Digital communication model in increasing public trust (Case study of Bawaslu Magelang Regency in the 2024 presidential election)

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to develop a digital communication model to enhance public trust in election monitoring in Magelang Regency, classified as a high-risk area in the 2024 elections. Using a qualitative method with a case study approach, involving observation, interviews, and documentation, the research focuses on creating a communication model that effectively increases public trust. The findings reveal that digital communication implemented by Bawaslu through social media is more effective in engaging the public, but synchronization with the website requires improvement to ensure better information transparency. Website management is centrally integrated to facilitate maintenance and address server issues, with hosting responsibilities handled at the national level, while local branches are limited to content management without access to modify the website. This study recommends a digital communication model that provides practical guidelines for creating digital content to strengthen public trust in election monitoring institutions.

1. Introduction

Indonesia holds general elections to determine the President and Vice President (Pulungan et al., 2020). This is in accordance with Law NO. 23, LN 2003 (Undang-Undang Tentang Pemilihan Umum Presiden Dan Wakil Presiden, 2003). General elections are a medium for channeling people's sovereignty that has been protected and emphasized in the 1945 Constitution (Rizki AD, 2024). Campaign supervision is explicitly explained in Bawaslu Regulation Number 33 of 2018. Campaign props include all objects or other forms that contain the vision, mission, program, and other information of election participants, as well as symbols or images of election participants that are installed for campaign purposes with the aim of inviting people to vote for certain election participants (Banurea, 2023). As an election supervisory body, Bawaslu is responsible for monitoring and preventing violations (Afnira, 2023).

Digital technology in today's era is advancing rapidly, with significant changes occurring, especially in communication. Currently, social life is dominated by social media, which serves as a tool connecting people in the digital age (Juliani & Suni, 2022). Social media allows institutions or organizations to directly interact with the public through electronic platforms (Anwar & Rusmana, 2017). As outlined by katadata.com, in 2022, the total number of internet users in Indonesia reached 202.6 million. This figure is high compared to the country's total population of 277.7 million people (Azzahra et al., 2024). When political participation is sufficient, political decisions are more likely to reflect the diverse perspectives of society, ensuring a sense of representation (Nurhidayah & Fadillah, 2024). Digital media has become the most frequently used communication tool, including in the democratic process in Indonesia.

In the digital era, Bawaslu communicates digitally through social media and its website. Digital communication refers to the process of delivering messages through digital platforms (email, blogs, websites, and social media) (Hidayat, 2022). Each region has a Bawaslu office to assist in coordinating with the central authority to address election violations. One such office is Bawaslu in Magelang Regency. According to the 2024 Election Vulnerability Index (IKP) mapping conducted by Bawaslu of the Republic of Indonesia, Magelang Regency is classified as a high-risk area (Humas Bawaslu Kabupaten Magelang, 2022). This assessment is based on the socio-political context, election implementation, contestation, and participation found throughout Indonesia. The IKP serves as a tool for early detection and preparation to understand the vulnerability level in each region.

Digital communication will be conducted through online media used by Bawaslu in Magelang Regency, such as @bawaslukabmagelang on Instagram and www.kabmagelang.bawaslu.go.id. Researchers found that the current digital communication model has not yet been effective in increasing public trust. Effectiveness is defined as achieving goals or targets as set (Komariah, 2005). Furthermore, effectiveness is also described as a condition that demonstrates success or, conversely, failure in reaching the goals according to the correct quality and quantity of work.

Fig. 1. Magelang District Bawaslu Insagram Post

Social media acts as an essential platform for individuals to share information and exchange knowledge (Fadillah et al., 2019). The digital communication process carried out by Bawaslu Magelang Regency includes results of supervision, data recap, invitations to polling stations, commemorative day greetings, and Bawaslu Magelang Regency's activity gallery. The communication messages conveyed are quite open for public access and can be directly monitored by the community. The amount of information uploaded on Bawaslu Magelang Regency's Instagram is in contrast to what is available on their website.

Although the information disseminated through Instagram is relatively active and up-to-date, the Bawaslu Magelang Regency website appears to be less optimal in terms of information updates. This is a challenge, considering that the website should be one of the main channels for delivering more detailed and formal information. Such limitations may reduce public engagement, as they might prefer to obtain information through platforms deemed more credible and accessible. Therefore, synchronization and optimization between Instagram and the Bawaslu Magelang Regency website are needed so that digital communication can be more effective and reach a broader segment of society.

Fig. 2. Website Display of Bawaslu Magelang District

On the Bawaslu Magelang Regency website at www.magelangkab.bawaslu.go.id, it is evident that there is still a lot of information that has not been uploaded. Despite the fact that the website is an alternative online media that can accommodate more comprehensive messages compared to social media, which has upload limitations. Many important pieces of information that should be communicated to the public in the digital era, including reports on the results of the 2024 election supervision, are still lacking.

To address this issue, it is essential for Bawaslu Magelang Regency to establish a more structured and consistent approach to updating their website. This involves not only uploading comprehensive and formal reports but also integrating interactive features, such as downloadable resources, search tools, and categorized archives, to enhance user experience. By aligning the frequency and relevance of website updates with the dynamic content posted on Instagram, Bawaslu can create a

cohesive digital presence that bridges formal and informal communication channels. Additionally, employing analytics to understand user behavior on both platforms can guide content strategies, ensuring that the information provided meets the public's needs effectively (Krasnova, 2023). Strengthening website content management will improve accessibility and credibility, further encouraging community engagement and participation in electoral activities (Li, 2023; Yip, 1996).
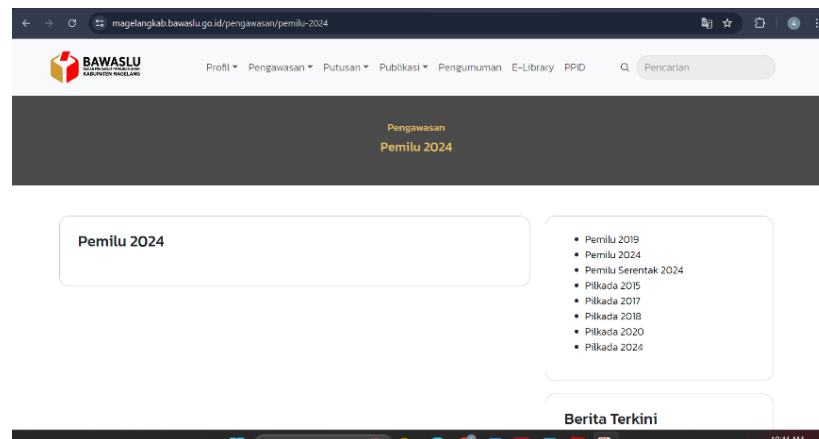

Fig. 3. Display of election monitoring report

Important information that should be published to the public through the official online media of Bawaslu Magelang Regency appears to be missing, preventing the public from accessing the results of Bawaslu Magelang Regency's supervision through the website. The use of the website as an online media for digital communication with the public is crucial because websites are more flexible, accessible 24 hours a day, and facilitate the distribution of messages for government institutions that the public needs to be informed about (Parsaorantua et al., 2017).

The previous research to be developed by the researcher is that of Tania Putri Juliani and Eugenius Kau Suni, titled *"Strategi Komunikasi Digital Bawaslu Daerah dalam Pencegahan Pelanggaran Pilkada Kota Depok 2020."* The results of this study show that digital media plays a very effective and efficient role in preventing violations and facilitating the work of election supervisors, thus contributing to the creation of a credible election or local election (Juliani & Suni, 2022). The difference in this research is the different research object, and the development from this research is the lack of a digital communication model that can be used to increase public trust.

Communication that emphasizes information transparency accessible to the public will determine public trust (Humas KPU, 2022). Maintaining public trust for election monitoring institutions is crucial because these institutions are entrusted with ensuring that the electoral process adheres to applicable rules and legal principles. A digital communication model with information transparency will address distrust and suspicion that may arise regarding the integrity of the election process, strengthening public trust in democracy and democratic institutions

(Pradesa, 2024). Based on this, there is a need for a digital communication model to enhance public trust in the performance of election supervisors so that the results of the elections are well-received by the public.

2. Theoretical Framework

Communication is the process of sending messages from the communicator to the communicant. In the era of digitalization, digital communication has emerged, bringing changes to communication behavior in society (Boestam & Derivanti, 2022). Advances in information and communication technology have transformed communication, no longer limited to face-to-face interaction alone. Nowadays, many digital media users are predominantly young people (Badri, 2022).

The use of devices such as smartphones and the integration of telecommunications, the internet, and broadcasting have directly changed how often we interact in person. Social interaction has shifted from being physical to virtual due to advancements in digital communication technology (Boestam & Derivanti, 2022). Technically, the internet is a network of computers consisting of millions of units worldwide connected to exchange information. Conceptually, the internet is also considered an electronic library that stores text, graphics, sound, and animation (Choo, 2024; Wangang, 2023; Yan, 2023). This makes the internet an effective and efficient tool for remote information exchange (Ahmadi, 2020). The internet has evolved with various programs that essentially function as communication applications among virtual community members, especially in transactional relationships, such as websites, e-commerce, blogs, and social media (Chaisriya, 2023).

The use of digital communication is crucial, as it enables companies or organizations to reach their audience and disseminate information, such as the characteristics of a specific region. Additionally, it can be utilized to introduce products and services to enhance audience perception or trust (Fianto & Andrianto, 2022a; Maizaud, 2022). Developing a digital communication model by leveraging technological advancements will make it easier for institutions to reach their audience (Meng, 2023; Sharakhina, 2023).

The new media widely used includes websites and social media. Social media is a form of electronic communication where users create online communities to exchange information, ideas, personal messages, videos, or other content (Aripradono, 2020). Social networks become primary places where users engage through comments and express their behaviors and feelings regarding a topic. Data on social media can be used to understand the impact or response to what is communicated to users through social media (Alfajri et al., 2019).

The connection between new media theory and this research is that new media are among the media that prioritize information transparency. Anyone can access information as long as they have

internet access. In the context of increasing public trust, using new media to demonstrate the transparency of government institutions' information will have a positive impact on the institution, as the public will be able to access and compare information according to field facts. In this research, information transparency through new media conducted by Bawaslu Magelang Regency will be key in enhancing public trust in the electoral process in Magelang Regency.

3. Method

Research on the Digital Communication Model for Enhancing Public Trust, using Bawaslu Magelang Regency as a case study during the 2024 Presidential and vicepresidential Elections in Magelang Regency, employs a descriptive qualitative research method. This method is characterized by the use of specific words and language with scientific methods (Kusuma et al., 2023). Qualitative research methods are often used to address problems that are not yet clear and lack depth (Rusandi & Muhammad, 2021).

Data collection in qualitative research with a case study approach can be obtained through several techniques, including interviews, observations, and documentation (Rusandi & Muhammad, 2021). The observation involves monitoring the digital media used by Bawaslu Magelang Regency through their Instagram account @bawaslukabmagelang. The next step in data collection is conducting in-depth interviews. In-depth interviews are discussions between two or more people, with one person conducting the interview and the other being interviewed, aimed at obtaining data for research purposes (Juliani & Suni, 2022). The interviews will be conducted with key informants, including Andi from the Bawaslu Magelang Regency Public Relations, as the primary informant, and Sumarni Aini Chabibah, a leader at Bawaslu Magelang Regency.

Once the data collection is complete and each piece of data is presented clearly, the next step is data analysis. Data analysis is a key process for obtaining important information from research findings. The data analysis involves processing the data by organizing, arranging, grouping, coding, and categorizing according to specific patterns to produce findings related to the research problem formulation (Rusandi & Muhammad, 2021). Data validation will be done through triangulation. Data triangulation or confirmability involves reporting or presenting the findings to the informants who were interviewed previously (Rusandi & Muhammad, 2021). All findings discovered in the field will undergo a triangulation process to ensure data validity. Each informant will be shown evidence of field findings to provide explanations about those findings.

4. Result and Discussion

The General Election Supervisory Agency (Bawaslu) Magelang Regency oversees 21 sub-districts to prevent potential election violations. The monitoring process is conducted from the sub-district and village level through the Election Supervisory Committee (Panwaslu). Every activity

occurring at the village or sub-district level is reported to Bawaslu Magelang Regency, which is then processed for publication through Bawaslu's media, including digital media. Bawaslu Magelang Regency opts for digital media due to its broad user base, particularly among young people who are a key focus for election participation.

Bawaslu Magelang Regency carries out digital communication periodically by posting information about Bawaslu's activities, election announcements, and calls to participate in monitoring the success of elections in Indonesia. Planning by Bawaslu Magelang Regency is based on the identification of previous activities as a reference for creating subsequent programs. Activities carried out by Bawaslu Magelang Regency include providing public education about elections, preventing potential violations during elections, optimizing first-time voters to monitor election participation, and collaborating with all elements involved in elections to achieve inclusive, dignified, integrated, and high-quality elections (Pingping, 2024).

During program planning, coordination with other parties such as election organizers, political contestants through parties, and stakeholders is conducted by inviting them to the Bawaslu Magelang Regency office. This coordination is aimed at exchanging information regarding elections. Bawaslu Magelang Regency also collaborates with local universities to enhance participatory monitoring efforts. Coordination involves discussing vulnerability issues and violations in the election stages to minimize potential violations. According to Bawaslu Magelang Regency, program planning through coordination with involved parties is very effective as it encourages proper election stages and collective election supervision.

One of Bawaslu Magelang Regency's achievements is the digital publication of all Bawaslu's activities related to elections. The online media used by Bawaslu include the website at www.kabmagelang.bawaslu.go.id, as well as social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, X, and YouTube. However, Facebook and Instagram @bawaslukabmagelang are the most active and interconnected in their postings. Bawaslu Magelang Regency vigilantly monitors election-related conflicts to ensure the results are trustworthy. Bawaslu regularly posts updates on activities and peaceful election campaigns to control misleading information in the community.

In cases of election fraud, Bawaslu Magelang Regency strives to impose penalties and recommend re-voting if errors occur during the election procedures. During these stages, Bawaslu Magelang Regency will provide periodic reports on its digital media to keep the public informed and ensure transparency regarding cases handled during election disputes. However, some information cannot be published on the Bawaslu Magelang Regency website as it is directed to Bawaslu Central, so information about violations and handling is mostly at the central level.

To enhance public trust, Bawaslu Magelang Regency opens as many communication forums as possible to be accessible to the public. One such initiative is the Public Complaint Post, which is always communicated through online media such as Instagram, Facebook, X, and the official Bawaslu Magelang Regency website. The complaint posts provided by Bawaslu Magelang Regency include posts related to voter data updating stages, identity data misuse in registration, verification and determination of political party candidates for the 2024 elections, and other complaints related to the formation of Adhoc Bodies, whether conducted by Bawaslu Magelang Regency or KPU Magelang Regency.

In the digital communication process, Bawaslu Magelang Regency also relies on public participation. Bawaslu has several programs to enhance community participation, including Participatory Supervisor Education, Participatory Citizen Monitoring Forum, Monitoring Corner, Cooperation with Universities, Participatory Monitoring Villages, and Digital Participatory Monitoring Communities. Community participation is essential for gathering more information about elections, allowing Bawaslu to address and prevent issues before they arise (Canale, 2022; Wangang, 2023; Yan, 2023). Information gathered from the public is also used for publication on Bawaslu's digital media.

To combat hoax information that could damage the electoral image, Bawaslu Magelang Regency conducts Participatory Election Socialization with the theme "Realizing Smart Voters, Anti-Hoax and Defamation!" This offline event involved 75 participants from stakeholders, universities, religious organizations, election monitors, election activists, women's organizations, disability organizations in Magelang Regency, Panwaslu Sub-districts, media, and members of the Saka Adhyasta Election Bawaslu Magelang Regency 2023. This program aims to address the spread of hoaxes online. The hope is that the participants will help spread information about the importance of verifying facts from information circulated on the Internet.

According to the Public Relations of Bawaslu Magelang Regency, the creation of content ideas is adjusted to current trends and also involves remaking content from Bawaslu Indonesia by adding local wisdom. Some specific content is also discussed in internal meetings to review the results of supervision or handling of violations. The content creation evaluation process is carried out in internal meetings, where posts from Bawaslu's online media, especially on Instagram, are reviewed for the most responses. Regarding the website, Bawaslu Magelang Regency is only granted access to content creation. Website modifications are directly managed by Bawaslu Indonesia.

Additionally, Panwaslu Magelang Regency is required to participate in the Digital Participatory Monitoring Community 'Jarimu Awasi Pemilu' through the website www.jarimuawasipemilu.bawaslu.go.id, established by Bawaslu Central to facilitate Panwaslu and

the public's active involvement in election monitoring. This community features a Discussion Forum, Election News, and Monitoring Stories, shared periodically and accessible to the public.
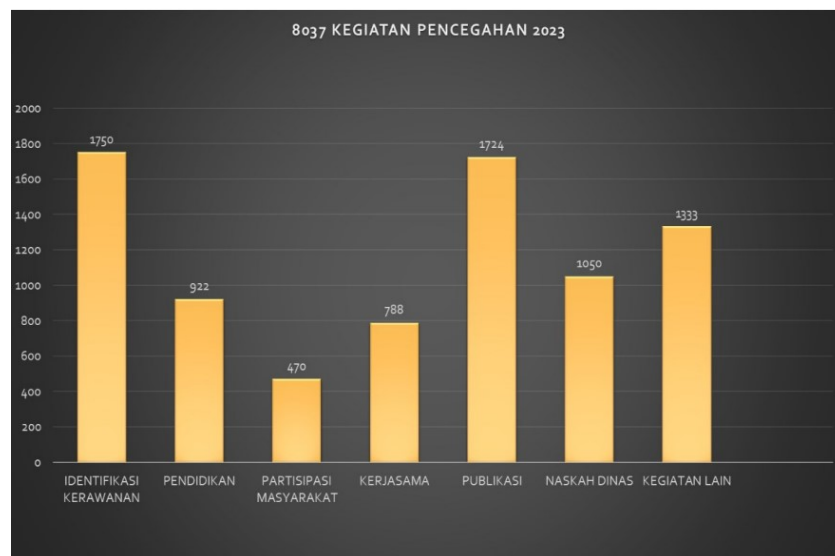

Fig. 4. Chart of Prevention Activities 2023

In 2023, Bawaslu Magelang Regency published 1,724 online publications to be disseminated to the public through its media channels. These publications cover monitoring activities and prevention of violations through socialization and informative messages encouraging public participation in overseeing the 2024 elections. Each digital communication by Bawaslu Magelang Regency undergoes evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the messages delivered. This evaluation is crucial to ensure that the messages reach the target audience accurately and are clearly understood. Additionally, Bawaslu Magelang Regency proactively follows the latest trends on social media and other digital platforms. These trends are integrated with the informative messages they convey, making them accessible to various demographics, from the youth to the general public. Through this approach, Bawaslu aims to maintain the relevance and appeal of their messages and enhance public participation in election supervision.

The digital communication processes implemented by Bawaslu Magelang Regency reflect theories suggesting that the digital era creates digital communication that alters social behaviors (Boestam & Derivanti, 2022). Bawaslu's choice to segment the youth through online media aligns with the fact that digital media usage is predominantly among younger users (Badri, 2022). Bawaslu Magelang Regency utilizes smartphone features to distribute informative messages quickly and broadly. Information gathered from various methods, including observations and trusted informants, is processed into factual, current, and reliable messages to ensure public trust.

The processed messages are then distributed through digital media connected to the internet, such as websites, Instagram, Facebook, X, and YouTube. These online platforms are used to reach a

broad and rapid audience. The public can also provide feedback to Bawaslu Magelang Regency through comments and messages on these platforms. From a government perspective, interactive sites are considered useful and convenient for receiving complaints and reports from the public, even without face-to-face interactions or conventional media (Mahmudah, 2018). This facilitates communication for both the public and Bawaslu Magelang Regency.

Bawaslu Magelang Regency's use of new media includes displaying text, graphics, audio, and video as part of their digital information hub. Digital platforms make message dissemination more effective and efficient, with a broad societal reach (Ahmadi, 2020). Bawaslu Magelang Regency leverages online media to expand the reach of their messages. Social media, as a form of electronic communication, allows users to create online communities for exchanging information, ideas, personal messages, videos, and other content (Aripradono, 2020). The social media platforms used by Bawaslu Magelang Regency, such as Facebook, X, and Instagram @bawaslukabmagelang, facilitate information exchange with other internet users, providing direct feedback to communicators and creating a robust online community for message dissemination. User participation on social networks, such as liking, commenting, sharing, or retweeting, strengthens relationships between users (Litterio et al., 2017).

Social media is also used by Bawaslu Magelang Regency to assess program effectiveness by monitoring social media activities related to elections and Bawaslu Magelang Regency. Data from social media can be used to understand the impact or response to what is communicated to users (Alfajri et al., 2019). Collected data will be analyzed to evaluate the effectiveness of ongoing programs. The effectiveness of online media is not only centered on its benefits for the government in facilitating communication with the public and aiding in message delivery but also on how social media use can enhance public trust, perceptions of service quality, and community participation (Rahmanto, 2022). As the theory of communication suggests, the use of digital communication is crucial because it allows companies or organizations to reach their audience and disseminate information, such as the characteristics of a specific region. Additionally, it can be used to introduce products and services to enhance audience perception or trust (Fianto & Andrianto, 2022b). Developing a digital communication model by leveraging technological advancements will make it easier for institutions to reach their audience.

To further enhance the effectiveness of their digital communication strategy, Bawaslu Magelang Regency could explore the integration of advanced digital tools, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, to better understand audience preferences and behaviors (AlDreabi, 2023). These tools can provide valuable insights into the types of content that resonate most with different demographics, allowing for more targeted and impactful messaging. Furthermore, collaboration with influencers or local digital content creators could help amplify the reach of Bawaslu's

messages, particularly among younger audiences who are highly engaged with social media. By continuously innovating their approach and adapting to the rapidly evolving digital landscape, Bawaslu Magelang Regency can strengthen public awareness, trust, and participation in election monitoring, ensuring their mission reaches the broadest possible audience effectively. Based on the discussion above, the following is a proposed digital communication model that can be used:
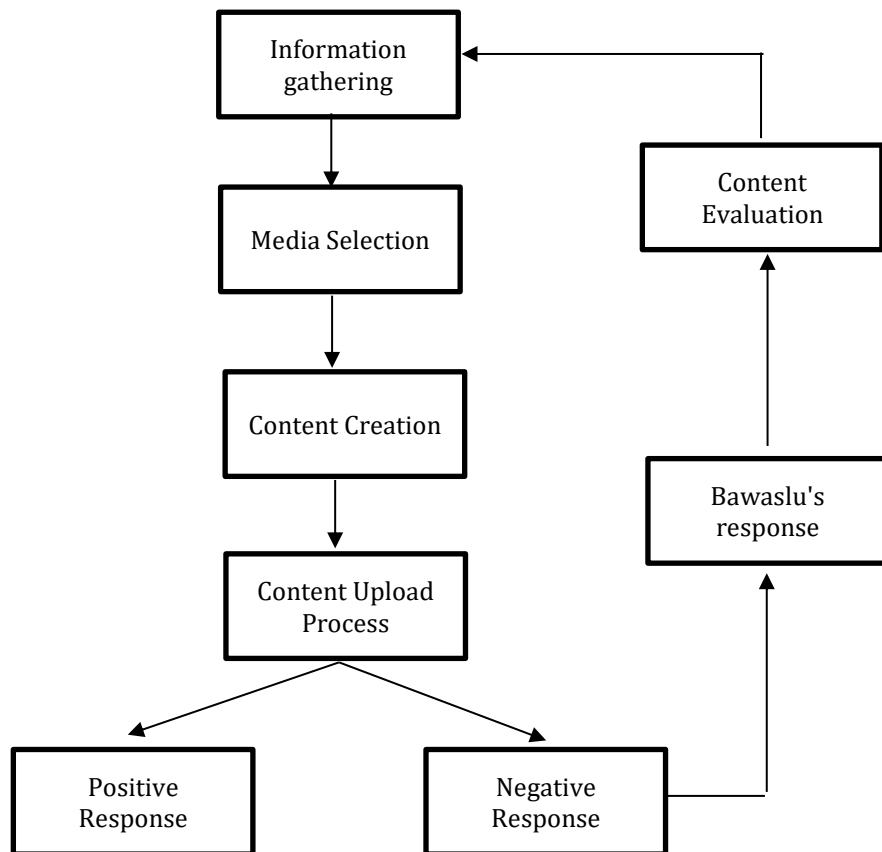

Fig. 5. Digital Communications Models

The collection of information is important in the digital communication process because Communication is the process of sending messages from the communicator to the communicant. In the era of digitalization, digital communication has emerged, bringing changes to communication behavior in society (Boestam & Derivanti, 2022). The creation of good digital content based on transparent data will ensure that the information being disseminated is trustworthy to the audience and can enhance public trust. The digital communication model carried out by Bawaslu Magelang Regency considers coordination between institutions or organizations related to elections to be able to create a strategy for delivering messages through online media. The process of increasing public trust also depends on the transparency of messages carried out by Bawaslu Magelang Regency because without transparency it will make people question the election results.

5. Conclusion

Bawaslu Magelang Regency uses digital media as a primary tool for conveying election-related information across 21 sub-districts, utilizing platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and the official website. The active use of social media, particularly Instagram and Facebook, helps reach younger audiences and encourages public participation in election supervision. Content creation follows current trends and incorporates local wisdom, with regular internal meetings to evaluate and refine content effectiveness.

Bawaslu also collaborates with various stakeholders, including election organizers, political parties, and universities, to strengthen participatory supervision. Programs like the Participatory Citizen Monitoring Forum and the Digital Participatory Monitoring Community encourage community involvement in reporting election violations. Routine evaluations of social media messages ensure effective communication, aiming to enhance transparency and public trust in the electoral process. For future research, it is recommended to explore improving the integration between social media and the website for a more cohesive and transparent digital communication strategy.

Acknowledgment

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