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PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS OF WOMEN LEADERSHIP DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA IN INDONESIA

BY

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to examine the communication patterns and methods used by two female political actors in Indonesia during the pandemic. The two female political actors are Tri Rismaharini (Minister of Social Affairs) and Khofifah Indah Parawansa (Governor of East Java). This study focuses on how the two actors build public communication on social media platform particularly Twitter accounts @KemensosRI and @JatimPemprov. This study used a descriptive-qualitative approach with the help Nvivo12 analysis tool as a data processing tool. This study finds out the pattern of strategies developed by Risma and Khofifah on their Twitter account. The public communication strategy implemented was seen from several aspects, namely: type of communication, communication intensity, content, and actor correlation. Through the analysis carried out by the author, it was revealed that Risma and Khofifah were able to build fairly good communication in media accounts This could be seen from the massiveness of the two actors in informing their activities as public officials. Through this pattern, the public, especially Twitter users, can see that the two actors of public officials are quite accountable and transparent in carrying out their positions. The two public officials' capability to adapt with public communication pattern on social media platform during the pandemic has become the reason why Risma and Khofifah are able to maintain their existence on the Indonesian political stage until now.

Index Terms- Public Communication, Women Politicians, Public Officials, Government, COVID-19.

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INTRODUCTION

Public communication by actors or political groups is a process of delivering information with several purposes to the public (M. J. Park et al., 2016; Lovari & Valentini, 2020; Alperin et al., 2018; Sihidi et al., 2022). Delivery of public information by political actors in general must have a political purpose (Spiers, 2020; Salahudin et al., 2020) The pattern of public communication by political actors has a significant influence on political careers such as being able to grow public trust from how to build communication. Public communication can be carried out in various styles or ways. Several ways of communication in the

conventional and modern era are likely very much different. Therefore, political actors are required to be able to adapt to new patterns in delivering public communication in the modern era. The development of information and communication technology presents a new platform for political actors to launch campaigns or public communications (Loilatu et al., 2021).

Social media is frequently utilized by political players to communicate their political intents in the age of ICT development. Various platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Line, Telegram, and so on are examples of massive social media applications used by recent political actors (Hockin-Boyers et al.,



2021; Jungblut & Jungblut, 2021; Sihidi et al., 2022). The ease of access and the breadth of reach offered by these various platforms are aspects that must be considered by political actors. Contents of communication also in this case affect public interest to lead to actors who are conducting political communication on social media (Purnomo et al., 2021).

Politics is nowadays massively explored by female actors. Previously, female actors received quite a number of rejections and challenges to play in politics, in this era they started to gain their political stage freely (Sihidi et al., 2019; Soedarwo et al., 2023). Problems or issues of patriarchy still often appear in the arena of political battles in Indonesia. However, the public has begun to understand that these things are the opinions of political opponents to bring down a female political actor. In the era of social media platform used as campaign strategy, female political actors have a place to convey information and build public communication quite freely. In this era, social media is also used as a forum to mobilize political masses. Through various methods or images built in political communication, adult female political actors are now more widely accepted and appreciated. This is reflected, for example, by Khofifah and Risma, who are now able to build good public communication and get a lot of public attention, especially social media users.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of social media, especially Twitter, was dominant as a means of public communication by political actors. The various features that Twitter offers such as hashtags, trending, retweets, and so on make it easier and more dominant to use in building public communication. Twitter can also be a place to mobilize the masses by political actors (Haupt et al., 2021; Karatas & Saka, 2017; M'Bareck, 2019; Uysal & Schroeder, 2019; Valenzuela et al., 2018; Hoffjann, 2021). On the other hand, political campaigns on social media are also often degraded by issues like hoaxes and SARA (identity politics). Therefore, the basic understanding of the users is of utmost importance. This basic understanding is the ability to be able to verify various news or content so that it should be not accepted as it is. During the pandemic, people are also more dominant in using social media under the policy of limiting social activities (Roziqin et al., 2021). This has become one of the main considerations by political actors to make social media more massive as a means of public communication (Haupt et al., 2021; Kaur et al., 2021; Nguyen et al., 2021; Pascual-Ferrá et al., 2020).

As a focus of research, in this case, the researchers are interested in conducting a study related to the pattern of public communication carried out by Risma and Khofifah, especially on Twitter as social media. During the pandemic, these two public officials certainly have their own challenges and ways of conducting public communication. This pattern of public communication is important to maintain the existence and essence of the information conveyed by the two public actors. Therefore, the author aims to conduct a study with the aim of finding out how the patterns of public communication built by Risma and Khofifah in Twitter. This research is important to see how women's public leadership works during an ongoing crisis. The findings (Wittenberg-Cox, 2020)

show that women have more effective leadership through a democratic and participatory approach than men in handling COVID-19. This is especially true in the early days, and it has been relatively successful in several women-led countries such as Germany, New Zealand, Finland, and Taiwan

METHOD

This study used a descriptive-qualitative method. This study also used the help of Nvivo12 analysis tools as a data processing tool. Data on the type of communication content, communication intensity, and actor relations were obtained from the Twitter social media analysis of female political actors, in this case, the Twitter account of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Tri Rismarini) and the Twitter account of the East Java Provincial Government (Khofifah). With a political background, Risma is a cadre of the Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle (PDIP). Risma is a female actor who is quite competent, this can be seen from her political career history, which has served as Mayor of Surabaya for two periods (2010-2015 & 2016-2020). Until now, Risma is also occupying a strategic position in the seat of the central government by serving as the Minister of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in the Indonesian Advanced Cabinet (Kabinet Indonesia Maju). On the other hand, she is also the Chair of the PDIP DPP for Education and Culture from 2019 until today. Meanwhile, Khofifah Indar Parawansa is a cadre of the National Awakening Party (PKB) (Partai Kebangkitan Bangsa). In a political career, Khofifah has served as Chairman of Commission VII DPR RI (1005-1997), Deputy Chairperson of the RI DPR (1999), State Minister for Women's Empowerment (1999-2001), Chair of Commission VII DPR RI (2004-2006), Minister of Social Affairs in the Working Cabinet (2014-2018), and currently serves as the Governor of East Java.

Based on the description above, it can be seen how the two female political actors were able to appear dominant in the politics in Indonesia and were able to maintain their existence to this day. The political career they have built means that they get a lot of support and trust from the community. This has led the researchers' interest in seeing how the communication patterns built by the two political actors can maintain the existence and trust of the public, especially on Twitter.

Data processing tool was used to make it easier for researchers to see how the two female political chords build public communication on Twitter. It is expected that after mapping the communication pattern, it can be seen how the two female actors build their political communication on Twitter. This finding is expected to be a reference for other female political actors in building political communication, especially on Twitter.

Risma & Khofifah's Type of Communication on Twitter

Based on the description of the data detailed in Figure 1, it can be seen how the type of communication built by Risma on the *Twitter* @KemensosRI account dominantly used the tweet feature to convey public information. This can be compared with the retweet

feature which was used with a percentage of 13.52%, while the rest used the tweet feature with a percentage of 86.48%. In this case, Risma as the leader/minister sought the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account to contain more information based on data owned by the Ministry of Social Affairs itself, not more dominantly using information from other accounts that also have related content. On the other hand, the use of the Tweet feature has advantages because the data or content that is published is the result of processed data from the institution/ministry itself.

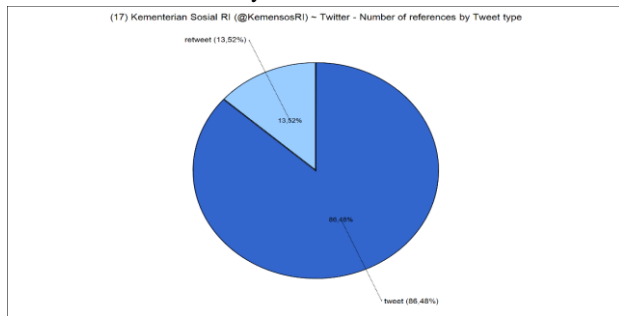


Fig 1: Types of Social Media Communication of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Risma)

When it is analyzed based on the content on the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account, Risma realized that her public position as Minister of Social Affairs was a strategic position and had direct attachment to the community. Therefore, the communication pattern that was built was dominant in conveying information or social activities that are being carried out by the Ministry of Social Affairs. This can also be referred to from the massive use of the #infosocial hashtag on the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account. This type and pattern of content is deliberately built as a public communication strategy to gain public trust. Through the delivery of information on activities that are quite massive, the public, especially *Twitter* users, consider that Risma, who is currently leading as a public official, can provide transparency and information in her various activities as a public official.

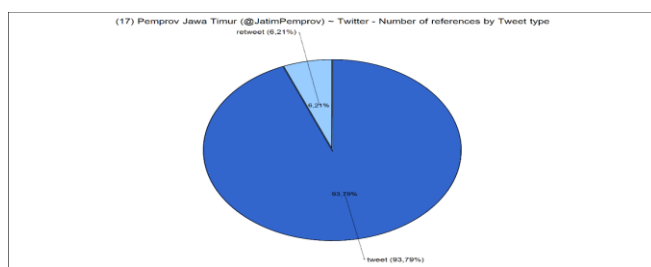


Fig 2: Types of Social Media Communication of the East Java Provincial Government (Khofifah)

Referring to the data in Figure 2 above, it can be understood that the type of communication built by Khofifah in the *Twitter* @JatimPemprov is quite monolithic than that used by Risma on social media accounts of Ministry of Social Affairs. This can be understood from the dominant use of the tweet feature in building public communications on *Twitter* accounts. Based on data processing using Nvivo12 analysis tool, it was found that the dominant use of tweets on the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account

was 93.79%, while the use of the retweet feature was 6.21%. In this case, it can be interpreted that the main data source posted on the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account is dominantly derived from the East Java Provincial Government/institution itself. This is also important because it means accountability and factual data that can be accounted for.

Based on the view of the researcher, the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account, which in this case is led by Khofifah, has been able to provide factual and actual public information for the people of East Java who use *Twitter*. The content of information provided is also almost entirely related to public activities and the government of the East Java Provincial Government. On the other hand, COVID-19 data updates are also massively included in the content. This provides education and information for East Java residents to see the latest developments of the COVID-19 situation in East Java Province. The description of the pattern and type of communication built by Khofifah on the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account is one form of public communication to gain public trust in the position she holds. This is also an indication of how Khofifah is able to build good public communication in the position she is holding. Although Khofifah's political career has been going on for a very long time, she is able to adjust the pattern of public communication in the current era, so that she can maintain her political career even as a female political actor.

Communication Intensity of Risma & Khofifah on *Twitter*

Based on the analysis in Figure 3, there is a fluctuating intensity in the content or delivery of information on @KemensosRI *Twitter*. The inconsistency of the content or posts can be seen in the range of June 2020 to January 2022. In June 2020, it was seen that the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account was quite passive in content posts, it represented only 10 times the post published. Next, in July, the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account was seen to start massive content posts, with a percentage of 87 posts. In the following months or until December 2020, the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account was quite massive in posting, but in early 2021, in January and February, the number of posts decreased. Furthermore, the intensity of posting on the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account experienced massiveness. Starting in March 2021 with 72 posts, April with 84 posts, May with 100 posts, and again starting to experience post content fluctuations until January 2022.

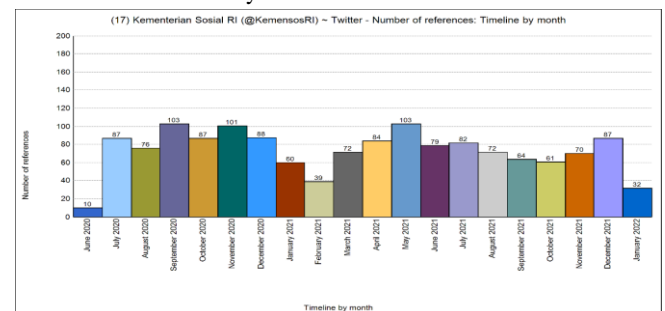


Fig 3: Communication Intensity of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Risma) on *Twitter* Social Media

If seen in Figure 3, it can be understood that the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account is not very consistent in posting posts from June 2020 to January 2022. The *Twitter* social media account @KemensosRI is a representation of the social affairs of the Indonesian people. Should remember this, the *Twitter* account @KemensosRI can more consistently contain information or content relating to public affairs. The number of programs or activities carried out by the Republic of Indonesia's Ministry of Social Affairs can influence the fluctuation of material or postings. However, should there be minimal activity in certain months, the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account can still contain educational posts or other information related to the social affairs of Indonesian citizens.

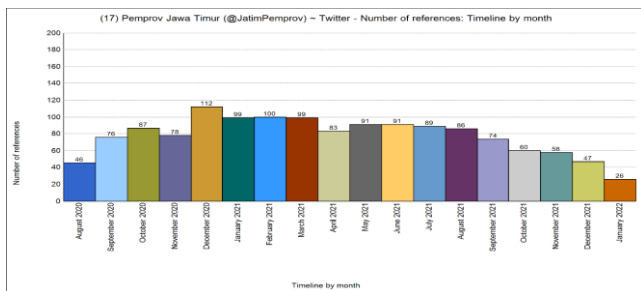


Fig 4: Communication Intensity of East Java Government (Khofifah) on *Twitter*

Figure 4 above is the data of communication intensity of the East Java Provincial Government (Khofifah) on *Twitter*. According to the statistics shown in Figure 4 above, there is a fluctuating data or number of posts on the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account. This content inconsistency is specifically seen starting in the range of August 2020 to January 2022. In August 2020, the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account only posted 46 times, then in the following months it began to spike with a peak in December 2020 which represented 112 times posting. Starting in January 2021, although there has been a slight decrease in the number of posts, it is quite consistent in loading posts. This consistency then began to decline, starting in June 2021 (91 posts) until its peak in January 2022 with a content percentage of only 26 posts.

Based on the previous description, it can be understood that the use of *Twitter* social media by the East Java Provincial Government is not consistent enough to provide information and accountability for activities to the community, especially *Twitter* users. As a representation of the performance of the East Java government, the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account should consistently contain content so that the public gets more information on activities from the government. Overall, of course, the East Java Provincial Government has a lot of activities every month, these should be fully published and communicated to the public, one of which is through the massive posting of activities through the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account.

Actor's Relationship in Communication: Risma & Khofifah's Interaction on *Twitter*

Based on the relationship of actors in communication and interaction according to the similarity of words, the thickest causality line shows on the accounts of @KemensosRI, @DITJEN_REHSOS, @LinjamsosOkay, @jokowi, @kemkominfo, @KemensetnegRI, @setkabgoid and several other accounts. The intensity of communication that is quite massive is the reason why the correlation line is quite massive and thick in some of the accounts described. This means that in this case, the *Twitter* account @KemensosRI is quite active in communicating with several other accounts which incidentally have influence and are related to tasks and institutions. Through the mechanism of establishing communication with several other accounts, the informal pattern indicates that *Twitter* @KemensosRI is building cooperation with other related accounts. This is important to take in order to increase the breadth of information from the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account, thereby it will increase the number of accounts viewing posts on the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account.

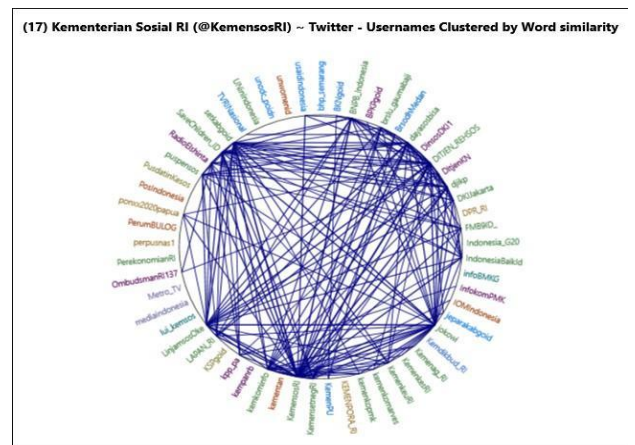


Fig 5: Correlation and Interaction as well as Communication of the Ministry of Social Affairs (Risma) on *Twitter*

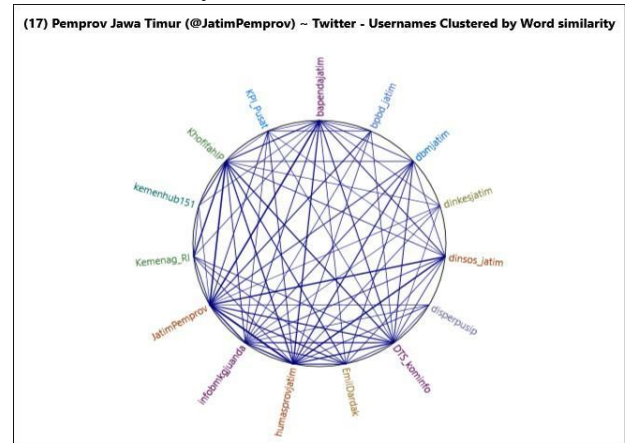


Fig 6: Correlation and Interaction as well as Communication of the East Java Provincial Government (Khofifah) on *Twitter*.

Based on the data detailed in Figure 6 above, it shows that there are several actors or other accounts that are quite massive in communicating and interacting with the @JatimPemprov *Twitter* account. Some of the dominant accounts, for example, are @JatimPemprov, @KhofifahIP, @humasprovjatim,

@bapendajetim, @infobmkgjuanda, @DTS_kominfo and @EmilDardak. Some of these accounts have a correlation with the government affairs of the East Java Province so that the @JatimPemprow *Twitter* account is massive enough to build communication. Through the massive pattern of communication with these accounts, it will certainly increase the breadth of content information from the @JatimPemprow *Twitter* account itself. This method allows many other users to view or glance at the various artificial content presented on the @JatimPemprow *Twitter* account. The number of other users who view the content on *Twitter* @JatimPemprow provides benefits for the East Java Provincial Government that the activities contained in their *Twitter* posts are more intensely viewed by the public.

Risma & Khofifah's Communication Content on *Twitter*

Figure 7 is the dominant content or sentence used by Risma on the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account. Based on the description of the data, Risma utilized *Twitter* quite well so that she was able to attract and build communication that was also quite dynamic for her followers. Although information or content has always been dominant in discussing her duties as Minister of Social Affairs, the language used in the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account was dynamic and easily accepted by the public. For example, in its content, it invited the public to maintain their immune system during a pandemic, reported their activities or routines as public officials greeted children, and several other social activities.

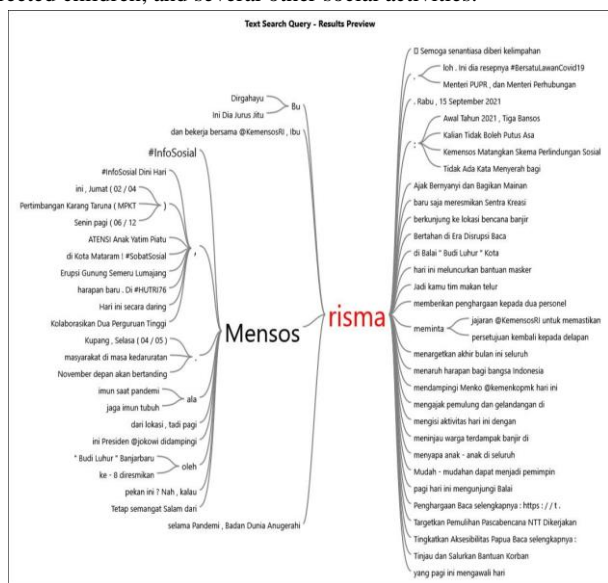


Fig 7: Risma's Communication Content on *Twitter* Social Media

As the Minister of Social Affairs, the content used in various posts on the @KemensosRI *Twitter* account is of course about social affairs. This was built as a main task and a strategy to convey information to the public. The implication of this communication pattern certainly has an impact on people's trust who see Risma as the minister of social affairs as capable of becoming an accountable public official.

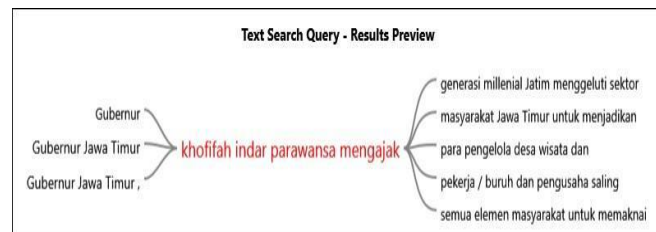


Fig 8: Khofifah's Communication Content on *Twitter*

Based on the data presented in Figure 8 above, there are several types of communication content carried out by Khofifah as the Governor of East Java. In general, the content on *Twitter* @JatimPemprow is quite linear with its main functions. For example, the dominant content published was an invitation to the people of East Java in various activities, greeting the millennial generation to remain productive even during a pandemic, building correlations with workers or entrepreneurs, and so on. It means that Khofifah in this case she also used her *Twitter* as a means of public communication by conveying her various activities as public officials. Through the communication pattern built on *Twitter*, it is believed that it will be sufficient to maintain Khofifah's existence as a public official or female political actor. The ability to build communication in social media implies that Khofifah is adapted enough with public communication pattern in this era, this is considering that Khofifah is a political actor who has been involved in Indonesian political circles for a long time.

DISCUSSION

Good public communication is an aspect that brings crucial implication for every political actor. Various patterns of public communication are sought to gain trust and voice from the community for the benefit of a political actor (Muzahid Akbar Hayat et al., 2021). This study discusses in detail how the communication patterns developed by two female political actors, namely Risma and Khofifah during the pandemic. The limitations of social activities have caused social media or digital platforms for building public communication for the two actors or public officials (Hertanto et al., 2021). Social media users, particularly *Twitter*, which is quite massive during the pandemic are believed to be more intense to use *Twitter* to get information. This is in real can be utilized by the political actors especially Khofifah and Risma in conveying information based on their positions on the *Twitter* account of their institutions.

According to the processed data and analysis carried out by the researchers, it can be understood that during the pandemic, Risma, who is currently serving as the Minister of Social Affairs, and Khofifah who is the Governor of East Java, are quite able to use the institution's *Twitter* account as a means of public communication. This can be seen from four aspects, they are the type of communication, the intensity of the communication, the content, and the correlation of actors in the institution's *Twitter* account. First, in terms of communication built, both Risma and Khofifah dominantly use the Tweet feature in posting. This means that the information contained is indeed based on the institution (Ministry of Social Affairs and the East Java Provincial

Government). This means that the actuality and factuality of the data can be accounted for by the institution. Through this pattern, the Twitter users also put more trust because the account is the official one of the two related institutions.

In the second aspect, it is analyzed from the intensity of posts made by Risma and Khofifah on their respective institutional accounts. The two accounts are @KemensosRI and @JatimPemprov. Although there are indications of fluctuating data, the two accounts are quite capable of showing a massive number of posts. In some months with a minimal amount of posting intensity, it is due to the lack of activity. However, as a criticism, in the few months with minimal activity, the content should be more stable by seeking a way the retweet feature. It is to note that the retweeted content has linearity with information that is usually published by both @KemensosRI and @JatimPemprov.

The third aspect is correlation and interaction and communication with other accounts. In this case, the Twitter account of @KemensosRI is more dominant and massively builds communication with various other linear accounts. This can be illustrated by the thickness of the line and the number of lines as stated in the processed data by the previous author. It is enough to have a distinction with the @KemensosRI account, that the @JatimPemprov account is not so dominant in building communication and interaction with other accounts as Risma did on the @KemensosRI account. Supposedly, to maintain the breadth of communication, the @JatimPemprov account can be more massive in building communication with various other linear accounts. This is important to expand the distribution of posts in the @JatimPemprov account itself.

The last aspect or fourth aspect is the type of content in the @KemensosRI and @JatimPemprov accounts. Based on the comparison of the data between Figure 7 and Figure 8 before, Risma is dominant and more varied and massive in the type of content. Meanwhile, Khofifah has not been able to be too varied in creating this type of content. Type of content is one of the important aspects. Different information objects must be adapted to the type of content. Therefore, Khofifah should be able to be more varied in posting content to get more attention from her followers on *Twitter*.

This study confirms the findings of previous studies, which looked at the leadership abilities of women with high sensitivity and strong empathy who were quite successful in carrying out public communications in handling COVID-19. Some of these studies capture the success of Angela Merkel in Germany (Hanifah, 2021; Prasongko & Wigke Capri Arti, 2021; Timoshenkova, 2022; David-Wilp et al., 2020), Jacinda Ardern in New Zealand (McGuire et al., 2020; Craig, 2021), Tsai Ing-Wen in Taiwan and Sanna Marin in Finland (Wittenberg-Cox, 2020). Like the findings of this study, these studies have succeeded in showing that women can generate better crisis management leadership instincts because they are more democratic and participatory in disaster management.

On the other hand, this study also produced findings different from previous studies discussing women's leadership during COVID-19. If this research emphasizes the success of women from the aspects of the policies produced, especially tightening the area, handling positive and death cases, and massive tracing, this article focuses on the use of Twitter as a means of public communication to socialize policies for handling Covid-19 and increasing public compliance. So, this article focuses on using Twitter to handle the COVID-19 crisis, which is different from the findings of previous research, which focused on the effectiveness of the resulting policies and very little touched on the use of social media.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that the two female political actors, namely Risma and Khofifah, have generally been able to use Twitter as a medium for public communication during the pandemic. This can be seen from several criteria, namely based on the type of communication, intensity of communication, content, and the correlation of actors in the institution's Twitter. Social media, Twitter, has become one of the most effective communication tools or information delivery during the pandemic. Risma as the Minister of Social Affairs and Khofifah as the Governor of East Java in this case can convey various information on their activities as a political actor or as a public official. Being able to adapt and vary in styles of public communication is the essence of Risma and Khofifah's power to gain public trust. The pattern or strategy of public communication that was built is one of the reasons why Risma and Khofifah are still able to exist as public officials even though they are female actors.

This study further emphasizes the usefulness of social media in the effectiveness and efficiency of public leadership. This is also a great opportunity for women to show proper political leadership when a crisis is happening and, at the same time, erode the negative stigma about their leadership capabilities which are often inferior to men. Social media can be a strategic channel for women to build a positive image and demonstrate their leadership competencies. The limitation of this study is the lack of other comparative data, such as analysis of data sourced from social media platforms other than Twitter, such as Facebook and Instagram. Apart from that, the data review in this study only uses NVivo 12 analysis tools. Further research with related themes is expected to be able to utilize other analytical tools to compare data and draw conclusions that are more relevant for further scientific developments.

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