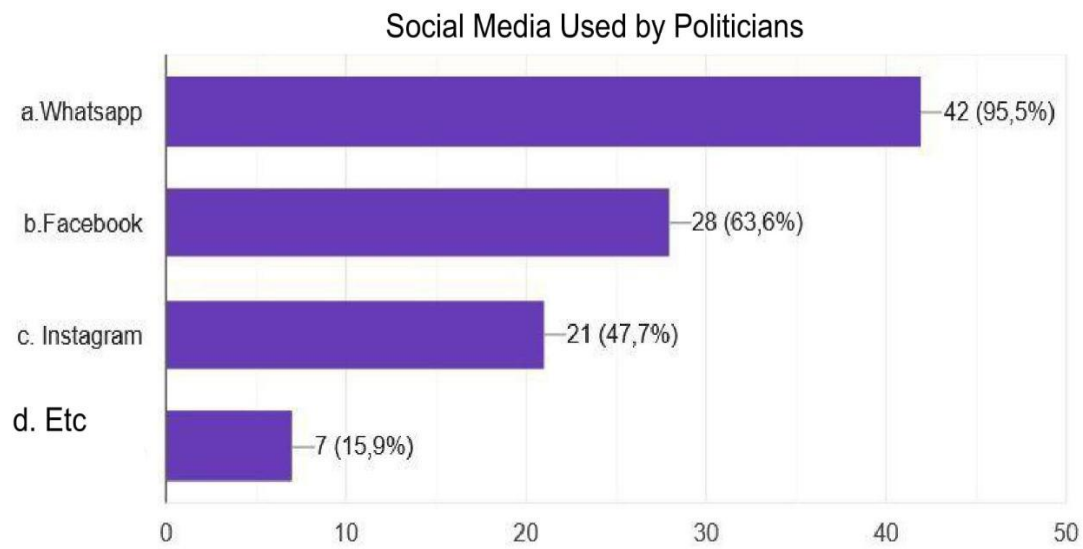
Method

Research with a positivistic paradigm with a quantitative approach uses a survey method in the form of distributing questionnaires to respondents, namely members of the DPD, DPR and DPRD who were elected after the 2019 Election, consisting of 13 members of the DPR RI, 29 members of the DPRD RI and 3 DPD RI members who scattered in the country including Aceh, Medan, Padang, Jambi, Kalimantan, Bogor, Jakarta, Yogyakarta, Sulawesi and East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). Based on the education level of the respondents, the most respondents graduated from Strata 2 (S2) were 19 people, the rest were Strata 3 (S3) as many as 13 people, Strata 1 (S1) as many as 10 people, Diploma 3 (D3) as many as 1 person and the equivalent of Senior High School (SMA) as many as 2 people. All respondents scattered in various regions are active legislators for the period 2019 - 2024.



Results and Discussion

Based on The questionnaire generated the following data, for the choice of social media used by members of the legislature. Electronic devices used by android are 100 percent. As for the signal to support the use of these devices, more than half of the legislative members, 52.3 percent, use the kouta package, then 25 percent use Wifi / subscription telephone and the remaining 22.7 percent use postpaid subscription telephone lines. Meanwhile, media sites 42 people (95.5 percent) use WhatsApp (WA) most often, then Facebook (FB) with 21 people (63.6 percent) and Instagram with 21 people (47.7 percent).



The intensity of the use of social media by legislators shows the following results, when legislators start activating social media, namely more than half said at night, namely 53.5 percent followed by 27.9 percent in the morning. More than half, namely 88, 4 percent of legislators open social media every day and the remaining 9.3 percent do only three times a week. In terms of duration of use of social media, almost half of the members are active in social media every chance they get, namely 45.5 percent, the remaining 11, 4 percent one hour a day. More than half of the respondents operate social media at home, namely 62.8 percent, then 16.4 percent on the go, as much as 14 percent at work and the rest in various places. Regarding the content of discussions between legislators and constituents on social media, more than half as many as 55, 8 percent were in the form of informative and further 32.6 percent were educative and the remaining 7 percent were in the form of persuasion. Most of the complaints filed by constituents were 77.3 percent regarding social and social issues. The motive of legislative members using social media is at most 74.4 to maintain the existence and relationship with constituents. The majority of legislators (81.8 percent) believe that social media is quite effective in realizing the goals and desires of legislators. Most of the complaints filed by constituents were 77.3 percent regarding social and social issues. The motive of legislative members using social media is at most 74.4 to maintain the existence and relationship with constituents. The majority of legislators (81.8 percent) believe that social media is quite effective in realizing the goals and desires of legislators. The majority of complaints filed by constituents were almost 77.3 percent regarding social and social issues. The motive of legislative members using social media is at most

74.4 to maintain the existence and relationship with constituents. The majority of legislators (81.8 percent) think that social media is quite effective in realizing the goals and desires of legislators.

Another questionnaire is equipped with the results of interviews that show an outline of the choice of social media, the intensity of use and the content of interpersonal communication carried out by members of the legislature, including: arguments by legislators choosing their favorite social media based on reasons that are easily accessible to constituents, messages can be resent, there is a choice of groups so that they do not bother to inform via private channels (Japri), effectively overcome the problem of time, place and cost, besides that most constituents use social media. The same things that are considered to be more varied, so not only in writing but also in the form of photos or videos of program activities. Likewise about activities on social media according to members of the legislature are quite effective and can improve interpersonal communication, the influence is quite high because there is two-way communication between members of the legislature and constituents and take place continuously, so that they can get to know each other better. The impact can increase the credibility of members of the legislative council in the eyes of the public.

Furthermore, social media as a means of interpersonal communication with constituents is considered to be able to bring change on the grounds that social media can be an effective means of socializing a policy or program. In addition, it can have an influence in changing the way constituents perceive public officials. Social media is also able to build public opinion if it is conveyed in a persuasive way and can open clear insights about every problem, when the community understands it will be very easy to build a conducive society to jointly build the nation and state towards better change.

The results of the survey regarding the choice of social media by legislators are complemented by the argumentation by the majority of members (69.8 percent) that social media is an effective means of delivering work programs during the pandemic. The results of this survey were strengthened by interviews of researchers with members of the Regional Representative Council (DPRD) of Medan Sumatra City Utara from the Golkar Party faction, Zubaidah is quite helpful to socialize and publish the agenda of activities for both individuals and parties which he uploads on Facebook with 2,586 followers. Meanwhile, senator at DPD RI from DKI Jakarta, Sylviana Murni often carries out often uploads documentation of activities in the form of work visits (media visits, sudden inspections and so on), intense socialization of work programs on Instagram with followers over 38 thousand accounts. Based on the results of the survey and interview above.

Director of the School of Communication Jack J. Valenti at the University of Houston Temple Northup, reviewed that the use of social media by politicians in establishing interpersonal communication with the public can have a positive or vice versa impact. Politicians should be held accountable for their activities on social media, not like what happened in America when Donald Trump used social media for lies by increasing his population and that is very bad. In addition, there are no restrictions on the use of social media by politicians either for campaigns or outreach, although on social media such as Twitter, there are often lies and signs by the public, but the content has never been removed.

Conclusion

The results of research on legislative members show that the WhatsApp social media application is the choice of the majority of politicians as much as 95.5 percent. While the intensity of the use of social media in the duration of using social media, almost half of the members are active in social media whenever there is an opportunity, namely 45.5 percent, the remaining 11.4 percent one hour a day. The content of interactions in an effort to establish interpersonal communication with constituents is at most 77.3 percent regarding The results of this study are in line with the Participatory Media Culture theory which states that where the media in this case social media provides a place for the public (constituents) to participate in the form of conveying their aspirations for complaints, and in discussions with members of the legislature. It is hoped that the results of research on the choice and intensity of the use of social media by legislators as an effort to establish interpersonal communication with constituents can certainly be a consideration for politicians and policy makers to optimize social media as an alternative to building public opinion in terms of self-image, public trust, support, existence. and the like which enhance the credibility and capability of politicians. Through social media, almost all (81.8 percent) of legislative members who are active in social media can realize the motives and goals of communication through the WhatsApp application (95.5 percent).

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