Political Communication of The General Election Commission and The Election Supervisory Board in Responding to Allegations of Voter Data Leakage

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Abstract: The alleged case of voter data leakage in the General Election Commission's (KPU) Sidalih application occurred ahead of the 2024 elections, the voter data was allegedly traded on BreachForums by an anonymous account. Responding to the alleged case, the political communication of the KPU and the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu) through the Twitter (X) social media account is very minimal, even the KPU did not convey its attitude at all on its Twitter social media account. This study aims to determine how the KPU RI and Bawaslu RI utilize Twitter (X) social media as a strategic communication tool and how to utilize Twitter (X) social media in responding to the alleged leakage of KPU's data. The research method used is a qualitative research method with a case study. The results showed that the lack of information about the alleged leakage of KPU data conveyed by KPU RI and Bawaslu RI through their Twitter social media channels, this was also exacerbated by the absence of dialogic communication on uploads related to the alleged leakage. The suggestion of this research is that KPU RI and Bawaslu RI need to optimize their political communication through Twitter social media management by consistently providing the latest information related to the alleged leakage of KPU data as well as building dialogical communication with the public or netizens. In addition, it is also necessary to improve the security infrastructure of the Sidalih application.

Keywords: Political Communication, General Election Commission, The Election Supervisory Board.

INTRODUCTION

Cases of data leaks ahead of the 2024 elections have occurred again. At the end of 2023, an anonymous account on BreachForums claiming to be Jimbo leaked hundreds of millions of data which he claimed came from the Indonesian General Election Commission (KPU) website. Experts suspect this is possible through voter data management admin credentials theft, such as phishing techniques. Based on this, the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo) investigatedk and the results show. Thethere were similthe data circulating in the public space offered by Jimbo's anonymous account and the data on the Indonesian KPU website. (Iradat, 2023).

Meanwhile, the National Cyber and Crypto Agency (BSSN) has submitted a report on the results of the initial investigation and digital forensics to the National Police's Directorate of Cyber Crime (Dittipidsiber) and the KPU. The investigation carried out by BSSN aims to find the root of the problem regarding the alleged data leak. The results of the investigation were followed up by Bareskrim Polri through law enforcement (Naibaho, 2023). Bareskrim Polri also took mitigation steps by closing access to the Voter Data Information System (Sidalih) application which is managed by KPU (Suud, 2023).

Leaks of voter data in the 2024 Election are a shared responsibility, especially the election organizers, namely the KPU and the Election Supervisory Board (Bawaslu). Apart from that, the cause of data leaks occurred due to the lack of secure data protection systems in government agencies in Indonesia. This can affect the stability of digital security during elections (Umagapi, 2023).

Cybersecurity impacts national security and has the potential to cause social dissatisfaction and unrest, especially loss of public trust (Choo, 2011). Studies on the influence of dialogic communication on trust in government show that there is a significant influence of mutuality orientation factors and openness climate factors in dialogic communication via social media on trust in government. The mutuality orientation factor refers to the interconnectedness and interdependence between an organization and its public, as well as the mutual confirmation of each party's views. On the other hand, a climate of openness is closely related to generating public trust and distrust (Hastrida & Hendriyani, 2023).

The alleged data leak from the Indonesian KPU certainly has an impact on public trust in the KPU and Bawaslu. This article tries to explain how the Indonesian KPU and the Indonesian Bawaslu utilize the social media Twitter (X) as a medium for political communication in responding to alleged data leaks belonging to the KPU. This article discusses the questions above by presenting data sourced from the official Twitter (X) social media accounts of the KPU and Bawaslu. This article only focuses on Twitter (X) because the Twitter (X) account can be used as a strategic communication tool by ministerial level institutions in Indonesia (Anggara, Hamdi, & Suswanta, 2023).

Political communication is defined as politically related communication actions for a specific mission or purpose. According to McNair (2017), as many as three actions are grouped into political communication. First, all forms of communication between politicians and other political actors to achieve certain missions. Second, political communication in the form of editorial coverage, news and political discussions in the form of writing in social media comment columns or on blogs that discuss the activities and profiles of political actors. Third, communication by activists and voters aimed at certain political actors and politicians (McNair, 2017).
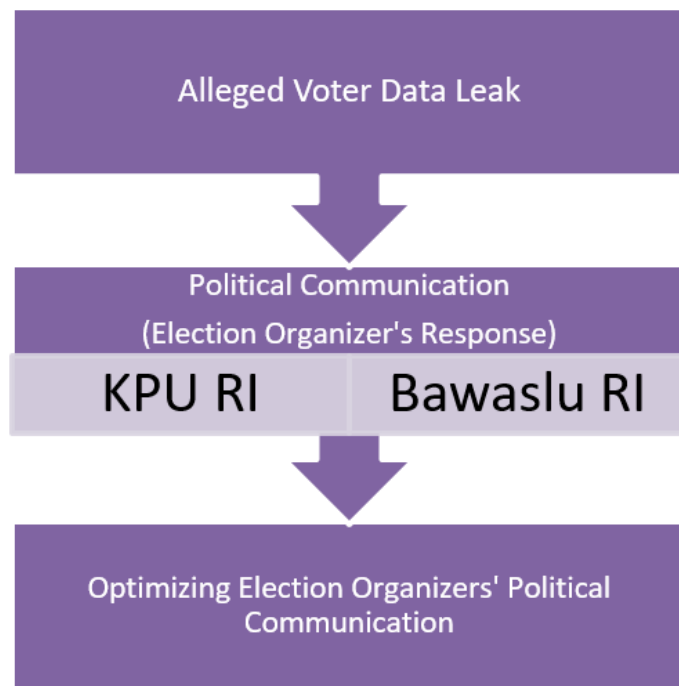
Political communication is very important and decisive in a democratic political system, supported by the role of the mass media which makes political issues, which at first could have been hidden or hidden, become open to the public (Sulaiman, 2013). Apart from mass media, the use of social media, especially Twitter (X), can also be used for political

communication purposes by political actors, both individuals and institutions (Samad, Hilman, Yakub, Yoda, & Harahap, 2023).

In political communication via social media, engagement is an indicator that can be used by communicators to measure the extent to which the public responds to the communication messages conveyed. Currently, political communication can be done anytime and anywhere, quickly and simultaneously via various digital media platforms such as Twitter (X), Instagram, YouTube and other social media (Budiarsa & Pandiangan, 2022). Engagements are defined as the total number of times a user interacts with a Tweet, including retweets, replies, follows, likes, links, cards, hashtags, embedded media, usernames, profile photos, or tweet expansions (Twitter, n.d.). The same thing was also stated by Sevin and Ingenhoff, both of whom revealed that an upload that was re-shared by netizens was a positive thing regarding the response given by netizens (Sevin & Ingenhoff, 2018).

METHOD

The approach in this research is a qualitative approach, research that aims to describe, explore, and understand the meaning that a number of individuals or groups of people ascribe to social or humanitarian problems (Creswell, 2014). The type of qualitative research used by the author is a case study. Case studies are a qualitative strategy through which researchers examine events, activities, programs, processes or one or more individuals in more depth. A number of cases were limited by activity and time so researchers collected detailed data through various data collection methods over a certain period of time (Creswell, 2016). In the context of this research, the case study is a case of suspected voter data leakage.

(Source: processed by the author)
Figure 1. *Research Method Flow Chart*

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The presence of new media (including Twitter) has had a significant impact on political activities, especially the political communication process (Indrawan, Efriza, & Ilmar, 2020). A study conducted by Subekti and his team regarding the activities of the official Bawaslu and KPU RI accounts shows that the role of Bawaslu RI on Twitter social media is more dominant in communication and interaction with the public compared to the KPU RI in terms of the activities of members, institutions, organizing elections, campaign outreach, and election stages. Apart from that, there is a strong correlation between the two related to the socialization of the election stages and campaign socialization. Lastly, the Indonesian KPU and RI Bawaslu's Twitter communication and interaction with the public discussed a lot of election content (Subekti, Nurmandi, Mutiarin, Suswanta, & Salahudin, 2021).

Subekti and his team's findings are in line with the author's observations on the social media accounts of Bawaslu RI (@bawaslu_RI) and KPU RI (@KPU_ID). The RI Bawaslu Twitter account is more active than the RI KPU Twitter account in the context of responding to alleged KPU data leaks. The @KPU_ID account did not provide any response to its account regarding the alleged leak. Meanwhile, Bawaslu RI provided a response on December 2 2023 via the @bawaslu_RI account by uploading a thread regarding Bawaslu RI's response regarding the issue of alleged KPU data leaks. In the upload, Bawaslu RI stated that it was reviewing it to determine whether there were any violations in the case. Furthermore, Bawaslu RI emphasized that it would follow up on the case if there were violations of the Population Administration Law and the Personal Data Protection Law (PDP). Finally, Bawaslu RI conveyed the chronology of handing over copies of the Permanent Voter List (DPT) to Bawaslu RI.

(Source: Twitter account @bawaslu_RI, accessed on January 21 2024
Figure 2. *Screenshot of Bawaslu RI's upload regarding alleged KPU data leak*

On the one hand, the upload received responses from netizens in the form of comments, retweets and likes. From the upload, it was observed that like responses dominated with 67, followed by 27 retweets and 15 comments.

In the context of political communication via social media, this response is an engagement in the RI Bawaslu upload. According to Budiarsa & Pandianga, engagement is an indicator that can be used by communicators to measure the extent to which the public responds to the communication messages conveyed. The same thing was expressed by Sevin and Ingenhoff, an upload which was re-shared by netizens was positive regarding the response given by netizens (Sevin & Ingenhoff, 2018). This shows that netizens think the upload is positive and needs to be re-shared via their respective Twitter accounts. On the other hand, even though Bawaslu RI has provided its response regarding the alleged KPU data leak case and received a positive response in the form of dozens of retweets, Bawaslu RI has not responded to comments from netizens who commented on the thread. A number of netizens provided various comments, ranging from satire, hate speech, to questioning the study conducted by Bawaslu RI.

(Source: Twitter account @bawaslu_RI, accessed on January 21 2024)
Figure 3. *Screenshot of netizens' comments uploaded to @bawaslu_RI's post regarding the alleged KPU data leak*

The absence of a response from Bawaslu RI to its upload shows that there is no dialogue capable of providing explanations to netizens. Netizens' perceptions were left to be formed from one upload by @bawaslu_RI. Thus, the dialogic facilities provided by Twitter social media are not used by @bawaslu_RI to carry out dialogic communication or interact with netizens. The impact of this resulted in the absence of discussion space between Bawaslu RI and netizens which resulted in no effort from Bawaslu RI to build a common understanding in understanding the alleged KPU data leak case.

Until the third week of January 2024, Bawaslu RI had not yet submitted the results of its study or at least the latest developments regarding the extent of the ongoing study. An interesting finding from this writing is that the Indonesian KPU has not conveyed its position regarding the alleged data leak, even though the Indonesian KPU is the institution most responsible for the alleged data leak, moreover, Kominfo's findings show that there are similarities in the data offered by anonymous accounts. Jimbo with data on the KPU website.

CONCLUSION

The political communicators in this research consisted of institutions in the form of the Indonesian KPU and the Indonesian Bawaslu. These two political communicators are included in the second act of political communication proposed by McNair (2017), namely political communication in the form of editorial coverage, news and political discussions in the form of writing in social media comment columns or on blogs that discuss the activities and profiles of actors. political. In this case, the activities of the Indonesian KPU and Indonesian Bawslu on their Twitter social media channels are related to alleged voter data leak cases.

Based on the facts and analysis presented in this article, it is clear that the lack of information regarding the alleged KPU data leak was conveyed by the Indonesian KPU and the Indonesian Bawaslu via their Twitter social media channel, this is also exacerbated by the absence of dialogical communication in posts related to the alleged leak. As a result of this, the potential impact is a decrease in public trust in the government, especially election organizers (KPU RI and Bawaslu RI). This is because Song and Lee's research shows that social media has become an effective means for the government to increase public trust by increasing their perception of government transparency (Song & Lee, 2016). The findings from Song and Lee are corroborated by the results of a study conducted by Porumbescu which stated that the use of government social media accounts was positively related to satisfaction and perceptions of trust in the government (Porumbescu, 2016). Thus, the Indonesian KPU and Indonesian Bawaslu need to optimize their political communication through managing Twitter social media by consistently providing the latest information regarding alleged KPU data leaks while also building dialogical communication with the public or netizens. From the technical side, it is in accordance with the results of research on the Sidalih application (Raharja, Nurmandi, & Subekti, 2023), the security infrastructure for applications needs to be improved so that they are not easily hacked and guidelines, rules and task forces need to be created that play a role in overcoming information technology problems or data leaks. This increase can be done by utilizing public services in the form of Security Assessment belonging to the State Intelligence Agency (Samad, 2021; Samad & Persadha, 2022) and BSSN public services in the form of Information Technology Security Assessment (ITSA).

Conflict of Interest

That by stating that what is written in this journal does not conflict with personal interests or other interests. Purely to be used as a scientific reference for future research. Thank you to a number of those involved, such as the Communication & Information System Security Research Center (CISSReC) research institute, government institutions, the National

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