THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK AS A PUBLIC COMMUNICATION MEDIA FOR THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS SERVICE OF SIKKA REGENCY
The Role of Facebook as a Public Relations Media

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Abstract
This study examines the role of Facebook as a public communication medium utilized by the Department of Communication and Informatics of Sikka Regency. The research aims to analyze how the social media platform is employed to disseminate information, foster interaction with the public, and enhance transparency and accountability of local government. Using a qualitative approach, the study collects data through in-depth interviews, observation, and content analysis. The findings reveal that Facebook serves as an effective tool for public information dissemination, fostering two-way communication, and increasing public participation. However, challenges such as technological infrastructure limitations and low digital literacy need to be addressed to optimize the use of this social media platform. This study examines the role of Facebook as a public communication medium utilized by the Department of Communication and Informatics of Sikka Regency. This study aims to analyze how the social media platform is utilized to disseminate information, foster interaction with the public, and enhance transparency and accountability of local government. Using a qualitative approach, this study collects data through in-depth interviews, observation, and content analysis. The results show that Facebook serves as an effective tool for disseminating public information, fostering two-way dialogue, and increasing public participation. However, there are challenges such as limited technological infrastructure and digital literacy in society that need to be overcome so that the use of social media is more optimal.

Keywords: Facebook, Sikka Regency Communication and Information Service

INTRODUCTION

In the digital era, social media has become an inseparable part of people's lives. One of the most widely used platforms is Facebook, which has a significant role in conveying information and building public communication. In Indonesia, government agencies have begun to utilize Facebook to reach the public more widely and effectively. The Communication and Informatics Service (Diskominfo) as an institution tasked with managing public information has the responsibility to ensure transparency and openness of information to the public. In this case, Facebook is a strategic tool for conveying government messages, building public participation, and supporting the implementation of local government work programs. The Communication and Informatics Service (Diskominfo) of Sikka Regency is a supporting element of the Sikka Regency regional government in the fields of public opinion and aspirations, statistics and cryptography. Sikka Regency is one of 22 regencies/cities in the Province of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT). The capital of Sikka Regency is Maumere with an area of 1,731.91 km2 and a

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population of 321,953 people in 2020 with a population density of 186 people/km2 (Central Statistics Agency of Sikka Regency, 2021). Based on Sikka Regent Regulation Number 40 of 2016 concerning the Position, Organizational Structure, Duties and Functions and Work Procedures of the Communication and Informatics Service, the duties of the Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Service are to assist the regent in carrying out government affairs in the fields of communication and informatics, statistics, and cryptography by carrying out the function of formulating and implementing policies in the fields of managing public opinion and aspirations, information management, infrastructure data services, empowerment of information and communication technology, statistics and cryptography, as well as carrying out coaching, evaluation, and implementation of other functions given by the Regent.

The Communication and Informatics Agency (Diskominfo) is an institution that has an important role in bridging communication between the government and the community. In the increasingly developing digital era, the use of information technology and social media as a means of communication is very crucial. One of the most widely used social media platforms in Indonesia is Facebook. As one of the largest social media, Facebook has great potential to reach various groups of people and disseminate information more effectively and efficiently. In context Diskominfo, facebook is not only used as a tool to convey information related to policies, government programs or public services, but is used as a means to build closer and more transparent relationships with the community. Facebook allows Diskominfo to educate the public, respond to statements or complaints directly, and build a positive image through relevant and interesting content.

The Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Office has several public communication media including a Facebook account (Diskominfo Sikka), an Instagram account (Diskominfo Sikka and Sikka info), a YouTube channel (Ledikom Sikka), and Radio Suara Sikka. This article will focus on discussing the role of Facebook as a public communication media for the Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Office. According to Statista (2023), active Facebook users in Indonesia have reached more than 120 million people, making Indonesia one of the countries with the largest number of users in the world. This shows the great potential of Facebook as a public communication medium. In addition, the We Are Social and Hootsuite (2023) report noted that social media has high penetration among Indonesian people, with the majority of users accessing it for news, information, and entertainment.

However, using Facebook as a public relations medium is not without challenges. Effective management of social media accounts requires careful planning, an understanding of the target audience, and the ability to measure the impact of each activity carried out. Therefore, it is important to analyze how the role of using Facebook media in strengthening the public relations function at the Sikka Regency Communication and Information Service, and to evaluate the extent to which Facebook can support broader public communication goals.With this background, this study aims to analyze the role of Facebook as a public communication medium for the Communication and Information Service of Sikka Regency, as well as evaluate its effectiveness and the challenges it faces.

CONCEPTUAL BASIS

To discuss the review of theories and relevant concepts related to "The Role of Facebook as a Public Communication Media for the Communication and Informatics Service of Sikka Regency", several theoretical aspects and key concepts can be emphasized. Here is a complete description with relevant references:
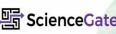
1. Public Communication Theory

Public communication refers to the process of conveying information from a government or institution to the wider public with the aim of conveying a message, influencing opinion, or increasing public participation. Public communication theories include:

- **Agenda Setting Theory**: The media plays a role in determining issues that are considered important by the public. In this context, Facebook as a digital platform is used by the Ministry of

Communication and Information to determine narratives or issues that will attract public attention.

- **Diffusion of Innovation Theory**: Everett Rogers stated that the dissemination of information and innovation through new media, such as social media, helps reach a wider audience.

Reference:
- McCombs, M. E., & Shaw, D. L. (1972). "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media."
- Rogers, E.M. (2003). "Diffusion of Innovations."

2. The Concept of Social Media as a Public Communication Platform

Social media, such as Facebook, is a digital-based media that supports two-way communication between the government and the public. Key concepts in its use include:

- **Interactivity**: The platform's ability to create dialogue between government agencies and the public.
- **Participation**: Provide space for the community to engage in discussions or provide feedback.
- **Transparency**: Using social media to convey information openly and honestly.

Reference:
- Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). "Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media."
- Linders, D. (2012). "From e-government to we-government: Defining a typology for citizen coproduction in the age of social media."

3. The Role of Facebook in Government Communication Strategy

As a popular platform in Indonesia, Facebook is often used by government agencies to convey:

- **Policy information**: The Communication and Information Service can disseminate government announcements or programs.
- **Public awareness campaign**: For example, campaigns against hoaxes or socializing digitalization programs.
- **Public service**: Provide direct information regarding government services and answer public questions.

Reference:
- Bunker, D., & Smith, S. A. (2009). "Governmental social media communication practices."
- Facebook usage statistics in Indonesia by We Are Social and Hootsuite (2023).

4. Benefits and Challenges of Facebook as a Public Communication Media

Benefit:
- **Accessibility**: Facebook can be accessed by the general public in various regions.
- **Efficiency**: Information dissemination is done in a short time at low cost.

Challenge:
- *Hoax* **and disinformation**: Social media is vulnerable to the spread of false information.
- **Digital divide**: Not all levels of society have access or the ability to use Facebook.

Reference:
- Bertot, J. C., Jaeger, P. T., & Grimes, J. M. (2010). "Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness and anti-corruption tools."

THE ROLE OF FACEBOOK AS A PUBLIC COMMUNICATION MEDIA FOR THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS SERVICE OF SIKKA REGENCY The Role of Facebook as a Public Relations Media

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RESEARCH METHODS

1. Research Approach

- **Qualitative Approach:** This approach is appropriate because the research focuses on an in-depth exploration of how Facebook is used as a public communication medium. The data obtained are usually in the form of narratives, interviews, or documents.
- **Quantitative Approach:** If you want to measure the effectiveness or level of public interaction, quantitative approaches such as surveys or statistical data analysis can be used.

2. Data Collection Methods

- **In-depth Interview:** Involving the manager of the publication media account or public relations of the Sikka Regency Communication and Information Service,
- Participatory Observation: Directly observing communication activities carried out through the Office's Facebook account.
- **Content Analysis:** Analyzing posts, comments, and responses on the Facebook page of the Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Service, to see patterns of communication and public engagement.

3. Data Sources

- **Primary Data:** Data obtained directly from interviews, surveys, or observations in the field.

4. Data Analysis

- **Qualitative:** Data from interviews and observations are analyzed using techniques such as thematic or grounded theory to find certain patterns or themes.
- **Quantitative:** Survey data is analyzed using descriptive or inferential statistics, for example to measure levels of public satisfaction.

5. Location and Subject of Research

- Location: Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Office, and the Facebook platform managed by the Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Office public relations.
- Research Subjects: Employees of the Communication and Informatics Department of Sikka Regency who are involved in managing Facebook and the community who interact through the platform.

DISCUSSION

1. *Public Relations* (Public Relations) In Government

Public relations (PR) or public relations is an activity related to the management of communication between an organization and its public, both internal and external. In the context of government, PR aims to build and maintain good relations between the government and the public and ensure that the information conveyed can be clearly received by the public.

According to Grunig and Hunt (1984), PR has several important functions, such as providing information, building good relationships with the community, and helping to form a positive image of the government in the eyes of the public.

At the local government level, the role of PR is becoming increasingly important with the development of information technology that facilitates communication between the government and the public. The Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Service (Diskominfo), as an institution that functions to manage public information and communication, utilizes social media as one of the main tools in carrying out its public relations function.

2. Social Media as a Public Relations Tool

Social media has become one of the most effective tools in modern PR activities. This is in line with Sainovich's opinion (2014), which states that social media has changed the paradigm of PR

communication, because it allows direct and two-way interaction between organizations and the public. In addition, social media also allows for fast and wide dissemination of information.

Facebook as one of the world's largest social media platforms, has been widely used by various organizations including government agencies to carry out PR activities. According to Tuten and Salomon (2015), Facebook provides various conveniences for organizations in interacting with the public, starting from delivering information, announcements, to mobilizing public support. The Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Office through the Facebook account "Diskominfo Sikka" uses this platform to carry out various PR activities, including disseminating information related to government policies, regional development programs, and public services.

3. The Role of the Facebook Account "Diskominfo Sikka" in Public Relations

The Facebook account "Diskominfo Sikka" has a very important role in the PR activities of the Sikka Regency Communication and Informatics Service. Based on research by Khaerani (2020), social media including Facebook can be used by local governments to strengthen relations with the community. Some of the important roles of this Facebook account include:

➢ **Information Dissemination**: Through the Facebook account "Diskominfo Sikka", various information about government programs, public policies, and development activities can be delivered quickly and accurately to the public. This is important so that the public gets accurate and timely information.

➢ **Interaction with the Public**: Social media allows for two-way communication. The public can provide comments, suggestions, or criticisms of policies or information conveyed. This interaction is very useful for the government in understanding the needs and aspirations of the community and improving the quality of public services.

➢ **Strengthening Government Image**: With a Facebook account, Diskominfo Sikka can introduce government programs in a transparent and easy-to-understand manner. This can increase public trust in the government and create a positive image for the local government.

➢ **Community empowerment**: Facebook account is also a channel for Diskominfo Sikka to educate the public about various ongoing programs and policies, such as health programs, education, infrastructure, and local economic empowerment. With clear and open information, the public is easier to actively participate in these programs.

3. Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media in Local Government PR

Although social media, especially Facebook, has many benefits in PR activities, there are several challenges that must be faced, such as the spread of incorrect information (hoaxes), management of negative comments from the public, and limited resources in managing social media accounts. Therefore, a mature communication strategy is needed, as well as professional social media management, so that public relations goals can be achieved properly.

But the opportunities are also very large, one of which is the ability of social media to create more open and participatory communication between government and society. This can increase public participation in regional development and strengthen democracy at the local level.

Conclusion

The Facebook account of Diskominfo Sikka has a very important role in supporting the public relations (PR) activities of the Communication and Informatics Office of Sikka Regency. Through this account, various important information can be disseminated quickly and easily to the public, as well as providing space for constructive two-way interaction between the government and the public. However, to achieve maximum results, proper management and communication strategies are needed so that this Facebook account can optimize its function as an effective public relations tool.

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