How Do People Respond to Local Governments in Communicating Government Programs through Social Media?

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Abstract

Open communication is one of the government's efforts to meet the demands of society in creating more transparent public information services. Instagram is one of the social media that allows the government and the public to interact through two-way communication, creating and sharing content in the form of words, images, audio or video, in real time. This study aims to identify the community's response to the communication of local leaders in informing government programs through Instagram. This study focuses on the Indonesian government's program on the issue of public education through the New Student Admission program. This study used an exploratory sequential mixed-method. The data was obtained from public comments via Instagram on posts submitted by the head of the West Java region. A total of 867 comments are analyzed in this study. Data processing techniques using text mining with sentiment analysis approach. The study found that the activeness of local leaders in using Instagram to inform government programs was very effective and able to attract participation from the community. The majority of comments showed negative sentiment towards government program information regarding the new student admission program which was conveyed through the West Java regional head's Instagram.

Keywords: open communication, Instagram, participation, public services, transparency

Abstrak


Kata kunci: komunikasi terbuka, Instagram, partisipasi, pelayanan publik, transparansi

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I. INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reform is currently still experiencing various obstacles and has not been able to provide maximum results, for example problems related to public services and government bureaucracy therefore that it has not been in accordance with community expectations. Information has become an important resource for bureaucratic management of the global political economy (Gandy, 1989). Disclosure of information that can be accessed by the public through social media has strength and potential in a democratic system because it is seen as part of human rights which is an important feature of the Indonesian government as a democratic country. The low government performance is inseparable from the low level of community involvement in controlling government performance. Therefore, the government must be open and publish what has been, is, and will be carried out in its duties, functions, and performance (Nugraha & Damayanti, 2013) as a form of institution that builds a culture of sharing (Mulyaningsih, 2018).

Technology advances have an impact on changes in communication patterns between government and society. Government agencies began to use social media to inform their performance to the public. Social media can gradually re-engineer the old model in the public sector because it offers many opportunities to increase public transparency and trust, create citizen participation and involvement in public issues, and increase inter and intra-organizational collaboration (Karakiza, 2015).

In realizing a more transparent public information service, the Indonesian government has begun to publish its performance and activities through various social media. One of the regional heads in Indonesia who uses Instagram to communicate with the public is Ridwan Kamil who serves as the Governor of West Java for the 2018-2023 periods. He often publishes activities, performance, and others related to his duties as regional head through his Instagram (@ridwankamil), specifically related to public services. Netizens' responses to posts on Instagram are not only positive but also negative (Alamanda et al., 2019). He not only makes posts, but also responds to comments from the public, whether they contain criticism, suggestions, or just jokes. This supports and increases community involvement in controlling government performance consistently and openly, which in turn will improve government performance in public services.

Al-Kandari et al. (2016) stated that Instagram is a social media application that is gaining popularity quickly. Instagram users are dominated by teenagers and adults, profit and non-profit organizations, and political parties that use social media as a tool to attract attention and engage the public in conducting organizational campaigns (Paton, 2013). Ting et al. (2015) stated that Instagram has been widely used for personal needs, business activities, communication tools, and marketing. Currently, the number of active Instagram users in Indonesia reaches 82.32 billion, dominated by users in the 18-24 years age range and followed by 25-34 years old (NapoleonCat, 2021a). Data shows that Instagram users in Indonesia are dominated by the millennial generation, where this generation was born in 1980-2000, and grows and develops in the digital era (Kaifi et al., 2011). Andert (2011) said that this generation is influenced by computer technology. This is confirmed by Bannon et al. (2011) that the use of technology and media is very important for the millenial generation. Roehling et al. (2011) also proves that millennial life has a very close relationship with technology, ranging from communicating with each other to getting information through the internet.

Based on the results of research conducted by Fitriawan et al. (2017), it shows that there is a close influence and correlation between government communication and the quality of public services. Mishaal & Abu-Shanab (2015) show that people access government social media more often than their websites. Transparency, participation, collaboration and convenience in the communication process will bring success in community involvement in government programs. The topics posted will affect the success rate of communication. According to Graham (2014), social media is considered a very beneficial communication tool for local governments, including informing government programs.

Public service is one of the government's goals which aims to create a prosperous and independent society (Kusumadinata & Fitria, 2017). Public services are services provided as an effort to meet the needs of the community in accordance with the basic rules and procedures that have been determined (Sinambela, 2011). Therefore, public service is one of the government activities that is often a public concern (Fitriawan et al., 2017). One of the public service facilities is a public school. The Indonesian government took the initiative to implement a “Zoning System” as a policy for Admission of New Students (Jabbar, 2018). The Indonesian Ministry of Education and Culture (2018) believes that the Zoning System is implemented as an effort to accelerate access and equal distribution of services and quality in the education sector. The zoning system is a system where prospective students must choose a school that has the closest radius to their respective domicile. The zoning
system makes it easier for central and local governments than the previous system. This is related to mapping and providing increased access to education, school facilities, learning methods, quality and distribution of teachers, thereby accelerating the improvement of the quality of education in all regions (Indonesia.go.id, 2019).

Government openness is often a public demand, therefore that information related to government programs must be transparent, reliable, and accountable. Therefore, the government has the duty and function to serve the interests of its people through open communication. This study aims to identify the public's response to the communication process from one of the regional heads in Indonesia in conveying information related to public services through Instagram which focuses on the Instagram account @ridwankamil as the regional head of West Java Indonesia. The choice of Instagram is the focus of this research because the number of Instagram followers of Ridwan Kamil is more, namely 13.9 million followers compared to Twitter, which is 4.4 million followers, while Facebook has 3.5 million followers.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Social Media and Public Relations

The development of the internet, especially social media, has triggered major changes in media and public communication (Macnamara, 2010). The government is also developing in the same direction and experiencing a change/transition from e-government to social government where the government provides services through social media, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Flicker (Khasawneh & Abu Shanab, 2013). Social media is defined as a group of internet-based applications that are built on the ideological and technological foundation of Web 2.0 that allows users to create and exchange User Generated Content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Picazo-Vela et al. (2012) suggests that various social media including Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Blogs, Wikis, YouTube, Instagram, etc. where the application was built based on the principles of Web 2.0 technology. Social networking is an interconnected platform, extending all connect devices that support collaboration in creation, organization, connecting and sharing content.

Rapid technological developments have resulted in social media and communication devices developing quickly and broadly. Therefore, social media has become the main method of communication for today's society (Ting et al., 2015) and has become a very large virtual community, with a highly interactive and collaborative environment among its users.

Social media is increasingly used by governments to facilitate communication and improve services. Social media can be defined as "network-based services" that allow users to build public or private profiles in systems that are bound to one another, and to explore connections with other users on the system. This network plays an important role in many fields, such as education, health, marketing, and others. This network is very useful for the government because social media has many interactive and innovative features that help communication and interaction between the government and its people (Al-Badi, 2013). Karakiza (2015) argued that technological development and the wide use of social media have changed the way people communicate with each other. New technology and social media can change communication between government and society when they contribute to the transformation of public administration to be more open that has the following characteristics: people who actively participate in public affairs; collaboration between public services and between government and society; and transparency of government activities.

The community uses social media not only for professional needs, but also in social life and demands to interact with the government. Therefore, public expectations for a modern, open and effective government sector have also increased (Lagos & Kutsikos, 2011). Jukić & Merlak (2017) emphasize that social media provides the potential to increase interaction between public administration and its users. There are many benefits to using social media for public services, such as improving service delivery, increasing transparency and government image, and more inclusive policy processes.

Grunig et al. (2002) explain that social media facilitates and emphasizes interactive two-way communication, as well as providing opportunities for public relations to realize forms of communication that are more ethical and effective than forms of one-way communication. Therefore, Špaček (2018) believe that social media has been seen as a tool that can increase the participation and inclusion of people and other stakeholders in making public decisions. Social media can encourage innovation in the delivery of public services by the government. The social media used for the analysis of this study is Instagram because it has the second largest number of users after
Facebook in Indonesia (NapoleonCat, 2021b). In addition, Instagram is also considered capable of providing information through written captions and visual images to the public about government programs that are being carried out, as well as interacting directly with the community through two-way communication.

B. **Openness of Government Communication**

Information disclosure is now a must in the governance of government organizations. According to Fitriawan et al. (2017), bureaucratic communication is a process of delivering information systematically by government officials, as an effort to provide knowledge and understanding of the government's duties in organizing and serving the community. Open government is an old concept as an effort towards public information disclosure (Abu-Shanab, 2015). This phenomenon is closely related to e-government which is based on the widespread use of information and communication technology (ICT) towards open government. According to Dawes (2010), public information is important for citizens therefore it needs to be published and accessed freely. Open government is the direction of e-government where more information is exchanged between the government and its citizens in a transparent, participatory, accountable, and collaborative manner (Abu-Shanab, 2015). Nugraha & Damayanti (2013) suggest that communication is an important part in the process of public information services, especially communication activities in support of development policies implemented by the government.

Governments begin to use the internet as a means of communicating with citizens through the automation of routine government operations, which later developed into websites, RSS feeds, blogs, and wikis (Dixon, 2010), called e-government, with a one-way communication method. In contrast, social media emphasizes interactivity and shared content creation that encourages two-way exchange of information (Kingsley et al., 2010), which offers great potential to enhance the democratization of information exchange at the local government level. The results of the study from Hand & Ching (2011) show that the use of social media in local government can increase the engagement and affordability of citizens to participate. One of the barriers for local governments to use social media is resources, particularly time and staff (Briones et al., 2011). According to Hallahan (2008), the availability of staff in the process of managing social media in organizations affects the organizational commitment to involve the public online. The results of a study from the Pew Internet & American Living Project (2004) found that urban communities show the highest adoption rates, followed by suburban, large-city, and rural communities in wireless services. In addition, among those who use social media to disseminate health information, the most used tool is social networking sites (Avery et al., 2010).

Concise and directed communication between the government and its citizens is a pragmatic practice as well as a moral obligation stemming from democratic principles (Viteritti, 1997). Democratic theory emphasizes government that is open, interactive, and participatory. To address the need for transparency in these public organizations, Fairbanks et al. (2007) developed a model of transparency in government communications, with key elements of the model covering communication practices, organizational support, and resource provision. According to Heise (1985), public communication for the government is done to communicate openly, honestly, and timely with the public, without manipulating the information they share. According to Fitriawan et al. (2017), the dimensions of bureaucratic communication include dimensions: the quality of communicators, the process of conveying thoughts, means or media, messages conveyed, and communication climate. A key component of e-government is e-democracy, which is particularly strengthened by the ability of social media to interact directly with citizens. E-democracy is an emerging concept that shows the transformation of citizen involvement in a democratic and targeted process mediated by social networking media (Graham, 2014).

This study is an attempt to better understand the impact of social media on community engagement in responding to information on government programs that are communicated through the regional heads' Instagram. In particular, this study focuses on the community’s response to government programs with a case study of The New Students Admission Program on the education system in Indonesia. Communities are offered the opportunity to communicate with local governments in various online arenas including social media. This opens up new communication channels for government officials to communicate with their key stakeholders.

III. **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The research design of this study is a social analysis that refers to the social goals of the problems that exist in society (Fitriawan et al., 2017). This study uses an exploratory sequential mixed method by collecting and analyzing qualitative data in the first phase and quantitative data in the second phase. This study aims to identify the community’s response to the communication style of local leaders in informing government programs through
Sentiment Analysis on Public Comments via Instagram regarding the Government Program for New Student Admission

The zoning system is one of the policies implemented in the acceptance of new students in schools by considering the distance from home to school for prospective students. This system is also a database for the formulation of policies related to mapping and increasing access to education that includes school facilities and infrastructure, learning methods, and teacher distribution, therefore that it can accelerate the equal distribution of quality of education in all regions (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information, 2018). In addition, the zoning system is used to remove the label “favourite school” which is always fulfilled by registrants each year. With the implementation of the Zoning System, test scores and report books are no longer a top priority in accepting new students. These scores are the second consideration after the radius distance of the house to school in the zoning system (Indonesian Ministry of Communication and Information, 2019).

The Governor of West Java, Ridwan Kamil delivered information related to the implementation of the Zoning System during The Student New Admission 2019. The information was conveyed in the Instagram account @ridwankamil. Ridwan Kamil shared information regarding the registration of the New Student Admission program 2019 for High Schools by presenting the video on slide 1 and information from the mass media regarding the admission of quotas for new student admissions on slides 2 and 3 (Source: https://www.instagram.com/p/ByzApELgO5i/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link). Ridwan Kamil wrote the following caption on his Instagram:

“19 thousand additional allocation of seats is presented for the Admission of New Students from state schools, Senior High Schools and Vocational High Schools, therefore that the people of West Java can attend more public
schools. This addition resulted from the construction of many New Classrooms. New Student Admissions this year according to the instructions of the Minister of Education and Culture are divided into 3 pathways: the Zoning Path, the Achievement Path and the Transfer Path. Happy following the process of new students’ admission in an orderly and smooth manner. Thank you.”

The caption got 42,069 likes and 867 comments. The process of publishing government programs through Instagram allows the public to directly comment and interact with the government, and the government can find out how the community responds to the program. The response of the community can be seen in the comment’s column in each post. Public response can reflect the level of public satisfaction with the public services provided, which certainly determines the quality of public services performed by the government.

Figure 1 below shows the sentiment response given by the community in the comments column to the post submitted by Ridwan Kamil via Instagram.

Based on the figure above, it shows that the majority of netizens gave a negative response to the government program information, as many as 478 comments (55.13%) showed negative sentiment, 363 comments (41.87%) showed a neutral response, and 26 comments (3%) showed positive sentiment. The results of data processing show words with a high frequency based on positive and negative sentiments from the information conveyed. Figure 2 below shows several factors that emerged as an indication of the response from netizens.
Based on the figure 2, it shows that most comments show complaints about the distance from home to school, besides that the national exam score are also questioned because in the zoning system this is not a major consideration. Another factor is the emergence of fraud committed by students, including the misuse of family cards as evidence showing where they live. Many netizens expressed sympathy responses in their comments by expressing pity. Meanwhile, most positive sentiment comments indicate their hope that the program will run well. Other positive responses include gratitude, go forward, rightful, and good. Based on (Sari, 2020) sentiment analysis requires word degrees and rules, word degrees are used as a reference for word sentiment and rules are used as sentiment calculations. The word degrees are used for each word in the form of numbers whose values are categorized into positive, negative, and neutral.

B. Communication Process Effectiveness

This study also tries to map the communication process carried out by Ridwan Kamil as the Governor of West Java based on two-way communication through Instagram.

Communicator qualities include an understanding of government organizations, the ability to convey thoughts, the ability to absorb desires, and the ability to answer questions (Fitriawan et al., 2017). The results of the analysis show that Ridwan Kamil’s post indicates his understanding of the government's program on New Student Admission by demonstrating his ability to convey information that is expected to be a solution for the community in applying for the desired school. In addition, through his post, Ridwan Kamil also conveyed several alternative choices for students in choosing school admission programs. However, the indicator of the ability to absorb desires and the ability to answer questions did not find any response from Ridwan Kamil to the comments of netizens.

Thought Delivery Process includes clarity of information, adequacy of information, certainty of information, and timeliness of providing information. Based on the clarity and adequacy of information indicators, it was found that there were still many netizens who questioned the government program. Some comments from netizens are as follows:

“Sir, why is this zoning system therefore much cheating? Suddenly when registering, all prospective students indicated that their homes were close to the school, even though their homes were actually far away. My brother’s house is very close to the school, but he is not accepted (Has it been evaluated?)”

“In fact, it is difficult to evaluate this cheating, if caught cheating, will it be expelled from school?”

Meanwhile, on the indicators of certainty of information and timeliness of providing information, Ridwan Kamil has conveyed information at the right time where the issue is being debated in the community.

Facilities/media are tools used by Ridwan Kamil in conveying information. The media used is Instagram, where this media can display videos, images, and captions. In addition, Instagram also allows two-way communication. Thus, the media used is an effective medium to be able to involve netizens in actively participating in government programs.

Messages delivered includes acceptance, correctness, and compatibility between the message and the problem. The results of the study show that netizen responses are divided into positive, negative, and neutral sentiments. In addition, the results of the analysis show that the information conveyed through videos, pictures, and captions has the reliability and suitability of the information with the problems that arose at that time. Here are some positive, negative, and neutral comments.

a) Positive Responses

"The reason for the zoning system is to eliminate the gap between favourite and non-favourite schools. The existence of favourite schools is a form of government failure in equal distribution of education. All schools should be favourites, and all schools have complete facilities, therefore that all schools have outstanding students."

“There are also good things about zoning, reducing congestion and reducing the risk of accidents for students whose homes are far from school”

"Great Mr Governor ..."

b) Negative Responses
"The zoning system only makes students who live close to favourite high school become lazy to study, because they feel they will definitely be accepted at the school. Meanwhile, diligent students whose homes are far from favourite high schools must give up because of the zoning system, they cannot study there. The quality of high school in Bandung is not all the same, sir. If you don't believe me, just ask your child."

"That's right... those with low test scores can be accepted into public schools as long as their homes are close to public schools... what kind of system is this... it makes children down..."

"The zoning system frustrates schoolchildren. My nephew got good National Examination Scores, but he was not accepted into any public school. It feels like the achievements of 6 years of elementary school are in vain, poor of my nephew"

c) Neutral Responses

"Hopefully the science fighters will get blessed knowledge, to prepare them to build Indonesia. Amen."

"Hopefully schools in the village can also get this program. The teacher can prosper like in the city..."

Communication climate includes openness, honesty, and familiarity. Currently, technological advances encourage information disclosure for every organization. Based on the results of the study, it shows openness, honesty, and intimacy by giving netizens the freedom to submit comments. Some comments that show familiarity include some netizens who do not hesitate to offer or market their online sales products through comments on Ridwan Kamil's Instagram. In addition, there are also several comments that provide feedback or questions related to Ridwan Kamil's personal life.

V. CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that Instagram is one of the effective social media (Ting et al., 2015) for regional heads in building two-way communication with the community. The community responded by clicking like and providing various comments about government programs that were informed through the regional head's Instagram. In the caption posted by Ridwan Kamil, there are 42,069 likes and 867 comments. This shows that the public has paid attention to the information posted by regional heads. According to Špaček (2018), social media has been seen as a tool that can increase the participation and inclusion of people and other stakeholders in making public decisions. The results of the study show that Instagram is also considered capable of providing information through written information and visual images to the public about government programs that are being implemented. The use of Instagram can encourage government transparency by informing, educating, and reporting on government activities, policies, and community issues on their social media pages, thereby building trust and accountability in government (Jaeger & Bertot, 2010).

This study discusses the case of using Instagram by regional heads in informing new student admissions programs, where the issue of the zoning system is a public debate in conducting school registration. The regional head tries to convey this information through his personal Instagram. Posting information through Instagram as an effort to provide knowledge and understanding about the government's duties in regulating and serving the community (Fitriawan et al., 2017). Citizens need public information that can be accessed freely (Dawes, 2010). The concept of government openness with the delivery of information about government programs through Instagram is a medium for exchanging information in a transparent, participatory, accountable, and collaborative manner (Abu-Shanab, 2015). Hand & Ching (2011) show that the use of social media in local governments can increase engagement and affordability of citizens to participate.

Based on the results of the study, it shows that most people respond with negative sentiments to information on new student admissions in 2019. Public services are built to serve the community, thus the quality of services provided is determined by community satisfaction (Hsiao & Lin, 2008). Based on the findings, it shows that most netizens gave a negative response when the Zoning System was applied to the admission of new students in 2019. Some negative comments on this issue include home distance, national exam score, family card, and pity. The zoning system encourages student admissions based on the proximity of the school and home, thus closing the opportunity for students who are far from home to enrol in favourite schools. Inequality in school facilities, which are considered favourites, is a problem for the community, because people want the best facilities for their education. The study also identified positive responses, although the numbers were not significant. Some positive
responses include people's expectations that the quality of education in Indonesia will be evenly distributed, and some responses provide support for government programs such as gratitude, go forward, rightful, and good.

Regional heads have implemented bureaucratic communication effectively as an effort to provide knowledge and understanding of the tasks carried out by the government in regulating and serving the community (Fitriawan et al., 2017), although not all indicators can be met. There are several indicators that must be improved; the communicator quality variable shows that the indicator is the ability to absorb desires and the ability to answer questions. Based on the results of the analysis, there was no response from Ridwan Kamil regarding the comments given by netizens. In fact, in another post, Ridwan Kamil responded to several netizens who made comments. This prompted the emergence of various negative sentiments in the caption he delivered regarding the new student admission program in 2019. This is related to the Though Delivery Process variable, where the community needs clarity and adequacy of information, it was found that there were still many netizens who questioned the government program and Ridwan Kamil has not responded in the post.

Another variable on the effectiveness of the communication process shows that Ridwan Kamil uses Instagram media which is one of the most widely used social media in Indonesia. Thus, Instagram is an effective medium in delivering information on government programs. In addition, the message delivered also indicates that netizens are trying to understand the information even though most comments submitted show negative sentiments. This shows that the government needs to evaluate the zoning system process applied to the admission of new students in 2019. The communication climate variable shows that netizens are given the freedom to express their opinions, questions, and responses to government programs.

VI. LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATION AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

Based on the results of the study, it shows that the use of Instagram is one of the effective methods in conveying information related to government programs to the public and increasing community engagement in government policies. Instagram is also effective in knowing the public's response to government programs. The communication process that occurs between the community and regional heads through Instagram has also become more interactive, because social media is very important for the millennial generation, who always demands quick responses, answers and responses by utilizing the internet, especially social media (Smith & Nichols, 2015).

Based on the results of the case studies, it was shown that the government's program related to new student admissions in 2019, the majority received negative responses. The number of negative responses from the community shows that there is still a lack of community satisfaction with these services, therefore the quality of public services still needs to be improved. This study recommends that the government reconsider the needs and desires of the community in making new policies to minimize contradictory attitudes and complaints from the public, for example by asking the public's opinion about the policies that will be issued. Furthermore, local governments can use other social media, such as YouTube and IG TV to provide detailed information on the process of accepting new students to the public. Thus, netizens know that the local government continues to make improvements. In addition, the government can also post ongoing government programs on social media to find out changes in netizen responses. The results of these responses are evaluated and finalized by the Government concerned, so that public satisfaction can increase with the quality of public services. The government must also expand the means and media to communicate with the community and provide a quick response to the community in order to increase the interactive relationship between the government and the community.

Information disparities arise because communication has not been carried out evenly (Graham, 2014). However, based on observations on Ridwan Kamil's Instagram in other posts, a simple, interactive, and straightforward communication style is the hallmark of the regional head. Ridwan Kamil uses language that is flexible, interactive, and easy to understand, making it easier for the public to accept, especially the millennial generation. Ridwan Kamil also always inserts humor and moral messages for his community. This adds value to the communication process carried out by the West Java regional head. Therefore, it is hoped that the leader's consistency in every post submitted via Instagram by responding to the community interactively.

This study has several limitations that can be used as a reference for further research. For the scope of text mining, the analysis of this study uses a limited number of comments, therefore that further research can analyze other issues with a large and varied number of comments. This study also only focuses on one government program, namely the acceptance of new students in 2019, therefore that it is possible to analyze other issues that
are government program priorities. In addition, further research can be developed by analyzing through other social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, and it is recommended to expand the scope of the study area and various other analytical techniques.

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