Working with limitations: social media management in local government on Solo region

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Abstract The use of various social media platforms by local governments has increased over time, including the regional government in Solo Raya. Social media accounts owned by local governments are not optimal, even though the use of social media can support the implementation of good governance. This research uses qualitative methods, data is mainly collected through focus group discussions with social media managers at district/city governments in the Greater Solo area. The results of this research indicate that the district/city government in the Greater Solo area still considers social media not to be the main means of communication with the public and tends to be considered as unofficial media. Social media management strategies vary across the seven districts or cities in Solo Raya, although the choice of main types of social media is almost the same, namely Facebook and Twitter. The informing function is still the most prominent among the other two main communication functions, namely advocating, persuading, and engaging citizens. Social media's function is also underused in terms of effectiveness, responsiveness, and accountability.

Keywords: government communication; local government; social media

INTRODUCTION

Government communication is vital as it embodies the essence of the reciprocal relationship between the government and the people or citizens. Especially in the current democracy and digital era, the government must provide communication facilities to accommodate and stimulate citizen participation in maintaining a democratic climate. Communication is important in informing the public about a particular situation so that the government can explain the existing measures and position itself as a reference figure during an emergency. (Tokakis et al., 2019). Government communications are essential in building trust and institutional credibility (Hyland-Wood et al., 2021; Kavanaugh et al., 2016).

Along with technological developments, the presence of the internet, especially social media, can be an opportunity for communication between the government and citizens. Social media provides various communication facilities to build interactive relationships between citizens and the government. Indonesians are no strangers to social media. Social media users in Indonesia, according to a 2016 survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII), in its report, stated that the number of Indonesian internet users in 2016 reached 132.7 million, where Facebook was in first position as the most widely used social media. with 71.6 million users (54 per cent), Twitter ranked second highest, followed by photo and video-sharing services, namely Instagram and YouTube. The media can provide content and reword government communications, influencing public perception and understanding of issues or emergency conditions (Yang & Lee, 2020).

The potential of social media to support the implementation of good governance means that the public will have enthusiasm and a positive response to interacting with their government through electronic networks at the beginning of the emergence of social media. The use of social

media can reduce this information asymmetry. This is because it provides a rich communication context for current and potential users of an organisation (Felix et al., 2017). Social media engagement is characterised by soliciting user-generated content, responding to citizen suggestions and concerns, or any other attempt to include citizens in the discussion (Mossberger et al., 2013)

In Indonesia, awareness of social media opportunities to interact with citizens has also emerged. This was seen in 2012 when the government issued the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Number 83 of 2012 regarding the Guidelines for the Utilisation of Social Media for Government Agencies. Through this regulation, it is hoped that government agencies can utilise social media as a communication facility for their citizens.

Several cities in Indonesia have started using social media, such as the City of Bandung, through Facebook and Twitter. In the @PemkotBandung account, they share information about government policies, development information, and activities of the SKPD and the Mayor of Bandung. Some hashtags are also maximised for easy information search, for example, #macetBDG #SKPDBDG #TamanAlunAlunBandung #BanjirBDG. In Central Java itself, Governor Ganjar Pranowo has suggested that public officials and SKPDs in Central Java create social media accounts. Ganjar himself actively uses Twitter as a means of communication. In addition, the Provincial Government of Central Java is also partnering with Twitter Indonesia to improve public services and interaction with residents via Twitter Kemala. Twitter Kemala, which stands for Manage Melantas Service, is a public service solution created by Twitter to facilitate real-time communication and interaction between the government and the public (Kompas.com - 29/09/2016).

However, the use of social media has not been evenly distributed in the regions, including within the regional government in the Greater Solo area. Their social media accounts have not optimally functioned as interactive media between the government and its citizens. This can be seen from the use of one of the social media, namely Twitter. Based on the researcher's observations, the official Twitter account for Humas or Boyolali Regency was not seen, but only Boyolali Regency PPID account was identified. On the Twitter account, Boyolali Regency has a small number of followers, with only 116 followers. This implies that only 116 accounts receive the information posted by those accounts. Compared to communities like @Areaboyolali, which has 3,393 followers, @kabarboyolali_, which has 3,298 followers, @BoyolaliOnline, which has 1,239 followers, the official local government account is far behind. The development of social media platforms has changed the mode of communication between government and citizens, introducing new forms of citizen engagement (Al-Omoush et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, from the researchers' initial observations on the official Twitter accounts of 7 (seven) local governments in the Solo Raya region, it is evident that the number of followers on the official local government accounts is still very small when compared to the number of citizens who use social media in the region. This indicates that the government's use of social media is still not optimal (Table 1).

Table 1. Official Local Government Social Media Accounts and Number of Followers (data as of 8 April 2017)

No	City	Facebook	Follower	Twitter	Follower
1	Surakarta	https://www.facebook.com/PemkotSurakarta/	588	@Pemkot_Solo	5535
2	Karanganyar	https://www.facebook.com/karanganyarkab.go.id/	4399	@karanganyarkab	1171
3	Sukoharjo	https://www.facebook.com/HumasSukoharjo/	815	@sukoharjo_humas	797
4	Boyolali	-	-	-	-
5	Wonogiri	-	-	@humas_wonogiri	2111
6	Sragen	-	-	@HumasKabSragen	2621
7	Klaten	-	-	@Klatenkabgoid	3638

Source: Author Data Processed (2017)

For the government, integrating new technology to support communication performance is challenging. It requires the understanding and involvement of all stakeholders to improve public services. In the case of social media management, commitment and creativity are vital to fostering public trust and engagement, with the official local government account as a communication platform. If not managed properly and wisely, using social media as a communication tool can have a negative impact. Various inputs and comments, both positive

and negative, can enter without being controlled, thereby affecting the image of government institutions and public trust.

The use of social media as a platform for effective government media management is crucial. Compared to conventional word-of-mouth communication, social media enables faster dissemination of information, which can greatly enhance good governance. Aside from being communicative, interactive, and fast in providing information on the daily activities, it will foster personal closeness and present a more approachable image of the government, which is seen as less rigid. If the government uses social media, the public will also receive information in a more personalised manner, tailored to their preferences rather than formally. According to Mergel (2013), the model of social interaction demonstrated that government social use of media drives many important outcomes, such as trust in public administration, citizen satisfaction, and integrity. The transformative roles that social government can play in many areas, such as transparency, participation, and collaboration, promote public trust in government (Zuiderwijk et al., 2019).

Therefore, research on social media becomes imperative, as it illustrates the extent to which local governments in Indonesia embrace and implement social media practices extensively. Despite the importance of government digital initiatives in adapting to dynamic social, political, and technological environments, there remains a debate regarding the role of government in promoting engagement and adoption (Hong et al., 2022). In this study, the researchers will primarily investigate how the social media management model adopted by the local government in the Solo Raya region supports government communication to realise principles of good governance such as participation, accountability, and transparency. Based on the outlined issues, this study aims to explain the social media management model utilised by the Solo Raya region's local government to enhance government communication. The primary objective is to exemplify the principles of good governance highlighting participation, accountability, and transparency.

METHODOLOGY

The research conducted employed a qualitative research method. Researchers performed a field study on this. This research aims to address specific research questions. It requires gathering complex and detailed information, which was obtained by talking directly with key informants and listening to their perspectives and experiences. The researchers used the method in data collection through a focus group discussion (FGD). The FGD method has several characteristics, serving as a data collection technique for qualitative research. Data generated through this method comes from studying the social interactions that occur during the discussion process of participating informants (Lehoux et al., 2006). Through the FGD method, informants can provide insight into the various ways that shape the behaviour and attitudes of a group of individuals or about perceptions, understanding, and explanations for social learning. Collecting data through FGDs is suitable for identifying and soliciting opinions on a topic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Social Media Management

The management of social media across the seven districts or cities in Solo Raya has various methods. However, there is a similarity in the primary types of utilised social media applications. Posts on social media, which are often unfiltered and readily available, seem to reject the legitimacy of mainstream media as authentic news sources, which leads to raising questions about news ethics and the depth of the content. The nature of new media is uniquely flexible (Susanto, 2017). Social media is a new way of interactive communication. The flexibility of social media is now getting more accessible, and people can use social media to find, obtain and use information. Social media serves a platform for managing and disseminating information within community groups. It also facilitates building and enhancing relationships between individuals, governments, and communities, transcending barriers posed by their respective differences.

As conveyed by an informant from Klaten district who said that his party carried out the role of managing social media. As said by the following informants:

"Social media was created in 2012 using Twitter, the name is Humas Klaten, has 1900 followers. At first, it was just a complaint, but after a policy was issued by Mr. Ganjar [governor] in 2016 to make a twitter for each SPPD. The official account is Public Relations Klaten as a complaint account and for the population from Public Relations to Civil Registry."

However, in Karanganyar, social media is handled by the Office of Communication and Information (Diskominfo). The informant said the following:

"The social media we use are Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and websites. We have only launched an official website for the Karanganyar government so that management can be more integrated and controlled. For social media, starting in December 2015, we will launch sapamas (a system for collecting community aspirations), which is based on numbers, for now, it is based on WhatsApp numbers."

The development of social media platforms presents opportunities that extend beyond national boundaries in cyberspace and have the potential to achieve the goals of increasing knowledge, service delivery, citizen engagement and legitimacy, and responsiveness to increasing citizen expectations as expert users of social networks (Mergel, 2013). The increasing prevalence of communication carried out by the public through social media platforms has brought progress and opportunities to create common spaces for the public that can encourage the exchange of information and informed opinions and enrich public discourse.(Rowe, 2014). The use of social media platforms used by the government likely allows co-creation and dialogue against the attitudes and behaviour of users.

The Surakarta City Government's Communication and Information Service manages social media through Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and path applications. They use the channel as a means of complaint and for city branding. The city of Surakarta developed an application together with "Solo Destination" where the application is Android-based which is related to the branding of the city. The use of solo destinations makes it easier for the public to find out the tourism potential and products of the City of Solo. Branding strategies commonly used in a project to manage both internal and external stakeholders will be explored. Thus, branding and social media contribute to stakeholders i.e. government and to discussions about community engagement. The Solo City Government also has Unit Layanan Aduan Masyarakat (ULAS) community complaint content. Social media as a means of handling complaints also presents challenges, as service recovery practices tested and confirmed offline cannot always be transferred to online channels (Sengupta et al., 2018).

The Sukoharjo Regency Government emphasises that social media management is still ambiguous in relation to its primary sector. In Sukoharjo, the roles of two institutions were distinguished, namely the Public Relations Section and the Diskominfo. While PR and Kominfo both take care of social media, distinction arises as PR focuses on branding to regional heads, while Kominfo manages the district as a whole, which includes regional apparatus organizations (OPD). For social media in Sukoharjo, there is the Sukoharjo Regency Government, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The management of social media in the Sukoharjo Regency Government does not yet have a person in charge, so it still needs to be improved.

Meanwhile, the Wonogiri Regency Government admits that the management of social media there is still limited and uncoordinated due to deficiency in human resources. Likewise, with Boyolali, the current focus remains primarily on complaints for further follow-up As the informant's statement from Wonogiri is as follows:

"From Wonogiri there are social media and Kamala, to be honest in Wonogiri all UPDs have their own Twitter. We are not as good as our friends in managing social media due to limited human resources. Until now there is no social media that officially represents the Wonogiri government."

To facilitate the management, several informants suggested the need for a policy on social media issued by the local government. They are also still worried and confused about the regulations. As stated by an informant from Sukoharjo:

"There are several social media that are managed through their own initiative. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and there is also an Android application that contains news that we

have compiled, but if it is called an official account, it is not yet because there are no regulations yet, but this is not yet. In the future, regulations will be made. Their duties and functions are more in the Ministry of Communication and Informatics. Public relations to regional leadership branding, Kominfo to government branding. Public Relations Communication and Informatics are based on their duties and functions. There are no SOPs and regulations for that yet, this is being fixed and will work. Sukoharjo Between public relations and Kominfo is still confused to find information for the community.

Furthermore, social media managers require legal assurances because the use of social media also has consequences. Also, adherence to IT laws is imperative. Apart from that, local governments must also have leadership support and SOPs, especially if the social media is to contribute in fostering transparency, accountability, and participation. So far, the Sukoharjo Regency government has indicated that due to being in the developmental phase they tend to disable the comments feature and only upload content frequently. Government communications play an essential role in building trust and institutional credibility (Kavanaugh et al., 2016).

There are several social media problems that occur where there are fake accounts or hacking of several social media accounts. This has an impact on government communication regulations. Regarding regulation, the informant also mentioned the ease of which fake accounts appeared, many social media accounts had not been verified, and accounts belonging to the Sukoharjo Regency government were also not verified.

"It would be better if the social media account is verified. As in solo, namely the municipal government of Solo which is the official account in the city of Solo. Before it was verified, but I was afraid it would be misused. From public relations, you don't dare not claim to be an official account. Lest they think we made a fake account too "

In this case, the manager also needs to distinguish between official accounts and verified accounts. As an official institution representing the local government, it is essential to maintain an official social media account as a legitimate platform for governmental communication. Recently, the central Kominfo facilitated the verification process for free, guaranteeing the local government would obtain an official and verified account. The new verified Twitter account belongs to the Sukoharjo regency government.

Social Media Content Management

Social media is a means by which consumers can share text, image, audio, and video information with each other and with companies and vice versa. The role of social media in enriching business processes is increasingly recognised. Social media allows companies to change the way they communicate with customers, market their products and services, and interact with customers to build good relationships. Government-run online discussions on social media accounts serve as a vital platform to establish communication with the public.

Interactions on government social media platforms are specifically discussed in this study. The management of social media on public and government accounts has a very significant difference in comparison with general accounts which shows the quality of interaction between users. However, government accounts don't have much interaction between users. In general, social media has a greater advantage where everyone can receive information and social discourse found on developing media platforms.

The material managed on the government's social media accounts is quite dominant, namely regarding complaints. The government disseminates information through the public relations section as a means of engaging with the public, initially addressing complaints. The Klaten district government's social media has been launched since July 28, 2016. The information provided by the Klaten district government concerns occupation and infrastructure problems, in relation to the problems received by the Klaten regency government focusing on infrastructure, road damage, and lots of potholes and we focus on infrastructure development and complaints have a great contribution to the improvement of government.

The Karanganyar Regency Government explained that apart from complaints via social media, it also contained other contents, namely the activities of regional leaders and OPD. All information related to the regent's activities is available through social media, national news, and

websites. All complaints will be accommodated via social media to make it more interactive and respond immediately.

Meanwhile, Surakarta City is somewhat different from other districts, including material regarding destinations. The "Solo Destination" application provides information regarding events and Surakarta City government policies. The process for managing material or content from government social media accounts varies. However, most of it consists of information related to OPD.

The Boyolali Regency Government explained that all content could come from several government agencies. Management on social media is still reliant on one person. Uploaded content comes from local governments such as in Boyolali. The government and the district head are enthusiastic about reforming the use of social media. Information on social media for the Boyolali district government regarding the prices of necessities at markets. This is because of the cooperation between the district government and the Department of Agriculture. At the Employment Service, the government gets information on job vacancies that can be shared on social media.

So far, most local governments in Solo Raya have actively used social media with priority content namely: government programs, scholarship information, tourism promotion and regional potential, publication of leadership activities and complaints from the public. Each district or city has a special team in setting and standardising the content to be published. Based on the results of the Surakarta City government informant stated.

> "For those who fill content in one day at least six contents, so then includes all agencies or all channels providing information. So that Kominfo has several contents in one day. There are standard SOPs for using social media and have a special team for managing social media. There are 5 people who manage social media. For features, there are several features including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and many more".

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The Role of Social Media for Good Governance
Regarding transparency, accountability, and participation, local government social media managers said that social media plays a role in quickly conveying information related to announcements. As stated by the following informants

> "Usually, the government makes announcements for community members. Many event announcements are made on social media, in this case, websites, such as festival events, snack festivals, and so on".

Related to online behaviour, people tend to prioritise community complaints in cyberspace, perceiving them as more genuine. At the same time, those who are proficient in social media use must also uphold responsibility. However, the Sukoharjo Regency government stated that its people did not use social media too much. The use of social media is only used for positive information such as damaged roads and so on. Meanwhile, the Surakarta City government's social media is an informative tool for the community. In addition to completing the transparency that has been achieved with conventional media,

The use of social media is related to commitment to leadership. Karanganyar Regency government leaders are active on social media. In general, the presence of social media is interpreted positively by the regional government in the Solo Raya region; as said by Khazaeli & Stockemer (2013), there is a positive influence of internet penetration on government practices in the results of his research. However, it is not yet clear if this positive influence is related to information and accountability that residents can access. Some even think that the community still doesn't have access to or cares about using social media to get involved in discussing local government affairs. It is as stated by Magro, (2012) that the internet is not evenly distributed and is still dominated by young people. So not everyone can access it.

The higher the government's use of social media, the higher the involvement of citizens as well as the transparency of the government (Haro-de-Rosario et al., 2016). Local governments are still relatively passive and have not taken advantage of the available platforms. The existence of features such as podcasts and real-time webcasts is still minimally used. Social media is still difficult to be used as a gateway for a government revolution that is more consultative, participatory, collaborative, and transparent.

The informing function of the media used by the government still stands out among the three main functions of government communication, namely informing, advocating/persuading, and engaging citizens. The function of social media is still minimal for use in aspects of effectiveness (building program support and legitimacy), responsiveness (knowing citizens' needs and responding to them), and accountability (explaining government services and providing government accountability mechanisms). The model of using social media to realise good governance of media management by the government is crucial. However, this research shows that social media planning, such as the People-Objectives-Strategy-Technique (POST) method, has not been carried out by the regional government in Solo Raya. Some informants stated that they had never read Minister Number 83/2012 concerning Social Media Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform. Social media can be used to improve good governance through word-of-mouth among citizens. Compared to conventional word of mouth, social media will deliver information faster. Daily activities will build personal closeness and reveal the face of the government, which is not that rigid. If the government uses social media, the public will receive personal information according to their preferences, not formally.

CONCLUSION

Based on data when this research was conducted, the regencies/city government in the Greater Solo area still considered the use of Facebook and Twitter not to be the main means of communication to the public. It tended to be considered as unofficial media. The Solo Raya government is still trying to use social media as a more reliable source for regional government affairs. The management of social media varies in the seven regencies or cities in Solo Raya, although the selection of the main types of social media is almost the same. Leaders who actively use social media have strong connections with the community. The information dissemination function is still the most prominent among the three main functions of government communication, namely informing, advocating/persuading and engaging citizens. The function of social media is also still minimal for use in the aspects of effectiveness (building support and legitimacy for the program), responsiveness (knowing citizens' needs and responding to them) and accountability (explaining government services and providing government accountability mechanisms).

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