



Strengthening Digital Citizens Political Communication Ethics (Digital Citizenship) in Social Media

Rahyudi Dwiputra¹, Thoriq Abdul Aziz², Muhammad Nur³

^{1,2}Departement of Civic Education, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

³Social Studies Education Study Program, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia

Abstract—*Social media as a communication channel is an important target of political socialization. Social media's breadth of reach and depth of influence is a hunt for political communicators to convey their messages and political campaigns. However, ethics is not used as the main basis in conveying messages and political campaigns on social media in practice. This research aims to find out how to strengthen the ethics of political communication in social media. The research method used is a literature study or literature review study. The results of this paper indicate that for political communicators, communication ethics must be the main basis for conveying political messages and campaigns on social media. In addition, the public must become digital citizens who are good at reading the communication patterns of political actors on social media so that they are not trapped by hoaxes and contain elements of the division.*

Keywords—*Strengthening Ethics, Political Communication, Social Media*

Correspondence. rahyudidwiputra@upi.edu

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A. INTRODUCTION

Politics is basically something that cannot be separated by human activities, because humans as political creatures (zoon politicon) need each other to achieve their respective goals. Humans in dealing with other humans certainly have similarities and differences in interests. These views and differences can lead to disputes and contradictions, but according to Lalu Husni (2004) it is behind political conflicts/differences that will guide humans in realizing their desires. This connectedness makes it seem as if humans are creating political activity to achieve a common goal, even though there are differences of opinion. Political activities carried out by humans, both directly and indirectly, will go hand in

hand with the rapid development of democracy in Indonesia. A democratic government system requires every citizen to participate actively in all political activities, such as every citizen has the right to determine policies in a country. This is because political goals are obtained and intended, and the benefits are returned to the community.

Especially in this Reform Era, the framework of democracy is wide open, so that one of the political products that must be achieved is how elections are held in a democratic manner. Social media as part of the flow of political communication is an important target for conducting political socialization. Social media has advantages that are not possible only for each person.

The breadth of reach and depth of influence of social media has always been a target for political communicators. How a political message actually reaches the public depends on the extent to which political communicators can include social media in each of their political communication activities (Tabroni, 2012).

In this context, social media becomes very important for the benefit of political communication. However, in practice, the use of social media as a political communication process ignores an important aspect, namely ethics, so it tends to go too far and without control. Thus, this research will reveal facts on the ground related to the behavior patterns of politicians and their successful teams in conducting political communication using social media.

If the process of political communication is not based on strong ethics, it is feared that the public will only become victims of social media consumers, not the common good to achieve goals. In a survey conducted by the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers (APJII) conducted in April 2019, the number of internet users in Indonesia was 171.7 million people or around 64.8% of Indonesia's total population of 264 million people. Internet users increased by 10.2% or 27.9 million people compared to the previous year's internet users (APJII 2019). This increase was due to infrastructure development in various regions such as the availability of fiber optics and other supporting infrastructure that supports internet activities carried out by 540 APJII members (in Wahyudiyono, 2019).

Based on these data, the Indonesian people can be categorized as internet users who have a lot of access to information, such as on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, and other social media. Surfing the internet world is indeed something that attracts people's interest, especially on social media it is very easy to access information and disseminate information. This is what political communicators use to convey messages and political campaigns to the public, because many Indonesian people use the internet for their needs. Thus, political

actors and society must jointly strengthen ethics so that they do not fall into bad news, and are protected from fake news (hox), hate speech, racism, undemocracy, intolerance and others that are against the morality. Departing from the background explanation above, the authors formulate a problem that will discuss how to define political communication and how to strengthen digital citizenship communication ethics in social media. So the author raised the title of "Strengthening the Ethics of Political Communication of Digital Citizens (Digital Citizenship) in social media".

B. METHOD

This research is a research that uses a literature study or a literature review study. According to Mestika Zed (2003) that literature study can be interpreted as a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading and recording and processing research materials. Based on this opinion, it can be concluded that the literature study method means data collection techniques by reviewing books, literature, records, and various reports relating to the problem to be solved. The data is taken from scientific journals through a Google Scholar search which is then made into review papers in order to provide additional knowledge in the hope of adding new insights which are made in such a way as to produce scientific works in the form of narrative reviews.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Indonesia's political reform in 1998 has given rise to freedom of political communication and democratization. Political communication and democracy can be described as two sides of a coin that cannot be separated. According to Idham Holik, (2014) that there is no democracy without freedom of political communication. Meanwhile (Yuniati, 2020) simply defines political communication as communication that involves political messages and political actors, or is related to power, government, and government policies of Kamarudin (2015, p. 22). Political communication interpreted in this

understanding includes the political capabilities possessed in conveying an utterance or purpose in involving political actors to achieve a certain act of power effectively and efficiently through political messages conveyed (Kruse et al., 2018).

As a result of the meaning of the shift in political stages, a form of digital political communication emerged to achieve the interests of each political actor to achieve his interests (Wang & Xing, 2018). According to Buber et al (in Andrik Purwasito, 2003) considers that the essence of politics is a "competition system", so that the study of political communication must also develop because in using communication as a political tool it is always adapted to the times or what happened at that time so that communication as a political tool can be in accordance with the competition system in an era and can give effect.

Based on this opinion, it shows that the development of political communication is the conformity of the times. While political communication is a political activity that aims to convey messages and political campaigns. The breadth of the field of political communication studies, in the end gave rise to many definitions. Several experts/scientists explained the definition of political communication, including; McNair (2003) in *An Introduction to Political Communication*, defines political communication as "purposeful communication about politics" which includes: First, all forms of communication carried out by politicians and other political actors with the intention of achieving certain goals. Second, political communication is directed by these actors to non-politicians, such as voters and newspaper columnists. Third, communication about these actors, and their activities, as contained in news, editorials and other forms of media regarding politics. Based on the opinions above, we can conclude that political communication has its own characteristics based on the times. While the definition of political communication as information conveyed by political actors to convey messages and political campaigns. Then political communication can be obtained,

such as through newspapers, electronic print media, even though social media. So, this social media is then used by politicians or political actors to convey messages and political campaigns.

The presence of social media as a new tool is quite interesting for community groups in Indonesia. Utilization to exchange information and knowledge is done because there are goals and the same desire to be achieved. As with political life and technological advances, social media is in great demand as a means of political communication. According to Juwandi et al., (2019) this shows the existence of social media that is able to attract the interest of the younger generation as citizens who participate in elections in 2019. Thus, social media can be used as a means of digital political education for citizens. Based on the data found, it turns out that social media is used as a means to convey political messages for the electability of parties and political actors. Research on digital footprints is shown as a strategy of political actors who play on the social media accounts they create, which is a new strategy that provides opportunities to improve image and electability in local elections. (Sembada & Sadjjo, 2020).

Although social media is used as a means of communication and political education, it creates new problems. The phenomenon of this problem can be seen from the pattern of utilization that can lead to social conflict. This phenomenon can be seen where the continuity of political life on social media overrides ethics as the main basis. Social media seems to be only a place to spill stories of all activities, emotional outbursts in the form of writing or photos which often override existing ethics. According to Afriani & Azmi, (2020) social media is no longer a medium to facilitate communication to share information, but is more dominantly a place to accommodate sensations. Thus, technological progress is no longer accompanied by advances in thought and technology, there is only progress that is inversely proportional to the situation. This is further strengthened based on the Microsoft Survey on the Digital

Politeness Index as of February 2021. The results of this study show that virtual democracy has increased the search and exchange of information, sparked public debate, raised pro and contra groups, and has awakened Indonesian digital citizens to introspect themselves so that they comment involving ethics as the main thing.

Meanwhile, according to Oktaviani, (2021) it is also undeniable that one of the factors that causes Indonesian netizens to be impolite is the existence of public debate regarding politics in Indonesia. Based on this, Microsoft should be careful in categorizing Indonesian digital citizens as the most disrespectful users of social media, because it is also necessary to know the involvement of political actors to divide society for their own interests, also on social media. According to Zamri, (2017) in this social media era, the events that need to be considered based on political communication behavior are as follows: 1)

The messages produced are more creative, and message monopoly does not occur on social media. 2) Messages are distributed very quickly and more interactively. 3) Every political actor and supporter has the opportunity to master social media so as to capture public responses efficiently. 4) The use of social media is getting wild, out of control and not even smart, because political actors are only capable of using social media but not in terms of literacy. 5) Communication ethics in networking is often ignored, resulting in cultural degradation in terms of speaking. The involvement of social media and its relationship in political communication can be interpreted as one of the media or forms of indirect interaction patterns to convey this political communication. The all-digital era demands social media as a medium of political communication to convey the interests of a people in depth. (Diepeveen, 2021). The pattern of social media involvement as stated by (Lverich & Leverich, 2018) states that there is a potential for polarization of changes in political communication in a fast direction after the emergence of a growing variety of social media.

From this we can see that social media has potential as a means of political communication. However, there are concerns and violations of communication ethics that are often committed by users. Language, which should be a good communication tool, is instead used to attack, ridicule, demean others and other destructive behaviors. So in the future, social media should be developed as a better medium for political communication by using ethical languages. Therefore, according to Budiyono (2015) it is necessary to increase good morals and language for the community through education at the elementary level, even preschool, so that later it will produce a society that can maintain good morals and language in communication, including in the political arena and virtual world. This is supported by the introduction of the concept of digital citizenship as an approach to understanding digital citizens in preparing themselves to have global citizenship competencies based on the ethics of local wisdom values (Atif & Chou, 2018).

One part of a digitally-savvy citizen is having the capability to understand digital etiquette on the internet (Kim & Choi, 2018). This explanation of digital ethics can be related to the aspect of social media as a medium for citizen interaction in conveying political affairs and interests by not spreading hoax news, hatred and leading bad opinions without seeking the truth of the facts. (Paulus et al., 2019) so that the digital ethics that are implemented can be carried out in tandem in accordance with the times but still respect the norms and manners that apply. The development of information and communication technology has made social media the fastest, most accurate and inexpensive means of communication. News on television and newspapers that circulate rarely get information through social media. The world of Indonesian politics will never be separated from various compliments, suggestions, and harsh criticism from all elements of Indonesian society, including internet users (netizens). According to Munzir (2019) the strong role of social media in the world of politics in attracting

public attention through campaigns, helping the younger generation to be politically literate, and increasing the participation of first-time voters is unavoidable.

Therefore, anyone who is going to enter the world of politics, needs to have knowledge and skills in using social media. Political actors as one of the subjects who have the capability to carry out messages of political interest have a mandatory requirement in interpreting social media as a potential medium in channeling interests to achieve the purpose of implementing this political communication (Jost & Sterling, 2020). This is widely felt to influence the success of political communication activities to be carried out. The role of this political communication intersects directly with political ethics as part of the norm of political identity (Trigiani & Boler, 2021). So that political communication must be accompanied by an understanding of ethics as the basis for carrying out every political activity so that there is no disruption or deviation from different norms due to political incompetence on social media.

D. CONCLUSION

Strengthening the ethics of political communication is an important part of social media. This is because social media is a means of communication channel for political communicator actors to convey messages or political campaigns. Political actors must make ethics the main basis because without strong ethics, it will only spread fake news (hoaxes) that cause divisions between communities. In this study, social media is ideal if it is used to attract people's interest in participating in political life in ethical ways and not prioritizing political interests that are too excessive. In this way, positive reactions from society in the form of sentiments and divisions can be avoided. In addition, this research is expected for political communion actors to convey their political messages ethically and ethically, and for the public to always be good and intelligent digital citizens in reading actor

communication patterns. politics on social media.

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