

Political Communication of Indonesian Female Regional Leaders

Komunikasi Politik Kepala Daerah Perempuan Di Indonesia

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Abstract

The women's presence as regional leaders is one of the strategies for establishing more gender-just policies. Female regional leaders conducted diverse methods to win the votes of their constituents. The communication patterns used are diverse despite having similarities. The research aims to find out and analyze patterns and channels as well as the effects of political communication by female regional leaders in Indonesia. This study used a qualitative approach with three female regional leaders in three Javanese provinces. The research found that women tend to choose communication patterns and channels that used interpersonal communication channels to obtain political information. The female regional leaders used interactive communication patterns through social media, outdoor media, and mass media, such as television and print media. Communication channels used were personal communication channels, group communication channels, public communication channels, social communication channels, and traditional communication channels. The effect is that there is a change in the process of fighting for various public interests through verbal and nonverbal messages and mutual influence with various government policies. The research recommended that it is necessary to change the communication channel using social media massively to greet and discuss with constituents so that the effects are received massively as well.

Keywords: Communication channels; communication effects; communication patterns; regional heads; women

Abstrak

Kehadiran perempuan sebagai kepala daerah merupakan salah satu strategi bagi lahirnya kebijakan yang lebih adil gender. Berbagai cara dilakukan perempuan pemimpin daerah dalam memenangkan suara konstituennya. Pola komunikasi yang digunakan beragam namun memiliki kesamaan. Tujuan penelitian yaitu: mengetahui dan menganalisis pola dan saluran serta efek komunikasi politik yang dilakukan kepala daerah perempuan di Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan tiga perempuan kepala daerah di tiga provinsi Jawa. Hasil penelitian pola dan saluran komunikasi yang digunakan menggunakan saluran komunikasi interpersonal lebih banyak dipilih perempuan untuk mendapatkan informasi politik. Pola komunikasi interaktif yaitu melalui media massa yang digunakan para perempuan pemimpin daerah melalui media sosial, media luar ruang dan media massa seperti televisi dan media cetak. saluran komunikasi yang digunakan adalah saluran komunikasi pribadi, saluran komunikasi kelompok, saluran komunikasi publik, saluran komunikasi sosial dan saluran komunikasi tradisional. Sedangkan efek yang didapat terjadinya perubahan dalam proses memperjuangkan berbagai kepentingan publik melalui pesan-pesan verbal dan nonverbal serta saling mempengaruhi dengan berbagai kebijakan pemerintah. Saran yang direkomendasikan yaitu: mengubah saluran komunikasi menggunakan media sosial secara masif untuk menyapa dan berdiskusi kepada konstituen, sehingga memperoleh efek yang diterima secara masif pula.

Kata Kunci Efek komunikasi; kepala daerah; perempuan; pola komunikasi; saluran komunikasi

Introduction

The affirmative policy only had been applied for ten years, but the number of women in the Indonesian People's Representative Council (DPR) increased, especially in the 2009 general election. Although the number experienced a decrease in the 2014 general election (Hasandinata, 2013; Sarinastiti et al., 2019), the government that used to be centralized and transformed to be decentralized has channeled the responsibility of electing their regional leaders and the vice directly to citizens. The mechanism also has the democratic sphere of local politics open and deliberated in determining regional development. Through direct regional elections, the people can cast a ballot for the persons they believe based on the credibility and capability of the candidates. Publics in regions can observe the track record and service of the candidates to the regions, and this is how constituents in the regions vote for a candidate. As for women, the representation of women witnessed improvement annually. Indeed, the overall national development since the period of 1999-2004 to 2009-2014 was relatively significant, by 9% to 17.7%. Nevertheless, women representation in each province still varies, and even some provinces still have no women representation, such as Lampung, South Borneo, Southeast Celebes, and Aceh.

Apart from legislative, Indonesian women also succeed in executive politics. (Setyo, 2016) found that from 2005 to 2014, 26 women have been elected as regional executive leaders. Twenty women are appointed to be regents, five women as mayors, and one woman as governor. This achievement is proof that Indonesian people have not been skeptical anymore to believe in women in leading their regions. Of women appointed to be executive leaders in regions, some are still ruling their jurisdictions, such as Airin Rachmy Dianny (the mayor of South Tangerang), and Tri Rismaharini (the mayor of Surabaya), and some of them were running for the second time in 2017 Regional Election, including Idza Priyanti (the regent of Brebes), Atty Suharty Tochija (the regent of Cimahi) dan Neneng Yasin (the regent of Bekasi).

The presence of women as a regional executive leader is a strategy for producing gender equity policies. According to (Ainiyah, 2017), "gender and the gender mainstreaming in Indonesia" showed that countries with a significant number of women in the policymaking process, such as in the parliamentary, result in progressive women-based policies as happen in Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Norway, Germany, and Netherland. Following the trend, many women leadership also appears in some regions in Indonesia. There are three prominent women in regional leadership, namely DR, N, and RT. Two of them are incumbents. DR is reelected as mayor for the period of 2016-2020, and, besides being an incumbent, RT comes from a bureaucratic environment. On the other hand, N is a regional executive leader coming from the political environment. In light of that, the research aims to analyze the pattern, channel, and effect of political communication conducted by these three Indonesian regional executive leaders.

Communication is a social process in which individuals use symbols to create and interpret meaning in their environment (Cangara, 2009; Heryanto, 2018; Mukarom, 2011). In other words, communication is a process conducted by individuals, or customarily called communicators, to transfer information or ideas so that other individuals, or communicants, can follow the intention of the communicator.

Many experts and scholars define political communication. One of them is (McNair, 2017) in *An Introduction to Political Communication* in which political communication is defined as "purposeful communication about politics." It includes: Firstly, all communication form conducted by politicians and other political others

aiming a particular objective, secondly, political communication by the actors to non-politicians, such as voters and newspaper columnists, and thirdly, communication regarding the actors, their activities, such as included in the news, editorial, and other media regarding politics.

Negrine et al. (2007) stated that political communication is a study of the strategy of communication used to influence public knowledge, belief, and political action. Cho (2008) described the relevance of the study of politics and communication through the analysis presented during the communicated discussion of political events. The reference used to scrutinize politics and communication still uses a basic framework (Littlejohn, 1994), namely: Who says What, in Which Channel, To Whom, and With What Effect" (Hubeis, 2010). It can be seen in Figure 1.

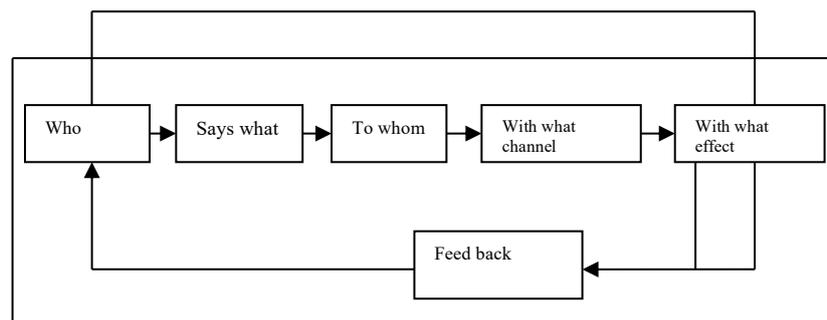


Figure 1. Communication Model Process

Political communication pattern is a symbol of the communication process. The communication process is a sequence of activities to transmit a message to get feedback from the receivers. Through the communication process, there emerge patterns, models, forms, and other small parts related to the communication process. The communication pattern consists of two parts: linear and interactive. 1) Regarding linear communication pattern, Sharlamanov et al. (2014) applied the human communication process rooted in mathematical theory in engineering communication that was described as a linear communication process. Linear communication pattern is one-way communication, face-to-face, whether in person or group communication. 2) Regarding interactive communication pattern, the process of a message from the communicators to communicants through media is active and require feedbacks. According to Rogers (1974), the characteristic of interactive communication includes a. information flow from many people to many other people; b. audience source or interactive communication members; c. high audience segmentation (demassification); d. high-level interaction; fast or delayed feedbacks.

Mass media is often deemed as the fourth estate in the social-economic life. This is because mass media is perceived as having an essential role in developing the social economic and political life of society. As a means to transmit news, evaluation, or general view of diverse topics, media become an institution that creates public opinion. Mass media, therefore, can figure in being an oppressing group of an idea or notion, even interest or image represented to be put in empirical context (Heryanto, 2018; Putra, 2011; Subiakto, 2015; Wahid, 2012).

Political communication channel happens in four different types, namely interpersonal communication, group communication, organization communication, and mass and social communication. On the other hand, the dimensions of the political

communication channel of symbols of political discourse are words, images, and actions. The combination of those three produces images, pictures, and drama containing political elements (Sartika, 2016). That is, each political process needs channel and communication media to make the transmission of political message to audiences easier according to the form and objective of political communicators.

According to McNair (2017), the effect of political communication on behavior and attitude can be evaluated in 3 ways. The first is through how people constructed as the intended audience are influenced by the message of political communication. In other words, how people respond to that (typically, it is a general opinion). After that, their response is compared with other significant groups by surveying to collect the data. The second is through how the voters act against the communication strategy conducted by the candidate in political campaigns. The technique used here is polling. The third is through how the effect particular elements, ranging from communicators, messages, media, communicants, and is isolated. The technique used here is an experiment.

Communication effect becomes essential in the process of political communication since the effect is an indicator of the success of political messages transmitted by political communicators. Message transmission invariably expects an observable effect, that public opinion is created. Positive public opinion that lasts in people's minds can change into positive behavior and attitude of audiences.

Method

The research used a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach founded on an understanding of the subjective experience of natural events and its relation. The number of informants picked in the research was 48. The researcher interviewed all informants deeply to reach their subjective experience regarding the political communication strategy of the candidates in winning executive leader seats that were experienced consciously and directly by each subject. The location was focused on three regions in Javanese island. The research was started from February 2018 to January 2019.

The research tried to collect and gather qualitative data. Bungin (2001) mentioned that principally data could be acquired through three different categories: 1) in-depth, open-ended interview, 2) participant observation, and 3) written documents.

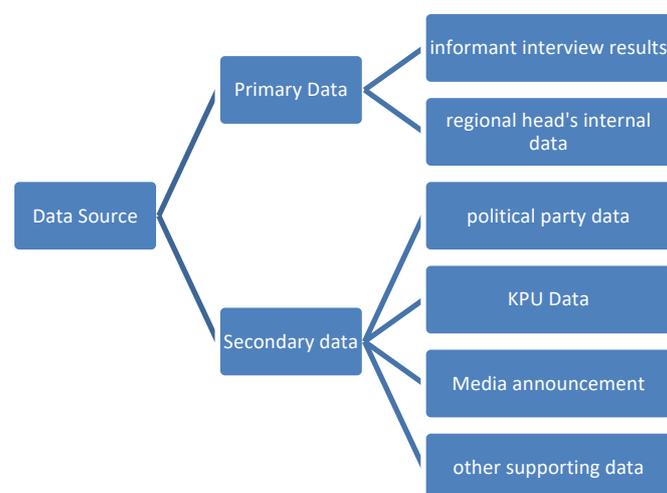


Figure 2. Data Source

The data analysis technique used in this research was phenomenological analysis, specifically, phenomenological data analysis of Creswell et al. (2017).

Results and Discussion

Political Communication Pattern Received by the Regional Executive Leaders from their Constituents

(Khalik et al., 2018; Rosit, 2012) stated that effects could be a situation that is intended by the message transmitter, ranging from a neutral situation, or no changes occur, to a worsening situation. On the other hand, (Cangara, 2009) argued that influence or effect is the difference in what the message receivers think, feel, and do before and after receiving a message. Influence can be said effective if changes happen in the receiver equal to the objective of the intention of the information transmitter. In discussing patterns and mechanisms of political communication of women leaders from the perspective of the constituents, two communications were partitioned as Table 1.

Table 1. Communication Pattern

Communication Pattern	Channel
Linear	One-way Communication between Individuals Group Communication
Interactive	Print media Outdoor Media Mass Media

The Pattern of Political Communication between Individuals

Communication between individuals or personality is one of the primary sources of information that affect constituents through political messages that they receive from women political actors, the successful team, public figures, family, neighbors, and friends (Juwito et al., 2012). The source affects the constituents to vote for a candidate. Communication between individuals or interpersonal is an activity of symbolic messages exchanges conducted by the respondents face-to-face with other people. The interpersonal communication channel is often chosen by women to elicit political information (Hasandinata, 2013; Izdiha, 2017; Sihite, 2011). There are three reasons for which women tend to pick interpersonal channels:

1. Women feel uncomfortable in a public situation compared to men.
2. Women tend to avoid meetings that involve a large group of mass and prefer communication in a small group.
3. Women tend to be careful with others' feelings and thought compared to men.
4. Voters or constituents who are women tend to vote familiar people they trust like family, friends, or public figures as the source of information to receive political information regarding their regional leaders.

Interactive Communication Pattern through Mass Media

The constituents receive information through social media, outdoor media, and mass media, such as television and print media, that are ordered by female regional leaders (Kaplan et al., 2010). The communication channels consist of group communication channels, public communication channels, social communication channels, personal communication channels, traditional communication channels:

1. Group communication channels are means for the female candidate of regional leaders in a party of other groups, whether as a board or members. The role of groups in the political context is essential because it can be a political communication channel to interact with the board or members or the constituents. Female regional leaders can place themselves in the group. That group that is active in each activity conducted by the political party will facilitate the campaign and to gain support from the constituents.
2. Public communication channels are meeting places of women leaders in the form of outdoor campaigns, worship places, mass meetings in the city square, open stage, music concert, art show, sports championship, and bazaar.
3. Social communication channels usually are meeting places with the people in the form of regular social gatherings (arisan), recitation, circumcision, wedding, harvest party, coffee shops, entertainment place, boarding house, security post, and traditional market.
4. Personal Communication channels are face-to-face communication. The messages are private and should not be heard by other people except for the people involved in personal communication. It ranges from door-to-door communication, correspondence, to WhatsApp with peers, friends, and colleagues.
5. Traditional communication channels are frequently found in remote communities that have the same political right as citizens. Traditional communication channels are needed to approach the constituents in the region. Usually, it is conducted in the birth ceremony, wedding ceremony, and funerals (Setyo, 2016).

The Effect of Political Communication, Patter, and Mechanism Received by Female regional leaders from the Constituents

Influence or effect, according to (Rogers, 1974) is a difference happening in what the receivers think, feel, and do before and after the messages received. The output expected from political communication is that the audiences or constituents can understand the messages from the source to accept and vote the candidate of female regional leaders mentioned (Alie, 2010; Zamroni, 2016).

The effect of political communication conveyed by political communicators is that the three female regional leaders strived for different public interests through verbal and non-verbal messages. In addition, it was also conveyed that they affected each other with different governmental policies (Santi, 2018; Siagian, 2013). Political communication effect sometimes cannot be predicted because the common interest from a different group of people was hard to be formulated and mapped in political messages conveyed (Mukarom, 2011; Sarinastiti & Fatimah, 2019; Zamroni, 2016).

The strategy of political communication conducted by three female regional leaders above is that they executed and run programs that had been promised in the previous political campaigns. Those three female regional leaders always conducted direct communication with the target people. It was conducted through formal and informal meetings, ranging from open office, patents party, to immediate field inspection (*blusukan*). The meetings were dialogical, accommodating the complaints and opinions from the people regarding their life problems to be delivered to the leaders. The strategy implementation is a managerial process in developing created concepts. According to Nurussa'adah (2018), to implement political strategy, human factors are significant, especially in three different aspects, namely: political leaders, leaders of political parties that work full-time, and members of political parties that

work part-time. The relationship between these parties is in education, motivation, and ethics. Those three are the basic requirements for the success of strategy implementation. In the operational field, the essential requirement for success depends on the principle of speeds, adjustment, and seductions.

Conclusion

Interactive communication patterns are communication through mass media. The constituents elicit information through media used by the female regional leaders through social media, outdoor media, and mass media like television and print media. Interpersonal communication channels are activities of political messages exchanges conducted by the respondents face-to-face with other people. The interpersonal communication channel was frequently picked by female regional leaders to collect political information.

The effect, pattern, and mechanism received in the form of political communication between individuals or personalities are the primary source of information to influence constituents through political messages that are received by the political communicators of female regional leaders, successful teams, public figures, family, neighborhood, and friends. The sources are responsible for influencing. The researchers recommend that interactive communication patter used face-to-face communication channels may not have a significant effect on female regional leaders in Indonesia. It is the time for using social media massively as the communication channels to greet and discuss with the constituents to gain a massive effect.

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