

The General Election Commission's Strategy in Increasing Election Participation During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the strategy of the Indonesian General Election Commission in conducting socialization to increase election participation during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia using the @KPU_ID Twitter account. This research uses descriptive qualitative research. This analysis uses a literature study. The analysis in this research is done through the Twitter account of the Indonesian General Election Commission, namely @KPU_ID using NCapture from NVivo 12 Plus with Chrome web browser. The data is processed using the cross tab feature to automatically calculate the required main statistical tests with meaningful comparisons and analysis of indirect variables. The Crosstab Query feature is to enter code (manual, generated, etc.), text data, and numeric data into variables and pattern data. Furthermore, using the Word Cloud feature, words that often appear in data searches or display terms are discussed. This research reveals the Republic of Indonesia's General Election Commission's tweets related to outreach strategies to increase election participation during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia on their Twitter accounts. The findings of this study include the dissemination of information about outreach strategies to increase election participation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Strategy, The General Election Commission's.

1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic not only threatens public health and the economy but is also a test for the practice of democratic values [1]. Indonesia has become one of the countries struggling to control COVID-19 through various policies and collaboration of multiple parties, with a handling fund of IDR 405.1 trillion. Now efforts to control COVID-19 are getting tougher, amid the government's plan to carry out simultaneous Regional Head Elections (Pilkada)

on December 9, 2020 [2].

Since June 2005, for the first time in the history of the Indonesian people, direct local elections (Pilkada) have been held by the people. Previously, under Law no. 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government, the election of governors, regents, and mayors and their representatives is carried out by the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) according to their respective levels [3]. The direct election of regional heads is based on the provisions of Law no. 32 of 2004 based on the requirements of

Article 18 paragraph (4) of the 1945 Constitution, which stipulates that the Governors, Regents, and Mayors respectively as heads of provincial, district, and city governments are democratically elected [4].

Currently, the Pilkada is directly regulated by Law Number 10 of 2016. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia has repeatedly made changes to the laws governing Pilkada. The changes are as follows, Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning the second amendment to Law Number 1 of 2015 concerning the stipulation of government regulations instead of Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning the election of governors, regents, and mayors into law. Law Number 8 of 2015 changes to Law Number 1 of 2015 concerning the stipulation of government regulations in place of Law Number 1 of 2014 concerning the election of governors, regents, and mayors into law. Law Number 1 of 2015 concerning the stipulation of government regulations instead of law number 1 of 2014 concerning the election of governors, regents, and mayors into law. Law Number 12 of 2008 concerning amendments to Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning regional government [5].

Simultaneous Pilkada held since 2015 is still transitional and gradual/bumpy [6]. Currently, carrying out simultaneous regional elections in Indonesia is regulated in Presidential Decree No. 22 of 2020 concerning Election Day [7]. Simultaneous Pilkada is an essential and strategic instrument to build a democratic regional government. Direct elections simultaneously encourage the people, in this case, the voters, to elect regional heads and deputy regional heads (governors and deputy governors, as well as regents and deputy regents/mayors and deputy mayors) democratically [8].

Simultaneous Elections in 2020 were extraordinary elections in the course of Democracy in Indonesia and several other countries in the world [9]. Fears that the 2020 Pilkada would have become a new cluster for the spread of COVID-19 were again voiced by an infectious disease expert, even though the central government claimed that the general voting was following the health protocol [10].

During President Soekarno's time to organize elections, an election management body was formed called the Indonesian Elections Committee (PPI), based on the Circular Letter of the Minister of Justice Number JB.2/9/4 Und.

April 23, 1953, and 5/11 /37/KDN dated July 30, 1953 [11]. Meanwhile, during the New Order era, President Soeharto formed the General Elections Institution (LPU) as the organizing body for general elections in Indonesia based on Presidential Decree No. 3 of 1970. And finally, the era of President BJ. Habibie was the beginning of the formation of the General Election Commission (KPU). LPU was transformed into KPU through Presidential Decree Number 16 of 1999 [12].

As an independent institution in the Indonesian constitutional system, the General Election Commission has the duties, powers, and obligations as an election organizer as stated in Law Number 15 of 2011 concerning Election Organizers [13]. One of the tougher challenges that must be faced is the level of voter participation [14]. The reason is that there were still doubts from voters about the government's readiness to suppress the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Indonesia, which was still considered not optimal. The community was also worried about the possibility of the emergence of a Pilkada cluster related to the COVID-19 pandemic [15].

An epidemiologist from Australia's Griffith University, Dicky Budiman, said that implementing the regional election with the COVID-19 condition in Indonesia was actually very risky, considering the number of new cases of positive COVID-19 infection was still high. However, this simultaneous regional election could not be canceled. Thus, preventative measures had to be carried out optimally [16].

In December of 2019, various cases of "unknown infectious agent pneumonia" associated with an open food wholesale market were reported in the downtown city, Hubei Province, China. Coronavirus (severe acute metabolic syndrome coronavirus two, or SARS-CoV-2) is thought to be the primary cause, with the bat *Phinolophus* as the suspected origin. In precisely two months, the virus had spread from urban centers across China and thirty-three alternative countries [17]. On March 2, 2020, President Joko Widodo announced the first (and second) positive cases of two citizens, a woman aged 31 and 64 [18].

The 2020 Pilkada was held on December 9, 2020, in 9 provinces, 224 regencies, and 37 cities. In the last seven days (26 November-3 December), the average daily cases in Indonesia reached 5,382 points. From this data, the

implementation of the 2020 Regional Head Election raises concerns that it would cause an increase in the transmission of the COVID-19 virus in Indonesia [19].

With doubts from the community as an important factor in deciding who must be present in the simultaneous Pilkada activities in 2020, two questions arise that underlies this research, namely, What is the Indonesian KPU doing to increase voter participation rates in the 2020 simultaneous elections in Indonesia? and is this method successful in increasing voter turnout in the 2020 simultaneous regional elections in Indonesia?

In this study, the authors wanted to find out what strategies were carried out by the Indonesian KPU in increasing voter participation rates in the 2020 Pilkada in Indonesia and whether the process of the Indonesian KPU was successful in increasing voter participation rates in the 2020 simultaneous elections.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research was processed using Qualitative Data Analysis using the NVivo 12 Plus application. It is an application that is considered capable of assisting researchers in qualitative research by providing valuable data, saving time, and offering better flexibility [20]. The data was retrieved through the Twitter account of the General Elections Commission of the Republic of Indonesia via NCapture from NVivo 12 Plus with Google Chrome. The data was processed with the Cross Tab feature to automatically calculate the necessary main statistical tests with meaningful comparisons and analysis of indirect variables. Crosstab Query feature is to enter code (manual, generate, etc.), text data, and numeric data on variable and pattern data. At this stage, an automatic calculation was found between all data related to the KPU's strategy in increasing voter turnout during the COVID-19 period. Furthermore, using the Word Cloud feature, words that often appear from data searches or view terms would be discussed. This research revealed the strategy of the Indonesian KPU regarding increasing voter numbers during the COVID-19 period.

3. BASIC THEORY

3.1 Strategy

The strategy is essentially a plan (planning) and management (management) to achieve specific goals in operational practice. A good strategy is a strategy that contains the values of its members so that they feel bound to the company's goals and can be a continuous encouragement for its members [21].

3.2 Political Participation

Community participation is an essential element of representative democracy in a democratic country. Community participation is the implementation of popular sovereignty, which is manifested by the involvement of voters in democratic parties. The higher participation indicates that the people follow, understand, and involve themselves in-state activities. Conversely, a low level of participation suggests that the people lack appreciation or interest in state problems or activities [22].

3.3 Public Communication Of Government

All voters have the correct access to government info because they will participate in politics. The correct information is enshrined in a range of international treaties and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The voters' access to public authority info is called the freedom of information act. It plays a significant role in providing residents information to create proper political selections [23].

The government must use integrated communication, which is defined as communication in use: customer integration and the understanding of all messages from any source, driven by the company or originating from other sources, the customer perceives as communication, forming a use-value for him for certain things [24].

Communication through social media could be an advanced method, involving several stakeholders, public participation, and interaction. Rising health emergencies in areas have seemingly become a near and dear issue. Thus, effective health and risk communication should also consider the political and cultural context

during which social media messages will be received and understood [25].

Implicit in politicians' general public on social platforms is transparency to the public by being responsive. Thus, for each politician and the public, social media has become a platform for depicting celebrities as a variety of "intimacy, genuineness and access, besides, because of the construction of an externals" [26].

3.4 Social Media Users Within a Government

Social media users refer to voters who use online platforms to specify their state affairs and participate in political activities to influence public policy. ICTs, particularly internet-based channels, permit voters to spread information concerning what the government is doing and then promptly replicate their views back to the political method. Since the beginning of the web era, similar ideas have appeared within the literature, like electronic democracy and online participation [27].

One of the best parts of social networks is that voters can participate in political debates voluntarily. This digital media transforms antecedently passive customers into active users who will produce their content and specific their views and interests on political problems. Social media connections' prevailing social network permits timely and period resources to unfold speedily through the user's network. Additionally, multimodal interactive content supported by a combination of facts and values will increase risk awareness and strengthen readiness by investing in public issues and might drive compliance [28].

Different social media, like blogs, microblogging, sharing services, text messages, discussion forums, and social networks that may directly interact with their voters, are presently utilized by government departments in varied countries. Control and implementing government policies for the greater good of society by increasing productivity and overall public services is at the core of e-gov coordination [29]. The government's social media is a replacement wave of technology adoption. The government on social media platforms is no longer seen as a choice, however, as a replacement customary. Therefore, in e-government analysis and followings around the world, the government's social media is turning into an important topic.

Social media's primary purpose is to make new ways to interact with the general public and increase participation and collaboration among voters. Understanding user views in social media communication has received more significant attention because social media has become an essential platform for organizations to act with users [30].

4. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Dissemination of Information

In carrying out its strategy, @KPU_ID used Twitter to socialize with the Indonesian people. During this COVID-19 pandemic, the community continued to carry out their duties as citizens by participating in the simultaneous elections in December 2020. Some information in the @KPU_ID Twitter account that could be analyzed in this study, among others, was the update time, interaction, and use of hashtags. The information was processed using Nvivo 12 plus, then the data found are as follows.

4.1.1. Time Update

The data below displays the tweet update time from the @KPU_ID account in conducting outreach to the community so that the Indonesian people continue to participate in the 2020 simultaneous regional elections in Indonesia.

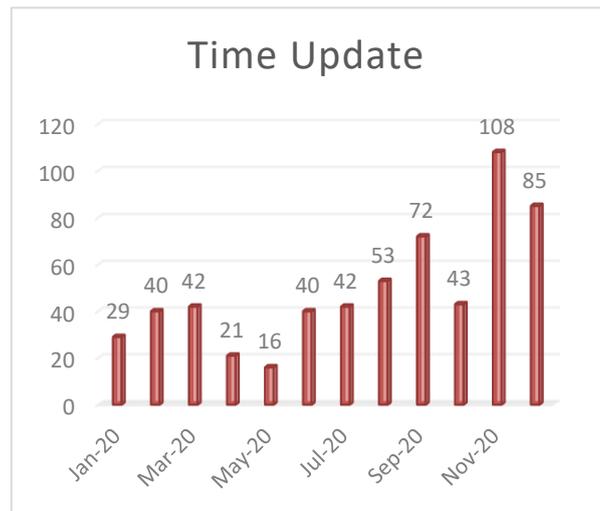


Figure 1. Time Update

The chart above shows an increase in the activeness of the @KPU_ID Twitter account

ahead of the 2020 simultaneous regional elections held in December 2020. The increase in the activity of the @KPU_ID account increased from June 2020 to September 2020. Then there was a decrease in October 2020, but then there was an increase in November 2020. It was KPU's busiest month before holding simultaneous regional elections in December 2020.

4.1.2. The Interaction Relationship

The data below shows the interaction relationship between the @KPU_ID account on Twitter

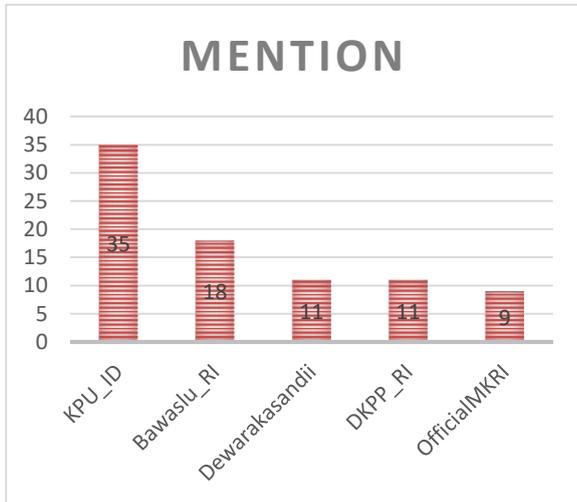
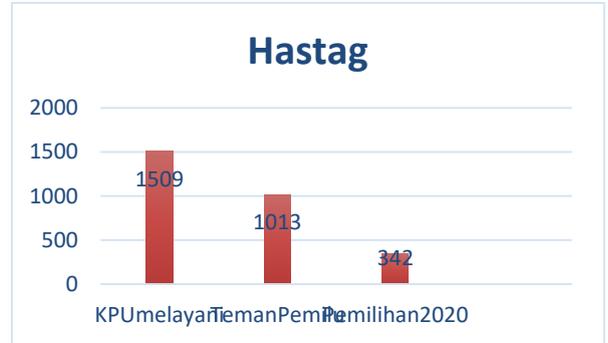


Figure 2. Mentions

The chart above shows the mentions that occurred on the @KPU_ID Twitter account. These mentions are interactions on Twitter that interact with the @KPU_ID account during the 2020 simultaneous elections. From the picture above, it can be seen that the @KPU_ID received the most mentions, with a total of 35 words. Next, there is the @Bawaslu_RI account which has the most interactions with the @KPU_ID account with 18 comments. Furthermore, there are Dewarakasandii accounts and DKPP_RI accounts that interact with the @KPU_ID account, with a total of 11 mentions. And finally, there is the OfficialMKRI account that interacts with the @KPU_ID account with a total of 9 mentions.

4.1.3. The use of hashtags

The data below shows what @KPU_ID account used in carrying out its strategy to increase voter turnout during the COVID-19



pandemic in Indonesia.

Figure 3. Hashtags

The chart above shows hashtags used by @KPU_ID during the 2020 simultaneous elections. There were three hashtags, namely #KPUmelayani with a total of 1509 tweets, followed by #TemanPemilu with 1013 tweets, and the last is #Election2020 with a total of 342 users tweeting.

4.2. Discussion on Twitter

In the @KPU_ID Twitter account, apart from disseminating information, there are also discussions. The debate on Twitter resulted in an analysis cluster, and the word frequency data are as follows.

4.2.1. Indicators

On the @KPU_ID Twitter account, in carrying out the distribution and interaction, several indicators could be discussed. The indicators discussed include the following:

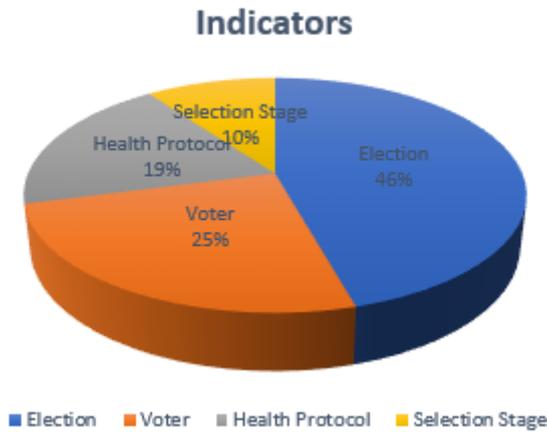


Figure 4. Indicators

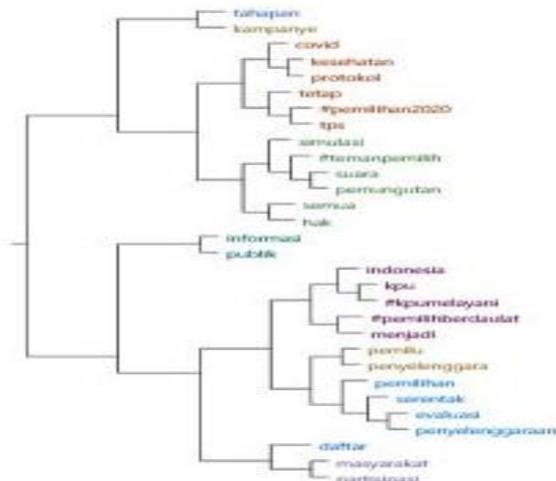
The chart above shows the indicators in the discussion that occurred in the @KPU_ID account. The most frequently discussed indicator is the election, with 306 tweets. Furthermore, the second indicator that is widely discussed by the @KPU_ID version is Voter with 169 tweets. The next indicator is the Health Protocol, with 128 tweets. And the last indicator is the Selection Stage, with a total of 67 tweets.

4.2.2. The Cluster Analysis

The data below discusses the analysis cluster that was found when an interaction occurred by the @KPU_ID account.

Figure 5. Cluster Analysis

The picture above shows the cluster analysis



that occurred on the @KPU_ID account. This cluster analysis explains the discussion themes

that often arise during the 2020 simultaneous elections. Clusters that appear include the selection stage, health protocol, campaign, election, etc.

4.2.3. Words that Frequently Appear

Words below often appear in tweets by the @KPU_ID account



Figure 6. Words Frequently

The image above describes the words that appear the most in the @KPU_ID account. These words include KPU, #KPUmelayani, #TemanPemilih, Elections, #Pemilihan2020, and Elections.

4.3. Finding Research

In this study, it was found that the strategy carried out by the General Election Commission (KPU) in Indonesia had succeeded in increasing voter turnout in the 2020 simultaneous elections during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is evidenced by the Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting Survey (SMRC), showing the participation rate in the regional elections during the pandemic is higher than expected. Around 76 percent of residents living in the Pilkada area voted on December 9, 2020, higher than the election five years ago, which was 69 percent [31].

5. CONCLUSION

The General Election Commission (KPU) in Indonesia has succeeded in using one of the social media platforms, namely Twitter, to socialize and disseminate information to increase voter turnout in the 2020 simultaneous

regional elections held during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. @KPU_ID's Twitter account does a great job in sharing information. The dissemination of information about the simultaneous elections and the health protocol used by the KPU made the public enthusiastic about participating in the 2020 simultaneous elections. It is proven that there was an increase in voter participation in the 2020 simultaneous elections compared to the 2015 simultaneous elections.

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