

The Role of Social Media in the Dissemination of Public Information

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Abstract

Social media has become one of the main communication platforms in the digital era for delivering public information. This study aims to analyze the role of social media in the dissemination of public information, identify challenges, and formulate optimization strategies. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data analysis from ten previous studies. The results show that social media has great potential in reaching a wide audience, but its effectiveness is often constrained by limited human resources, infrastructure and public trust. To improve its role, a more focused communication strategy, interesting content management, and better utilization of technology are needed.

Keywords: *Social media, public information, communication strategy, effectiveness.*

INTRODUCTION

The Indonesian government has passed the Law on Electronic Information and Transactions (UU ITE) Number 11 of 2008, which was later revised by Law Number 19 of 2016. In this law, there are various provisions governing abuse in the dissemination of electronic information (Fitriani, 2017). In the context of the current digital era, advances in information and communication technology have had a significant impact on various aspects of life, including the way we interact and access information. One of the most influential innovations is the emergence of social media, which has profoundly changed the pattern of public communication. Social media not only serves as a platform for sharing personal content, but also acts as a tool for disseminating public information quickly and widely (Nasution & Welly, 2023). Today, social media platforms are one of the main channels that people use to obtain information. According to the research “Status of Digital Literacy in Indonesia 2021” conducted by the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology and Katadata Insight Center (KIC), 73 percent of individuals rely on social media as a source of information. This figure is much higher than television which recorded 59.7 percent, online news at 26.7 percent, and official government websites which only reached 13.9 percent.

Social media plays a crucial role in disseminating information to the public, especially in the midst of the increasing need for access to fast and accurate information (Nasution et al, 2024). In this context, Law No. 23/2014 on Regional Government gives governments the freedom to serve according to the needs and conditions of the people in their areas. This law is the main guideline that confirms the significant powers held by local governments to exercise autonomy as a whole. Thus, local governments can manage their own government affairs, govern their territory and citizens, without any intervention from other parties (Lisdawati, 2022).

Nowadays, media plays a very important role in people's lives. The utilization of social media has touched almost all levels of society, providing opportunities for individuals to quickly

access the various information they need. Social media are online platforms that make it easy for users to contribute, share and create content, such as blogs, social networks, wikis, forums and virtual spaces (Nasution, 2023). Among the different types of social media, social networking is one of the most commonly used. This platform allows individuals to create personal pages that are connected with friends, making it easier for them to share information and communicate with each other (Rofiyanti, Agustina, and Firzah, 2024).

With a growing number of users, social media has become a key factor in shaping public opinion and raising awareness of ongoing issues. These platforms allow access to information anytime and anywhere, from breaking news to social campaigns (Nasution et al, 2021). While social media offers many benefits, it also brings challenges and risks, including the spread of inaccurate information or hoaxes. This situation raises questions about the important role of social media in educating the public and ensuring that the information presented is reliable.

Since they were first created, social media platforms have been designed to be spaces where users can interact, share, and exchange information and thoughts within online communities and networks (Nasution et al, 2024). In this context, social media includes blogs, social networks, discussion forums, and visual environments (Fitriani, 2017). Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of social media in the dissemination of public information and its impact on user behavior and public response to the information received. With an emphasis on the use of social media as a means of disseminating information, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide a deeper understanding of the dynamics of public communication in the digital era.

The development of information technology has revolutionized the way people communicate and access information. Today, social media has become one of the main channels for disseminating public information, thanks to its speed, interactivity and ability to reach a wide audience. However, the effectiveness of social media is often not maximized, due to a number of obstacles, such as limited human resources, inadequate technological infrastructure, and low levels of public trust. The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. Analyze the role of social media in the dissemination of public information.
2. Identifying the obstacles faced in the information dissemination process.
3. Formulate strategies to optimize the use of social media in the dissemination of public information.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with a literature analysis approach from ten relevant journals. Data was collected through content analysis of previous studies covering various social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Theories used in this research include interactive communication as well as the social media effectiveness approach.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media has now become a key platform for organizations and governments to disseminate information to the public. Research data shows how effective social media is in reaching the public.

1. Wide Reach and High Interactivity, According to research (Ananda Muhamad Tri Utama, 2022), the Aceh Transportation Agency utilizes various social media platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube, to disseminate information regarding land, sea, and air transportation. The use of evaluation strategies through Icono and planning with Trello has succeeded in increasing interactions on social media by 20%, which can be seen from the increase in the number of likes, retweets, and comments.
2. Speed of Information Dissemination, Social media has the ability to spread information in seconds. According to a study, around 75% of social media platform users in Indonesia access the latest news through Facebook and Instagram (Rohmiyati, 2018).
3. Public Engagement in Education Campaigns, According to (Massie, Warouw, & Golung, 2021), around 60% of residents of Ranotana Weru Village utilize social media, such as WhatsApp and Facebook, to obtain information about COVID-19. In this context, social media has become a very important tool for disseminating information on health and vaccination protocols.

Despite its great potential, the effectiveness of social media in disseminating public information is still hampered by various obstacles.

1. Limited Human Resources (HR)

(Rahayu Amanda, 2021) It was found that the Directorate General of Sea Transportation (DJPL) faced challenges in social media management. Due to the lack of a dedicated manager, the optimization of DJPL's Twitter account only managed to reach 50% of its potential.

2. Lack of Public Trust

(Deri, 2023) Research shows that only 10-15% of East Lombok residents actively trust information coming from official government accounts. This distrust arises from concerns over fake news and potential data theft.

3. Low Community Participation

In a study by (Suparto & Habibullah, 2021), only 8% of the total followers of the @KominfoPemalang Twitter account interacted with uploads, either through likes or comments. This finding reflects the low level of community participation in utilizing available information.

4. Infrastructure and Technology Limitations

(Lisdawati, 2022) Identification shows that the lack of infrastructure, especially a stable internet connection, is a major obstacle in Rokan Hilir District. Only 40% of villages in this region have adequate internet access, making it difficult for them to utilize social media as a means to disseminate information. To overcome these constraints, several optimization strategies can be applied:

1. HR Competency Improvement

According to (Ananda Muhamad Tri Utama, 2022), special training for social media managers at the Public Relations of the Aceh Transportation Agency has succeeded in increasing interaction by 25%. In addition, the additional number of admins responsible for social media also accelerates the response to feedback from the public.

2. Creative and Engaging Content Management

(Ummah, 2019) We note that the use of infographics and interactive videos has increased the attractiveness of Central Buton Diskominfo's social media content by 30%. In addition, content that is tailored to the needs of the community also contributes to increased trust in the information conveyed.

3. Utilization of Analytical Technology

(Suparto & Habibullah, 2021) Emphasizing the importance of using analytics tools such as NVivo in measuring the effectiveness of social media content, this study shows that analytics can be used to monitor interactions. The results show that posts involving images or videos have a 40% higher engagement rate compared to plain text.

4. Interagency Cooperation

(Fitriani, 2017) Underscoring the importance of synergy between agencies in delivering a consistent message, the study revealed that collaboration between different agencies can increase campaign effectiveness by 50%. This is due to expanded reach and increased public trust. Case Study: Social Media Utilization:

1. Pematang Regency

The @KominfoPematang Twitter account serves as a means to disseminate public information. However, data analysis reveals that only 10% of followers actively interact. This is due to less interesting content and strategies that have not been optimized.

2. Aceh

The Aceh Transportation Agency's public relations strategy of optimizing various social media platforms has successfully increased interactions by 20% in the last six months. This shows that platform diversification can significantly expand the reach of information.

3. East Lombok

The negative stigma towards social media emerges as one of the main obstacles. In a study conducted by Deri (2023), it was revealed that 70% of people feel worried about the safety of their personal data on social media platforms.

4. Central Lombok

A study by (Ummah, 2019) found that effective use of social media can increase access to public information by up to 30%, although there are still some constraints related to infrastructure.

CONCLUSION

Social media now serves as a critical platform for organizations and governments to disseminate information quickly and widely. By utilizing channels such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok and YouTube, information can reach a larger audience, increase interaction and support public education campaigns. Research indicates that successful utilization of social media can be seen in increased interaction, accelerated information dissemination, and public engagement on crucial issues, such as health protocols and vaccinations. The utilization of social media to disseminate public information is faced with various challenges. Some of these obstacles include limited human resources, low public trust in official information, minimal public participation, and inadequate technological infrastructure in some areas. These factors can reduce the effectiveness of delivering information through social media. To overcome these problems, optimization strategies are needed, such as increasing the competence of human resources, more creative content management, utilization of analytic technology, and cooperation between institutions.

Case studies from regions such as Aceh, Pematang, East Lombok and Central Buton show that implementing the right strategies can improve interaction, expand the reach of information and overcome various barriers.

By overcoming various obstacles and taking advantage of existing opportunities, social media has the potential to become a very effective tool for delivering public information quickly, transparently and relevantly in this digital era. Implementing the right strategy will increase public trust in the information delivered and strengthen the relationship between the government and its citizens.

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