

## Strengthening the Role of Village Head Communications In The Digital Age

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**Abstract:** The village head as a local actor has a strategic role in the development and empowerment of village communities. The implementation of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages as well as Law Number 14 Year 2008 on Public Information Transparency is a demand that must be responded by the village head. Moreover, the third point of Nawacita: "Building Indonesia from the Fringe by Strengthening Areas and Villages within the Framework of Unitary State" places the village as a Government development priority. On the other hand, the massive development of digital media influences the communication patterns of society. But there is still reluctance from the village head to take advantage of digital communication media as a new media. Denis McQuail outlines the main features of new media that can be utilized such as decentralization, high ability, interactivity and flexibility of forms, content and usage. Participatory Media Culture Theory by Henry Jenkins is used to view social realities in which new media offer the audience to jointly take on the role of media consumers and media producers alike. Through the literature study, this article describes how efforts can be made to strengthen the role of village head communications in the digital age.

**Keywords:** [the Village Head, New Media, Participatory Media Culture, Source of Credibility]

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The village is a representation of the smallest community law unity that has characteristics in running its social life as part of the life order of the Indonesian nation. There are 4 (four) village authorities regulated in Law Number 6 Year 2014 on Villages covering government administration, development implementation, community development, and community empowerment.

The communication of the village chief's leadership becomes interesting to study due to a change of authority that has implications on the complexity of the dealings dealt with. There are at least four major challenges that the village must face. Namely (1) the amount of budget allocated to the village; (2) government and political affairs; (3) the

existence of public information disclosure demands; and (4) the rapid development of communications technology in the digital age.

First, village legislation places the village as the spearhead of development and improving people's welfare. villages are given the authority and adequate resources to manage their potential. This priority is also stipulated in the Government's Development Priority Nawacita at point 3 stating that the government builds Indonesia from the periphery by strengthening the regions and villages within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

Village funds allocated by the government become one of the commitments in strengthening the role of the village. Since 2015 the allocation of

village funds has increased significantly. In 2015, the village budget is Rp. 20.7 trillion with the average of each village received an allocation of Rp. 280 million. In 2016, village funds increased to Rp. 46.98 trillion with an average of Rp. 628 million. In 2017, village funds again increased to Rp. 60 trillion with an average of each village getting an allocation of Rp. 800 million. In 2019 the government targets each village on average to get an allocation of Rp. 1.4 billion.

The budgets in the village are not only village funds but other sources of funding from village funding allocations, district financial aid, provincial financial assistance, tax returns, and other legitimate income from village-owned enterprises. The size of the existing budget in the village requires communication skills of the village head in planning, implementing and evaluating the use of the budget.

Second, there is a change of village and political government. The village head is inseparable from the election duty. In 2018 there is the election of Governor / Vice Governor of Central Java whereas in 2019 there is direct election of legislative and president. The village head should indirectly facilitate the electoral tool at the village level, namely the Voting Officer (PPS) and the Field Supervisory Committee (PPL).

Sragen Regent (Perbup) Regulation No. 20 of 2017 on Organizational Structure and Working Procedures of Village Government also give significant change. This is the foundation for organizing the structure of village organizations and equipment. Organizational structure that has been agreed with the Village Representative Agency (BPD) has implications for the arrangement of village apparatus according to organizational structure and competencies. The village secretary who

comes from the State Civil Service (ASN) is drawn to the original work unit. The next stage is filling vacancies from the village apparatus through competency tests. After this stage is completed then the new charging device village from the public.

Third, the public information disclosure which is mandated by Law Number 14 Year 2008 also impacts on minister changes of public servants, including village administration. Even some local governments appoint a village secretary as an Information and Documentation Management (PPID) Officer.

Fourth, the rapid development of communication technology in the digital era. The vital role of the village in development requires the ability of the village head to communicate the exercise of his or her authority through various channels of communication. Moreover, the development of the digital era now requires speed and openness of information that is easily accessible to the public supported technologies such as websites, social media, or other smartphone applications. The Village Law also mandates the use of information technology systems to support the performance of village heads.

But in reality there is still reluctance of village heads to use communication media in the digital era as a new media. The village head still chooses traditional channels of communication regardless of the rapid demands of new media developments. In fact, the increasing number of tasks carried by the village head should be more and more communication channels that must be used.

This can be due to the lack of ability of village heads in using communication media in the digital age. In addition, the village head also has not understood the potential of digital communication

media. As a result, the demands of the use of various media such as websites, social media, or other smartphone applications have not been used optimally.

For that it needs to strengthen the role of village head communications in the digital era. Strengthening the role is done to the credibility of the village head as a communicator as well as the ability of communications media in the digital era.

## **2 METODE**

This article uses literature study methods on journals, books and scientific articles relating to strengthening leadership communications in the digital age. The literature is then compared between new media capabilities and the theory of Source of credibility (Hovland, Janis & Kelley).

## **3 RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Communication**

Trenholm & Jensen define communication as a process by which sources transmit messages to recipients through multiple channels. Hovland defines communication as the process by which individuals transmit stimuli to change the behavior of other individuals.

Frank Dance discovers three dimensions of critical conceptual difference to the definition of communication. First, the level of observation or abstractness, some definitions are very common while the other definitions are narrow. Second, intentionality, some definitions include sending and receiving messages consciously whereas other definitions do not impose these restrictions. Third, judgment, some definitions mention explicitly about success, effectiveness, or accuracy, whereas other definitions do not mention explicitly.

In the context of leadership communication of the village head,

Barrett defines leadership communication as the controlled, purposeful transfer of meaning by which the leader influences a single person, a group, an organization, or a community. Leadership communication uses the full range of communication skills and resources to overcome interferences and to create and deliver messages that guide, direct, motivate, or inspire others to action.

### **3.2 Village Head's Credibility as Communicator**

As a communicator, Village Head must have a credibility that qualified in delivering communication messages. The higher the credibility of the communicator will be easier to affect the audience. Conversely, if the communicator has a low credibility then the message will be difficult to accept. Cangara provides conditions for the success of communicators, namely credibility (credibility), attractiveness (attractive), and strength (strength). Credibility (credibility) is a set of perceptions about the advantages possessed source so accepted or followed by audiences (recipients).

The source of credibility theory coined by Hovland, Janes and Kelley assumes that a person may be more easily persuaded if his persuasion sources are credible enough.

Devito said that the form of credibility can be divided into 3 (three) kinds of parts, namely: (1) initial credibility, ie credibility obtained before the communication process was initiated; (2) Derived credibility, ie the credibility that communicators gain during communication; and (3) terminal credibility, ie the credibility that the communicator receives after the listener or reader follows his or her review.

### 3.3 Strengthening Village Head Communications in the Digital Age

The dynamic communication model as presented by Osgood and Schramm has characteristics that correspond to communication in the digital age. Cangara describes this circular model as a dynamic model, where messages are transmitted through encoding and decoding processes. The relationship of encoding and decoding is the relationship between source and receiver that take place simultaneously and influence each other. Interpreter can double as both sender and recipient of the message.

This model places the message sender and receiver in a dynamic position. In one process, the communicator transmits a message to a communicant that can be responded by sending the message back to the first source as a reciprocal process. This ability can be done by the communication media in the digital age.

For example, social media can be used by the village head to communicate the exercise of authority to the community. Communication through social media allows interactive communication between the village head and the community, and even personal person per person.

The village head can take advantage of these dynamic communication characteristics to disseminate information and interact with the community. The community will be easy to communicate with the village head communications personally and interactively, coupled with the credibility of the village head. Initial credibility that has been attached to the position of the village head strongly supports the success of communication.

But what needs attention is the ability to communicate the village head during the communication to get derived credibility. Transparency, responsiveness and communicative become the absolute requirement to get terminal credibility.

Denis McQuail also outlines the main features of new media that can be utilized by the village head among them:

- (1) *digitalization and convergence of all aspect of media;*
- (2) *increased interactivity and network connectivity;*
- (3) *mobility and delocation of sending and receiving;*
- (4) *adaptation of publication and audience role;*
- (5) *appearance of diverse new forms of media gateway)* (McQuail, 2010: 141).

While Roger (1986) describes the main features of new media are: (1) Interactivity, new media facilitate individuals communicate almost like face-to-face communication with high levels of interactivity so as to communicate accurately, effectively and more satisfactorily; (2) Demassification, a special message can be exchanged individually among the participants involved in large numbers so that the communication control system moves from producer to consumer message; (3) Asynchronous, new communication technology has the ability to send and receive messages at the desired time.

## 4 CONCLUSIONS

The presence of new media in the digital age can help the village head's communication in exercising its increasing authority. But there needs to be an increase in the credibility of the village head.

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