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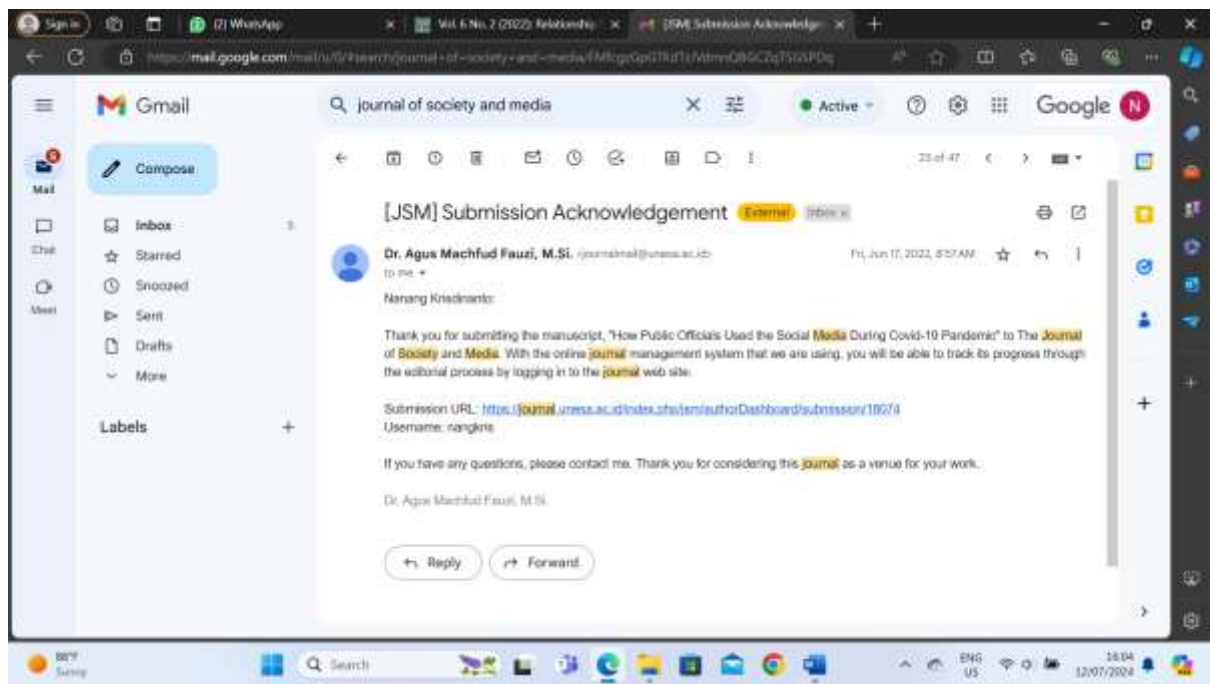
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How Public Officials Used the Social Media During

Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. The study examined the use of the social media by the public officials during Covid-19 Pandemic focusing on Twitter accounts of four governors in Indonesia, namely Twitter of Jakarta Province Governor Anies Baswedan (@aniesbaswedan), Central Java Province Governor Ganjar Pranowo (@ganjarpranowo), East Java Province Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa (@KhofifahIP), and West Java Province Governor Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil) respectively. The four accounts were studied as they were associated with four of Indonesia's governors with high level of activities. The study employed qualitative method. Data were collected from the given Twitter accounts which contained pieces related to policies of handling of Covid-19 pandemic, using the NCapture software. The data were then put in NVivo 12 Plus for further manual coding process. The data in the coding were tweets of the four governors on policies they implemented with regards to Covid-19, from the first time of the outbreak of the pandemic in Indonesia in March 2020 to end of November 2020. The data were then analyzed using NVivo 12 Plus Qualittaive data Software benefitting from some features such as Crosstab Query, Word Cloud, and Word Frequency Query. The results of analysis showed that the four governors seemed to deliberately use the social media and Covid-19 issues for various purposes ranging from the use of the social media as instrument of information and communication transparency; instrument for government internal coordination to instrument for political branding for 2021 Presidential Election.

Key Word: *Social Media, Twitter, Covid-19, Public Officials*

Introduction

The social media have modified the uses of communication resources. One of its implication is the fact that communication between the government or organization with its public has become more widely open (Sáez-Martín et al., 2014). This is attributed to the more exponential social media development (Belkahla Driss et al., 2019). Related data in 2015 showed that 65% of adult population in the USA used the social media, a figure which is considered to be 10 times bigger compared to that of the previous decade. In Australia, in

March 2019, 15 million people were recorded as active users of *Facebook* while the other 4.7 million subscribed to *Twitter* (Kankanamge et al., 2019). In Indonesia, as indicated by the data from the Association of Indonesia' Internet Provider, in 2015, around 34.9% of the population was internet users, and even in November 2010 Indonesia was dubbed as "*Twitter country* " oleh CNN Tech (Rumata, 2016).

During the crisis situation such as the Covid-19 pandemic, both the government and public officials maintained their direct communication with their public (Teichmann et al., 2020) and therefore, the social media have become an effective means of communication during the Covid-19 pandemic era (Basch et.al, 2020). In principle, the social media have been widely benefitted for handling crises and disasters (Kankanamge et al., 2019) owing to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in restriction of direct face-to-face meetings and left the people with no other choice than use of communication model or information search by means of database hunting and digital transaction (Androutsopoulou et al., 2019). In view of the governmental communication, the social media are also considered to be capable of displaying real time policy-related contents (Witanto et al., 2018). Therefore, communication between the government and the public through the social media may bring another perspective to the given policies, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic (Cinelli et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, almost all of the national and regional offices have made use of the social media as communication platform especially those that have labelled themselves as a 'smart city', such as Bandung, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Bogor and other cities in Central Java, West Java, East Java, and Jakarta provinces (Hasibuan & Sulaiman, 2019). This research aims to identify how the regional public officials used the social media, particularly Twitter during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research focused on Twitter accounts of the four regional public officials namely Jakarta Province Governor Anies Baswedan (@aniesbaswedan), Central Java

Province Governor Ganjar Pranowo (@ganjarpranowo), East Java Province Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa (@KhofifahIP), and West Java Province Governor Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil) respectively. The selection of focus was based on the highest number of internet users in Indonesia (Association of Indonesia's Internet Providers, 2020), as well the fact that the said governors are considered to have the highest level of use of Twitter compared to other governors in Indonesia. In addition, the four provinces are included as Indonesia's regional governments that apply 'smart government'.

Twitter is the social media most frequently used by the four governors to communicate with their public owing to its characteristics as micro-blogging platform which allows users to interact directly with other users, use the tagar, and is equipped with features like "trending topics." The study aims to identify the issues attributed to the use of the social media during the handling of Covid-19 pandemic within the governmental communication context. In other words, the research focused on issues of dissemination of ideas, programs and initiatives for handing of Covid-19 pandemic by the four governors to the public.

Studies related to the use of social media in the government context have been done in various focuses. The study by Moreno-Ibarra & Torres-Ruiz (2019), Criado et al (2013), Gintova (2019), Gunawong (2014), and Witanto et al, (2018) for instance, highlighted the use of media by governmental bodies to improve public participation and involvement (both in political and public policy participation). A study by Magro (2013), Belkahla Driss et al (2019), and Sobaci (2015) focused on the use of social media as part of public policy infrastructure as well as a tool for the governmental bodies to make decisions.

Some tendencies in terms of government's communication effort and use of social media have been found in the studies above. Firstly, in some of the studies, the subjects were not focused on the government specifying on the head of the regional government; and secondly, researches focusing on the communications of the head of regional government

regional especially those with the focus of social media have not been widely done. The research gap lies between this study with the previous studies. Generally speaking, trend of social media research focuses on related media effectiveness with a limited number of researches focusing on model of communication. The focus on use of the social media in the government practice context has not been adequately addressed in the previous researches. In fact, theoretically, the use of the social media in the context of governmental communication will give benefits to both the heads of regional governments and governmental practices. As stated by Picazo-vela et.al (2012), government's participation in the social media may result in better public's communication, participation and transparency, and best transfer practices within the government institutions.

Covid-19 pandemic situation has required that the public and nation's health system including the regional governments effectively interact with the public, among others by producing related contents in the social media (The World Health Organisation, 2020). Such information is a big help to the head of regional governments as it allows them to identify the public's needs, problems, opinions and feelings for further making of effective public policies (Charalabidis et.al, 2015). Such information can come in contents featuring suggestions for health protocol, policies for pandemic mitigation, up to the strategy for economic recovery. In other words, the heads of regional government must be able to communicate with the public by involving more than one actor and maintain two-way and more deliberative communication attempts (Nabatchi, 2012). At this point, the social media like Twitter can be benefitted from.

Research Methods

The research employed qualitative approach, while data were collected from the four governors' Twitter accounts, namely governors of Jakarta, West Java, Central Java and East Java provinces as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Twitter Accounts under Study

GOVERNOR'S NAME	PROVINCES	TWITTER ACCOUNT
Ridwan Kamil	Jawa West	@ridwankamil
Anies Baswedan	DKI Jakarta	@aniesbaswedan
Ganjar Pranowo	Jawa Central	@ganjarpranowo
Khofifah Indar Parawansa	Jawa East	@KhofifahIP

Source: Twitter, processed.

The research used NVivo 12 Plus *Qualitative Data Software Analysis* (QDSA) that functions as a tool for analysis. NVivo has developed not only as a tool for storing and retrieving information but also has servef as a research method reference (Brandão, 2015). The advantage of qualitative approach lies in its ability to obtain a description on how and why people are involved in the social media and the meaning attached to their experience with the social media (Snelson, 2016). The following is the data obtained from the governors' uploads on Twitter.

Table 2
Number of Contents by Type

NAME OF GOVERNOR	TWEET	RETWEET
Ridwan Kamil	2,903	353
Anies Baswedan	2,024	970
Ganjar Pranowo	2,268	1,386
Khofifah Indar Parawansa	1,930	544

Source: Twitter, processed.

Data were analysed using NVivo 12 Plus Qualitative Data Software Analysis Analisis employing some features such as Crosstab Query, Word Cloud, and Word Frequency Query. Prior to anaylisis process, data from each of the governor's Twitter were collected using NCapture sofeware. The data were then inputted to NVivo 12 Plus for manual coding. Data in the coding consisted of the governors' tweets from the first time of Covid-19 outbreak in

Indonesia in March 2020 to end of November 2020. Data in Table 2 shows the number of tweets recorded with the Nvivo 12 Plus. The data were later used as the main source of information to be used by the researcher to identify how the governors had been using Twitter during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Findings and Discussions

Data or findings in this research will be described and analyzed in three parts, namely (1) The Governors' Dominant Topics on Social Media; (2) Dominant Issues Raised by the Governors; and (3) Political Branding Towards 20214 Presidential Election. Each of the parts will be equipped with data illustration compiled using NVivo 12 Plus *Qualitative Data Software Analysis* (QDSA), yaitu NVivo 12 Plus.

The Four Governors' Dominant Topics on di Twitter

What was the governors' major theme on Twitter? The data in this part will be presented using word cloud feature in which big themes are visualized in word clusters. The collected words have gone through a sorting process for the fact that NVivo 12 Plus is unable to process Indonesian language words in a satisfactory manner. Connectors like "and", "with", "for" and other words were omitted. The data are presented in the following figures.

Figure 1
Word Cloud Account for the Greater Jakarta Governor

Figure 2
Word Cloud Account for West Java Governor.

Figure 3
Word Cloud Account for East Java Governor

Figure 4
Word Cloud Account for Governor Central Java Governor

The first account belongs to the Governor Greater Jakarta Province Governor with user name @aniesbaswedan. Figure 1 shows the word "Covid" as the most frequently used word by the Governor of the Jakarta Province. Apart from that, tagar #jakartatanggapcorona (Jakarta corona responsive) is the most dominantly visualized word. Other dominants words include "#jaki", "#psbbjakarta" (Jakarta big-scale social restriction), "sosial" (social), "juni" (June), "wilayah" (area) and some other words. Some visualized words such as "transportasi" (transportation),"transjakarta", and "stasiun" (railway station) suggest that the mass transport has been the dominant issue frequently used in the Jakarta Province Governor's Twitter. With regards to this issue, some information on public transformation was given on as tweets, namely, (1) the change of schedule of public transport due to the pandemic; (2) the condition of the public transport corridors and terminals; (3), transportation health standards and services; (4) provision of supplies for prevention of Covid-19 spread such as disinfectant, hand sanitizer, and related healthcare instructions; and (5) service information. In addition, the Governor of the Jakarta Province also introduced the use of bicycles as a safe alternative transport during the pandemic.

The next account belongs to West Java Governor with user @ridwankamil (see Figure 2). Words related to Covid dominate the Ridwan Kamil's Twitter account such as "covid", "psbb" (large scale social restriction), "masker" (mask), "kesehatan" (health), "pasien" (patient), "pcr", "kasus" (case), "zona" (zone) dan tagar #kitapastimenang (we will win). It is

interesting to note that this account has a lot of words related to territories such as "Indonesia", "Bekasi" and "Bogor". The word "Bekasi" and "Bogor" are used to inform policies implemented to the two regencies. Some other words indicate information on confirmation of Covid-19 spread clusters in each of the said regencies. In term of governmental practices, West Java Governor once applied the local PSBB (large scale social restriction-LSSR) to Bogor, Depok and Bekasi regencies. This resulted in the fact that information with regards too the regencies have been immensely included in West Java Governor's Twitter. Meanwhile, the word "Indonesia" was frequently used by the Governor of West Java in reference to the effort of maintaining people's unity in facing the Covid-19 pandemic. Using such narrative, West Java Governor positions himself as both a regional and national politician.

East Java Governor Twitter's user name is @KhofifahIP (see Figure 3). Like the Jakarta and West Java Governors' Twitter, the topics of discussion focused on the handling of Covid-19 pandemic. However, some other words such as "muslimat" (Muslim women), "jatim" (East Java), "surabaya", "kabupaten" (regency), "desa" (village) and user name of President of Republic of Indonesia "@jokowi". Topics related to Covid-19 were represented by the words "covid", "pasien" (patient), "kesehatan" (health), "medis" (medical), "sehat" (healthy), "bantuan" (help) and "darurat" (emergency). Such tweets with Covid-19 related words generally contained issues on socialization of health protocol. In addition, the word "covid" also refered to reports on updates of Covid-19 patients handling in East Java.

Finally, the Central Java Governor's Twitter account under the username of @ganjarpranowo (see Figure 4). Like the other three Governors' accounts, account of @ganjarpranowo also focused Covid-19 topics. The word "covid", "masker" (mask), "protokol" (protocol), "kesehatan" (health), and "bantuan" (help) indicated that Ganjar

Pranowo used his Twitter account for socializing health protocol. Figure 4 indicate mentions of @provjateng (belonging to the Central Java Province government), @dpubmckjateng (belonging to Central Provincial Services for Public Works, Road Construction and Housing) and account of @tajyasinmz (belonging to Vice Governor of Central Java Taj Yasin), suggesting that Twitter was also benefitted as communication medium among the local governmental stakeholders. Such communication can be seen by the frequent reports uploaded by the public through their social media which mainly contained reports and complaints on damages of provincial road lanes. The words "ruas" (road lane) and tagar #jalancantik (well-maintained road) as can be seen in figure 4 refer to such reports. This well reflects the power of social media like Twitter which has the ability to initiate collective actions and actual information exchange, and integrate individual contribution that is flexible and non-hierarchial in nature and not limited by space and time (Linders, 2012). Such Twitter characteristics have been benefitted in a maximum way by Central Java Governor to help him run his governmental practices.

Dominant Issues Raised by the Four Governors

Next, the researcher categorized the dominating issues raised by the four governers through Twitter during the Covid-19 pandemic. The category was based on most frequently used words searched using Word Frequency Query Nvivo. The words were then grouped in some categories, namely handling of Covid-19, government activities infrastructure and other issues as fully described in Figure 5 as follows.
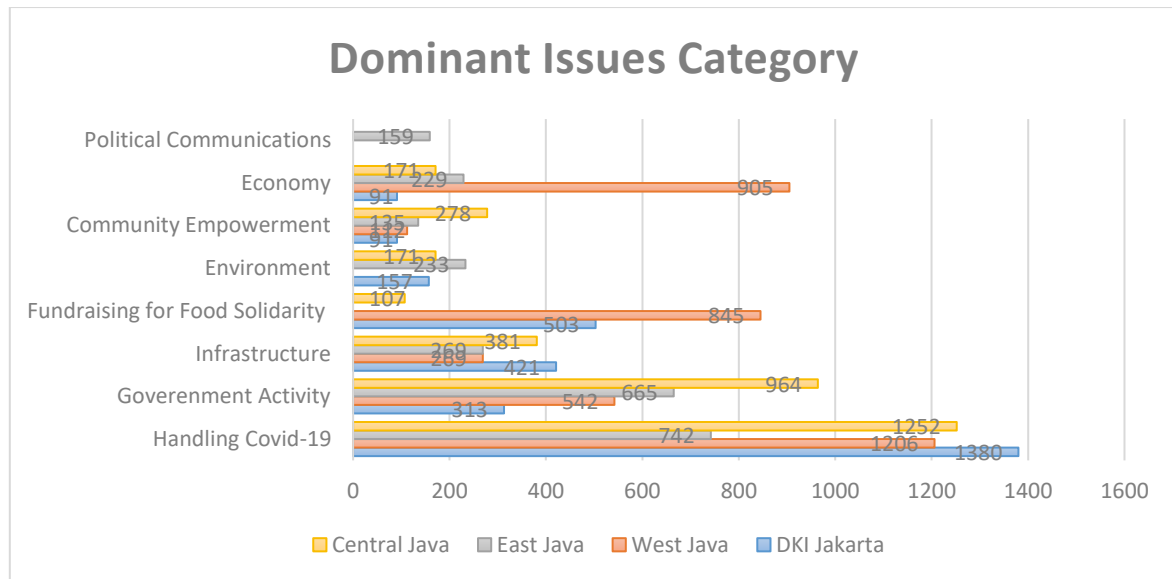
Figure 5
Categories of Dominant Issues Raised by the Governors during the Covid-19 Pandemic

As can be seen in Figure 5, the four governors' Twitter accounts have focused on issues of handling of Covid-19 pandemic. The Twitter accounts of Jakarta, West Java and Central Java provinces governors contain more than 1,000 "Covid-19" words each. East Java governor's twitter account only has 742 words related to Covid-19 handling issues, yet the word is dominant when compared to other words. In term of Covid-19 handling issues, governor of Jakarta provided more of such issues compared to the remaining three governors.

In view of the government activity issues, governors of East Java, West Java and Central Java tweeted more than 500 words, with Central Java governor having 964 words. Jakarta governor's account only had 313 words related to government activity issues.

The next issue in the infrastructure. Jakarta governor's account dominates this issue with 421 related words while East Java and West Java have 261 words each, and Central Java governor's account contains 381 words of this category. East Java and West Java governors' account focused more on general infrastructure issues, while Jakarta and East Java governors' accounts highlightee relations of transportation infrastructure issues with that of pandemic issues, and the Central Java governor put attention on repairs of road infrastructure using the tagar #jalancantik (well-mantined road).

The next dominant issue is the fundraising for food solidarity. The implemented LSSR policy has prevented those whose earning depends upon physical activities from performing their routines. Therefore, various movements for food solidarity have emerged and formed a mutual support strategy for survival during the crisis. It is interesting to note that while such issue is dominant with Twitter account of West Java, Central Java and Jakarta governors, it gets less attention in East Java governor's account. In West Java's account, food solidarity is one of dominating issues. Food solidarity is also a dominting issue after that of Covid-19 handling. East Java governor's account also put food solidarity as a dominating issue with related word number not bigger than that of the fellow West Java, Central Java, and Jakarta governors'.

Meanwhile, the number of words for environment issue is not that big. This issue is not dominant in West Java Governor's account. The account focused more on economic issues (905 words), much bigger than that of the other three governors (229 words in East Java Governor's account, 91 words in Jakarta Governor's account and 171 words in Central Java Governor's account).

The next issue is community empowerment. For this issue, highest number of related words were found in Central Java Governor's account (278 words), followed by East Java Governor's account (135 words), West Java Governor's account (112 words), and Jakarta Governor's account (91 words).

Data in Figure 5 shows different policy priorities or programs among the four governors in term of handling of Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the figures also reflect each of the governors' communication style. Contents presented by the governors will also effect the public attention which will result in the public participation and behavior pattern (Mergel, 2013). They also indicate that the social media have become a good communication medium to be used by the governors as part of the government internal communication medium

(Mergel, 2013), yet a communication strategy is required to make sure that each content can be of a benefit to the public (Rahmawati & Pratiwi, 2020).

As can be seen from the govenors' Twitter accounts, each tweet demonstrates a variety of contents, featuring not only short sentences or messages (adjusted to 280 characters per tweet as allowed by Twitte); they include images, graphics or videos in their tweets or retweets. Within the conceptual framework, social media content information, concept and theme form a crucial communication for delivery of expected results (Lai & To, 2016). Apart from that, varied posts that come in the forms of texts, images and videos can attract the public response (Furqon et al., 2018). This is reflected in the West Java governor's contents which are often presented in videos with infographic messages. Such style is not found in the other three governors' Twitter. The three other governors normally re-tweet infographic contents from the local Covid-10 Handling Acceleration Task Force. What has been done by the West Java governor's is considered to be an innovative effort to attract more public responses.

The research data also reflects that the social media have enabled real time interaction potentials between the government and the public, and encouraged economic and solutions to the underlying social problems (Clarke, 2017; Syarifuddin et al., 2020). Data from Figure 3 and 4 conclude that the social media have become the need of the head of the regional government especially amidst the current era of technology (Prabowo, 2018). The social media with their advantages such as the ability to encourage collective action; generate actual information exchange; integrate individual contribution; remain flexible, non-hierarchial and not restricted by time and space; can be maximized as an important tool in running the government administration (Linders, 2012). The dominant topics and issues under discuss suggest how the governors have maintained a certain level of consistency in terms of the use of the social media (in this case Twitter) in response to a variety of momentums. Not only did

the governors use the social media for the momentums related to governmental policies or activities, but also as political communication media or political branding benefitting from the Covid-19 pandemic situation. (This topic will be dicussed in detail in the next part).

The power of social media has also provided the heads of regional government to stay updated with related information and public aspiration not available with conventional communication media. Their success use of the social media suggests that they have developed their quality of communication and public survices. Generally speaking, the research data show how the governors have benefitted from the social media as communication media in terms of protocol, public policies, and actualization of each vision and mission in their efforts of controllong Covid-19 pandemic.

The research data also indicate that Twitter has been utilized as medium for internal coordination among the governmental bodies. Reports from the public will be forwarded (retweeted) to accounts belonging to the right local government bodies). Governor of Central Java even used Twitter as medium of coordination between himself and the vice governor. This can be considered as a way for provision of swifter and more convenient public services. Such social media communication process has become an alternative to the conventional one-way communication that is believed to have failed to obtain public participation. A research by Salahudin et.al (2020) for instance, suggests how the government officials in Indonesia, ranging from President Joko Widodo, officials authorized with the handling of Covid-19 pandemic and head of regional governments have established related interactions and collaboration through Twitter for handling of Covid-19 pandemic.

It is necessary to note that there have been some institutional and organizational problems that need to be addressed by the heads of the regional government to ensure maximum use of the social media within the government activities. The problems include highly dominating bureaucratic atmosphere, low government officials' competence of

utilizing the available social media and technology, and public access and digital literacy (Karakiza, 2015).

'Political Branding' Towards 2024 Presidential Election

The research data indicate that Covid-19 contents of included in the four governors' Twitter accounts indirectly serve as political branding. In other words, the governors have made use of their Twitter accounts as communication tool for establishing political brand benefitting from the Covid-19 related contents. The findings relate to their position in the national political competition landscape, where the four governors are prominent candidates for the 2024 presidential election. Despite the fact that presidential election is still long way to go, it seems that the political competition atmosphere is around, especially for the fact the the current President Joko Widodo is not eligible for re-running. The four governors' names are readily known to the public through some candidacy surveys as promising candidates for the 2024 presidential election. The widely open political space for the 2024 election hypothetically contributes to the potential candidates' (including the four governors under research) necessary preparations, one of which is to be done by establishing their own political branding by means of their media sosial media account and, by benefitting from a variety of related momentums.

This can be detected from the word clusters found in the research. In the East Java Governor's Twitter @KhofifahIP, the word "@jokowi", which is the Twitter acunt of President Joko Widodo (Figure 3) is frequent. Such word can be read as the effort of East Java Governor's political branding to tell the public that she is a close ally (politically and ideologically) of President Joko Widodo. Within the national political ground, Khofifah is known to be Joko Widodo's staunch supporter in 2019 election, and even appointed as Minister of Social Affairs in Joko Widodo's cabinet prior to running for and taking office as East Java Governor in 2020. Apart from that, the word "muslimat" (Muslim women) is also

frequent in the account @KhofifahIP. It is not actually a word related to handling of Covid-19 pandemic. This is considered to be the governor's effort to confirm her political branding as a female politician who is a religious-nationalist. The word "muslimat" originates from 'Pengurus Pusat (PP) Muslimat', a wing of Nahdlatul Ulama, an Indonesian moderate Islam mass organization which has the largest members in the world. Khofifah has been the chair of Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama since 2000 up to the present time. The members of this organization are women associated with Nahdlatul Ulama. The frequent use of the words "@jokowi" and "muslimat" in her Twitter account can be understood as Khofifah's effort to maintain and affirm her political branding as a religious-nationalist politician who is connected with President Joko Widodo, as her political capital for the 2024 Presidential Election.

The same thing can also be seen from the word cloud data of @ridwankamil (West Java governor's account). One of the words frequently used in his Twitter is "jabarjuara" (West Java the champion), a word which is not actually related to the handling of Covid-19 pandemic (see Figure 2). The world cluster originated from the governor's vision, namely 'the making of West Java that is physically and spriritually a champion with innpvation and collaboration." The vision has been aired since his campaign earlier when running as candidate of West Java Governor. The vision was then translated into some missions and excellent programs realization which have been regularly informed through his Twitter. Owing to his background as a professional (architect), West Java Governor has seemed to affirm his political branding as a politician and head of regional government who is competent, ideal, and is capable of utilizing the information technology.

Central Java and Jakarta Governors' Twitter accounts also indicated similar fact respectively. In the account of @ganjarpranowo (Figure 4), #jatenggayeng (joyful Central Java) is found, which is the slogan or tagline of the Central Java Province that was officially

introduced in 2015 by the governor to promote and introduce the province's products and potentials. The slogan depicts spirit, boldness, toughness, honesty, friendlinees, joy, harmony and warmth. The presence of the tagar in the world cloud data indicates that the Central Java Governor has shared various information on the achievements and implementation of the #jatenggayeng programs. The governor seemed to continuously build his political branding as a friendly and communicative politician benefitting from his willingness to respond to his followers' mentions. He even takes it easy when he responds to mentions with negative tones.

Jakarta Governor's account @aniesbaswedan has frequently aired the phrase "kolaborasi bantuan sosial." (social assistance collaboration) (Figure 1). The phrase originated from the program called Large Scale Social Collaboration (LSSC) launched by the governor in May 2020. The name and abbreviation of the program title was deliberately made similar to the national government program originally intended to restrict social mobility for prevention of Covid-19 spread. LSSC, as put forward by Jakarta Governor, is a social collaborative programs madea available for collaboratively helping others, by connecting people who wish to give, and those who need help or those who are economically impacted by the implementation of the national PSBB (Large Scale Social Restriction-LSSR) that also applied to Jakarta province. There were four selections of packages in LSSC program, namely breakfast-dinner meal package, staple food package, holiday festival package, and cash. The media and political observers consider LSSC as "rivaling program" of LSSR, for the fact that Anies Baswedan is an ambitious politician vying for the presidency. The presence of word cluster "social assistance collaboration" which refers to LSSC program can be seen as part of the governor's political branding as a head of regional government with the work of national leader, which triggered insinuation such as "a governor with a presidential work" attached to Anies Baswedan.

However, theoretically and conceptully, political branding amidst the

Covid-19 pandemic is normal. In principle, government's communication practice benefitting from any medium is intented to build self image of the government officials (Besman et al., 2018). A research by Porimbecsu (in Rahmawati & Pratiwi, 2020) stated that the government's use of the social will result in public opinion building on the government of head of government's performance. Being one of the social media utilized for building political branding, Twitter gives considerable effects to public opinion or perception through the tweets (Rahmat & Purnomo, 2020).

Bungin (2018) also stated that the current social construction of modern society is heavily influenced by the information and communication technology. However, the social media can serve as a double edged knife; as it may become a tool of control over the government administration in one hand and the killer of government administration in another hand. Therefore, what the four governors have done (as detected from the world cloud of their Twitter account) can be perceived as a process of social construction that they used to shape their respective political branding and individual identity images. The word "muslimat" in the account @KhofifahIP for instance, strongly highlighted women image as it refers to the woman organization which is the wing of Nahdlatul Ulama. East Java province is the home to the biggest Nahdlatul Ulama members and therefore, the image "mother" emerged from the governor of East Java that further developed as "mother of East Java people"

Political branding actively contributes to shaping of framing for politicians and political parties since political branding gives the politicians the chance to communicate their individualimage and political party (Widianti et al., 2019). Within Indonesian political context, similar effort was undertaken by Ma'ruf Amin during the 2019 presidential election during which he made use of Twitter as political branding tool which turned out to have a significant effect. Researcher Adinugroho et.al, (2019) showed that the use of the social

media highly contributes to electability compared to other internet platforms. This indicates that the social media positively effect the public for search for political information the forms political inclination towards certain politicians and political parties. Another research also shows a significant relations between the use of the social media for political campaign and voters' trust or loyalty (Dabula, 2017).

The research data suggest that currently political branding is not only shaped by politician's personality and appearance or political party, but also by the politician's ability to build relations with voters, leadership genuiness, responsiveness to technology (by means of Twitter) and political messages that raise hopes (Sandra, 2013). The four governors who are the subjects of this research (with their Twitter accounst) describe how political branding can be constructed by means of the social media by benefitting from various momentums, including Covid-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

Based on the result of analysis of the data obtained from Twitter accounts belonging to the governors of West Java, Jakarta, Central Java and East Java, a conclusion is drawn on account of the use of the social media during the Covid-19 pandemic. Firstly, the four governers have immensely utilized the social media as part of their effort of handling the Covid-19 pandemic, especially as an instrument or medium of conveying information and conducting direct communication with the public for handling of Covid-19 pandemic purposes. The social media have been seen as an important instrument within the framework government communication in dealing with the pandemic. Secondly, the governors have used Twitter as an instrument for establishing internal coordination for dealing with Covid-19 pandemic. The internal coordination which is normally performed in closed spaces is now done openly (visible to the followers) by utilizing the features available with the social media

(in this case Twitter), such as retweets, tagars and so forth. In other words, the social media, in this case, has made the government communication more open, which, to some extent, may bring advantagea to the said governors as they will be considered as transparent and accountable leaders. Thirdly, the governors have used Twitter and Covid-19 issues to build and affirm their political branding, particularly as a strategy in anticipation of the 2021 presidential election. The four governors mentioned in this research are potential candidates of the presidential election.

In view of the theoretical context, the research is expected to enrich the realm of Covid-19 pandemic studies within the perspective of government communication and use of the social media. The research data and analysis can be benefitted from in terms of practical ground (references for government communication actors for development of transparent communication style) and academicians (as references for developing studies on Covid-19 pandemic in the perspective of government practice or communication).
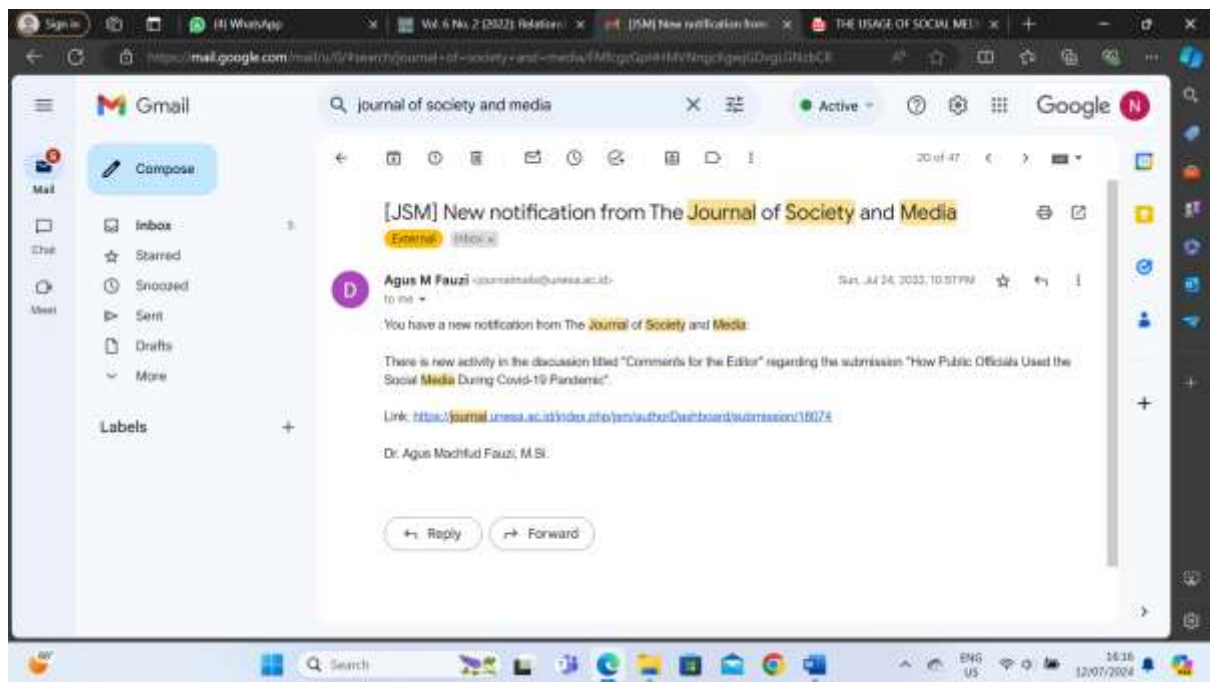
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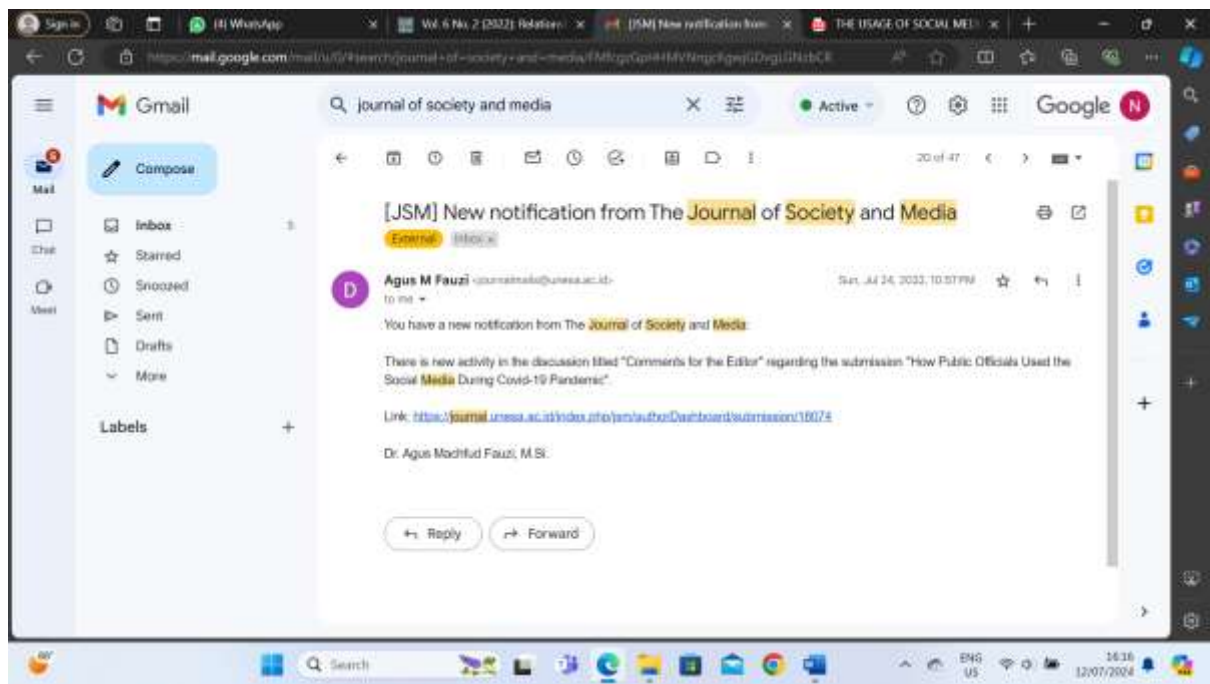Lai, L. S. L., & To, W. M. (2016). Content analysis of social media : A grounded theory

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2. Bukti Konfirmasi Review

dan Hasil Review Pertama

(24 Juli 2022)

3. Bukti Konfirmasi Submit Revisi Pertama,

Respon kepada Reviewer,

dan Artikel yang Diresubmit

(24 Juli 2022)

Bukti hasil uji Turnitin yang diminta

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

by Nanang Krisdinanto

HOW DID THE GOVERNORS USE SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: INDONESIAN EXPERIENCE

Budiman[1], Nanang Krisdinanto[2*], Silviana Purwanti[3], Tengku Imam Syarifuddin[4]

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[3]Department of Communication Science, Universitas Mulawarman Samarinda, Indonesia

Abstract. This study examines the use of social media by public officials during the Covid-19 pandemic and focuses on the Twitter accounts of four Provinces' governors in Indonesia. The Twitter accounts observed in this study are Governor of DKI Jakarta Anies Baswedan (@aniesbaswedan), Governor of Central Java Ganjar Pranowo (@ganjarpranowo), Governor of East Java Khofifah Indar Parawansa (@KhofifahIP), and Governer of West Java Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil). The four accounts were investigated because of their high activity on Twitter. This study uses a qualitative approach. The data was collected from realtime tweets and retweets of the accounts related to the Covid-19 pandemic handling policy, using the NCapture software. The data is then inputted to the NVivo 12 Plus and encoded manually. The data in the coding is a tweet from the four governors regarding the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic, starting from the time the Covid-19 case first appeared in Indonesia in March 2020 until the end of November 2020. The data was then analyzed using the NVivo 12 Plus Qualitative Software Data Analysis, taking advantage of several features, including Crosstab Query, Word Cloud, and Word Frequency Query. The results of this study indicate that social media (Twitter) is used by governors as an important part of information and communication transparency instruments related to the Covid-19 pandemic; as an instrument for transparency of internal coordination within the government; and as a medium for the creation or confirmation of political branding for the 2024 Presidential General Election.

Keywords: Social Media, Twitter, Covid-19, Public Official

Introduction

Social media has modified the use of key resources in communicating: discussion forums and communication networks have now become open as communication channels between governments or organizations and citizens (Sáez-Martín, Haro-de-Rosario, & Caba-Perez, 2014). This is based on the exponential growth of social media (Belkahla Driss, Mellouli, & Trabelsi, 2019). Data in 2015 showed that 65 percent of the adult population in the US used social media, a figure almost 10 times higher than the previous decade. While in Australia in March 2019, 15 million people were also active on Facebook and 4.7 million people used Twitter (Kankanamge, Yigitcanlar, Goonetilleke, & Kamruzzaman, 2019). In Indonesia, referring to data from the Association of Indonesian Internet Service Providers in 2015, as many as 34.9% of citizens are internet users, even since November 2010 Indonesia has been declared a "Twitter country" by CNN tech (Rumata, 2016).

In crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, the government and public officials continue to try to maintain direct communication with the public (Teichmann et al., 2020). For this reason, social media is one of the effective communication channels for communication in the era of the Covid-19 pandemic (Basch et.al, 2020). Social media has often been used in handling crises

and disasters (Kankanamge et al., 2019), especially during the Covid-19 pandemic which requires that there are restrictions on face-to-face meetings, although in some cases, people choose to use communication models that have a limited amount of information, such as searching for information through databases or conducting digital model transactions (Androutsopoulou, Karacapilidis, Loukis, & Charalabidis, 2019). In the context of government communication, social media also offers organizations the ability to survey content assessments and event-related assessments in real-time thereby providing a policy perspective to the government (Witanto, Lim, & Atiquzzaman, 2018). Thus, communication between the government and the public on social media will provide another perspective on policy, especially in the Covid-19 pandemic crisis (Cinelli et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, almost all government institutions, both at the central and regional levels, have used social media as the communication platform, especially those that have labeled themselves as smart cities, such as the provincial governments of Central Java, West Java, East Java, DKI Jakarta, The cities of Bandung, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, and Bogor as well as other local governments (Hasibuan & Sulaiman, 2019). Therefore, this study wants to see how governors as public officials use social media, especially Twitter, during the Covid-19 pandemic. This study focuses on four public officials, namely the Governor of West Java Province Ridwan Kamil, the Governor of Central Java Province Ganjar Pranowo, the Governor of DKI Jakarta Province Anies Baswedan, and the Governor of East Java Province Khofifah Indar Parawansa. The choice is based on the number of internet users in the region which is the highest in Indonesia (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2020), as well as the level of activity of the governor in using social media. In addition, the four chosen provinces include its local governments have implemented smart government in Indonesia.

Twitter is the social media platform that seems to be used most often by the governors to communicate with their citizens, given its characteristics as a micro-blogging that makes it easier for users to interact directly, allows the use of hashtags, and has features such as "trending topic". This study also wants to describe the problems that arise around the use of social media during the Covid-19 pandemic response in the context of government communication. In other words, this research focuses on problems related to the delivery of ideas, programs, and ideas about overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic from the four provincial governments to the public.

Studies related to the use of social media in the context of government have been carried out with various focuses. Research conducted by Moreno-Ibarra & Torres-Ruiz (2019), Criado et al (2013), Gintova (2019), Gunawong (2014), and Witanto et al, (2018) for example, highlights the use of social media by government institutions to increase community participation and involvement (both participation in political events and participation in public policy). Whereas Magro (2013), Belkahla Driss et al (2019), and Sobaci (2015) focus on the use of social media as part of the public policy infrastructure and as a tool for government institutions to make policies. Other research conducted by Moreno-Ibarra & Torres-Ruiz (2019), Brandt et al (2017), Rudinac, Zahálka, & Worring (2017), and Kankanamge et al (2019) also look at how social media is used as urban infrastructure. In these studies, it is seen how the metadata generated by social media can support the quality of life in the concept of smart city development. In addition, these studies show that social media analysis is also able to capture spatial patterns within the city related to the presence of users and their involvement in environmental issues and other topics.

Meanwhile, research conducted by Zhang et al (2019), Witanto et al (2018), (Bonsón, Torres, Royo, & Flores (2012), Molinillo, Anaya-Sánchez, Morrison, & Coca-Stefaniak (2019), Gilbert et al (2015), Hong (2013), Gunawong (2014), Criado et al (2013), and Belkahla

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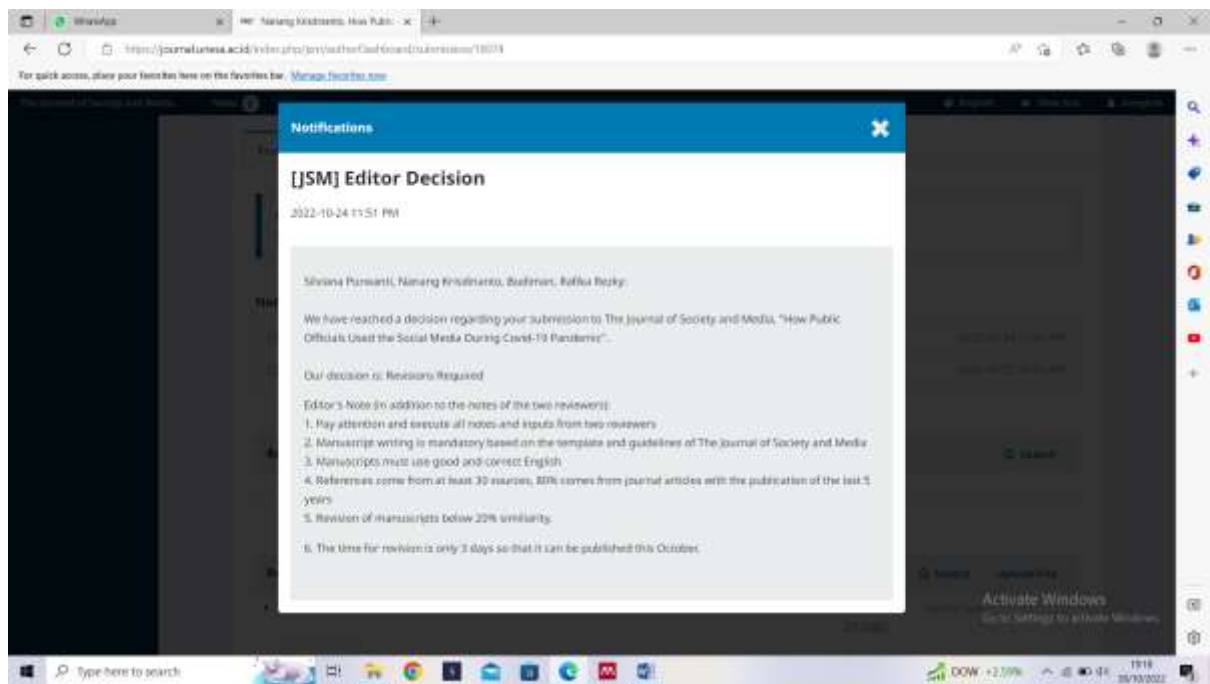   Publication   1%

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4. Bukti konfirmasi review

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(24 Oktober 2022)

Notifications ✖

[JSM] Editor Decision

2022-10-24 11:51 PM

Silviana Purwanti, Nanang Krisdinanto, Budiman, Rafika Bezky:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to The Journal of Society and Media, "How Public Officials Used the Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic".

Our decision is: Revisions Required

Editor's Note (in addition to the notes of the two reviewers):
1. Pay attention and execute all notes and inputs from two reviewers
2. Manuscript writing is mandatory based on the template and guidelines of The Journal of Society and Media
3. Manuscripts must use good and correct English
4. References come from at least 30 sources, 80% comes from journal articles with the publication of the last 5 years
5. Revision of manuscripts below 20% similarity.

6. The time for revision is only 3 days so that it can be published this October.

Activate Windows
Go to Settings to activate Windows.

5. Bukti konfirmasi submit revisi kedua,
respon kepada reviewer,
dan artikel yang diresubmit
(26 Oktober 2022)

Respon terhadap reviewer

	Bagian	Catatan Reviewer	Perbaikan Penulis
1.	Abstrak	Perbaiki abstrak sesuai ketentuan jurnal dan urutan kata kunci.	Kami juga telah memastikan abstrak dan kata kunci sesuai ketentuan jurnal.
2.	Format	Sesuaikan format dengan template yang disediakan	Kami telah menyesuaikan format naskah sesuai template yang disediakan. Namun mohon maaf, kami tidak menemukan template yang berisi masthead Journal of Society and Media, sehingga kami meng-up load naskah dengan format sesuai template tanpa masthead.
3.	Daftar Pustaka	Tambahkan referensi hingga memenuhi syarat jurnal.	Kami telah memastikan referensi minimal 30 dengan mayoritas jurnal dengna kurun waktu terbit 5 tahun terakhir. Jumlah referensi kami adalah 40 buah.
4.	Uji Turnitin	Pastikan similiarity check maksimal 20%.	Kami telah melakukan similiarity check dengan hasil 9%. Berkasnya sudah kami upload sebagai supplmentary file.

Bukti naskah yang di-resubmit

The Usage of Social Media and Political Branding of Public Officials during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Abstract. *The study examined the use of the social media by the public officials during Covid-19 Pandemic focusing on Twitter accounts of four governors in Indonesia, namely Twitter of Jakarta Province Governor Anies Baswedan (@aniesbaswedan), Central Java Province Governor Ganjar Pranowo (@ganjarpranowo), East Java Province Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa (@KhofifahIP), and West Java Province Governor Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil) respectively. The four accounts were studied as they were associated with four of Indonesia's governors with high level of activities. The study employed qualitative method. Data were collected from the given Twitter accounts which contained pieces related to policies of handling of Covid-19 pandemic, using the NCapture software. The data were then put in NVivo 12 Plus for further manual coding process. The data in the coding were tweets of the four governors on policies they implemented with regards to Covid-19, from the first time of the outbreak of the pandemic in Indonesia in March 2020 to end of November 2020. The data were then analyzed using NVivo 12 Plus Qualittaive data Software benefitting from some features such as Crosstab Query, Word Cloud, and Word Frequency Query. The results of analysis showed that the four governors seemed to deliberately use the social media and Covid-19 issues for various purposes ranging from the use of the social media as instrument of information and communication transparency; instrument for government internal coordination to instrument for political branding for 2021 Presidential Election.*

Key Word: *Social Media, Twitter, Covid-19, Public Officials*

INTRODUCTION

The social media have modified the uses of communication resources. One of its implication is the fact that communication between the government or organization with its public has become more widely open (Sáez-Martín et al., 2014). This is attributed to the more exponential social media development (Belkahla Driss et al., 2019). Related data in 2015 showed that 65% of adult population in the USA used the social media, a figure which is considered to be 10 times bigger compared to that of the previous decade. In Australia, in March 2019, 15 million people were recorded as active users of *Facebook* while the other 4.7 million subscribed to *Twitter* (Kankanamge et al., 2019). In Indonesia, as indicated by the data from the Association of Indonesia' Internet Provider, in 2015, around 34.9% of the

population was internet users, and even in November 2010 Indonesia was dubbed as "*Twitter country* " oleh CNN Tech (Rumata, 2016).

During the crisis situation such as the Covid-19 pandemic, both the government and public officials maintained their direct communication with their public (Teichmann et al., 2020) and therefore, the social media have become an effective means of communication during the Covid-19 pandemic era (Basch et.al, 2020). In principle, the social media have been widely benefitted for handling crises and disasters (Kankanamge et al., 2019) owing to the fact that the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in restriction of direct face-to-face meetings and left the people with no other choice than use of communication model or information search by means of database hunting and digital transaction (Androutsopoulou et al., 2019). In view of the governmental communication, the social media are also considered to be capable of displaying real time policy-related contents (Witanto et al., 2018). Therefore, communication between the government and the public through the social media may bring another perspective to the given policies, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic (Cinelli et al., 2020).

In Indonesia, almost all of the national and regional offices have made use of the social media as communication platform especially those that have labelled themselves as a 'smart city', such as Bandung, Surabaya, Yogyakarta, Bogor and other cities in Central Java, West Java, East Java, and Jakarta provinces (Hasibuan & Sulaiman, 2019). This research aims to identify how the regional public officials used the social media, particularly Twitter during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research focused on Twitter accounts of the four regional public officials namely Jakarta Province Governor Anies Baswedan (@aniesbaswedan), Central Java Province Governor Ganjar Pranowo (@ganjarpranowo), East Java Province Governor Khofifah Indar Parawansa (@KhofifahIP), and West Java Province Governor Ridwan Kamil (@ridwankamil) respectively. The selection of focus was based on the highest number of internet users in

Indonesia (Association of Indonesia's Internet Providers, 2020), as well the fact that the said governors are considered to have the highest level of use of Twitter compared to other governors in Indonesia. In addition, the four provinces are included as Indonesia's regional governments that apply 'smart government'.

Twitter is the social media most frequently used by the four governors to communicate with their public owing to its characteristics as micro-blogging platform which allows users to interact directly with other users, use the tagar, and is equipped with features like "trending topics." The study aims to identify the issues attributed to the use of the social media during the handling of Covid-19 pandemic within the governmental communication context. In other words, the research focused on issues of dissemination of ideas, programs and initiatives for handing of Covid-19 pandemic by the four governors to the public.

Studies related to the use of social media in the government context have been done in various focuses. The study by Moreno-Ibarra & Torres-Ruiz (2019), Criado et al (2013), Gintova (2019), Gunawong (2014), and Witanto et al, (2018) for instance, highlighted the use of media by governmental bodies to improve public participation and involvement (both in political and public policy participation). A study by Magro (2013), Belkahla Driss et al (2019), and Sobaci (2015) focused on the use of social media as part of public policy infrastructure as well as a tool for the governmental bodies to make decisions.

Some tendencies in terms of government's communication effort and use of social media have been found in the studies above. Firstly, in some of the studies, the subjects were not focused on the government specifying on the head of the regional government; and secondly, researches focusing on the communications of the head of regional government regional especially those with the focus of social media have not been widely done. The research gap lies between this study with the previous studies. Generally speaking, trend of social media research focuses on related media effectiveness with a limited number of

researches focusing on model of communication. The focus on use of the social media in the government practice context has not been adequately addressed in the previous researches. In fact, theoretically, the use of the social media in the context of governmental communication will give benefits to both the heads of regional governments and governmental practices. As stated by Picazo-vela et.al (2012), government's participation in the social media may result in better public's communication, participation and transparency, and best transfer practices within the government institutions.

Covid-19 pandemic situation has required that the public and nation's health system including the regional governments effectively interact with the public, among others by producing related contents in the social media (The World Health Organisation, 2020). Such information is a big help to the head of regional governments as it allows them to identify the public's needs, problems, opinions and feelings for further making of effective public policies (Charalabidis et.al, 2015). Such information can come in contents featuring suggestions for health protocol, policies for pandemic mitigation, up to the strategy for economic recovery. In other words, the heads of regional government must be able to communicate with the public by involving more than one actor and maintain two-way and more deliberative communication attempts (Nabatchi, 2012). At this point, the social media like Twitter can be benefitted from.

METHOD

The research employed qualitative approach, while data were collected from the four governors' Twitter accounts, namely governors of Jakarta, West Java, Central Java and East Java provinces as presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1
Twitter Accounts under Study

GOVERNOR'S NAME	PROVINCES	TWITTER ACCOUNT
Ridwan Kamil	Jawa West	@ridwankamil
Anies Baswedan	DKI Jakarta	@aniesbaswedan
Ganjar Pranowo	Jawa Central	@ganjarpranowo
Khofifah Indar Parawansa	Jawa East	@KhofifahIP

Source: Twitter, processed.

The research used NVivo 12 Plus *Qualitative Data Software Analysis* (QDSA) that functions as a tool for analysis. NVivo has developed not only as a tool for storing and retrieving information but also has servef as a research method reference (Brandão, 2015). The advantage of qualitative approach lies in its ability to obtain a description on how and why people are involved in the social media and the meaning attached to their experience with the social media (Snelson, 2016). The following is the data obtained from the governors' uploads on Twitter.

Table 2
Number of Contents by Type

NAME OF GOVERNOR	TWEET	RETWEET
Ridwan Kamil	2,903	353
Anies Baswedan	2,024	970
Ganjar Pranowo	2,268	1,386
Khofifah Indar Parawansa	1,930	544

Source: Twitter, processed.

Data were analysed using NVivo 12 Plus Qualitative Data Software Analysis Analisis employing some features such as Crosstab Query, Word Cloud, and Word Frequency Query. Prior to anaylisis process, data from each of the governor's Twitter were collected using NCapture sofeware. The data were then inputted to NVivo 12 Plus for manual coding. Data in the coding consisted of the governors' tweets from the first time of Covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia in March 2020 to end of November 2020. Data in Table 2 shows the number of tweets recorded with the Nvivo 12 Plus. The data were later used as the main source of information to be used by the researcher to identify how the governors had been using Twitter during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Data or findings in this research will be described and analyzed in three parts, namely (1) The Governors' Dominant Topics on Social Media; (2) Dominant Issues Raised by the Governors; and (3) Political Branding Towards 20214 Presidential Election. Each of the parts will be equipped with data illustration compiled using NVivo 12 Plus *Qualitative Data Software Analysis* (QDSA), yaitu NVivo 12 Plus.

The Four Governors' Dominant Topics on di Twitter

What was the governors' major theme on Twitter? The data in this part will be presented using word cloud feature in which big themes are visualized in word clusters. The collected words have gone through a sorting process for the fact that NVivo 12 Plus is unable to process Indonesian language words in a satisfactory manner. Connectors like "and", "with", "for" and other words were omitted. The data are presented in the following figures.

Figure 1
Word Cloud Account
for the Greater Jakarta Governor

Figure 2
Word Cloud Account
for West Java Governor

Figure 4
Word Cloud Account
for Central Java Governor

Figure 3
Word Cloud Account
for East Java Governor

The first account belongs to the Governor Greater Jakarta Province Governor with user name @aniesbaswedan. Figure 1 shows the word "Covid" as the most frequently used word by the Governor of the Jakarta Province. Apart from that, tagar #jakartatanggapcorona (Jakarta corona responsive) is the most dominantly visualized word. Other dominants words include "#jaki", "#psbbjakarta" (Jakarta big-scale social restriction), "sosial" (social), "juni" (June), "wilayah" (area) and some other words. Some visualized words such as "transportasi" (transportation),"transjakarta", and "stasiun" (railway station) suggest that the mass transport has been the dominant issue frequently used in the Jakarta Province Governor's Twitter. With regards to this issue, some information on public transformation was given on as tweets, namely, (1) the change of schedule of public transport due to the pandemic; (2) the condition of the public transport corridors and terminals; (3), transportation health standards and services; (4) provision of supplies for prevention of Covid-19 spread such as disinfectant, hand sanitizer, and related healthcare instructions; and (5) service information. In addition, the Governor of the Jakarta Province also introduced the use of bicycles as a safe alternative transport during the pandemic.

The next account belongs to West Java Governor with user @ridwankamil (see Figure 2). Words related to Covid dominate the Ridwan Kamil's Twitter account such as "covid", "psbb" (large scale social restriction), "masker" (mask), "kesehatan" (health), "pasien" (patient), "pcr", "kasus" (case), "zona" (zone) dan tagar #kitapastimenang (we will win). It is

interesting to note that this account has a lot of words related to territories such as "Indonesia", "Bekasi" and "Bogor". The word "Bekasi" and "Bogor" are used to inform policies implemented to the two regencies. Some other words indicate information on confirmation of Covid-19 spread clusters in each of the said regencies. In term of governmental practices, West Java Governor once applied the local PSBB (large scale social restriction-LSSR) to Bogor, Depok and Bekasi regencies. This resulted in the fact that information with regards too the regencies have been immensely included in West Java Governor's Twitter. Meanwhile, the word "Indonesia" was frequently used by the Governor of West Java in reference to the effort of maintaining people's unity in facing the Covid-19 pandemic. Using such narrative, West Java Governor positions himself as both a regional and national politician.

East Java Governor Twitter's user name is @KhofifahIP (see Figure 3). Like the Jakarta and West Java Governors' Twitter, the topics of discussion focused on the handling of Covid-19 pandemic. However, some other words such as "muslimat" (Muslim women), "jatim" (East Java), "surabaya", "kabupaten" (regency), "desa" (village) and user name of President of Republic of Indonesia "@jokowi". Topics related to Covid-19 were represented by the words "covid", "pasien" (patient), "kesehatan" (health), "medis" (medical), "sehat" (healthy), "bantuan" (help) and "darurat" (emergency). Such tweets with Covid-19 related words generally contained issues on socialization of health protocol. In addition, the word "covid" also refered to reports on updates of Covid-19 patients handling in East Java.

Finally, the Central Java Governor's Twitter account under the username of @ganjarpranowo (see Figure 4). Like the other three Governors' accounts, account of @ganjarpranowo also focused Covid-19 topics. The word "covid", "masker" (mask), "protokol" (protocol), "kesehatan" (health), and "bantuan" (help) indicated that Ganjar Pranowo used his Twitter account for socializing health protocol. Figure 4 indicate mentions

of @provjateng (belonging to the Central Java Province government), @dpubmckjateng (belonging to Central Provincial Services for Public Works, Road Construction and Housing) and account of @tajyasinmz (belonging to Vice Governor of Central Java Taj Yasin), suggesting that Twitter was also benefitted as communication medium among the local governmental stakeholders. Such communication can be seen by the frequent reports uploaded by the public through their social media which mainly contained reports and complaints on damages of provincial road lanes. The words "ruas" (road lane) and tagar #jalancantik (well-maintained road) as can be seen in figure 4 refer to such reports. This well reflects the power of social media like Twitter which has the ability to initiate collective actions and actual information exchange, and integrate individual contribution that is flexible and non-hierarchial in nature and not limited by space and time (Linders, 2012). Such Twitter characteristics have been benefitted in a maximum way by Central Java Governor to help him run his governmental practices.

Dominant Issues Raised by the Four Governors

Next, the researcher categorized the dominating issues raised by the four governers through Twitter during the Covid-19 pandemic. The category was based on most frequently used words searched using Word Frequency Query Nvivo. The words were then grouped in some categories, namely handling of Covid-19, government activities infrastructure and other issues as fully described in Figure 5 as follows.
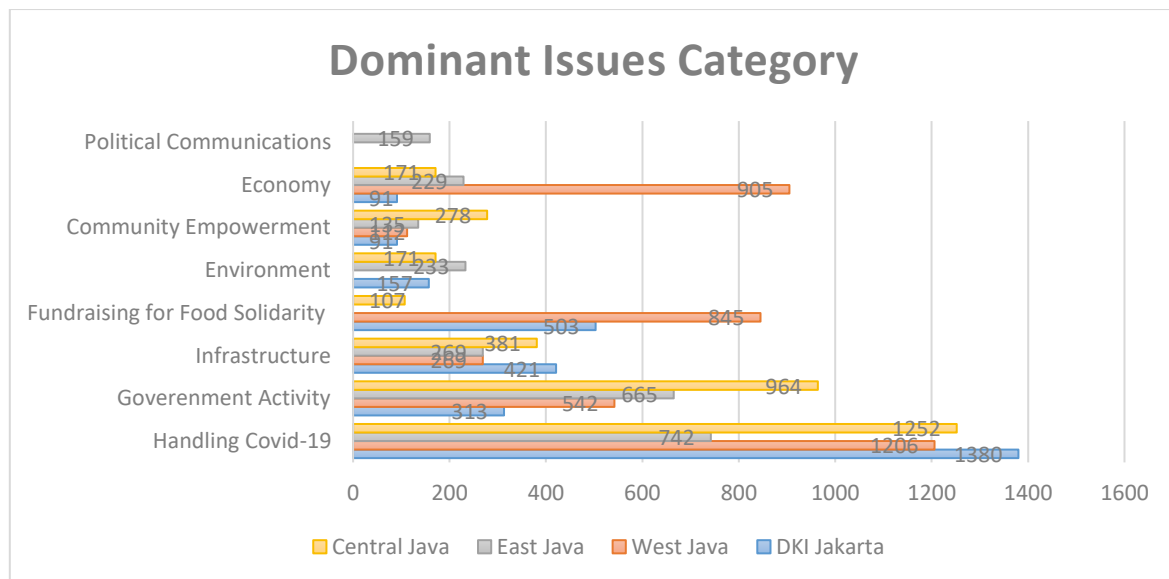
Figure 5
Categories of Dominant Issues Raised by the Governors during the Covid-19 Pandemic

As can be seen in Figure 5, the four governors' Twitter accounts have focused on issues of handling of Covid-19 pandemic. The Twitter accounts of Jakarta, West Java and Central Java provinces governors contain more than 1,000 "Covid-19" words each. East Java governor's twitter account only has 742 words related to Covid-19 handling issues, yet the word is dominant when compared to other words. In term of Covid-19 handling issues, governor of Jakarta provided more of such issues compared to the remaining three governors.

In view of the government activity issues, governors of East Java, West Java and Central Java tweeted more than 500 words, with Central Java governor having 964 words. Jakarta governor's account only had 313 words related to government activity issues.

The next issue in the infrastructure. Jakarta governor's account dominates this issue with 421 related words while East Java and West Java have 261 words each, and Central Java governor's account contains 381 words of this category. East Java and West Java governors' account focused more on general infrastructure issues, while Jakarta and East Java governors' accounts highlightee relations of transportation infrastructure issues with that of pandemic issues, and the Central Java governor put attention on repairs of road infrastructure using the tagar #jalancantik (well-mantined road).

The next dominant issue is the fundraising for food solidarity. The implemented LSSR policy has prevented those whose earning depends upon physical activities from performing their routines. Therefore, various movements for food solidarity have emerged and formed a mutual support strategy for survival during the crisis. It is interesting to note that while such issue is dominant with Twitter account of West Java, Central Java and Jakarta governors, it gets less attention in East Java governor's account. In West Java's account, food solidarity is one of dominating issues. Food solidarity is also a dominting issue after that of Covid-19 handling. East Java governor's account also put food solidarity as a dominating issue with related word number not bigger than that of the fellow West Java, Central Java, and Jakarta governors'.

Meanwhile, the number of words for environment issue is not that big. This issue is not dominant in West Java Governor's account. The account focused more on economic issues (905 words), much bigger than that of the other three governors (229 words in East Java Governor's account, 91 words in Jakarta Governor's account and 171 words in Central Java Governor's account).

The next issue is community empowerment. For this issue, highest number of related words were found in Central Java Governor's account (278 words), followed by East Java Governor's account (135 words), West Java Governor's account (112 words), and Jakarta Governor's account (91 words).

Data in Figure 5 shows different policy priorities or programs among the four governors in term of handling of Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, the figures also reflect each of the governors' communication style. Contents presented by the governors will also effect the public attention which will result in the public participation and behavior pattern (Mergel, 2013). They also indicate that the social media have become a good communication medium to be used by the governors as part of the government internal communication medium

(Mergel, 2013), yet a communication strategy is required to make sure that each content can be of a benefit to the public (Rahmawati & Pratiwi, 2020).

As can be seen from the govenors' Twitter accounts, each tweet demonstrates a variety of contents, featuring not only short sentences or messages (adjusted to 280 characters per tweet as allowed by Twitte); they include images, graphics or videos in their tweets or retweets. Within the conceptual framework, social media content information, concept and theme form a crucial communication for delivery of expected results (Lai & To, 2016). Apart from that, varied posts that come in the forms of texts, images and videos can attract the public response (Furqon et al., 2018). This is reflected in the West Java governor's contents which are often presented in videos with infographic messages. Such style is not found in the other three governors' Twitter. The three other governors normally re-tweet infographic contents from the local Covid-10 Handling Acceleration Task Force. What has been done by the West Java governor's is considered to be an innovative effort to attract more public responses.

The research data also reflects that the social media have enabled real time interaction potentials between the government and the public, and encouraged economic and solutions to the underlying social problems (Clarke, 2017; Syarifuddin et al., 2020). Data from Figure 3 and 4 conclude that the social media have become the need of the head of the regional government especially amidst the current era of technology (Prabowo, 2018). The social media with their advantages such as the ability to encourage collective action; generate actual information exchange; integrate individual contribution; remain flexible, non-hierarchial and not restricted by time and space; can be maximized as an important tool in running the government administration (Linders, 2012). The dominant topics and issues under discuss suggest how the governors have maintained a certain level of consistency in terms of the use of the social media (in this case Twitter) in response to a variety of momentums. Not only did

the governors use the social media for the momentums related to governmental policies or activities, but also as political communication media or political branding benefitting from the Covid-19 pandemic situation. (This topic will be dicussed in detail in the next part).

The power of social media has also provided the heads of regional government to stay updated with related information and public aspiration not available with conventional communication media. Their success use of the social media suggests that they have developed their quality of communication and public survices. Generally speaking, the research data show how the governors have benefitted from the social media as communication media in terms of protocol, public policies, and actualization of each vision and mission in their efforts of controllong Covid-19 pandemic.

The research data also indicate that Twitter has been utilized as medium for internal coordination among the governmental bodies. Reports from the public will be forwarded (retweeted) to accounts belonging to the right local government bodies). Governor of Central Java even used Twitter as medium of coordination between himself and the vice governor. This can be considered as a way for provision of swifter and more convenient public services. Such social media communication process has become an alternative to the conventional one-way communication that is believed to have failed to obtain public participation. A research by Salahudin et.al (2020) for instance, suggests how the government officials in Indonesia, ranging from President Joko Widodo, officials authorized with the handling of Covid-19 pandemic and head of regional governments have established related interactions and collaboration through Twitter for handling of Covid-19 pandemic.

It is necessary to note that there have been some institutional and organizational problems that need to be addressed by the heads of the regional government to ensure maximum use of the social media within the government activities. The problems include highly dominating bureaucratic atmosphere, low government officials' competence of

utilizing the available social media and technology, and public access and digital literacy (Karakiza, 2015).

'Political Branding' Towards 2024 Presidential Election

The research data indicate that Covid-19 contents of included in the four governors' Twitter accounts indirectly serve as political branding. In other words, the governors have made use of their Twitter accounts as communication tool for establishing political brand benefitting from the Covid-19 related contents. The findings relate to their position in the national political competition landscape, where the four governors are prominent candidates for the 2024 presidential election. Despite the fact that presidential election is still long way to go, it seems that the political competition atmosphere is around, especially for the fact the the current President Joko Widodo is not eligible for re-running. The four governors' names are readily known to the public through some candidacy surveys as promising candidates for the 2024 presidential election. The widely open political space for the 2024 election hypothetically contributes to the potential candidates' (including the four governors under research) necessary preparations, one of which is to be done by establishing their own political branding by means of their media sosial media account and, by benefitting from a variety of related momentums.

This can be detected from the word clusters found in the research. In the East Java Governor's Twitter @KhofifahIP, the word "@jokowi", which is the Twitter acunt of President Joko Widodo (Figure 3) is frequent. Such word can be read as the effort of East Java Governor's political branding to tell the public that she is a close ally (politically and ideologically) of President Joko Widodo. Within the national political ground, Khofifah is known to be Joko Widodo's staunch supporter in 2019 election, and even appointed as Minister of Social Affairs in Joko Widodo's cabinet prior to running for and taking office as East Java Governor in 2020. Apart from that, the word "muslimat" (Muslim women) is also

frequent in the account @KhofifahIP. It is not actually a word related to handling of Covid-19 pandemic. This is considered to be the governor's effort to confirm her political branding as a female politician who is a religious-nationalist. The word "muslimat" originates from 'Pengurus Pusat (PP) Muslimat', a wing of Nahdlatul Ulama, an Indonesian moderate Islam mass organization which has the largest members in the world. Khofifah has been the chair of Muslimat Nahdlatul Ulama since 2000 up to the present time. The members of this organization are women associated with Nahdlatul Ulama. The frequent use of the words "@jokowi" and "muslimat" in her Twitter account can be understood as Khofifah's effort to maintain and affirm her political branding as a religious-nationalist politician who is connected with President Joko Widodo, as her political capital for the 2024 Presidential Election.

The same thing can also be seen from the word cloud data of @ridwankamil (West Java governor's account). One of the words frequently used in his Twitter is "jabarjuara" (West Java the champion), a word which is not actually related to the handling of Covid-19 pandemic (see Figure 2). The world cluster originated from the governor's vision, namely 'the making of West Java that is physically and spriritually a champion with innpvation and collaboration." The vision has been aired since his campaign earlier when running as candidate of West Java Governor. The vision was then translated into some missions and excellent programs realization which have been regularly informed through his Twitter. Owing to his background as a professional (architect), West Java Governor has seemed to affirm his political branding as a politician and head of regional government who is competent, ideal, and is capable of utilizing the information technology.

Central Java and Jakarta Governors' Twitter accounts also indicated similar fact respectively. In the account of @ganjarpranowo (Figure 4), #jatenggayeng (joyful Central Java) is found, which is the slogan or tagline of the Central Java Province that was officially

introduced in 2015 by the governor to promote and introduce the province's products and potentials. The slogan depicts spirit, boldness, toughness, honesty, friendlinees, joy, harmony and warmth. The presence of the tagar in the world cloud data indicates that the Central Java Governor has shared various information on the achievements and implementation of the #jatenggayeng programs. The governor seemed to continuously build his political branding as a friendly and communicative politician benefitting from his willingness to respond to his followers' mentions. He even takes it easy when he responds to mentions with negative tones.

Jakarta Governor's account @aniesbaswedan has frequently aired the phrase "kolaborasi bantuan sosial." (social assistance collaboration) (Figure 1). The phrase originated from the program called Large Scale Social Collaboration (LSSC) launched by the governor in May 2020. The name and abbreviation of the program title was deliberately made similar to the national government program originally intended to restrict social mobility for prevention of Covid-19 spread. LSSC, as put forward by Jakarta Governor, is a social collaborative programs madea available for collaboratively helping others, by connecting people who wish to give, and those who need help or those who are economically impacted by the implementation of the national PSBB (Large Scale Social Restriction-LSSR) that also applied to Jakarta province. There were four selections of packages in LSSC program, namely breakfast-dinner meal package, staple food package, holiday festival package, and cash. The media and political observers consider LSSC as "rivaling program" of LSSR, for the fact that Anies Baswedan is an ambitious politician vying for the presidency. The presence of word cluster "social assistance collaboration" which refers to LSSC program can be seen as part of the governor's political branding as a head of regional government with the work of national leader, which triggered insinuation such as "a governor with a presidential work" attached to Anies Baswedan.

However, theoretically and conceptully, political branding amidst the

Covid-19 pandemic is normal. In principle, government's communication practice benefitting from any medium is intented to build self image of the government officials (Besman et al., 2018). A research by Porimbecsu (in Rahmawati & Pratiwi, 2020) stated that the government's use of the social will result in public opinion building on the government of head of government's performance. Being one of the social media utilized for building political branding, Twitter gives considerable effects to public opinion or perception through the tweets (Rahmat & Purnomo, 2020).

Bungin (2018) also stated that the current social construction of modern society is heavily influenced by the information and communication technology. However, the social media can serve as a double edged knife; as it may become a tool of control over the government administration in one hand and the killer of government administration in another hand. Therefore, what the four governors have done (as detected from the world cloud of their Twitter account) can be perceived as a process of social construction that they used to shape their respective political branding and individual identity images. The word "muslimat" in the account @KhofifahIP for instance, strongly highlighted women image as it refers to the woman organization which is the wing of Nahdlatul Ulama. East Java province is the home to the biggest Nahdlatul Ulama members and therefore, the image "mother" emerged from the governor of East Java that further developed as "mother of East Java people"

Political branding actively contributes to shaping of framing for politicians and political parties since political branding gives the politicians the chance to communicate their individualimage and political party (Widianti et al., 2019). Within Indonesian political context, similar effort was undertaken by Ma'ruf Amin during the 2019 presidential election during which he made use of Twitter as political branding tool which turned out to have a significant effect. Researcher Adinugroho et.al, (2019) showed that the use of the social

media highly contributes to electability compared to other internet platforms. This indicates that the social media positively effect the public for search for political information the forms political inclination towards certain politicians and political parties. Another research also shows a significant relations between the use of the social media for political campaign and voters' trust or loyalty (Dabula, 2017).

The research data suggest that currently political branding is not only shaped by politician's personality and appearance or political party, but also by the politician's ability to build relations with voters, leadership genuiness, responsiveness to technology (by means of Twitter) and political messages that raise hopes (Sandra, 2013). The four governors who are the subjects of this research (with their Twitter accounst) describe how political branding can be constructed by means of the social media by benefitting from various momentums, including Covid-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

Based on the result of analysis of the data obtained from Twitter accounts belonging to the governors of West Java, Jakarta, Central Java and East Java, a conclusion is drawn on account of the use of the social media during the Covid-19 pandemic. Firstly, the four governers have immensely utilized the social media as part of their effort of handling the Covid-19 pandemic, especially as an instrument or medium of conveying information and conducting direct communication with the public for handling of Covid-19 pandemic purposes. The social media have been seen as an important instrument within the framework government communication in dealing with the pandemic. Secondly, the governors have used Twitter as an instrument for establishing internal coordination for dealing with Covid-19 pandemic. The internal coordination which is normally performed in closed spaces is now done openly (visible to the followers) by utilizing the features available with the social media

(in this case Twitter), such as retweets, tagars and so forth. In other words, the social media, in this case, has made the government communication more open, which, to some extent, may bring advantagea to the said governors as they will be considered as transparent and accountable leaders. Thirdly, the governors have used Twitter and Covid-19 issues to build and affirm their political branding, particularly as a strategy in anticipation of the 2021 presidential election. The four governors mentioned in this research are potential candidates of the presidential election.

In view of the theoretical context, the research is expected to enrich the realm of Covid-19 pandemic studies within the perspective of government communication and use of the social media. The research data and analysis can be benefitted from in terms of practical ground (references for government communication actors for development of transparent communication style) and academicians (as references for developing studies on Covid-19 pandemic in the perspective of government practice or communication).

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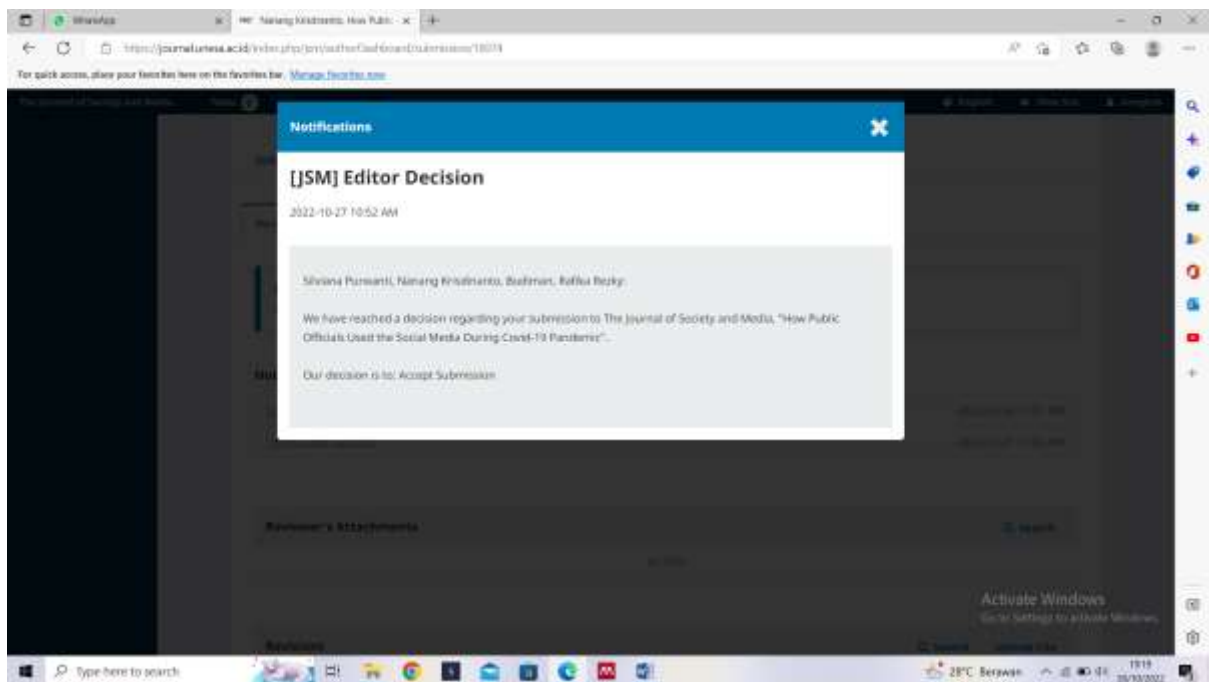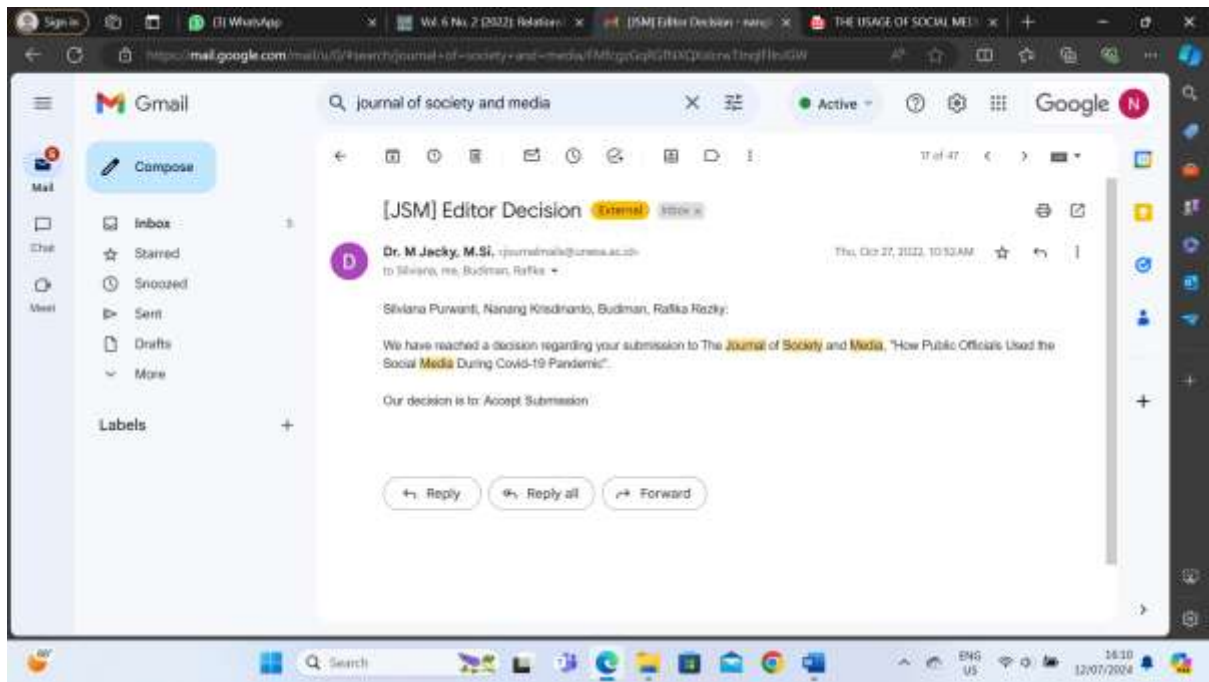
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6. Bukti konfirmasi artikel accepted

(27 Oktober 2022)

[JSM] Editor Decision

Dr. M Jacky, M.Si. <journalmails@unesa.ac.id>
to Silviana, me, Budiman, Rafika

Thu, Oct 27, 2022, 10:52 AM

Silviana Purwanti, Nanang Krisdinanto, Budiman, Rafika Rezky:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to The Journal of Society and Media, "How Public Officials Used the Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic".

Our decision is to: Accept Submission

Reply   Reply all   Forward

Notifications

[JSM] Editor Decision

2022-10-27 10:52 AM

Silviana Purwanti, Nanang Krisdinanto, Budiman, Rafika Rezky:

We have reached a decision regarding your submission to The Journal of Society and Media, "How Public Officials Used the Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic".

Our decision is to: Accept Submission

7.   Bukti konfirmasi artikel published online
(30 Oktober 2022)

Notifications

[JSM] Editor Decision

2022-10-30 07:51 PM

Silviana Purwanti, Nanang Krisdinanto, Budiman, Rafika Rezky:

The editing of your submission, "How Public Officials Used the Social Media During Covid-19 Pandemic," is complete. We are now sending it to production.

Submission URL: https://journal.unesa.ac.id/index.php/jsm/authorDashboard/submission/18074
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Revisions