The Role of Social Media in Building Public Opinion on the Covid-19 Pandemic and Its Impact on National Defense

Dwi Agus Riyanto, Priyanto, and I Wayan Midhio

ABSTRACT

The rapid development of information and communication technology makes it easy for people to obtain various types of information and interact socially, one of which is through social media. With various kinds of information in it, social media can influence public views in the process of forming opinions or points of view. In addition to having a positive impact, social media can also have a negative impact if users cannot filter properly the news or information they find. This research examines the role of social media in building public opinion, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic so that it affects national defense. The research method used is literature study. The results of the study show that social media has become a means of spreading both positive and negative information about Covid-19. Social media has great power to lead to public perceptions, which can generate opinions and then create social behavior that is counter-productive to the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Public opinion on Covid-19 has an influence on people's readiness to face a global pandemic attack. The amount of information containing hoaxes or fake news related to Covid-19 has created a lot of confusion among the public, making handling it even more difficult, and causing a lot of material and immaterial losses, especially fatalities. This of course will affect the decline in the potential of national resources which will have an impact on the strength of the country's defense.

Keywords: Covid-19, National Defense, Public Opinion, Social Media.

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I. Introduction

The presence of technology has a rapid impact on life. Humans use technology in every life. The influence of technology attracted Marshall McLuhan's attention through his book Understanding Media in 1964. McLuhan wrote about the influence of technology. Where changes in technology, society is increasingly dependent on and can create and manage culture at the same time (Morissan, 2013).

Social media is a place to convey information to the public that has a crucial role in building public opinion. The description of social media objects is public opinion that refers to something that varies but will produce information (Cangara, 2009). Social media is a tool used to spread opinions and news from certain sources, as well as from one person to the public. Through social media, one can easily share information and exchange ideas as well as discuss unlimited things (Legionosuko, 2017).

As Cangara explained, social media is a tool for conveying important messages in communication that are influenced by someone. Then social media becomes a center of information for the public. The existence of social media is inseparable from the era of the industrial revolution 4.0 where all conventional media turned into digital media. Finally, the role of information provider is more on social media, not through conventional media. Public opinion that has been formed can change after social media contains conflicting information. Social media has become one of the main actors in shaping public opinion and has a broad impact on society.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, social media became part of providing important information on the situation and condition of Covid-19 in the world and especially in Indonesia. This information is certainly very useful for knowing the development of the Covid-19 pandemic. If we trace back a little, Covid-19 appeared in China, social media is filled with this information. Furthermore, the information experienced a rapid increase that attracted the attention of the public at large. Policies limiting public activities in almost all countries play a role in guiding the media in building opinion and determining public behavior during Covid-19.

The role of social media is very large during the Covid-19 pandemic. There is news about Covid-19 that the Covid-19 virus is not dangerous and is considered a normal virus. The emergence of social media reports whose truth is doubtful and not credible about Covid-19 has made people less concerned about, and alert and indifferent to the spread of Covid-19. The opposite condition also occurred in other parts of society, who panicked to protect themselves. People's fears are not without reason. The behavior and mindset of the community is of course based on the information it gets. The phenomenon of panic buying also occurred, people bought goods, especially basic needs, in unreasonable amounts which caused scarcity in the market.

Various impacts occur in the social community and their influence on the functions of the government and private sectors. Covid-19 does not only disrupt resilience in the health sector, but has a domino effect on other sectors. The large number of victims and the wide coverage of areas affected by Covid-19 can affect national defense. This is because today's social media has become the dominant factor influencing public views in the process of forming opinions. Thus, the writer is interested in writing about the role of social media in building public opinion during the Covid-19 pandemic and its influence on national defense.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS

A. Agenda Setting

Agenda setting is a strong relationship between the news conveyed by the media and issues that are considered important by the public, which is one of the most popular types of mass media effects called agenda setting. Agenda setting exists because the mass media is an information gate that must be effective in conveying information. The media must sort and choose what to convey and what the public knows about a situation at a certain time. The media mostly carry out the process of selecting and filtering news by the media. Agenda setting can build general issues that are considered important and can also determine parts or aspects of these general issues that are considered important (McQuail, 2011).

B. National Defense

Indonesia's defense is structured in a universal defense system to achieve national goals as stated in the Preamble to the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia. The overall defense system integrates military defense and non-military defense. This is done through efforts to build strength and national defense capabilities that are strong and respected and have high deterrence against all forms of threats. As RI Law Number 3 of 2002, concerning National Defense, Article 4 which states that, threats are every business and activity, both from within the country and abroad which is considered to endanger the sovereignty of the country, the territorial integrity of the country, and the safety of the whole nation (RI Law No. 3, 2002).

The implementation of national defense based on RI Law No. 3 of 2002 is guided by the universal people's defense and security system (Sishankamrata) by involving all citizens, territories and other national resources. The definition of national defense in RI Law no. 34 of 2004 concerning the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) Article 1 paragraph (5) which states that national defense is all efforts to uphold state sovereignty, maintain the territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), and protect the entire nation from threats and disturbances against the integrity of the nation and state, prepared by taking into account the geographical conditions of Indonesia as an archipelagic country (RI Law No. 34, 2004).

Furthermore, in RI Law no. 23 of 2019 concerning Management of National Resources (PSDN), Article 1 which states that national defense for a sovereign nation is a way to maintain, protect and maintain the integrity, unity and integrity, as well as national sovereignty against all forms of threats. The Indonesian nation has its own way of building its national defense system. Through a defense system that is universal by involving all citizens, territories and other national resources, which is prepared early by the government and implemented in a total, integrated, directed and sustainable manner to uphold state sovereignty, territorial integrity and safety of the entire nation from any threats (Law No. 23, 2019).

PSDN for national defense aims to transform national resources into national defense forces. SDN is ready to be used for national defense purposes through efforts to defend the country, arrangement of supporting components, and formation of reserve components. So it can be said that national defense is a universal defense and security that is prepared early and involves all national elements to uphold state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national safety.

III. RESEARCH METHODS

The method in this research is literature study. According to Mestika (2003), literature or library studies can be interpreted as a series of activities related to methods of collecting library data, reading and recording and processing research materials. Literature studies can also study various reference books and the results of similar previous studies which are useful for obtaining a theoretical basis for the problem to be studied (Sarwono, 2006). Meanwhile, according to Sugiyono, library research is a theoretical study, references and other scientific literature related to culture, values and norms that develop in the social situation under study (Sugiyono, 2012).

IV. DISCUSSION

A. History of Social Media and Its Understanding

McLuhan and Quentin Fiore stated that the media in every era has become the essence of society. They argue that there are four eras or eras (epochs) in media history, and each era is related to the dominant mode of communication in that era. Furthermore, McLuhan stated that the media functions as an extension of the human senses in each era, namely: ethnicity (tribal); writing (literate); print (print); and electronics (Morissan, 2013).

The birth of the earliest social media network, namely Six Degrees which launched in 1997. Six Degrees itself is the first social media platform that can allow users to connect with real world contacts, for example by creating a profile in a database. After the emergence of social media Six Degrees which turned out to be short-lived. In 2001, the world of communication technology made another innovation by presenting a new social media called Friendster. In contrast to the fate of its older sibling, Friendster managed to attract millions of users by simply registering email addresses and basic on-line networks.

So fast development, in a short time popping up other interactive social sites following Friendster. As if Friendster had not been allowed to exist alone for long. Since 2003 various social media have continued to emerge with many advantages, uniqueness, characteristics and various segmentations. Various social networking sites make it easy for users to share ideas, suggestions, views, activities, information, events, invitations and interests within each person's individual network. In addition to social networking services that are focused on individuals, figures or, community services are also developing which are more focused on groups or shared groups.

One example of social media is Facebook. Social networking site Facebook until now entered in the ranks of the five most well-known because it has many members. Then Twitter was born and added variety to social media. The birth of social media cannot be separated from the rapid development of communication technology and a society that is open in accepting the changing conditions of the world. So the rapid development of social media has become a reality and cannot be denied at this time. With the continued emergence of social media, in general social media users through internet-based applications can share, participate and create content. Social media and multimedia technology become one unit that is difficult to separate and encourages new things.

Because people always have a need for various information that will accompany them in their social activities. They will be very curious about some of the phenomena that occur outside, this is used as a reference in making an answer or decision (Unde, 2014). Of course, in social media there are norms that must be considered. Because social media is a powerful tool to influence public opinion (McQuail, 2010). In this regard, social media has a very large influence in influencing individuals or groups in terms of emotions and concepts that make them helpless in fighting the influence of the media (Hutagalung, 2015).

B. Definition of Public Opinion

Public opinion is the attitude or behavior that a person shows to the public, if he does not want himself to be isolated; in controversial terms, public opinion is an attitude that someone shows to the public without having to endanger himself, namely in the form of exclusion according to Noelle-Neumann (Morissan, 2008). In order to develop positive public opinion towards a public agency, it must be given complete and objective information regarding activities that concern their interests, so that an understanding will emerge from it. Apart from the opinions and suggestions from the public regarding the agency's policies, they must be considered and appreciated (Suhana, 2017).

- a. According to Abdurachman (2001) that public opinion is the result of integrating opinions based on discussions conducted in a democratic society. Public opinion is not the sum total of the opinions of individuals who are collected, thus:
- b. Public opinion is not an agreement (senstemimig, unanimous);
- c. It is not the number of opinions that are counted "numerically", namely how many people there are on each side, so that the majority of opinions can be called public opinion.
- d. Public opinion can only develop in democratic countries where there is freedom for each individual

to express his opinion verbally, in writing, pictures, signs and other symbols that can be understood (Abdurachman, 2001).

Public opinion is formed based on problems that exist and develop in society which raises pros and cons. Public opinion in this study is a response to what is happening in society with different sides and different understandings.

C. Definition of the Covid-19 Pandemic

Covid is an acronym for 'CO', namely 'corona', 'VI' for 'virus', and 'D' for 'disease' or disease. while the number "19" indicates the year the variant of the virus was found, namely 2019 (Kominfo, 2021b). Covid-19 is not the only pandemic that has occurred throughout human life. At least fifteen pandemics were recorded before the arrival of Covid-19. The long history of pandemics even began hundreds of years BC. The pandemic began to emerge when humans decided to leave their nomadic lifestyle and chose to settle down. However, the Covid-19 pandemic is one of the largest pandemics in human history based on the scope of distribution, the number of positive cases, and the number of deaths (Morens et al., 2019).

Pandemics are divided into three categories, namely occurring on one continent or between regions, involving two or more regions and occurring in almost all regions. Covid-19 is caused by the SARSCov-2 virus, which is a member of the Corona Virus family which also causes the SARS and MERS pandemics (Liu, 2020). Covid-19 is a respiratory disease with a mild to severe spectrum (Li, 2020).

D. The Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Opinion

Social media is a source of power for control, management and innovation in society that can be utilized as a substitute for power or other resources. The media is a location or forum that plays an increasingly important role in displaying events in people's lives, both nationally and internationally. The media is very often a vehicle for the development of culture, not only in terms of the development of art forms and symbols, but also in the sense of the development of procedures, modes, lifestyles and norms.

The media has become the dominant source not only for individuals to obtain images and images of social reality, but also for society and groups collectively, the media provides normative values and judgments that are merged with news and entertainment. In the 18th and 19th centuries, the media was used as a propaganda tool, and it became important in the world of politics along with the growth of information, requests for press freedom, opinion, organization, and involvement in government institutions (Nuruddin, 2001).

Social media brings the interests of certain parties. Through its content, social media infiltrates the interests of certain groups to grab public attention. With repeated attacks of the same information, social media tries to influence public attitudes. Social media also has such a strong influence on political life. Social media has a wide reach in disseminating political information, even being able to cross regional boundaries, age groups, gender, and socio-economic status. Thus, mediated political status will become a common concern in various places and circles.

Reporting of events by one media tends to be related to other media, so that an information chain is formed that adds to the power of the mass media in disseminating information and is able to increase the impact it has on the public. At the time of Plato, social media was believed to have an influence. Because of that, he limited reading materials for certain communities. In the United States (US), since the 1960s, media studies have proven that social media has an effect on people's actions, including in aggressive and revolutionary actions. As far as studies conducted by experts, media interpretation is a consideration for a social movement.

In relation to the Agenda Setting theory, the mass media has an agenda setting function. Social media has the right to broadcast an event or not broadcast it. So that social media is able to lead public opinion in a discussion. The output of this discussion will determine agendas in government politics, by raising an issue as if it is important to be raised as public opinion. Social media sets the news for important discourse, which in the end can influence the public and agree, it's easy to follow and agree with what is conveyed on social media.

The media makes important the issues raised even though they are not fully needed by society. Thus the community seems to need messages and information that ultimately change the thinking and even the culture in that society. Social media with the information presented does have a very central influence in the formation of public opinion so that it can influence the condition of social behavior in society. With social media, a certain person or group instills a certain message through information whose content is often set in advance. Until now, the media is still believed to have great power in shaping public opinion.

In its development, social media has taken forms that rival conventional or traditional media, such as television, radio or print media. An academic even assess that mass media is now losing to social media. At present the position and role of the mass media has been lost to social media in conveying information. Due to technological developments and the high interest of the public in using social media, the role of the mass media is no longer as strong as it used to be. Today the mass media is considered to be behind social media, when social media has taken all the functions of mass media.

To find out about an event, the public is now more inclined to access information from social media. Social media now allows everyone to play the role of journalist (reporter). Social media users with the sophistication of their smartphones can produce and publish the latest events, like journalists (Practical Communication, 2020)

In the early days of the Covid-19 pandemic, a lot of speculation and opinion was built up through social media which influenced people's social behavior in reacting to the spread of Covid-19. The attitude and behavior of this community determines the effectiveness of handling the Covid-19 pandemic and has implications for the number of victims of the pandemic which affects the strength of the national defense.

E. Public Opinion on the Covid-19 Pandemic and Its Impact on National Defense

According to Hoppe (2003), national defense provides equal protection for all territories and all its citizens. Hoppe's opinion is that the defense issue is an important issue for a country with the object of protection in it being its territory and people. The practice of defense in Hoppe's thinking emphasizes the ability of the government itself as a function of national defense (Risman, 2018).

The purpose of implementing national defense is to maintain and protect state sovereignty, territorial integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI), as well as the safety of the whole nation. In achieving this goal, the function of national defense is carried out by utilizing all potential, national facilities and infrastructure as an important part of the national defense component as well as being used for the welfare of the people. PSDN for national defense aims to transform SDN into a national defense force that is ready to be used for the benefit of national defense through the efforts of Defending the State, arrangement of Supporting Components, and formation of Reserve Components (Law No. 23, 2019).

State defense is one of the functions of government. The state can involve its people in efforts to defend the country as a form of fulfilling the rights and obligations of citizens in defending the country. The Indonesian nation has established a defense policy in accordance with RI Law no. 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense. The Indonesian national defense system is universal by placing the TNI as the main component of defense, supported by Reserve Components and Supporting Components, especially in dealing with military threats. Meanwhile, in dealing with non-military threats, the defense system places government agencies outside the defense sector as the main element, in accordance with the form and nature of the threats faced (Lemhanas, 2011).

That the source of threat is no longer only military in nature, in fact in many cases the source of threat can be both military and non-military. Furthermore, security is not only aimed at the continuity of the state but is also a necessity for all other actors including individuals (Perwita, 2008). The dimensions of threats in the country are very diverse, such as ideology, politics, socio-culture as well as defense and security. Threats with an ideological dimension, for example, are radical group movements. Threats have a political dimension both from abroad and from within the country. From abroad, for example, threats made by a country by exerting political pressure on Indonesia. Intimidation, provocation or political blockade. An example of a threat with a domestic political dimension is separatism (Winarno, 2007).

Furthermore, threats with an economic dimension internally such as high inflation and unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, unclear establishment of an economic system, unequal income distribution and high cost economy, while externally, can take the form of indicators of poor economic performance, low competitiveness, unpreparedness facing the era of globalization, and a fairly high level of dependence on foreigners then threats with socio-cultural dimensions such as issues of poverty, ignorance, underdevelopment, and injustice. This issue is the starting point for problems, such as separatism, terrorism, deep-rooted violence, and disasters caused by human actions (Kalidjernih, 2009).

If you look at the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in the world, for example, there are around 235 countries and 762,201,169 confirmed cases as of April 2023. The number of deaths is 6,893,190 people. Not to mention those counted by a country that doesn't report the number of confirmed pandemics like North Korea. If you look at Indonesia as of January 2023, it was quoted on the official portal of the Covid-19 task force that in Indonesia the number of positive people was 6,728,676 people, 6,750,603 people recovered and 161,050 people died. This data does not include those that are counted indirectly in hospitals and health centers (WHO, 2023).

According to the McGraw Hill Dictionary, social media is a means used by people to interact with each other by creating, sharing and exchanging information and ideas in a virtual network and community. Social media has the ability to multiply messages that are so amazing. Whether messages are multiplied or not has a very close correlation with people's response to the issue. If the response is positive, social media trends will multiply the issue. The impact of this multiplication is certainly very large in society. Each media can discuss a public event according to their respective views. The mass media has an editorial policy regarding the content of the public events it wishes to convey.

Social media has a significant role in building public opinion. During the Covid-19 pandemic, social media continued to provide information about the Covid-19 pandemic in all parts of the world. The existence of information and news on social media during the Covid-19 pandemic had both positive and

negative influences. The positive side is that it makes people understand the development of the Covid-19 pandemic in various parts of the world, can increase their vigilance and be more careful in protecting themselves and their environment. But the negative side that you get can be even more dangerous. Because posting various hoax and uncredible information can be an inhibiting factor in efforts to stop the spread of the new type of corona virus SARS-CoV-2 or Covid-19 (Morens et al., 2020)

Another obstacle the community is also facing is the infodemic surrounding Covid-19. This infodemic leads to excess information about a problem, so that its emergence can interfere with efforts to find a solution to the problem. In addition, infodemics can also be fatal and cause loss of life. This phenomenon often appears in society, such as incorrect information about one of the antidote drugs for Covid-19 which makes people feel safe in the presence of this drug, thus ignoring recommended health protocols (Kominfo, 2021a).

Information on social media about Covid-19 that is spread in a way that is not credible forms public opinion and produces social behavior that is counter-productive to efforts to deal with Covid-19. This is one of the factors causing many victims to be exposed to Covid-19. With the large number of victims exposed to fatalities during the Covid-19 pandemic, the ability of human resources as one of the potential elements of SDN has decreased, so that it cannot be fully managed as a national defense force, both in the form of Supporting Components and Reserve Components to deal with threats, especially when it is necessary to mobilize the components of the country's defense.

It can be explained that the decline in the productivity or ability of human resources will of course hamper the mobilization process if it is needed at any time in the implementation of national defense. Mobilization is the act of simultaneously deploying and using National Primary Schools as well as national facilities and infrastructure that have been prepared and fostered as components of the national defense force to be used in an appropriate, integrated and directed manner for overcoming every threat, both from abroad and from within the country that endangers unity and national unity and the survival of the nation and integrity (Law No. 23, 2019).

Therefore, social media as a means of public communication must be utilized for positive purposes that benefit the public interest, for productive matters, encourage creativity and innovation, and improve people's welfare. Social media users are expected to carry out literacy, education, and maintain ethics and civility in using social media. Counteracting the phenomenon of fake news or hoaxes that spread on social media through valid and confirmed information literacy (Kominfo, 2017).

V. CONCLUSION

Public opinion and social media have a close relationship. Social media is the most important element in communication activities to carry out certain interests in the current era. Social media as a public communication channel, plays a role in shaping public opinion, has the power to influence and determine public behavior. With the agenda setting model, social media can be used as a means of setting information that is discussed so that it can influence public views to agree and easily agree and even follow what the maker says. These interests then become a problem because they are often misused and distributed disproportionately or violate journalistic norms. Social media has great power to lead public perceptions, which can generate opinions and then create counter-productive social behavior towards the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. The large number of material and immaterial losses, especially fatalities, reduces the potential of national resources, especially the ability of human resources as a component of the defense force in the implementation of national defense.

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