

The usage of social media as a form of external public communication (Case study on Ridwan Kamil as the mayor of Bandung)

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Abstract

This research entitled “The usage of social media as a form of external public communication (case study on Ridwan Kamil as the Mayor of Bandung)” aims to perceive how Ridwan as a leader can utilize social media as a form of external communication to Bandung people, as well as to perceive what communication and leadership style he applies based on the communication messages through his social media. This research uses qualitative method by content analysis. The data is being collected through literature review which came from the articles from internet sites and the content of Ridwan’s social media. Moreover, this research uses Computer Mediated Communication and External Communication theory. According to the result of analysis to the three main social media accounts of Ridwan which are Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, the writer found that Ridwan is a clever and brilliant leader who can utilize his social media. In addition, he can differentiate the communication message in these three different social media types, where he produces more formal and comprehensive content on Facebook; brief, real-time and interactive content on Twitter; and more personal, casual and entertaining content on Instagram. By using these social media services, Ridwan has succeeded in communicating to his external public (society) with the purpose of gaining image of Bandung as a tourism city, solving public communication issue and opinion, as well as promoting Bandung.

Keywords: External Public Communication; Social Media; Transformational Leadership;

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The existence of social media nowadays is a common thing to the modern people, especially to Indonesian people. It is found by many surveys that Indonesia is one of the country with the most internet users (including social media) in the world. As stated by Indonesia Ministry of Communication and Information on their website kominfo.go.id, “There are about 63 million internet users in Indonesia currently, in which 95% of them use the internet to access the social media.”

In political field, social media has an important role as the medium of change and city development, and also as the effective medium for receiving and responding to public’s aspiration. This seems to inspire the leaders in government to surf into this social media in order to maintain communication with their external public (society). Also, it is stated on the Law (Undang-undang) Number 14 of 2008 about The Transparency of Public Information that the public officials as a service provider is obligated to be more transparently, more effectively and more efficiently in doing their governmental assessments as well as in providing the public with access to information. Sedarmayanti (2009) said that the obtaining and sharing of information can be facilitated through the internet, the usage of internet in order to expand the performance of governance has been concerned by many parties, not exceptionally by the public officials.

The Mayor of Bandung, Ridwan Kamil is one of the public leaders who aware of and use social media the most. The writer also found that he once wrote a book about the importance of social media which is titled

'#Tetot: Aku, Kamu, dan Media Sosial'. There are three social media services which he frequently use, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Poles apart with the most leaders who use social media to gain image of himself, to damage other parties for the sake of his political business and to share his promises which is uncertainly came true, through these three main social media accounts, Ridwan shares the facts instead, such as the policies he made, the awards he have achieved, some simple yet entertaining messages, as well as persuasions to keep the city clean and safe to his followers who came from different classes of people. As a leader, he shows that he can communicate very well and effectively to his society which is so active in using social media.

By all of the above reasons, the writer is interested and feels the need to analyze further on how Ridwan Kamil uses social media as a form of communication to his external public (society), as well as on what leadership communication and style that he applies based on the communication messages through his social media accounts.

1.2. Leadership Communication Theory

Barrett (2014) explains that leadership communication is a transmission of meaning which is controllable and purposeable, which is done by the individuals who influence other individuals, groups, organizations or communities through their communication skills and data sources to positively relate with their public, to solve the barrier and to produce messages that guide, direct, motivate and inspire others. By any means, the higher position someone has in an organization, he must be able to direct his program towards changes and vision development.

1.3. Transformational Leadership Model

Bass & Riggio (2006) argues that the transformational leaders are those who stimulate and inspire their followers to achieve amazing result. In the process, these transformational leaders will be developing their capacity of leadership, as well as trying to elevate their followers' needs along with their goals and objectives. So, it can be concluded that the transformational leaders will surely gain relationship with others not only for some valuable exchanges (transactional), but also more likely for involving their followers' beliefs, needs and values.

Bass (1985) adds that the behavior of transformational leaders are captured in a continuum, including: *Idealized Influence*: dialogue, becoming a role model, gaining confidence

Intellectual Stimulation: developing creativity and decision making

Inspirational Motivation: gaining awareness of vision mission, directing, example

1.4. Computer Mediated Communication Theory

This theory was initially found by Joseph Walther. In the book titled "A First Look at Communication Theory" by Griffin, Walther claims his Computer Mediated Communication theory as Social Information Processing theory (SIP). He says that in this CMC it is possible if the self-fulfilling prophecy happened. Self-fulfilling prophecy happens when someone has a certain hope of something and he can make it comes true. In brief, it shows that CMC is the communication tool using computer mediation which aims to impress the interlocutor through the usage of languages in delivering the message. The receiver will not be able to perceive on what non-verbal messages might be delivered by the sender, which will lead to any perception in each individuals who receive the message, how he interpretes the meaning of the message that he receives.

1.5. External Communication Theory

External public communication is the tool that organizations use to suit and influence their related public, such as customers, voters, societies, regulators and legislators. Hill (1977) says that private sectors in America face two things in external communication, which are maintaining profitability and fulfilling the hopes requested by society. Either do the government sector. This happens because the society is very dependable to the organizations.

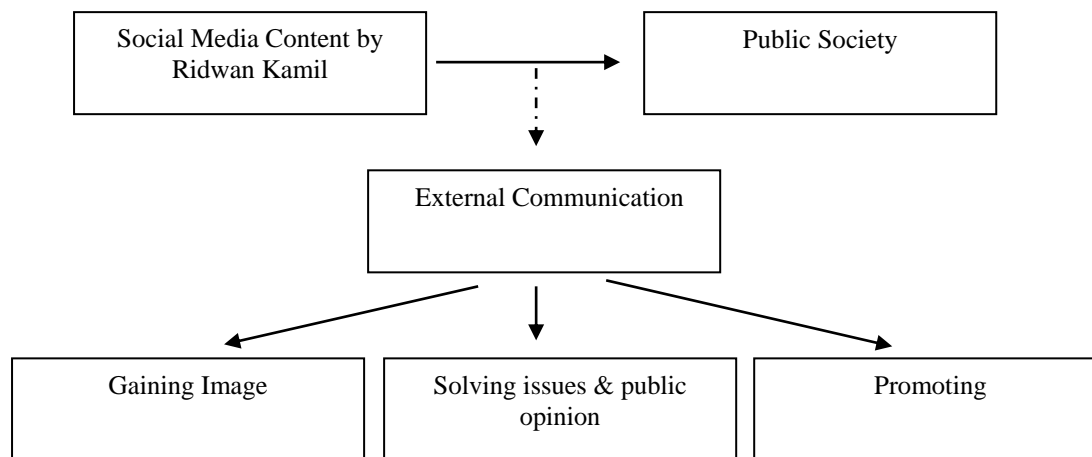
Organization external communication is generally divided into three purposes, which are to gain image of organization, to solve communication issue and public opinion, as well as to promote. Gaining organizations' image is the process of development and publication of characters from organization.

Meanwhile, issue communication and public opinion are related to identification of issues that impact the organization.

In conclusion, external communication is very important and has to be done by an organization, either in private sectors or government, in order to gain good image to the public, to map the developing issues, and to promote its products to the public. If an organization could build a good and effective communication with its external public, so it is highly possibly that the agreed goal of an organization could be achieved.

1.6. Framework of Theory

The writer focuses on the external communication that the object – Ridwan Kamil does to his public. There are three purposes of external communication which are to gain image of organization, to solve communication issue and public opinion, as well as to promote.



Picture 1. The writer's framework of theory

2. Method

This research uses qualitative method by case study approach. The data of research sources is collected through literature reviewing from the articles or readings on the internet as well as from the content in social media accounts of Ridwan Kamil. The writer uses content analysis technic by observing and explaining his social media contents, and by analyzing the existing case study to the related theory.

Firstly, the writer sees the phenomena of social media usage by the public leaders lately which lead them to communicate externally with their society in order to gain image of the organization, to solve the communication issues and public opinion and to promote the organization. Secondly, the writer finds the related theories as the foundation of her analysis. Thirdly, the data is being collected by literature reviewing through the articles from internet sites and contents on Ridwan's social media accounts. Lastly, the writer analyzes this data by relating them to the theory of external communication.

3. Result and discussion

From the result of case study observation of the posts on Ridwan Kamil's social media accounts, the writer found that he is one of the most clever and brilliant leader who can utilize his social media very well. This is shown by how he suits the content on his three different social media accounts – Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, so that people can easily receive and understand the message that he delivers. The communication skills of Ridwan Kamil is proven by the numbers of his followers on these three different social media services, which are about 2,9 million followers on Facebook, about 2,2 million followers on Twitter and about 6,4 million followers on Instagram.

As seen on Ridwan's Facebook page with account of @mochamadridwankamil, he delivers the messages more formally, comprehensive and explanative. Just like any official government website, his Facebook page is mostly consisted of the report of Bandung governmental activities and policies, which either has been happened or will be happening on a later date. Moreover, he also shares the postings of his visits abroad when he attended meetings with some leaders from many country with his followers. This makes anyone who sees his posts feels like they can watch any of daily activities that the Mayor does.

Meanwhile, in Twitter, Ridwan seems more interactive and communicative to his followers in delivering his messages. Along with the characteristics of Twitter itself which is real-time and brief, with only 140 characters someone can tweet each other spontaneously. Through his Twitter account @ridwankamil, he has the opportunity to respond to the complain as well as report on current happenings in Bandung from his followers. This also what makes people feel closer and more engaged to him.

On the other hand, Ridwan shows the other side of himself on Instagram that he actually is passionate in photography. He often share pictures of him and his family on his Instagram account @ridwankamil. He also likes to create a funny and entertaining caption which makes people intend to leave comments for his silliness. Briefly, the writing style he uses on Instagram is more personal, more casual and more entertaining, compared with the writing style he uses on Facebook and Twitter.

By using social media, Ridwan has succeeded in communicating with his external public (society), either those who live in or outside Bandung. There are three main purposes. Firstly, to gain image of Bandung as a tourism city with its tagline “Stunning Bandung” by persuading and reminding people to contribute in keeping Bandung clean, in order and safe. Secondly, to solve communication issue and public opinion. Based on the article on Yukbisnis.com website, Ridwan obligates all public service institutions in Bandung to have a Twitter account so they can receive reports directly from the community. This is done for solving communication issues and public opinion from the past. Thirdly, to promote Bandung. As a graduate of architecture, he has the strength in urban and infrastructure planning. He is also skillful in delivering messages in social media so that every construction and refreshment he made in Bandung can be exposed to the public. In fact, from the moment he officially became the Mayor of Bandung in 2013, he has succeeded in getting Bandung crowned as 10 tourism destination by Ministry of Tourism and as the only city from Indonesia who join World Green City Organization.



Figure 2. Different style of delivery of content on Ridwan Kamil's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter account

According to the above results, it can be said that Ridwan has done his leadership communication very well and effectively. It is simply because he can transmit the controlled and aimed meaning – to provide changes and development of Bandung. He can influence other individuals, groups, organizations or communities by using his communication skill and data sources to build positive relationship with them, to solve the barriers and to create guiding, directing, motivating and inspiring message to them. The proverb “the higher a leader’s position in an organization, so he must be able to direct his program towards changes and vision development” can be proven by him through the communication messages he delivers in his social media.

Furthermore, the writer found that Ridwan is a transformational leader. He could stimulate and inspire his followers to achieve amazing results, for example through external public communication he does in social media. He also pays attention to his public’s needs and tries to develop his leadership capacity so that he could make changes and innovation to Bandung city. He builds relationship with his followers not only for the valued exchange (transactional), but also he involves their beliefs, needs and their values. Referring to the behavior of transformational leadership in the continuum of Bass (1985), so Ridwan is:

- Idealized Influence by his effort to dialog, build his people’s confidence, as well as become a role model to his society;
- Intellectual Stimulation by the way he make decisions and develop creativity;
- Inspirational Motivation by gaining awareness on vision mission, directing his society to achieve their shared vision mission and become a role model in his society.

From the result, the writer wish that this research can expand the references for other scholars in future research, which is especially in the field of Communication Science on the usage of social media and external public communication. This research is wishfully can be an inspiration to the organization leaders out there, either in the private company or government so that they could maximalize the social media as a tool for communicating with their external publics. Nevertheless, there are also some weaknesses of this research, such as the qualitative method that the writer uses is limited – only by case study and content analysis approach. Hopefully, other scholars can analyze deeper in future on the usage of social media through in-depth interview, direct observation and/or through the questionnaires to the social media users (either with correlational or causal quantitative). Besides, the writer suggests that the research on the usage of social media can be done in other field of communication studies, such as marketing communication and advertising, so that it can expand the knowledge of the public on this social media usage.

4. Conclusion

There are four points that can conclude this overall research. First, Ridwan is a clever and brilliant leader who can utilize the social media, by differentiating the message content in his three social media accounts; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The message on his Facebook is more formal and comprehensive, while the message on his Twitter is brief, real-time and more interactive. In contrast, the content on his Instagram is more personal, more casual and entertaining. Because of his ability in delivering the message on his social media accounts, he could reach million numbers of followers, which are about 2,9 millions on Facebook, about 2,2 millions on Twitter and about 6,4 millions on Instagram. Second, he succeeded in communicating with his external public (society) in purpose of gaining image of Bandung as a tourism city, solving communication issues and public opinion, and promoting Bandung. Third, he has done a very well and effective leadership communication since he is able to transmit the controlled and aimed meaning which lead to change and development to Bandung. Lastly, he is a transformational leader who can stimulate and inspire his people to achieve amazing results, such as through the external public communication he does on his social media.

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