

Hoax management of presidential staff office: An example of government public relations strategies

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Abstract Hoax management is a significant factor in maintaining government stability. Public Relations is necessary to respond and manage current developing issues, especially during the current era of information. Public satisfaction is dependant on how the government manages issues and ultimately increase public trust. This research employed the qualitative approach, i.e., case study research method, which describes researches carried out intensively in great detail and depth. The data were collected through unstructured observations, interviews, and documentation. This research investigated the Communication Excellence Theory proposed by Grunig and Hunt, which illustrate the symbolic processes of understanding human behaviour within an organisation. This research also studied how the concept of public relations strategies is implemented in solving the cases mentioned in this study. The results of the analysis found that, for the Presidential Staff Office, social media was essential in establishing an effective government public relations as well as to manage public issues.

Keywords: government public relations; presidential staff office of republic indonesia; hoax

INTRODUCTION

The developments of information technology have triggered rapid and sophisticated development in communication. In consequence, the public discourse has become increasingly uncontrollable, thus putting the government's performance in the spotlight. A survey conducted by DailySocial.id in 2018 (DailySocial, 2018) showed that 58% of the total

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respondents stated that they often receive fraudulent materials on their social media platforms. Of which, 45% stated that they received it. This research found that there was an extensive hoax distribution. Therefore, a synergy between the government and the society in delivering information is needed to alter such an opinion. Thus, the government should provide prompt responses and transparent information, as well as maintain good communication with the public.

The central idea of democracy is how people can have power in their own lives and over their own lives (Balkin, 2016). Having a responsive government that can be held accountable to the public is one way to achieve this goal. In a democratic country, citizens have the right to share their opinions. However, currently, freedom of expression tends to go unrestrained.

The domains of e-government include the state's jurisdiction, as well as its roles and relationships in economy and society. Meanwhile, two central concerns of public policy are promoting economic growth and prosperity; as well as fostering social cohesion. Therefore, in the knowledge-based economy, information is the new form of wealth with technology as the new tool to create such wealth (Brown, 2005).

Today, the mass media has become a place to share lies, falsehood, and even harmful propaganda because the media makes information more accessible. On the other hand, the media influences the mindset of the people, which can be quite a risk to the government. Therefore, it is necessary to manage issues well because freedom of expression may bear a negative impact when addressed improperly. After all, the internet had the potential to exacerbate attitudes in countries that have more access to information (Gainous, Wagner, & Gray, 2016).

The authors have noted several preceding research on the government's communication strategies. One of which was Graham (Graham, 2014) who was focused on the involvement of local government in the digital and post-truth era. Meanwhile, Nabatchi and Amsler (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014) studied direct public involvement in local government. However, there has been no research on hoax and hate speech management or public relation politics from the Presidential Office perspectives.

Communication Excellence Theory explained how public relations could contribute as a management function to the overall effectiveness of an organisation. The theory also stated that communication provides certain value to an organisation because it can help maintain long-term relationships with the public. According to Grunigh and Hunt (Grunig & Dozier, 1992), there are four models of public relations, which are The Press Agency, Public Information, Two-way Asymmetrical, and Two-way Symmetrical.

The press agency model put its emphasis on public relations practice, which focuses on promotion, publicity, and public propaganda efforts. This model ignored ethics and referred to as one-way

communication from the communicator to the receiver. Meanwhile, the public information model underlined the delivery of accurate and valid information to the public as it attempted to build public trust despite its one-way communication nature. Currently, this model is commonly used by companies, educational institutions, and non-profit organisations. The two-way asymmetrical model applied social science researches to measure and assess the public or society that an organisation considers in the formulation of PR programmes. By using this model, public relations can deliver messages based on research results and scientific strategies to persuade the public to cooperate, behave, and think according to the organisation's interests.

On the other hand, the two-way symmetrical model was considered as the best method for a successful PR of an organisation. This model highlighted the willingness of both parties to make adjustments to each other. Additionally, this model also focused on applying research methods and communication skill to manage conflicts and improve public perception methodically (Grunig & Dozier, 1992). However, it is to be noted that different organisation may apply different PR model as they are affected by different dominating powers and forces (Grunig & Dozier, 1992).

According to Frank Jefkins (Jefkins, 2002), Public Relations referred to all forms of communication, both internal and external, between one organisation and its audience in order to achieve specific goals based on mutual understanding. Thus, good relations with the public, which is the primary goal of the practice of public relations, are an essential factor that might affect the success or failure of the organisation.

Indeed, Lattimore (in Lattimore, Baskin, Heiman, & Toth, 2011) identified public relations as a leadership and management function that helps to achieve organisational goals, defines the philosophy of the organisation, and facilitates organisational change. Thus, public relations practitioners must communicate with all appropriate internal and external public to develop a positive relationship and ensure consistency between organisational goals and social expectations. From those definitions, it can be concluded that public relations referred to a planned communication essential in carrying out management functions to achieve organisational goals. Furthermore, the purpose of public relations was to identify, build, and sustain mutually beneficial relationships (Vieira & Vieira, 2018).

Public Relations practitioners might use four strategic steps to achieve organisational goals, which were issue identification; plan and programmes; action and communication; and program evaluation. In the early stage, public relations practitioners identified and defined the issues concerning the organisation by conducting research, gathering facts, and immersing themselves into the issue. After finding out the problem and its cause, public relations practitioners developed a plan to address the issue by making a program containing a set of actions and scenarios to be carried out based on the available budget.

The action and communication step was the execution of the plan and programmes formulated in the previous step. The action referred to the execution of plans and programs. This step might involve all members of the organisation to convey the desired message to the public. Public relations practitioners must evaluate after undertaking activities related to dealing with an existing issue. It was necessary to assess whether the program ran according to the plan and to identify any shortcoming. Therefore, in the future, any shortcoming could be minimised, and other programmes could be better prepared (Ruslan, 2002).

Government public relations is the type of communication function that deals with the interaction of the citizens with their government, governmental regulators, the legislative (elected or appointed), and other regulatory arms of the government (Lee, 2012). According to Lattimore (Lattimore et al., 2011), government public relations was a management function that helped organisations to formulate organisational goals and adapt to the demands of its constituents and society. Furthermore, he stated that the government public relations are a type of communication function that connects the interaction of the citizens with their government, regulators, and other extensions of government policies.

Decree of the Minister of Communication and Information Technology, Republic of Indonesia Number 371/KEP/M.KOMINFO/8/2007 regarding the code of ethics of government public relations, defined government public relations as the activity of institutions or individuals who carry out management functions in the field of communication and information to the public, stakeholders, and vice versa. From this definition, it can be inferred that government public relations is an institution's activity which simultaneously explains and receive input from every policy that will be made, is being made, or has been made.

According to Cutlip (1982), the main task of government public relations practitioners was to provide information. The information referred to here is in the form of government policy, not only at the local, national, or even global level. Meanwhile, Lattimore (2007) proposed that a good public relations practitioner was one who strives to achieve mutual understanding between institutions and society. Government public relations also aims to monitor public opinion; plan and manage the effectiveness of public relations; arrange messages for internal and external audiences; and measure the effectiveness of the entire process.

Meanwhile, government public relations, in the context of the Indonesian Presidential Staff Office was the Presidential Staff Unit. It was formed by Presidential Regulation No. 26 of 2015 to provide support to the President and Vice President in managing the implementation of three strategic tasks. These three tasks are the implementation of national priority programmes; activities related to presidential political

communication; and management of strategic issues. In carrying out its duties, the Presidential Staff Office undertook the control function to ensure that national priority programmes are implemented according to the President's vision and mission. The Presidential Staff Office implemented comprehensive problem solving to manage issues, accelerates implementation, monitors national priority programs, and conducts other tasks given by the President, which also includes accelerating the implementation of national priority programs (Kantor Staff Presiden, 2018).

The Indonesian Presidential Staff Office also had other responsibilities, which included managing strategic issues, delivering data analysis and strategic information to support the decision-making process, managing political communication strategies, and relaying information. The tasks regarding political communication and information dissemination, however, carried out specifically by the Deputy 4 Presidential Staff Office the Republic of Indonesia.

According to Regester and Michael (2003), an "issue" was a representation of a gap between corporate practice and stakeholder expectations. In other words, any issue that arose during a particular condition or event, both inside and outside the organisation, when left unchecked, will have a significant effect on the function or targets of the organisation in the future. Issues were commonly interpreted as rumours. However, in the context of public policy, issues were closely related to policies. Generally, issues arose because of one of two things. Either there was a cross of opinion among the actors regarding the direction of future action or the conflicting nature of the problem itself.

There are two types of issues based on its impact, which were the defensive and offensive issues. Defensive issues were issues that were likely to pose a threat to the organisation, so the organisation must defend itself so as not to suffer a reputation loss. Meanwhile, offensive issues were issues that could be used to improve the reputation of the organisation (Kriyantono, 2012). Thus, a hoax is considered a defensive issue.

METHODOLOGY

This research employed the qualitative research approach. Qualitative research produced descriptive data in the form of written or oral statements from people or observed behaviour. The study used the case study method, which was a study that was carried out intensively, in detail, and in-depth (Shih, Wu, Wang, & Chen, 2017). This research was a multiple case study, which means that it examined two or more case studies (Yin, 2013).

Furthermore, this study employed the constructivism paradigm, which was characterised by logical, empirical methodology in the broadest sense. This paradigm was ideal for human research. Constructivists claimed that humans did not find or acquire knowledge,

as it was mainly compiled or shaped (Denzin, 2009). The technique of data collection included observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Such observation was conducted during a two months long internship from March to April 2017.

This study used the non-probability with purposive sampling technique. According to Neuman (Neuman, 2003), purposive sampling was a sample collection technique in which the researchers have pre-determined the sample criteria. Furthermore, this study employed expert sampling. According to Neuman (Neuman, 2003), this technique selected samples based on expertise in the desired area. Therefore, the researchers determined the research sample to be the members of Deputy 4 of the Indonesian Presidential Staff Office. Indeed, staffs of the Presidential Staff Office Republic of Indonesia were credible informants in this research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this study, the authors attempted to understand the role and public relation approach employed by the Presidential Staff Office Republic of Indonesia in managing hoaxes. The study focused on unique issues that were hoaxes (false news).

The three most frequently circulated hoaxes were related to anti-Islam, communism, and pro-Chinese "*Antek Cina*" agendas. Various statements have confirmed these phenomena. Expert Staff of the Deputy for Political Communication and Information Dissemination of the Presidential Staff Office (from now will be referred to as Presidential Staff Office), Alois Wisnuhardana, as stated in Tempo Online newspaper (Tempo.co, 2017), mentioned that there were at least three major hoax issues that were used frequently to attack President Jokowi. These three issues were related to anti-Islam, pro-communism, and pro-Chinese issues.

In addition to that, according to the Wave Politica Director Jose Rizal as featured in the CNN Indonesia Online Newspaper (Wiwoho, 2018), the types of fake news (hoaxes) that were highly circulated on social media throughout August-December 2017 were related to the rise of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI). Furthermore, Jose stated that a survey was conducted through monitoring Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube, and several other social media sites. The results indicated that in addition to the rise of the PKI, other hoaxes circulating in social media were related to the anti-Islam government (2.3 per cent), CEO Traveloka walkout (1.1 per cent), Chinese labour (0.7 per cent), and Sandiaga Uno trespassing the busway lane (0.5 per cent).

Relating to those statements, this study was focused on three major hoax issues, i.e., the rise of PKI, foreign labour, and anti-Islam. Addressing such issues was critical as they could potentially escalate into various other problems. For example, throughout 2017, several hoaxes regarding the rise of PKI spread wildly in the society. Some of them even

triggered demonstrations, including those ending in clashes at the YLBHI office on September 17, 2017.

Figure 1. Example of News Report Regarding PKI Issues



Source: Liputan6.com (Siregar, 2017)

The emerging cases were usually associated with other sensitive topics, especially the economy. Hoaxes regarding the invasion of Chinese foreign workers allegedly receiving higher wages had raised concerns in society.

Meanwhile, anti-Islam issues were usually found in the form of radical accusations, intolerance, etc. Anti-Islam hoaxes increase along with other sensitive issues related to SARA (*tribes, religions, races, inter-groups*), which may potentially divide the nation. Indeed, such issues have caused a disturbance in the community. Therefore, the role of the public relations at the Presidential Staff Office of the Republic of Indonesia was critical in making sure that the spreading hoaxes did not trigger public disturbance. In this discussion, the authors studied the public relations strategy employed by Presidential Staff Office in managing hoaxes regarding PKI, foreign workers, and anti-Islam issues.

Public Relations communication model used by Presidential Staff Office in managing hoaxes

Public Relations activities exhibit characteristics of democracy, which favours audiences or the public. Audiences are not seen as mere objects but as subjects. However, it may cause various unverified issues to be easily disseminated and consumed by society, which can potentially trigger misunderstanding and even division. With advances in technology and the presence of social media, information can be increasingly unmanageable and cause the emergence of other problems. Therefore, excellent communication is critical when responding to issues, as well as conveying government policies and performance. Indeed, the lack of communication between the government and its

people when responding to various issues and disseminating policies may disrupt national stability.

Communication between the government and its people is essential. The citizens expected the government to be as open and transparent as possible in their decision-making; to be mindful of equity and civil rights; and to ensure fairness in due process (Head, 2007). An error in relaying information from the government and the people in responding to an issue might decrease the government's reputation as it might escalate the issue and endanger the government. Hoaxes rose because there was a gap between the limited human capabilities and the rapid development of information technology, in which human can barely process each emerging issue. Unfortunately, the equipment made available by the computer technology today has fuelled various cybercrimes (Choi, Shorubalko, Gustavsson, Schön, & Ensslin, 2009). In this case, the researchers aimed to observe how the Deputy 4 of Presidential Staff Office Republic of Indonesia carries out its duties as the conveyor of information to the public.

Public Relations practitioners aim to serve the public by addressing several issues that concern the public. From the observations and interviews, the author found that the Presidential Staff Office employed the symmetrical two-way communication model public relations approach in its efforts to manage public issues. According to Grunigh (Grunig & Dozier, 1992), this model focused on communication techniques to manage conflict and improve public understanding.

In fulfilling its duties to carry out information dissemination, Presidential Staff Office implemented plans, starting from when the issue arises until it is solved. In addition to hoaxes, the office also aimed to improve the organization's positive image in the public eye. Presidential Staff Office did not only answer the issue but also convince the public that their concern did not happen or was not accurate. Presidential Staff Office strived to convey transparent information and prioritizes the truth. Therefore, Presidential Staff Office tried to make a counter-movement quickly and delivered accurate information according to their plan.

The researcher saw an effort in trying to convey a single narrative to avoid diversifying the issue, which might lead to disturbance in the society. In addition to using a single narrative, Presidential Staff Office also provided a forum for the public to submit reports through the site "lapor.go.id." It was an effort by the organisation to identify the public's concerns. Through "lapor.go.id" website, the public could make reports regarding various issues. LAPOR! (People's Online Aspiration and Complaint Service) was a social media-based aspiration and complaint facility that could be easily accessed through www.lapor.go.id, SMS to 1708, or mobile apps. This network integrated 81 Ministries/Institutions, 5 Regional Governments, and 48 State-owned enterprises (BUMN). The Presidential Staff Office developed LAPOR! to increase public

participation in the supervision of development and public services in Indonesia.

Figure 2. Screenshot of reports on hoaxes



Source: www.lapor.go.id (Lapor.go.id, 2018)

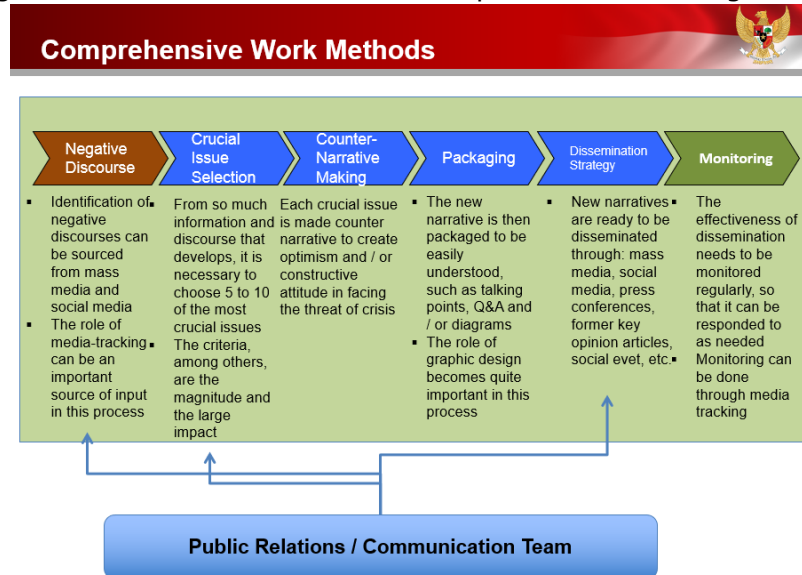
Through LAPOR!, the public could submit reports related to various issues, one of which was on hoaxes. Figure 2 showed an example of a report made by a member of the communities regarding hoaxes spreading on Facebook that could potentially cause division.

Public relation strategy used by Presidential Staff Office in managing public issues

The public relations team in the Presidential Staff Office understood that freedom of opinion might be misinterpreted as a mean of expression without control. The fact that information is readily accessible, along with the advancement in technology, has made significant changes to the lifestyle and mindset of society. The use of social media negatively affects public space as it was filled with hoaxes that could provoke negative emotions. Indeed, this situation may cause discord and create distrust in society.

In dealing with hoaxes, the Presidential Staff Office of the Republic of Indonesia developed multipled stages of actions to address the issue in various ways. In general, the researchers found that the Government Public Relations strategy implemented by the Presidential Staff Office was the issue management process, which was comprised into four stages: issue identification, program planning, program implementation, and program evaluation.

Figure 3 Presidential Staff Office Comprehensive Working Method



Source: Personal data of the Indonesian President's Staff Office

Issue Identification

At this stage, public relations practitioners identify and define the problems concerning the organisation by conducting research, continuously gathering facts, and immersing themselves into the issue. Public Relations team monitors how the issues are developing by reading and observing the public activities attitudes in communicating their opinions on the organisation.

The management must recognise issues that may affect the organisation. At this stage, the issue identification process may employ several methods, which include conducting opinion polls, holding FGDs, monitoring mass media, providing opinion contacts, conducting "management by walking around," visiting and hearing public aspirations directly, as well as monitoring the social media. The following were the process involved in identifying issues stage conducted by the public relations team of the Indonesian Presidential Office:

The public relations team at the Presidential Staff Office used mass media monitoring methods. Media monitoring was considered to be the foundation or initial step in gathering data and information related to the issues that may appear in mass media or social media every day. After identifying the issues developing in national print and online media, the public relations team then conducted meetings and put the issues into a priority scale based on the urgency of the issue. Of all the issues that were in development, usually, only 5-10 important issues were selected based on several magnitudes and impacts criteria.

Program planning

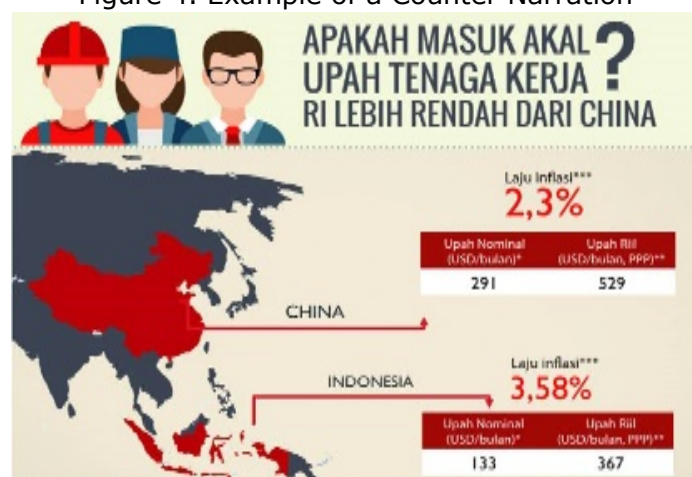
After determining the rising issue and its cause, the second stage is planning and formulating the program in which the public relations team develops a plan to control the issue by making programs which

contain a set of actions and schemes The Presidential Staff Office conducts an analysis of the issue in a crisis centre meeting which is held every other day at Bina Graha building, Presidential Staff Office, Jakarta. The following is a statement from Alois Wisnuhardana, the Person in Charge (PIC) at the Social Media Crisis Center of the Presidential Staff Office:

We collaborate with the President Communication Team in crisis centres and media discussions. At the crisis centre, along with the Presidential Communication Team, we work together to make counter-narratives on the issues. Additionally, there is also media discussion every two weeks. The Ministry of Communication and Information hosts it, and the Presidential Staff Office provides the material together with the Presidential Communication Team. So far, the cooperation that we built has been quite good.” (Informant 2).

After raising issues were identified and put into priority scale, the next step was to analyse the cause of the issue and the possible consequences for the organisation. The purpose of this step was to find out the real issues, its cause, and its source. When the issue had been further analysed, the next crucial step was to develop a counter-narrative. Counter-narrative were constructed to create optimism or constructive attitude in the threat of a coming crisis. The narrative was presented as something that can be easily understood. Some examples include using talking points, question and answer (Q & A), and diagrams. Therefore, at this stage, the graphic designer played an important role.

Figure 4. Example of a Counter Narration



Source: Personal data of the Indonesian President's Staff Office

Figure 4 highlighted an issue regarding the wages of Chinese workers. The infographic was meant to be an answer to developing news. Therefore, rising issues could be countered with data and facts. The Presidential Staff Office also verified information by neutralizing

hoaxes or misleading information. It was done by conducting socialisation to disseminate the counter-narrative or other information containing government policies.

Nevertheless, the content of information must be uniformed to ensure a single narrative policy in order to minimize disruption in society. Agustinus Eko Raharjo, a staff at Deputy 4 of Indonesian Presidential Staff Office, illustrated this point further:

We have a Ministry and Institution (K/L). That single narrative means that there are related parties who are the leading sector. Who has the authority to speak (about certain issues)? So, then we will ask for information to the experts. It depends on the topic. The goal is to be accurate. Then, the information is circulated in the K/L group. Later on, they will write (address) it on their respective webs. (Informant 1)

The existence of a single narrative makes information more accurate, fast, and consistent. Public issues must be quickly addressed; therefore, a synergy between institutions was essential in helping Presidential Staff Office disseminate information through the web. However, synergy alone was not enough. An excellent and well-thought counter-narrative was also fundamental in this process. Agustinus Eko Raharjo further illustrated this point in the following statement:

We also do counter-narrative in answering issues. Utilising discourses based on facts and solutions. Later we share the results on social media and the official release in print or online. Some are also in charge of giving clarifications on TV or Radio. (Informant 1)

The Presidential Staff Office also approached and attempted to embrace community leaders. Such action was done to convey that the government is actually above all segments of society. The Presidential Staff Office also aimed to enforce the law. In coordination with officials or legal institutions, it took various action against individuals who spread hoaxes, lies, and slander.

Action and communication

The third stage was action and communication. Based on their method of comprehensive work, the Presidential Staff Office called it the dissemination strategy. Action and communication steps were executed after compiling the actions that had been formed in the program planning stage. In this stage, all the plans and programs that had been developed were put into action. The involvement of all members of the organisation in communicating with the public during this stage was critical.

For example, in 2016, an issue about how PKI meetings were allegedly held frequently at the Presidential Merdeka Palace had grown. To control that issue, the Presidential Communication Team collaborated with the Presidential Staff Office Republic of Indonesia by using legal channels to provide assurance. Deputy 4 Presidential Staff Office staff Agustinus Eko Raharjo explained the situation in the following statement.

Regarding the PKI (issue), it is an old issue since Jokowi's first presidential campaign. However, now that issue has grown and tends to lead to slander. Mr Teten, as the head of the Presidential Staff Office, has filed a report to the police. We once did the same thing when Jokowi Undercover book was published and made public. The results were positive; people knew that the book was not true. (Informant 1)

The government's counter-narrative was disseminated through mass media, social media, press conferences, opinion articles, etc. Other than that, the government also utilize other potential media assets. Included in those assets were the Television of the Republic of Indonesia (TVRI) and the Radio of the Republic of Indonesia (RRI). Graham (2014) asserted that the public and organizations recognised the value and urgency of social media at all levels. Likewise, regional governments also recognize the positive benefits of social media and use it to study public expectations. The media that may be used to disseminate contra-narrative includes media relations, website, and social media.

Media relation was an approach in public relations that considered publicity strategy. The formula was "to make noise" to gain attention from the audience. This approach mostly involved persuasion through media relations and utilised press releases. This approach is in line with the work of public relations, which emphasises the concept of mutual understanding and mutual benefits between the government, the media, and the community through media coverage. In this case, some news articles were published in the mass media after a press conference or press release from the Presidential Staff Office. At that time, Presidential Chief of Staff Moeldoko stated that the issue of Foreign Workers (TKA) was related to the country's political situation. Moeldoko assessed that the issue of TKA was always discussed during the political year. The statement given by Moeldoko was then quoted by the media as follows:

"Yes, as I said earlier, this is going up and down. This TKA issue is always related to the political situation. We have analysed it. Moreover, as the situation is coming to an end, the issue has become more attractive," Moeldoko said during a press conference at the Bina Graha building, Presidential Palace Complex, Central Jakarta, Tuesday (04/24/2018). (Andhika Prasetia, 2018)

The second approach was the website of the Indonesian Presidential Staff Office. There were two websites, "ksp.go.id" and "presidenri.go.id." The presidential Staff Office attempted to address issues related to foreign workers by conducting discussions with experts. The effort was made to convince the public that the government was trying to find the best solution for the problems.

Figure 6. Screenshot of Web Presidenri.go.id



Source: Presidenri.go.id. (Presidenri.go.id, 2018)

In the news, the president stressed that there was no room for communism in Indonesia. This statement was an effort to address the issues related to the rise of the PKI. At that time, issues that Jokowi was involved in the PKI movement were widely circulated.

The third approach was Social Media. Indonesian citizens are relatively active social media user. According to a survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2017, there were 143.26 million internet users in Indonesia, 87.13% of which used social media. The president's staff employed this statistic as the base in information dissemination. Progresses in public communication showed that social media could be used to convey achievements as well as clarify developing issues. Therefore, the Presidential Staff Office utilised Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and an official Whatsapp group.

The official twitter of the Indonesian Presidential Staff Office was "@kspgoid." About 74.6 thousand followers have followed that account up to 31 October 2018. @kspgoid had posted 27.6 thousand tweets. Since its activation in September 2016, the account posted an average of one tweet each day. Another purpose of the Presidential Staff Office Twitter account was to take hoax and fake news identification requests.

On Facebook, the Presidential Staff Office shared photographs of the president's activities. It also posted various counter statements and clarification regarding rising issues. For example, the official Facebook account made a response to foreign labour issues. Through its Facebook presence, the Presidential Staff Office attempted to convey facts with data to counter the issue of 10 million foreign workers from China working in Indonesia. This statement was also reinforced by the data

that proved the fact that the number 10 million that was heavily circulated was actually the number of tourists, not foreign workers.

On Instagram, the author identified an attempt to address the issue that the government, in this case, the leader of the State (President), is an anti-Islam figure. Several uploads depicted the president attending events at the Islamic boarding school (*pesantren*), the caption of which was the president's remarks on a message of peace.

Efforts to control controversy were also made through Whatsapp groups whose members include public relations representatives from all Ministries/Agencies and Presidential Staff Office staffs. In the group, the Presidential Staff Office posted press releases and new information to be posted on each ministry's websites. Unfortunately, this effort was not well implemented.

Program evaluation

Evaluation or monitoring was done to monitor the effectiveness of information dissemination regularly. Therefore, the actions taken could be accurate and useful. Public Relations practitioners must conduct an evaluation after carrying out problem-solving activities. It was necessary to examine whether the program runs according to the plan. This stage was also essential in identifying shortcomings. Therefore, in the future, faults could be minimised, and other programs could be better prepared (Ruslan, 2002).

This step was observed during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) event between Presidential Staff Office and the President's Communication Team on Monday, March 13, 2017. The President's Communication Team represented by Ari Dwipayana and Sukardi Rinakit revealed that the communication team had made various efforts to enforce a single narrative policy and had responded to developing issues.

Presidential Staff Office also worked together with the Presidential Communication Team and the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology. They worked together in synergy and constructed a single narrative and issue management in a crisis centre — however, a lot of still needed to be done to better the communication process. The synergy between ministries and institutions was also necessary. At the focus group discussion, the Presidential Staff Office staffs also presented several evaluations and strategies that could enforce the single narrative policy.

CONCLUSION

Problems that may arise from hoaxes shall not be considered trivial. This research found that the Presidential Staff Office had made various attempt to counteract hoaxes and other issues developing in the public sphere. There were three most widely and heavily circulated hoaxes, which were foreign labour, communist, and anti-Islam issues.

To control these issues, Presidential Staff Office employed the two-way symmetrical communication model, which focused on using communication techniques to manage conflicts and methodically improve public perception.

The research revealed that deputy 4 of the Presidential Staff Office was responsible for executing political communication program and information dissemination based on public relations strategy. Presidential Staff Office public relations strategy was comprised of four stages. The first stage was the issue identification stage. In this stage, the Presidential Staff Office monitored various mass media and social media on developing issues and chose 5 to 10 main issues that were considered to be the most important. The first stage was then promptly followed by the second stage, which was program planning. At this stage, the Presidential Staff Office prepared and packaged counter-narratives to respond to emerging issues and change public opinion. The third stage was the implementation stage. In this stage, information was disseminated through various media platforms, for example, mass media; websites such as Presidential Staff Office.go.id and Presidenri.go.id; or social media such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and official WhatsApp group.

Last but not least, this research found that the Presidential Staff Office conducted an evaluation or monitoring, in which a routine evaluation was conducted by examining the effects of counter-narratives published in the media. At this stage, completed plans were majorly evaluated. The evaluation was usually presented in a large meeting which involved the President's Communication Team, Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, and other teams.

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