The Effectiveness of Social Media as a Tool for Regional Election Campaign in Indonesia

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Abstract: This paper focuses on the use of digital media as a tool for political campaigns in regional elections (Pilkada), as it is written in Law No. 10 Year 2016 Article 65 Paragraph (1) that all the candidates for the elections are allowed to campaign by announcing, broadcasting, and/or using printed mass media, electronic mass media, and/or other media (internet, social media, telecommunication services). Digital media can make the campaigns more effective. However, it is frequently misused by people who are irresponsible, and it will eventually lead to a black campaign. This paper will identify the effectiveness and the problems which emerge from doing a campaign through social media. Can digital media make the campaign more effective? Or will it only cause a black campaign war which leads to negative propaganda in this digital era?

1 INTRODUCTION

The development of the internet and the use of social media are seen as a good opportunity by some political parties for doing their campaigns. Political parties, political candidates or candidate pairs can convey their messages to their voters by interacting through social media. The development of internet technology is increasingly utilised by the majority of Indonesians who have social media accounts on many different platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Blog, and YouTube.

In Indonesia, internet users are continuously increasing. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kemen-Kominfo) in 2017 shows that internet users in Indonesia totalled 143.26 million or 54.68% of the total population of Indonesia (which is 262 million people). The numbers show an increase by 10.56 million in the number of internet users as compared to the results of the survey in 2016 (https://kominfo.go.id).

With the development of the number of internet users which is in line with users of social media, the numbers for which are continuously increasing. The result of the survey conducted by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII) in 2017 shows that at least 87.13% of the total number of internet users are accessing social media services in Indonesia. Furthermore, for some Indonesian citizens, internet is also used in socio-political areas.

As much as 36.94% of the internet users used that technology to read the political news. The demography of internet users in Java is 57.70% or as much as (APJII 2017).

The Indonesian General Elections Commission (KPU) realises that social media cannot be trivialised; therefore, the KPU has regulated the use of social media as the medium of regional election campaigns since 2015. Law No. 10 Year 2016 on Regional Elections, states that all the candidates of the elections are allowed to do a campaign by announcing, broadcasting, and/or using printed mass media, electronic mass media and/or other media. By using other media, it means using telecommunication services or internet technology to convey their campaign promises.

If we looked back to Barrack Obama's nomination as the US president in 2018, his successful teams used the internet, especially the use of social media as a tool of political campaign. Obama's successful team's sharpness in using social media was also adopted by the contestants in the presidential elections in Indonesia in 2014. Both Prabowo Subianto and Joko Widodo have their own followers on their own Facebook Fans-Page. The followers on Prabowo's Facebook account total around 7,425,440 people while Jokowi's Facebook Fans-Page was liked by 3,311,213 people. The timelines of both candidates were filled by photos of their campaign activity, photos of their visions and

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missions, and also photos of their programs. There is also an interesting fact: Jokowi's successful team also put their advertisement banner on their Facebook log-in page, so that users who wanted to log-in to their account, would see Jokowi's ad.

With the emergence of such digital public space, it also opens the opportunity for the political parties and politicians to use such digital media as a medium for them to do their campaigns. The candidates for regional head, campaign teams, or sympathisers will be more seriously working on their campaign materials on social media.

This paper will identify the effectiveness and the problems which are generated from doing political campaigns on social media. Can digital media make political campaigns on social media more effective in assuring the voters so that the regional head candidates get the voters' votes? Or will it just become a vehicle for a black campaign which leads to negative propaganda in this digital era.

2 CAMPAIGN AS FORM OF POLITICAL EDUCATION

Campaign is conducted as the manifestation of political education within society, which is conducted in a responsible manner and also based on fair, open, and dialogical principles. This is in line with the KPU Law No. 4 Year 2017 Article 4. Whereas the campaign itself in Law No. 19 Year 2016 is defined as an activity to assure voters, by way of offering the visions, missions, and programs of the political candidates or the candidate pairs. Based on the two definitions above, it can be seen that campaign is an important point in election practice, for political education is not simply explaining political visions and missions to the candidate pairs in the elections. However, a campaign should be an educational and comprehensive medium for the citizens so that they know their role and function in politics, in the life of the people and of the nation.

The campaign practice in Indonesia is still very closely related to the conventional model by way of recruiting voters with so many kinds of attribute at a limited gathering, meeting, through dialogue, public debate/open debate among the candidate pairs, spreading the campaign materials amongst the public, setting-up props and putting-up ads in printed or electronic media.

3 EFFECTIVE CAMPAIGN THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

In Indonesia, campaigning on social media is not a new thing. However, it is newly regulated since the simultaneous local elections were held in 2015. The KPU regulates the use of social media in the KPU Law. Article 47 PKPU No.4 Year 2017 states "the political parties or the political parties alliance, the candidate pairs/campaign teams are obligatorily required to register their official social media account to the KPU in accordance with the level no later than a day before the campaign is held". Furthermore, the materials and the durations of the campaign on social media are also regulated i.e. it can be in the form of texts, voice, pictures, or a combination of the three whether it tends to be narrative, graphic, character, interactive or not, and it should be acceptable for the receiver's devices of the messages and that the official account must obligatorily be closed no later than a day after the campaign period is over.

Social media is one of the common communication tools for candidate pairs or candidates during the campaign period to promote their programs, visions and missions. Social media enables the candidate pairs to directly reach their voters, mobilise their supporters and influence their voters. Campaigning through social media is also considerably effective as a tool for exchanging ideas, including the campaign materials which can be spread very quickly. However, social media is significantly ineffective for the impromptu mobilisation of a campaign.

Social media is considerably effective in conducting a campaign in this digital era. Campaigning by using social media will be more effective compared to using conventional campaign props such as billboards or banners. Open-minded citizens do not easily trust the contents of billboards or banners; however, they will consider what their friends or colleagues say on social media.

The candidate pairs, or the candidates who are utilising the use of social media as the campaign medium to connect themselves with the voters, need to arrange a suitable strategy, as the information on competing candidates can be very quickly and widely spread to the audience. Even in the regional elections in 2015, the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP) specifically held communication and media strategy training in collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Stiftung (FNS), a German foundation which focuses on improving democratic quality. This event was followed by 19 regencies'/cities' representatives who were conducting the regional

elections in 2015; apart from conducting strategy-making and media-handling training, the concept of crowd sourcing and crowd funding were also explained and presented (http://www.enciety.co).

During the regional elections in Surabaya in 2015, the two candidates had different campaigning styles. If the successful teams of the candidate pair of Rasiyo-Lucy Kurniasari tended to use a conventional campaigning model, it was different from their competitor candidate pair, Tri Rismaharini- Wisnu Sakti Buana who utilised the internet as a medium for their campaign. A crowd-sourcing campaign model, which involved society in everything relating to the campaign, was used to gather support.

During the regional elections in East Java in 2018, every candidate pair competed to grab support from the millennial generations. Sebastian Stier et al., in the journal Election Campaigning on Social Media, states that, in order to earn the supports from the millennial generations, the successful teams should carefully arrange strategies to do the campaign through different social media platforms. This is because each of the social media platforms has its own distinct architecture and characteristics; therefore, the topic being discussed on each social media platform is different; it also need to be adjusted to media which is being used.

The contribution of social media also determines the success of the candidate pair in winning the elections during the regional elections in East Java in 2018. According to the data collected by Kumparan, Gus Ipul's Instagram account named gusipul_id, has 19,425 followers. Since he was nominated as the candidate pair for the East Java regional elections on February 12, 2018, within a period of 1 month and 15 days, Gus Ipul posted 66 posts. Meanwhile, Khofifah, through her Instagram account named khofifah.ip, has 71,594 followers. Even though the followers of Khofifah are greater in number compared with the followers of Gus Ipul, there were only 28 posts posted by Khofifah from her account in the same period. From the data above, it can be seen that Gus Ipul is more active than Khofifah.

The effectiveness of social media as a medium for political campaigns is not only determined by the massive number of active users. The characteristics of social media in being able to reach various realms is one of its important strengths. Social media is a medium by which to communicate in which each individual can influence one another, and can spread the information in terms of how multi-level marketing works.

3.1 Social Media has Multi-way Interactions

The contribution of social media towards the success of the candidates' or candidate pairs' campaigns, relies on how the social media enables the candidates and candidate pairs to interact with their would-be voters in a highly unlimited scale and intensity. Social media gives the opportunity for voters to have a two-way dialogue with candidate pairs or the candidate. With social media, even a multi-way dialogue between candidate and voters, voters and candidate, or voters and voters can be made.

The supports gained from social media also add more chance of earning the vote in the elections. The votes gained in the elections will increase if there is involvement or active participation from the voter candidates. That active participation should not always be done on the social media account of the political party itself or the social media account of the candidate or the candidate pair, but this kind of support can be done by way of spreading the campaign materials obtained from the social media account of the candidate with a personalised message in order to generate talk on social media.

3.2 Social Media Is Not Instant

The well-informed and educated users of social media are not easily influenced and not quick to trust new information. In social media, it is only the factual information which can be accepted. In assuring that the information that we get is factual, a debate or dialogue frequently occurs to generate mutual understanding and conclusions. This kind of process requires a long length of time.

The process of assuring society through social media requires a long amount of time, working slowly by discussing the visions, missions, ideas and ideologies, for the users of social media are not people who are easily persuaded to support something, but they follow their own willingness and awareness.

Social media will be very useful for politicians who are intensely spreading ideas and discussing particular topics or social issues happening in society; those topics/issues are deeply discussed over time. Such politicians will win during the elections held.

3.3 Social Media as the Stabiliser

In line with the regulation, which regulates the national elections or the regional elections,

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campaigns can be conducted through printed media and electronic media ads, and some of those methods are facilitated by the KPU and some of them are independently produced by self-funding.

The existence of social media can function as a solution to minimise unfairness during a campaign ad that is conducted through commercial media. Social media becomes the stabiliser medium to the television broadcasts which are no longer able to keep their independence and fairness. Many of the TV channels are now owned by businessmen/women who are now starting to enter the politic realm. This kind of condition has made the television media a campaigning and socialising stage for the owners. Here, the social media is urgently needed.

It can be seen that the participants in elections are still updating their programs and their activities or are still introducing new members to their social media accounts after the period of the elections is over. This is done to keep their constituents and to recruit some new members/followers.

4 BLACK CAMPAIGNS ARE COMMONLY OCCURRING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is very flexible. It has a large space to convey the content of the campaign, and this is becoming one of the gaps which can be used by competitor candidates. The bad effect of social media is that it can be used as a medium to do a black campaign by spreading fake or hoax news; therefore, it can put the competitor candidates down in society. As a matter of fact, there are many politicians who have felt this bad effect of the cruel social media.

A black campaign can ruin democracy and everything which has been built, and it will affect society. The society will find it hard to choose the right candidate pair in the elections due to the wrong information that they have received

5 CONCLUSIONS

Considering the development of the internet in Indonesia which is rapidly increasing and improving across the whole country, it can be assumed that the role of social media in the political fight will become stronger. The phenomenon of doing a campaign through social media which has occurred at the national level has already been duplicated by political elites at the regional level during regional elections.

The existence of social media as a medium for doing campaigns will only be significantly effective for politicians who are working through times, not simply once in a five-year period.

According to the discussions above, there are so many things which need to be done to utilise social media as an effective medium for an effective campaign and in order not to make social media merely the medium for a black campaign. The following are several things which need to be considered:

- A clear and comprehensive legal framework to regulate the practices of the campaign on social media. Fraud and violation are likely to occur when the regulations have many legal flaws. The regulations relating to the actors, materials, and the right time to do a campaign on social media can anticipate bogus campaigns which are done through any anonymous irresponsible accounts.
- Supervision of the campaign content on social media can be done by all of society, and if there is some violation found, society is allowed to inform the supervisory board of the elections.
- The General Elections Commissions (KPU) and The Elections Supervisory Board of Indonesia (Bawaslu) need to set up a cooperation agreement with The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kemkominfo) to supervise and to take action on the practices of political campaigning on social media.
- The infrastructure of internet technology which is equally distributed from urban to remote rural areas.

The existence of the law regulating the legal assurance and the involvement and also the corporation between the elections administrator and the government, the mass and the youth organisation, media, educational institutions, and religious foundations make social media the medium for doing political campaigns effectively.

The support of the technology and the effectiveness of social media as a medium for doing political campaigns are not able to stand alone. The success in doing a campaign on social media will not always and not automatically lead to success in winning the elections. A campaign on social media should be followed and supported by a conventional campaign. That is to say, an intensive campaign on social media should be followed and supported by limited conferences, face-to-face meetings and dialogue, public debate, spreading the campaign

materials and setting-up the campaign props. These kinds of things are necessarily important even though the rate of internet improvement in Indonesia is getting better. However, there still remain remote rural areas which are not reached by the internet and there still remain tech-illiterate people in Indonesia.

The effectiveness of a campaign which is conducted on social media can be felt by the urban society which has already been supported by the improvement of technology, but a campaign which is conducted on social media might not be effective for those who are living in a rural area.

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