

Use of Twitter for Covid-19 Information Dissemination by Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center

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Abstract— The Covid-19 pandemic has become a global problem. In Indonesia, since the beginning of the pandemic, Muhammadiyah has taken a policy to prevent the spread of the virus. Muhammadiyah established the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center. To communicate the prevention and handling of Covid-19, the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center uses various media. One of the media used is Twitter. This research shows that the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center has succeeded in building interactions with the audience, mass media, government and non-government institutions. The Twitter Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center has become a fast and viral information dissemination medium.

Keywords— Covid-19, Twitter, Muhammadiyah, Information Dissemination

I. INTRODUCTION

Covid-19 has seized the world's attention in early 2020. The virus that originated in the city of Wuhan in China has paralyzed the Chinese economy and caused many victims very quickly. The emergence of the Covid-19 outbreak has created a big panic in Indonesia. The unpreparedness of the Indonesian government since the beginning of the pandemic has made the impact of the pandemic continue in Indonesia.

By 31 March 2020, there have been 1,528 confirmed Covid-19 cases in Indonesia and 136 deaths related to the disease. The nation's case fatality rate (CFR) is also much higher than that of People's Republic of China (8.9% vs 4%). Indonesia's healthcare facility is not ready to face Covid-19 yet. Massive preparation should have been taken seriously at the beginning of disease spread in the People's Republic of China. Professor Joseph Wu warned all parties as early as January 2020 in *The Lancet*. At that moment, the author stated that 2019-nCoV could be about to become a global epidemic. He also suggested that preparedness plans should be readied by ensuring the supply of drugs, personal protective equipment (PPE) as well as human resources needed to face the global outbreak [1].

The Indonesian government is trying to promote health by using various media to make people aware of following health protocols. Through various media, the Indonesian government asked the public to wear masks, maintain distance, wash hands with soap, and avoid crowds.

As the largest modern Islamic organization in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah is also not left behind. Considering the very fast spread of Covid-19, the Muhammadiyah Central Board stated that the outbreak was an extraordinary event that urgently needed to be taken seriously, massively, and well-coordinated. Muhammadiyah encourages the government to involve all parties to work together and synergize with socialization steps and policies that are open and comprehensive.

Muhammadiyah became the first mass religion organization in Indonesia to consolidate to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Through the Decree of the Muhammadiyah Central Board No. 02/MLM/I.0/H/2020 concerning the Corona Virus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, the Muhammadiyah Central Board has established the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center (MCCC) which is tasked with coordinating the implementation of programs and actions for handling Covid-19 pandemic.

Muhammadiyah is the largest modernist Islamic organization in Indonesia. Muhammadiyah's contribution to the modernization of the Islamic movement in Indonesia has reached various aspects of religious and social life. The attribution of Muhammadiyah as a modernist organization is due to its positive vision toward modernity. Muhammadiyah started to launch a series of reform movement within the body of Indonesian Islam. Despite strong resistance from the traditionalist Muslims, the Muhammadiyah's reform has been at the point of no return, and later proved to appeal the sympathy and membership from the traditionalist Muslims. One of the examples of the Muhammadiyah reform movement that was rejected by the traditionalists but now becomes commonplace is the change of sermon language of Friday prayers and two *Ied* prayers from Arabic—as had

been commonplace among traditionalists—into local and national languages [2].

The formation of the MCCC shows the spirit of Muhammadiyah's modernity in fighting the plague and saving lives. This research is focused on how MCCC utilizes digital media for health promotion of Covid-19 prevention. Several previous studies have shown that there is a change in the use of media during a pandemic. Research in Malaysia shows that the sources of information regarding the COVID-19 pandemic are mainly the government authorities and local healthcare workers. The most preferred medium of information regarding the Covid-19 pandemic is social media, and the most trusted medium is the television broadcast [3].

Research in Indonesia shows that students choose to use digital media to get information about Covid-19. The research found that students were digital natives that used social media for searching for information about COVID-19. The students were digitally literate in using social media to search for information regarding COVID-19 by verifying information before disseminating it on their social media account [4]. In the face of changing audience behavior in media consumption during the pandemic, health promotion efforts to prevent Covid-19 also need to adapt to existing changes.

II. LITERATURE FRAMEWORK

Research shown that social media have fast become the biggest and sometimes the first port of news telling of world events. Although communication through conventional newspapers establishes organization's credibility, nevertheless, communicating through social media websites has created higher credibility for organizations [5].

This research builds upon Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004) model of co-creation in the service sector and adapts this model to create a parsimonious theoretical framework to explain Social Media Engagement (SME). SME theory accounts for the role of technology as the underlying platform needed to facilitate social interactions among users that are globally and temporally distributed. Clearly, the rise of social media comes in large part from the evolution of technology to provide a unique user experience that enables users to connect in new ways that were never before possible. The user experience referred to in this research applies the definition of experience as the content of direct observation or participation in an event. When experience is defined as a noun, referring to the content stemming from direct participation, there are two critical factors that form the user experience in social media: the experience derived from the social interactions and the experience derived from the technical features. Social interactions are defined as the communication among users through social media [6].

III. METHOD

This research uses case study method. Case study is the process of seeking knowledge to investigate and examine phenomena that occur in real life. Case studies can be used when phenomena and real life have vague or blurred boundaries. Case studies can be described as an empirical knowledge-seeking process to investigate and examine various phenomena in real-life contexts. Through case

studies, the phenomena that occur are analyzed and explained in a coherent manner. The case study in this research is a single instrumental. It means as a case study research conducted by using a case to describe an issue. Data collection in the study was carried out using in-depth interviews and observations of the twitter account owned by the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center. The collected data is then processed and presented in this paper.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Muhammadiyah as the largest modernist social organization and Islamic organization in Indonesia through the One Muhammadiyah One Response (OMOR) program has been handling Covid-19. Central board of Muhammadiyah formed the Muhammadiyah Covid-19 Command Center (MCCC) team to take part in efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. MCCC has been formed from the national level to the regional level. One of the programs carried out by MCCC is health promotion for the prevention of Covid-19. Various media are used by MCCC in health promotion to prevent the spread of Covid-19. First, the use of print media and outdoor advertising. This was done through leaflets which were circulated to mosques and communities, and billboards posted in various locations. Second, the use of community media owned by Muhammadiyah, including Suara Muhammadiyah magazine, TVMu (Muhammadiyah Television), Radiomu, and the Muhammadiyah website. Third, make releases that are sent to various media. Fourth, hold press conferences on a weekly basis. Lastly, take advantage of social media, in the form of Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. This research is focused on Twitter MCCC.

The findings of this study indicate the use of social media by MCCC. First, the use of twitter as a media for health promotion. MCCC Twitter uses the @mucovid19 account. The account has been created since March 2020. The timing of the creation of the MCCC Twitter account shows that Muhammadiyah has taken steps to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic since the beginning of the pandemic in Indonesia. Compared to other organizations, Muhammadiyah is more progressive in taking action.

The @mucovid19 account contains uploads in the form of text, posters, infographics, videos, news links and video links to Youtube. In general, the content uploaded by @mucovid19 is the policy of the MCCC. All public communication policies carried out by MCCC are officially carried out using the website at <https://covid19.muhammadiyah.id/>. Twitter @mucovid19 is a social media channel used as a medium for disseminating information on the MCCC website.

Twitter @mucovid19 is also used to upload the latest information about what is happening, including emergency conditions. This is shown by an upload on July 3, 2021 which reported about the oxygen supply at the Muhammadiyah Kebumen Hospital, Central Java Province, which was experiencing a lack of oxygen. In a tweet, MCCC wrote that the oxygen in the Kebumen Muhammadiyah hospital would run out in two hours. The tweet immediately went viral on social media. Due to the viral background on social media, finally oxygen assistance for Covid-19 patients arrived.

When the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia worsened in June 2021, the MCCC through its Twitter account asked the government to carry out a three-week lockdown on the island of Java. This MCCC statement via Twitter is actually part of the statement made by MCCC through press releases and press conferences.

The worsening conditions for handling the pandemic as a result of government policies have caused hospitals in Indonesia to be full of Covid-19 patients. Through the @mucovid19 account, MCCC provides information about telemedicine services to the public in Indonesia.

Twitter @mucovid19 actively interacts with various social media accounts from various institutions, from internal to Muhammadiyah and from external to Muhammadiyah. From internal Muhammadiyah, the Muhammadiyah Disaster Management Center @MDMCIndonesia account and the official Muhammadiyah account @muhammadiyah actively interact with @mucovid19. An external account from Muhammadiyah that is quite active in interacting is @KawalCOVID19. This is a twitter account managed by Indonesian citizens voluntarily to control the transparency of data and information. @KawalCOVID19 often criticizes government policies in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. Twitter account @mucovid19 also interacts with the official account of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia @KemenkesRI.

The use of twitter by MCCC for health promotion in handling the Covid-19 pandemic shows Muhammadiyah's ability to utilize new media. Muhammadiyah managed to build interaction with netizens through the use of Twitter at @mucovid19.

V. CONCLUSION

The use of Twitter by MCCC for health promotion in handling the Covid-19 pandemic shows Muhammadiyah's ability to utilize social media. Twitter is the social media that has received the most attention from the public and media.

What is viral on Twitter is often the subject of media coverage. More than that, what happens on Twitter can even be part of the government's public policy making. Through @mucovid19, Muhammadiyah since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic has given attention to overcoming the pandemic. The interaction carried out by MCCC through Twitter shows that Muhammadiyah as the largest modern Islamic organization in Indonesia is active in overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic.

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