

Social Media as a Village Government Communication Channel in Improving Public Services to the Community in Minahasa Regency

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Abstract. *Public service issues are still often the main topic in society, starting from the lack of clear information and slow service that occurs in government in various cases, both related to information, administration and implementation of development in various fields, to the lack of resources that are able to provide the best service to the community. The current era of information technology, new media, which includes social media, is certainly one of the right solutions in overcoming communication and information problems for the government, but the problem is whether social media has been used optimally in carrying out public service duties by the government, especially the government in the village. Along with the many complaints from the public regarding government services, even though communication and information technology is already present in the midst of society and the government. This is the basis of this study, to be studied and studied in more depth, using a qualitative research approach, related to how social media becomes a communication channel for village governments in improving public services. Village governments in Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province have not optimally used social media as an information channel in an effort to improve public services. This is evidenced by the lack of official social media from the village government as a media/information channel in supporting public services. Not all village governments have the human resource capabilities that can manage and operate social media well, actively and intensively in providing information to the public regarding programs, policies, and government regulations. Most village governments in Minahasa Regency do not yet have official social media as a medium/channel of information to the public. There are still many village government officials who use their personal social media for the needs of conveying information to the public, even then only when necessary. Obstacles to the Village Government in utilizing social media to improve public services include limited human resources, technological infrastructure, and cultural constraints, these factors affect the effectiveness of communication through social media.*

Keywords: *Social Media, Communication Channels, Village Government*

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INTRODUCTION

Social media has become an important part of modern society today, quoted from data. <https://dataindonesia.id>, February 3, 2023, the number of social media users in Indonesia reached 167 million people in January 2023. From this data it is clear that this number is equivalent to 60.4% of the population in the country. The number of users also includes the government in the village, which of course in their daily lives and duties as village government officials must use

social media. The exposure of social media to society today is certainly based on the benefits obtained from social media, Social media allows us to access and exchange information easily (Cross, 2013; White, 2011). In addition, there are many other benefits of using social media. This is emphasized by the Hootsuite report that internet user data in Indonesia in early 2021 reached 202.6 million people. Meanwhile, the most popular internet activity for internet users in Indonesia is social media. There are 170 million Indonesians who are active users of social media. On average, they spend 3 hours and 14 minutes on social media platforms per day. Social media and the government are certainly closely related to the phenomenon of the current mushrooming use of social media in Indonesia, the government is inseparable from the existence of social media (Darmini, 2021; Yuniar et al., 2020). The basic benefit of social media for the government is the ease of providing services, related to communication and information, both programs, regulations and current government policies. The government at the central, ministry and so on levels or the government at the provincial and district/city levels have certainly utilized the existence of social media in relation to public services, although there are still complaints from the public regarding services that are not yet optimal, especially with the quality of service at the lowest level and closest to the community, namely the village government (Rifaed et al., 2023; Wahyuni, 2024). There are still many complaints from the public regarding the less than optimal services provided by the government in the village, including information on various programs, policies and regulations that many of the village people do not know about. The use of information technology as a basis for public services has also been in accordance with the era of the information society and the needs of today's society (Wibowo & Pratomo 2021). The use of social media as a support for public services is an absolute must because currently there is a tendency for everyone to try to find information through social media. This situation and condition can certainly be utilized by the government, especially the village government, to make social media a means of communication and information with the community regarding government programs, regulations and policies.

The problem is that the use of social media by the village government as a medium or communication channel to the community has not been optimally carried out, there is still a lack of knowledge regarding the management of social media as a good and correct information media (Lubis et al., 2020). Based on these problems, the researcher tried to study in depth using communication study research with a qualitative methodology approach on how social media as a communication channel for the village government in improving public services to the community in Minahasa Regency. This research was carried out of course related to the Unsrat strategic research plan (Renstra), 2021 - 2025, especially in the fields of social and humanities excellence, also in accordance with the Unsrat research topic, namely in the fields of economics and human resources.

Literature Review

The basic concepts related to this research certainly need to be explained, including the concept of communication media, social media, and new media theory as a reference for theory in this research. Communication media is a means used by communicators to convey messages to communicators, both verbally and in writing. Using the right communication channel will make your communication more effective. Communication channels using visual and non-visual media (verbal and written) facilitate the communication process in an organization (Ceylan, 2022). Social media as a group of Internet-based applications is based on the ideology and technology of Web 2.0 and allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content. Web 2.0 has become a fundamental platform for social media. Social media comes in various forms, including social networks, internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogs, wikis, podcasts, images, videos, and reviews. New media differs from old media in that it allows for dialogue between many actors, allows for the simultaneous acceptance, modification, and redistribution of cultural assets, and takes a critical position in regional relations that subvert modernity and broadcast models by allowing communication activities to take place from within, providing instant contact worldwide and incorporating modern/late modern subjects into the network equipment machine (Fauziah,

2015). In the current era of technology 4.0, digital communication media is very important for communication. It really helps people to communicate without knowing the limitations of distance and time (Tian Ludhiana Prabowo, Irwanshah, 2018). The theoretical reference in this study is the CMC (Computer Mediated Communication) theory from Arnus (2018). According to the book *Mass Communication Theory* by Walotek-Ściańska et al. (2014), the main characteristics of new media are networks, access to individual target groups as recipients and senders of messages, interactivity, and their usefulness. They are very diverse, as are their open personalities, which can be found everywhere. This theory emerged as a result of the very rapid development of communication and internet technology today. CMC works with the Internet, social media, including chat systems, the World Wide Web (www), text, graphics, photos, audio and video hyperlink systems, video sharing such as YouTube, social networking systems and searches. Connected systems, (El-Jarn, 2014). Friendship like Facebook. The CMC pattern causes changes in communication patterns in society. Communication patterns that used to be done face to face are now done through social networks.

The concept of public service if we base it on Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services defines public service as follows: "Public service is an activity or series of activities in order to fulfill service needs in accordance with laws and regulations for every citizen and resident for goods, services, and/or administrative services provided by public service providers". Public service, according to Widodo (2001) is: "Provision of services (serving) the needs of people or communities who have an interest in the organization in accordance with the basic rules and procedures that have been determined". Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services defines public service as follows: "Public service is an activity or series of activities in order to fulfill service needs in accordance with laws and regulations for every citizen and resident for goods, services, and/or administrative services provided by public service providers. Furthermore, public services, according to Robert 1996 (in Rohayati & Kurhayadi, 2021), are: "All forms of public service activities carried out by central government agencies, in regions and state-owned or regional business entities in goods or services both in the context of efforts to fulfill community needs and in the context of implementing public order."

METHODS

The methodological approach in this study uses a qualitative method, (Adlini et al., 2022) stated that in qualitative research, researchers carry out research activities objectively towards the subjective reality being studied. In qualitative research, researchers carry out research activities objectively in relation to the subjective reality of the research subject. Subjectivity in this case refers to the reality being studied, in the sense that reality is seen from the perspective of the person being studied. Qualitative research emphasizes more on the accuracy and relevance of the data. In the qualitative domain, the emphasis is on data validity. The correspondence between what is recorded as data and what actually happens in the environment being studied. Qualitative research focuses on the meaning, social construction, and complexity of the phenomena being studied (Creswell, 2014). Research informants are very important in research that uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The informants or subjects of this research are the village government in Minahasa district, the determination of research informants is carried out by purposive sampling. According to Sugiyono (2017) purposive sampling is a data source sampling technique with certain considerations. For example, in this study it is clearly known that the village government is the main source of data or research informant. The number of research informants will be adjusted to the data needs required at the time of the study. Seeing the theoretical reference used in this study, namely the CMC theory, the focus of this study is (1) Knowledge and Understanding of social media by the village government in Minahasa Regency in improving public services. (2) Utilization of social media by the village government in Minahasa Regency in improving public services. (3) Obstacles of the village government in applying social media as a communication channel in improving public services. Lofland and Lofland (Moleong, 2003: 112) state that the main source of data in qualitative research is primary data of words and actions, and the rest is additional data. This means that the words and actions of the subject are

nothing more than notes of information that have no meaning before being classified and reduced. Therefore, the researcher's expertise is not only in collecting data and digesting linguistic information, but also in being able to reveal information behind the nonverbal behavior of the informant. Data can be oral, written, actionable, or other data obtained from information sources. Miles & Huberman (1984) in Creswell (1994) setting (where the research is conducted), actors (people being observed or interviewed), an event (something that happens). Observed or observed and processed (the type of event carried out by the actor in the environment). The data analysis technique used in this study is to use qualitative analysis according to Miles and Huberman. Analytical model According to Miles & Huberman (1992), an interactive activity consists of several stages, namely: Data collection, data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social media has seen rapid growth in the last two decades. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok and YouTube have become an integral part of everyday communication around the world, including in villages that were previously isolated from digital technology. Some of the key factors driving this growth include: Wider internet access: Advances in digital infrastructure, such as the provision of cellular networks and Wi-Fi, have enabled villages in many areas, including remote areas, to connect with the outside world through social media. Increasing use of mobile devices: Increasingly affordable smartphones have made it easier for rural communities to access social media anytime and anywhere. Simplicity and ease of use: Social media platforms are designed to be easy to access and use, even by users who do not have advanced technological skills. Interactive work: Social media can facilitate communication between authorities and the community, thereby increasing participation, accountability and interaction.

The development of social media has brought significant changes to world conditions, including the implementation of governance at the village level. In this digital world, it is not only a communication tool between communities, but also an important platform for village governments to interact with the community, increase community participation, and accelerate the implementation of public programs and services. But in reality, many village governments or village government officials have not maximized the use of social media as a channel/media of information to the public. This is indicated by the lack of official village government social media that is used specifically for information and public service purposes, if there is social media that is used as a medium for information about programs, policies, regulations and so on, it is a social media account owned by a village official. The concept of Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC) is a theory that explains how communication through digital media such as email, chat, social media and other online media is different from face-to-face communication (Chew et al., 2021). CMC includes all types of interactions that occur through computers or other digital devices, where communication is verbal and physical. The use of social media is part of the computer communication (CMC) model mediated by the Internet in Sosiawan & Wibowo (2019). This technology is connected to a mobile phone in the form of a smartphone. Knowledge and Understanding of social media by village governments in Minahasa Regency in improving public services. Knowledge and understanding of the use of social media by village governments in the Minahasa region are important for improving the quality of public services. By using social media as a communication, promotion and awareness tool, rural governments can strengthen their relationships with the community, respond to community needs more quickly and expand the reach of services (Linders, 2012). Social media also provides opportunities for rural governments to innovate in providing more efficient and effective services while supporting sustainable rural development. From the results of the study, the ability of knowledge and understanding to use social media by village government officials is quite understandable, because they understand that social media is a media or communication channel that can provide information to the community regarding many things, including programs or policies and regulations from the government. Although from the results of the study, most villages in Minahasa Regency do not yet

have an official village government account, either using Facebook or Instagram, YouTube and TikTok.

Utilization of social media by village governments in Minahasa Regency in improving public services. In the digital era, social media has become an important tool for rural governments to improve public services. Utilization of social media by village governments in Minahasa Regency will increase the speed of communication, understanding and strengthen relationships with the community. Social media can help the process of fast and effective communication to the community in relation to providing information to the community (Komito, 2011). Announcements regarding public services, household chores, government programs and changes in laws can be done easily through platforms such as Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram or the local village government's YouTube channel, will attract public attention to the information. Social media can also be used to increase transparency in village management. Village governments can routinely share budget reports, village meeting results, or development project progress. Based on the results of the study, villages in Minahasa Regency have not optimally utilized social media as an information channel for the community in an effort to improve public services, there are still many village government officials who use their personal social media for the needs of conveying information to the public, even then only when needed (Kavanaugh et al., 2011).

Obstacles to village governments in applying social media as a communication channel in improving public services. In applying social media as a communication channel to improve public services, village governments face various obstacles that can hinder the effectiveness of using this digital platform. Social media provides many benefits in improving public services, village governments in Minahasa Regency but still face various obstacles in their application. Based on the results of the study, there are several things that are obstacles in the use of social media to improve public services, including limited human resources, technological infrastructure, and cultural constraints, all of these factors affect the effectiveness of communication through social media. However, with proper training, adequate budget allocation, and supportive policies, these obstacles can be overcome so that social media can be utilized optimally for the benefit of the community.

Overall, social media plays a very important role in improving public services by village governments. To optimally utilize the potential of social media, village governments need to understand how this platform can be used as a tool for communication, transparency, and better interaction with the community. Social media allows village governments to convey important information quickly and widely. Announcements regarding administrative services, assistance programs, or village activities can be delivered directly to the community without having to wait for physical meetings or announcements through traditional media. Through social media, village governments can publish financial reports, development activities, and the results of various village projects openly. This increases transparency and builds public trust in the village government. Social media allows two-way communication between the village government and the community. Residents can provide input, ask questions, or file complaints related to public services directly, thereby increasing community interaction and participation in decision-making. By using social media, the village government can accelerate the dissemination of information and respond to public complaints faster than through conventional methods. This allows for efficiency of time and resources in providing services.

Villages with strong tourism potential, local products, or culture can use social media to promote these things. This not only improves the village's image, but also attracts tourists and investors who can help the village's economic development. Social media can be used to effectively disseminate new policies or regulations to the village community. Village governments can also use these platforms to educate citizens on important topics, such as health, education, and the environment. Social media allows village governments to communicate with the wider community at a relatively low cost compared to traditional methods such as written announcements, banners, or physical meetings. In emergency situations, such as natural

disasters, social media allows village governments to quickly provide information to the community about safety measures or available assistance. To improve public services that are more efficient, transparent, and participatory, village governments need to understand and utilize social media optimally. With the right planning and strategy, social media can be a very influential tool in building better relationships between village governments and communities, as well as in speeding up the public service process.

CONCLUSION

Village governments in Minahasa Regency, North Sulawesi Province have not optimally used social media as an information channel in an effort to improve public services. This is evidenced by the lack of official social media from the village government as a media/information channel in supporting public services. Not all village governments have the human resource capabilities that can manage and operate social media properly, actively and intensively in providing information to the public regarding programs, policies, and government regulations. Most village governments in Minahasa Regency do not yet have official social media as a media/information channel to the public. There are still many village government officials who use their personal social media for the needs of conveying information to the public, and even then only when necessary. The obstacles for the Village Government in utilizing social media to improve public services include limited human resources, technological infrastructure, and cultural constraints, these factors affect the effectiveness of communication through social media.

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