

Political Communication Patterns through Social Media: A Case of an Indonesian Presidential Staff Twitter Account

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Abstract—Given the current technological developments, social media has become a necessity and a new tool that can complement services. Social media can influence the understanding of political communication and its impact on the public. Every element of society uses social media for various purposes, including the government. One who is quite active on Twitter and has repeatedly drawn controversy is the Presidential Chief of Staff, Retired General Moeldoko. The research investigates the pattern of political communication carried out by the Presidential Chief of Staff by focusing on his Twitter account and using the components of the effectiveness of political communication and media effects. The research applies a qualitative approach supported by the NVivo 12 Plus software. The data are collected using the NCapture for NVivo feature on the Presidential Chief of Staff's Twitter account (@Dr_Moeldoko). The results show that Moeldoko's communication through Twitter is generally for the media or fellow government agencies. His communication is also a way to provide information about government programs. In addition, the research also finds that the alleged ineffectiveness in Twitter management is based on a decrease in account activity. It can be concluded that his pattern of communication is general, vertical, and not participatory.

Index Terms—Political Communication Patterns, Social Media, Indonesian Presidential Staff, Twitter

I. INTRODUCTION

AS a result of the technological revolution and globalization, social media are inevitable in everyday life. The social media trend was very dynamic in 2009 and 2015. For example, social media trends show very little influence on the political world. Still,

this trend could be inversely proportional to 2016 and significantly impacted politics [1]. The rise of this trend makes politicians use social media in their daily interactions with the community in various aspects of the political process from before the election until after being elected. Facebook, Twitter, and Google do not only advertise products but also encourage purchasing digital advertisements. They also actively shape how campaigns are through collaborating closely with policymakers and how members of these firms serve as digital consultants for election campaigns and assist in developing digital strategies, content, and execution [2].

Facebook and Twitter are the two most widely used social media channels in political activities. Both have features that allow delivering specific political message messages effectively. Although the businesses tend to differ, Facebook is more suited to be used as a container for mobilization. Meanwhile, Twitter is more suitable for two-way communication from one individual to another, considering the use of more limited characters than Facebook [3]. Politicians use Facebook and Twitter for a variety of reasons. The numerous results of political communication mediation on social media are products of the audiences' unique characteristics and the sociotechnical environment [4]. For example, Indian political elites use cyberspace to set agendas through social participation, as seen in their public presentation. The four distinct groups of political elites and their manifestations in global life are also examined through the review of tweets [5]. Moreover, promoting Quebec's parliamentary news release on Twitter is a critical feature. In times of

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economic distress, the management team's desire for popularity, competitiveness, and demand drive the use of Twitter as a promotional tool [6].

One of the most prominent things is that the President does not only use social media as the head of government. Similarly, the other staff, the government officials, use a personal account until an agency's official statement is used. One of the frequent uses of Twitter in the interactions with the community is done by Retired General Moeldoko. The former commander-in-chief Indonesian of the National Armed Forces is now Presidential Chief of Staff. Moeldoko has been a Presidential Chief of Staff since January 17, 2018. Moeldoko often and actively shares government policies and what the President does on his Twitter. However, sometimes, Moeldoko's opinion can make an arguably controversial statement. For example, when a series of tweets with one particular topic (Kultwit) reaps the pros and cons among the central community in cyberspace. Moeldoko has stated that the city in Kalimantan and Sumatra faced the haze problem patiently. Moeldoko has also got the spotlight from neighboring countries at that time. Moreover, that statement receives a lot of criticism [7]. According to Raynaldo Sembiring from the Indonesian Center for Environmental Law (ICEL), some may practice it but question how serious the government is in addressing haze as a national problem [8].

Most of the research on the use of social media (Twitter) by the executive government is still in use, looking at the research conducted in the last few years. Moreover, the previous studies about heads of government also still focus on using social media as a means of political communication during campaigns. So, to distinguish the research from previous research, the researchers emphasize the effectiveness of the use of social media by officials other than the head of government, in this case, the Presidential Chief of Staff.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Government

In the government, social media are disproportionately and likely to associate with diverse political networks and relies on digital networking channels (lists and websites) for various information and action purposes [9]. Moreover, it encourages public participation as a communication tool that will help to boost public acceptance [10]. When viewed from the communication and coordination of the Indonesian government's official Twitter account, the development of intensive contact and coordination between President Joko Widodo and his staff accelerates the

proper management of the situation. In addition, this action is carried out with the help of several governors. For example, it aims to strengthen the commitment of central and local government officials and work together to implement policies that will effectively deal with COVID-19. This communication and coordination effort has prompted the provincial government to pay great attention to several locations to speed up the handling [11]. The hashtag #SobatParekraf is a specific keyword or topic symbol, meaning a friend of tourism and the creative economy. It shows that communication networks prefer Twitter as their platform of choice and use #SobatParekraf to embed digital culture in content [12]. Another example is the high level of communication regarding plans to reopen tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another example of previous research contributes to the guidelines for new communication network methods [13]. It also recognizes the political advantages and disadvantages of alliances, pursuing positions, and securing support to win presidential elections. In addition, the expertise of political actors in establishing relationships is essential. Modern presidential candidates may be more receptive to sharing information, as personalization issues can help raise their public profile [14]. In many circumstances, technical problems, such as lack of interoperability, incorrect settings, and misalignment with work procedures, make it very difficult for human resources to complete the required digital connection [15]. However, according to previous research [16], individuals who investigate how policies and COVID-19 communication related to political goals may have been primarily motivated by the need to preserve a powerful ruling class and ensure stability.

B. Political Communication Patterns through Social Media

Social media are considered an excellent communication tool by raising four main topics: dialogue promotion, engagement, unconstraint, and barriers. The first three topics focus on social media opportunities, while the fourth outlines the challenges local governments face in using social media [17]. The groups of politicians who are more inventive and progressive in their political communication, which reflects the hopes and expectations of how social media may affect politicians and political communication, are weaker than politicians in blog networks [18]. They do not fully benefit from social media as the embassy does. Meanwhile, embassies are transparent, use pleasant feelings, and provide helpful information to their stakeholders in their online communications. So, there is little direct

and personal interactive communication participation with only a small group of stakeholders [19].

However, not everyone has a beneficial influence on political communications on social media. Some have terrible effects [20]. For example, not only in Nigeria but also around the world, the use of hate speech and fake news in campaign messages has led to very different political communications and opposing approaches. They spend their days and energy insulting and spreading harmful marketing through hate and fake news, not taking the time to explain to voters what their goals are and what they want to do. Incessantly, they also make jarring posts on social networks, which often discredit their supporters [21]. Social media users experience political conflict and perceive it more on social media than in other modes of communication. Then, news consumption on social media is favorably associated with perceived disagreement on social media [22].

Even politically apathetic people indulge in simple political activities, such as liking and commenting on political posts on social media. When they do, it may result in increased political action. However, those who indulge in simple political activities are more likely to engage in more difficult political behaviors, providing evidence for both the interest and activation hypotheses [23]. The Internet, social media, and television are more successful in influencing political decision-making. For example, if university student's interest in the country's problems grows, their involvement in politics and awareness of its major political issues will also grow. However, there is a weak correlation between party allegiance and government and internal political effectiveness. Notably, internal political efficacy, party allegiance, interest in the country's issues, political campaigns, and social media effectiveness in political decisions positively predict the social media score for political participation [24].

Social media's political effectiveness is positive for active activism experiences. The relationship between social media's political efficacy and activism is more significant than previous research's principles of political effectiveness and social media activism [25]. Competence in social media communication and expectations of status, novelty, and social results affect political speech on social media. Additionally, the predicted outcomes of users' political discourse on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter, are distinct. Interpersonal communication factors play a critical role in social media's political debate and the disparities in users' expectations when expressing their political views through various social media platforms [26]. For example, the hashtag #Gejayanmemanggil is trending on social media. Twitter is highly successful in orga-

nizing students' social movements [27]. Twitter uses the #Gejayanmemanggil as a code or symbol with the connotation of an event or protest conducted on Gejayan street. The Gejayan rally occurred where Moses Gatokaca was slain in the Gejayan tragedy [28]. The ability of social media impacts political propaganda, and the extent to which government policies monitor information goes beyond censorship, propaganda, and disinformation [29].

Several previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of social media use, such as using social media by parliament [30]. Social media platforms offer advantages for political elites and citizens in communicating in public areas. The illusionary distance between elites and ordinary people reveals concerns such as corruption and constitutes a crucial instrument in the fight against corrupt intents [31]. Previous research also frequently discusses the effectiveness of social media use by the head of government, such as discussing the point of social media use by the world leader in the NATO World Leader Summit [32].

In the communication strategies of political campaigns, social media play an increasingly crucial role by reflecting information on the preferences and opinions of political actors and public followers. Furthermore, the contents of the messages provide extensive knowledge regarding the political issues and their structure during elections, such as the topics under dispute involving Europe or extending national debates in advance [33]. Popular narratives are primarily anti-state in their views and opinions. Indeed, users frame and narrate the crisis through the lens of preexisting and emergent political narratives [34]. Although Twitter plays a critical role in enabling lawmakers to track current political events and engage with constituents, it is often frequently used as a personal branding tool in other contexts, not only during election campaigns. Sentiment may impact the political opinion-forming process, resulting in electoral interference [35]. For example, the Trump administration is contesting the normative pillars of presidential communication due to the evolution of presidential activities alongside fragmented media and Trump's communication style. The deliberate logic of Presidents' negotiations contrasts with the sense of liberal individualistic digital communication [36]. Friendship - Driven (F.D.) and Interest - Driven (I.D.) interaction also contribute to political participation in distinct ways. The size of young people's social networks interacts with both F.D. and I.D. online activity to encourage political activity. Exposure to "weak ties" (as a result of massive social networks) increases political participation [37]. Exposure to reasoned online political comments increases

offline and online political engagement directly and indirectly through perception [38]. Political messages with pleasant emotions inspire positive citizens' answers, while neutral content draws negative remarks and criticism and supports opponents more frequently. It also means that political players' bidirectional communication and tolerance boost citizens' involvement, whereas one-way communication reduces it [39].

Twitter replicates most of the discontent in public political discussions. In a future study, they also significantly impact the interaction between social media and policy. They emphasize the necessity to address potential prejudicial factors arising from these sources of inequality [40]. Political support has an essential connection to the political agenda on social media. In addition, political support plays a vital role in the political agenda on social media. Social media give information for understanding the country's political concerns and empower people to contribute political details. Social media offers students a venue for political debate, leading to political support [41]. Because political communication is such a complex scientific discipline, theories of media impacts, other subjective notions based on interpretive and deconstructive approaches, and some of the methodologies used to examine political communication are difficult to grasp in one way or another. The analysis to understand political communication should be done comprehensively and use various perspectives.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

The method applied in the research is qualitative. Qualitative study is a broad term that encompasses a variety of naturalistic research approaches used in social life. Qualitative research on social systems, structures, and governance is at a crossroads. Qualitative research shapes policy and educates policymakers about the realities of their social services and interventions [42]. Qualitative research has actual relevance because of its ability to vividly depict the environment in which social action takes place and reveals unexpected things [43]. Qualitative research's defining characteristics include a deserving subject, extensive rigor, sincerity, reputation, resonance, significant contribution, ethics, and substantive coherence. This eight-point conceptualization is helpful as a teaching model because it offers a shared vocabulary for qualitative best practices for many people [44]. Figure 1 shows the research process.

A. A model of Twitter Usage Related to Political Communication

The search for data begins with a literature review to find issues related to the research and supporting

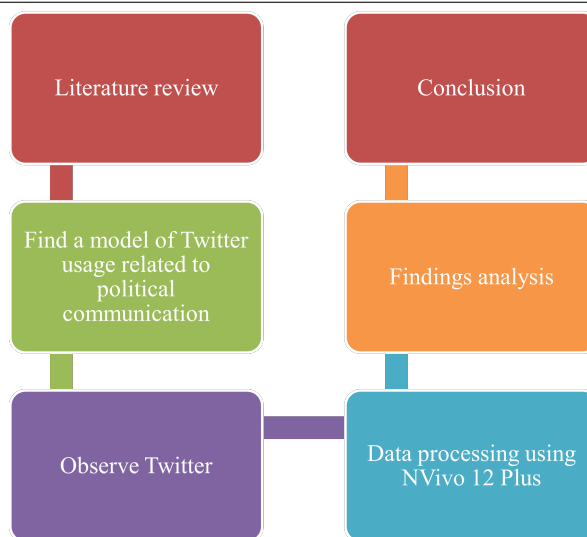


Fig. 1. Research process.

theories and data. Then, the data are made into a theoretical framework that serves as a guide for data retrieval and analysis. The research reports related to political communication are some literature review or information processing theory, media effects theory, and other objectives. The research assesses or sets social media accounts as the research subject.

B. Data Processing Using NVivo 12 Plus

The condition of every media today, especially social media, dramatically expands the scope of human communication. The presence of the media cannot be apart from people's lives in urban and rural areas. However, managing and analyzing data from various digital sites require a tool to decipher their contents, in this case, with the help of the NVivo 12 Plus application. NVivo 12 Plus is an application that can manage digital data effectively and efficiently. Thus, it allows the researchers to understand each case study thoroughly. Therefore, the research aims to present how data from digital web platforms are with the help of the NVivo 12 Plus application. The research focuses on Twitter. The researchers use books and journals as material for literature review. Then, the primary data are from the Twitter account of the Presidential Chief of Staff, Moeldoko (@Dr_Moeldoko).

The researchers use NCapture for NVivo 12 Plus to collect data from the Presidential Chief of Staff Moeldoko's Twitter account (@Dr_Moeldoko). The researchers also apply the NVivo 12 Plus to assess the data collected automatically. Results are used as material for analysis and fitted to the framework created in advance because it completes the literature review at

the beginning of the procedure. After going through the analytical processes, the researchers draw a conclusion based on the research findings.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. The Intensity of Activity in Moeldoko's Twitter

Given the current era, political communication may effectively disseminate information, as Twitter transmits millions of tweets daily. Twitter's media efficiency allows the less geographically and temporally precise identification of actual events or acts taken by the government, public concerns, and other information. It provides people with an incredible opportunity to investigate and document the dynamics of real-world happenings and comprehend the government's acts and the variations in day-to-day activity.

The first analysis shows the intensity of Twitter usage in @Dr_Moeldoko. In Fig. 2, Retired General Moeldoko was most active using his personal Twitter (@Dr_Moeldoko) in July 2018. When viewing field data and some tweets from Moeldoko, there is a topic of a natural earthquake in Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara. Moeldoko, as the Presidential Chief of Staff, is very active in providing information related to government programs in every phase of a disaster.

Access, participation, and engagement are the first three components of political communication. The use of social media has not been associated with a participation function, so there are no two-way social media. If the research looks at people's attitudes toward interactions, the interaction that Moeldoko created is still one-way. In this scenario, the sole purpose of social media is to disseminate information regarding the event or the programs.

In addition, Moeldoko was praised by President Joko Widodo as one of three formidable contenders for the 2019 general election back in July of 2018. During that time, he frequently joined President Joko Widodo on various tours. The data from Moeldoko's Twitter account also reveals that he clarifies the news circulating at the time, including the question of President Joko Widodo being a foreign minion, which Moeldoko believes to be fake information. In addition, Moeldoko conveys his undying allegiance and unwavering support to President Joko Widodo.

The circumstance also suggests that Moeldoko's political communication job motivates him to utilize Twitter as a tool for agenda-setting. He uses social media to persuade the public that the government must carry out its duties following the community's expectations [45]. According to earlier research, the political agenda of the party, the conventional media agenda, and politicians' social media agendas are all

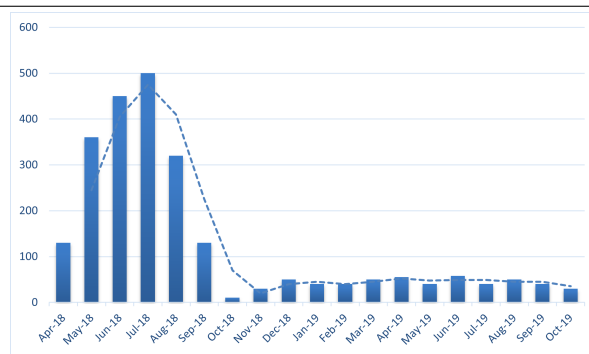


Fig. 2. The power of @Dr_Moeldoko's tweet.

influenced by one another. The basic plans are the same except for the fact. One significant exception is that the party's social media agenda is easier to foresee than its traditional media strategy for environmental issues. The project and other schedules are also closely related. However, persuasive communication strategies are essential to deter or allow parties from pursuing a certain agenda [46].

B. Map of Twitter Activity Distribution

It overviews the behavior in the investigated area during the day. It includes supplementary data to highlight the population's primary activities at various times. Twitter may now access the processing of space-time routes with a high resolution in both space and time. The researchers want to study the potential afforded by data, as well as the tools and visualizations required, to expose user mobility across a variety of various sorts of metropolitan settings. They work with data from Twitter. Unique impulses form the main aspects of complicated urban operations.

Figure 3 shows that tweets of @Dr_Moeldoko have had an intense interaction in several locations, such as Singapore, Bandung, Banten, Jakarta, and South Sulawesi. Overall, the tweet is relatively widespread in various provinces and neighboring countries. @Dr_Moeldoko has a dominant conversational interaction in Jakarta (=1000 or more), followed by South Sulawesi with a casual power calling (=176). There is also interaction intensity (=1) in Singapore, Banten, and Bandung.

Notable events in July 2018 were when Moeldoko joined the President with numerous ministers in South Sulawesi and his visit to the Indonesia Lawyer Club event. It was one of the most memorable events in July 2018. Because of these events, the traffic on his account had increased. In July, Moeldoko received several retweets and responses from other accounts that referred him.



Fig. 3. Twitter account's response mapping.

The communication that Moeldoko carries out typically only in one direction. The pattern of Moeldoko's relations is in stratum 1 of the political communication stratification. It indicates that Moeldoko's Twitter account maintains existing powers. He also attempts to rule in the latter or is a proximate decision-maker.

As previously said, Moeldoko's visit to South Sulawesi has significantly affected his Twitter account. It is along with Moeldoko's meeting with the President, several other noteworthy events, and the kids in the events. Specifically, the delegation of authority from Nasdem (a political party), the former Governor of South Sulawesi and chief of the inter-district relations of the central board (DPP), assists Moeldoko. It is shown in various ways, such as Syahrul Yasin Limpo being the Minister of Agriculture in President Joko Widodo's second term of government. It may allude to a notion about different political messaging subtypes. In this situation, Moeldoko's comment on Twitter strongly suggests a message like power distribution.

His highest activity in social media has occurred in Jakarta. It happened because of the meeting between General Moeldoko with his old friend, who served as Singapore's Defense Minister in July 2018, Ng Eng Hen (@Ng_Eng_Hen). Considering the domicile position, it is understandable that Moeldoko and other communicators related to Moeldoko are most common in Jakarta. However, Moeldoko's tweeting activity in Singapore is quite concerning.

However, Moeldoko's personal Twitter usage activity suffered a rapid decline in September 2018 and decreased dramatically in October 2018. Then, his Twitter activity increased in November 2018. Moel-

doko's use of Twitter tends to be stable and is under 100 tweets in one month. There is quite an increase, as seen in June 2019. Moeldoko commented a lot on the news regarding action on June 28, 2019. It was related to the announcement regarding the election dispute proceedings.

Political personalities can handle their social media accounts in one of two ways: individually or privately, administratively or collectively. Regarding this type, Moeldoko previously has remarked that an administrator oversees his Twitter account and occasionally engages in family-related Twitter activity. The efficiency of these administrators is still in doubt that the administration presently benefits collectively from using Twitter Moeldoko, given the drop in Moeldoko's Twitter activity.

In examining Moeldoko's Twitter activity, his communication style in his regular usage of Twitter can be seen in Fig. 4. There are two dominant actors in Moeldoko's interaction. The first is interaction with government agencies at the central level, such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Indonesia (@Kemenpora_RI), the National Archives Institute of the Republic of Indonesia (@Arsipnasion- alRI), and local institutions like the official Twitter account of West Java Province (@Jabarprovgoid). It also involves interaction with the agency that he rules. The second relationship is with the mass media. Some news media interact with Moeldoko's account, such as @Beritasatu, @Metro_TV, or @Tempodotco. The strong relationship between Moeldoko and the media can be seen in that Moeldoko gives statements that often reap the pros and cons. For example, in his

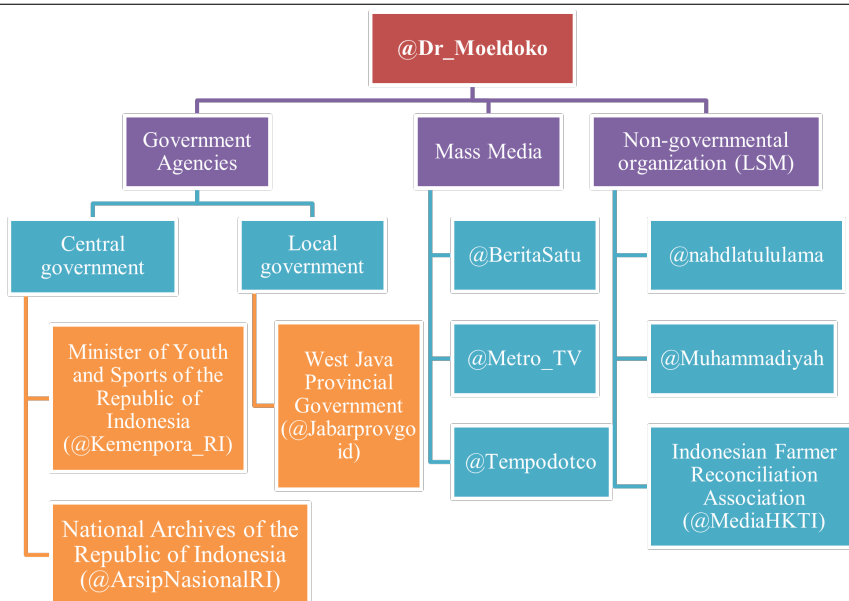


Fig. 4. Activity relationship of @Dr_Moeldoko.

statement on Twitter about forest fires, he asks the community to be steadfast and sincere in facing the problem.

There is also social media interaction with Moeldoko with several non-governmental organizations, namely with two leading Islamic organizations in Indonesia (Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah) through the LAZISMU account. It is understandable considering Moeldoko’s presence on several occasions, such as LAZISMU Ramadhan at the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership (PP Muhammadiyah) office, Menteng, Central Jakarta. During the meeting, Moeldoko expressed his appreciation for the LAZISMU program and discussed economic jihad as a real jihad that must carry out in the current era. Then, there is a tweet about his visit to the general manager’s office of Nahdlatul Ulama. He is welcomed directly by the chairman of the Nahdlatul Ulama board, Said Aqil Siradj. In addition, Moeldoko, who often tweets with the nuance of Islamic spirituality, is also considered suitable to represent the government in disabling the stigma. For example, President Joko Widodo is often called an anti-Islamic government that weakens President Joko Widodo’s leadership. So Moeldoko’s visit to two Islamic organizations is arguably the government’s affirmative action to refute these anti-Islam accusations. He also denies the allegations through his Twitter account.

In addition to the interaction with two Islamic organizations, Moeldoko often interacts with HKTI, or the association of Indonesian Farmers, considering Moeldoko’s position as the chairman of HKTI. It strengthens

Moeldoko’s relationship with Syahrul Yasin Limpo, considering that his second focus is on agriculture. The interaction with the existing community organizations can strengthen a sense of solidarity and a mutual desire to develop in the human development sector to create social welfare. For example, the Negede Woiito group members serve as community organizers for groups and neighborhoods. They are omitted, implemented, or assessed as community-based initiatives by the Jerusalem Children and Community Development Organization (JeCCDO). Apart from grassroots contact, development actors must understand the meaning and condition of community life. However, JeCCDO’s development activities are not [47]. In conclusion, it is suggested that NGOs and development workers initiate new poverty alleviation strategies. They should rethink their background and communication methods. An organizational background creates a space for dialogue and is not motivated to seek profit. It starts by aggressively promoting charities and voluntary donations. Then, it reduces the effect of media that focuses on profit. It also develops community participation plans through increasing philanthropic and volunteer contributions [48]. Social service activities in institutional networks raise concerns about organizational legitimacy and resource accessibility [49].

The approach emphasizes endogenous awareness and grassroots communication for community development. However, this mode of communication is rarely done. Seeing the network of two-way exchanges in Moeldoko’s tweets, a username is rarely used in

connection with his activity on Twitter. However, the account of the CEO of online media, Pangeran Siahaan, who has spoken with Moeldoko, is one of the names mentioned in the conversation. Also, there is @Adtaufiq discussing National Awakening Party (PKB) lawmaker Muhaimin Iskandar and Moeldoko's visit to GP Anshor's office.

In political communication theory, there are four components of the effectiveness of political communication: credibility, attraction, similarity, and power. It is understandable that Moeldoko meets two criteria: credibility and power. Moeldoko's credibility as a general-ranking soldier can enhance community confidence. In addition, his strength, serving as the commander in chief of the Indonesian National Army (TNI), also gives him considerable power and relations in the military and the government. Using Moeldoko as a political communicator can effectively convey the central government's political message regarding nationality and the sense of nationalism.

Additionally, Moeldoko bases his usage of Twitter to knit commonalities with most Indonesians by including a religious undertone. This finding supports the claim that tweets including religious appeals may have greater moral weight than those without such things. People may not need to tweet spiritual codes frequently, but they can do it sometimes with care and wisdom. For example, politicians promote religious concord between Americans and other nations while advocating for civic religion. Religious discourse is a wealthy and versatile genre that appeals to "high sensitivity" in various sizes of religious communities. Twitter users, for instance, remark that they make a unique appeal to civic religion in the wake of tragedy by using the terms "consideration and prayer". It is another piece of evidence that political leaders use this strategy [50]. Most respondents believe that conventional communication channels are more vital, notwithstanding the political appeal that social networks like Facebook and Twitter have gained. Furthermore, although most respondents recognize the interactive potential of new technologies, politicians have varying degrees of acceptance and utilization [51].

V. CONCLUSION

Political communication may take on numerous shapes depending on the goal. Moeldoko promotes the sharing of knowledge via social media by utilizing Twitter. He wants to inform the public about government activities through Kultwit and routine tweets. The Twitter account for Moeldoko serves two crucial communication functions. He tries to persuade the populace that the government has correctly fulfilled its

duties. The initial method is employed as a participant in official government operations and acts as an informant. The second procedure involves a fight to preserve governmental power as President Joko Widodo has occasionally been misrepresented on Twitter and other social media sites.

However, the research also has limitations, including the scope of the research time. The research only investigates using the Presidential Chief of Staff's Twitter (@Dr_Moeldoko) for two years (2018-2019). So, the results should interpret in terms of research objectives. Therefore, it is necessary to conduct further studies on the effectiveness of Retired General Moeldoko's political communication in 2020, 2021, and 2022, to maintain the prestige of Joko Widodo's government (regime) from various current political and economic pressures.

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