



The Function of *Whatsapp* Group as a Medium of Communication Government and People in Sinisir Village South Minahasa Regency

Meity Dina Himpong¹, Grace Jane Waleleng¹, Desie M.D. Warouw¹

¹Faculty of Social and Political Science, Sam Ratulangi University Manado, Indonesia

*Corresponding Author: Meity Dina Himpong

Email: meityhimpong1@gmail.com



Article Info

Article history:

Received 28 October 2023

Received in revised form 23

November 2023

Accepted 10 December 2023

Keywords:

WhatsApp

Communication Media

Function

Government

Society

Abstract

WhatsApp is one of the instant messaging applications used by 112 million people in Indonesia, including rural communities. *Whatsapp* is a popular technology that is also used as a communication medium for the government and rural communities. This study used qualitative research methods. For this reason, data collection was carried out using in-depth interviews, participant observation, document studies. The informants of this research are Government and Society. To answer the focus of this research, the theory used in this study is the Theory of Communication Media Function This research is also to develop Mass Media Courses and Development Communication Courses. The results showed that the function of *WhatsApp* Group as a medium of communication between the government and the community in Sinisir Village, South Minahasa Regency, is effective in implementing, realizing and improving services to the community, as well as a means of exchanging information between the government and the community. Efficient in time and cost, because in just one message can reach many people. Concrete as a medium or application that is seen, heard, read that governments and communities use to convey and receive messages. Able to motivate the community to support government programs with high enthusiasm.

Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) develops along with the level of human needs. In today's all-digital era, the presence of social media is widely used by the government and society as a means of communication. *WhatsApp* is an application for instant messaging and allows us to exchange images, videos, photos, voice messages and can be used to share information and discussion (Larasati, 2013a).

WhatsApp users in May 2018 were 1.5 billion and have sent as many as 65 billion messages through the *Whatsapp* application and *Whatsapp* web per day. The graph of messages generated by *WhatsApp* users in a day reaches 30 billion messages. In Indonesia, *Whatsapp* is used by 112 million people, including rural communities (Ngazis, 2018).

Whatsapp can use the "Community" feature that allows users to combine groups created with members of the same interest. Groups are created by admins who can add members of *Whatsapp* groups up to 1,024 people that are newly available in the Beta version. In *WhatsApp* groups, members can communicate privately with the closest people or many people in the group. *WhatsApp* group members can also make phone calls and *group video calls* such as *zoom meetings* or *google meet*.

Communication is the delivery of messages from one source to the receiver by using media in the delivery process. Communication is the main capital for social interaction with other humans to meet their needs. A medium is needed so that information from sources can be

conveyed to many people simultaneously, cost-effective, can be read immediately, and is able to move many people quickly (Mulyana, 2015).

Government communication is indispensable in government information services to rural communities. Effective communication is the key to the success of public information services to convey information to the public quickly and simultaneously. In order for communication to be effective, adequate means or communication media are needed. WhatsApp social media is an application used by the government of Sinisir Village, South Minahasa Regency as a means of delivering information to the community so that communication runs effectively (Abidin, 2016).

For this reason, this study intends to find and analyze the function of *WhatsApp* Groups as a communication medium for government and community in Sinisir Village, South Minahasa Regency, based on the function of communication media, namely from the aspects of Effectiveness, Efficiency, Concrete and Motivative (Rahartri, 2011).

Literature Review

Information and communication technology (ICT) develops along with the level of human needs. Currently, *WhatsApp* has been utilized by communicators to communicate in conveying messages to their targets. Communicators use WA as a communication medium in conveying messages, the information conveyed is more effective and is a satisfaction because using information technology messages are more quickly received by the target (Trisnani, 2017).

WhatsApp is an internet-based application that allows each user to share various kinds of content according to its supporting features. *Whatsapp* also has various features that can be used to communicate with the help of internet services. *WhatsApp* is the most popular social media that can be used as a communication medium. Generally, WA users say the reason for choosing this application is because of the availability of various conveniences in it besides not spending money alias free (Jumiatmoko, 2016).

The features contained in *WhatsApp* are Gallery to add photos, *Contact* to insert contacts, Camera to take pictures, Audio to send voice messages, Maps to send various map coordinates, even Document to insert files in the form of documents. All these files can be sent in an instant through the free application. These various features certainly add to the ease and comfort of communicating through online media (Larasati, 2013a).

The rapid development of information and communication technology, making it easier for people to interact and communicate over long distances, so that electronic communication tools have become part of our daily lives by taking a very dominant role. Advances in computer technology that are integrated with various other communication tools, such as radio, television, telephone, cell phones, smart phones, or even what is now a tablet PC – have made the world community, including Indonesia move towards a global communication change (Herawati, 2011).

Communication media are all means used to produce, reproduce, distribute or disseminate and convey information. (Rahartri, 2011).

The functions of Communication Media according to (Rahartri, 2011) are Effectiveness; Communication media to facilitate the delivery of information. Efficiency: Communication media as a means to accelerate the delivery of information. Concrete: Communication media to help speed up the content of messages that have an abstract nature. Motivative: Communication media as a means to be more enthusiastic about communicating.

Added that mass media includes newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the internet. Effective Communication Communication is the transmission of messages from a source to a receiver by using media in the process of delivery. Communication is the main human capital to carry out social interaction with other humans to meet the needs of life. A medium is needed when communicating, meaning that when communicating with others, we must use a tool or a means so that the information we want to convey can be received by the recipient of the information properly.

The strategy to improve communication effectiveness is to recognize communication targets, choose the right communication media, examine the purpose of communication messages, and maximize the role of communicators in communication.

Strategies to improve effectiveness in communication (Yossita, 2017); (1) Recognize the purpose of communication; (2) Selection of communication media; (3) Assessment of the purpose of the communication message; (4) The role of the communicator in communication, which is in attractiveness and credibility.

A village is a legal community unit that has territorial boundaries that are authorized to regulate and take care of the interests of the local community. Village Government or also called Pemdes is a government institution in charge of managing village-level areas. This institution is regulated through Government Regulation No. 72 [of 2005 concerning](#) village government issued to implement the provisions of article 216 paragraph (Larasati, 2013b) of Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning regional government. Village Government is the administration of government affairs and the interests of local communities in the government system of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (Abidin, 2016).

The leader of the village government is the Village Head or Old Law who is in charge of organizing government, development, and community affairs. Village apparatus is a staff element that assists the Village Head or Old Law in policy formulation and coordination. The village apparatus consists of the Village Secretary, and the Section Head (KASI) who serves as a technical executor who assists the Village Head as the executor of operational tasks (Abidin, 2016).

People are people who occupy an area either directly or indirectly interconnected as an effort to meet needs, related as a social unit through feelings of solidarity due to the same historical, political or cultural background. From some of these understandings, it can be interpreted that society is a unity or group that has relationships and some similarities such as attitudes, traditions, feelings and cultures that form an order (Dannerius, 1988).

Rural communities differ from urban communities, both in aspects of lifestyle, outlook on life, behavior including community institutions and leadership. Likewise, social structure, culture, religious systems, social processes, livelihoods, behavior patterns are also different from urban communities.

Methods

This study uses qualitative methods to: (Larasati, 2013b) gather detailed actual information that describes existing symptoms, (Ngazis, 2018) identify problems or examine prevailing conditions and practices, (Mulyana, 2015) make comparisons or evaluations, (Abidin, 2016) determine what others are doing in dealing with the same problem and learn from their experiences to establish future decision plans Fuchan & Arief (1992).

The informant of this research is the Government and Community of Sinisir Village, Modinding District, South Minahasa Regency, which was obtained by Purposiv *and* Snowball

to find out the function of WhatsApp Groups as a medium of communication between the Government and the community in Sinisir Village, South Minahasa Regency.

This research focuses on how *WhatsApp* Group functions as a communication medium for government and community in Sinisir Village, South Minahasa Regency seen from the aspects of Effectiveness, Efficiency, Concreteness and Motivative.

Data collection was carried out using methods commonly used qualitative approaches, namely observation (participation), in-depth interviews (*indept interviews*), and document studies. Data analysis was carried out from the beginning and throughout the research process. In this study, qualitative data analysis will be used with an interactive model developed by miles and Huberman (in 19), namely: Data Reduction, Data Presentation, Conclusion Drawing.

Results and Discussion

Effectiveness

Communication media as a means to facilitate the delivery of information. Information and communication technology (ICT) develops along with the development of increasingly modern human needs. *WhatsApp* is an internet-based application that allows every use to share various kinds of content according to the needs of its users. *WhatsApp* is a communication medium to deliver messages not only in the form of words but can also be in the form of photos, maps, and even documents. Files in documents can be instantly sent through the *WhatsApp* application.

Effectiveness is the level of achievement of goals, tasks and objectives. Effectiveness in producing output as expected. If a job can be done as planned, it can be said to be effective regardless of time, energy and others.

WhatsApp media is effective in implementing, realizing and improving services to the community, as well as a means of exchanging information from the government to the community and vice versa. If you will provide policy information from the government, it can be submitted via *WhatsApp*, because it can be read by community members who are members of the *Sinisir Village WhatsApp Group*. For example, during the last Covid-19 pandemic, the government directed people to stay at home, not to gather in large numbers, and to use masks. Because they are not allowed to meet each other, the policy is only conveyed through *WhatsApp Group*.

Effectiveness shows success in terms of achieving or not previously set goals. If the results of the activity are closer to the target, it means that the higher the effectiveness. Similarly, *WhatsApp Group Desa Sinisir Kec. Modinding Kab. Minahasa Selatan can be said to be effective, because by delivering information through WhatsApp Group, the government can inform the community accordingly, and the public can find out information from the government.*

Through *WhatsApp Group* I can inform the public of many things, for example if there is a member of the community who dies, I inform through *WhatsApp* so that the entire people of Sinisir Village know.

People need information because it is a necessity to increase knowledge. With information, the public can know what is happening, and can predict the possibilities that will occur. For example, during the covid 19 epidemic event, people were very afraid of contracting the covid 19 epidemic so they avoided meeting other people. At that time there were residents who were sick with coughs, but not covid 19. People who are uninformed will think that the person is

exposed to covid 19, so people really need actual information from the government through *WhatsApp Group*.

With information obtained by the community through *WhatsApp Group Sinisir Village* then the community knows what they are going to do and what they should avoid in order not to be exposed to covid 19, or with whom they can meet. Information Functions *WhatsApp* It is also very effective to avoid hoax news. By providing actual information once, it can be known by all members of the community *WhatsApp Group Sinisir Village*.

Sinisir Village, Modinding District, South Minahasa Regency is a village that is proclaimed as Sayer Village. When there is an Initial Planting of Potato Seeds in the framework of Activities *Development Of Integrated Farming System In Upland Areas (UPLAND)* Year 2022. When the government conveys this information to the public, one of them is done through *WhatsApp*. In addition to the government conveying information directly about the activities of Sayer Village in Sinisir Village, through *WhatsApp* It was also conveyed by the government to the community that with the existence of Sayer Village, it could increase people's income. The government also appealed to the community to be more active and harmonious and solid in developing their kamnya through vegetable crops.

Village Heads and Heads often convey information to the community through *WhatsApp Groups* that we must support the implementation of government programs, namely making Sinisir Village as Sayer Village. Because by being active, harmonious and solid to grow vegetables, family income can increase.

Utilization *WhatsApp Group* in conveying information or programs is very effective because almost all families in Sinisir Village use *WhatsApp*. And what is conveyed through *WhatsApp* the results are satisfactory and successful as a skill, usefulness, use result and support goals. Through *WhatsApp Group* Also, the government informs a certain topic that has been packaged in such a way to the public. The information is informative and actual news in accordance with the needs of the community. Such as information about government programs due to the covid 19 epidemic. The information conveyed is very useful for the people of Sinisir Village to avoid the covid 19 virus.

The government conveyed the development of the Covid-19 epidemic case to the public through *WhatsApp Group* so that the public would be more vigilant. If there are community members who are exposed to covid 19, other community members are urged to help by giving food placed in front of the homes of residents affected by covid. Even though they don't see each other, community members can help from afar.

Information functions *WhatsApp Group* The benefits are felt by the people of Sinisir Village, Modinding District, South Minahasa Regency. The information that has been packaged by the government is easy to understand and know and is very helpful for the public to take further action.

Our Head of Environment often conveys information to the community through *WhatsApp Groups*, so we get information about the development of the spread of the covid 19 virus in Modinding District, more specifically in Sinisir Village. Information submitted through *WhatsApp Group* is a source of knowledge from the community. It is related to needs. The importance and source of new knowledge for the community by obtaining reliable information.

Through this information, people also get entertainment. Because in *WhatsApp Group* These community members can greet each other, give support even in it there are words joking with other community members. This is an entertainment or distraction as a means of relaxation and

easing social tension for the people of Sinisir Village. It is also an entertainment and a means to release the burden or problems of life for a while for the community.

Government information via *WhatsApp Group* can also influence and mobilize community members, as well as change the attitudes and conditions of the people of Sinisir Village. For example; from not knowing to knowing, so as to mobilize people who were not too enthusiastic about planting vegetables before, finally with what the government said about Saylor Village, the community is increasingly active in planting vegetables.

Receiving messages and understanding from the community is an important factor in the success rate of communication of the Sinisir Village government. Messages or information submitted by the government through *WhatsApp Groups* sometimes experience delays in sending or receiving from the public. That's because sometimes the signal is not very good or community members have not immediately opened *WhatsApp Group* because they are busy or the signal is not good.

With the existence of an online forum *through WhatsApp Group* between the governments of Sinisir Village, Modinding District, Minahasa Regency, it is able to erode the organizational hierarchy so that informative message exchanges can be accepted by the community without going through long bureaucracy. Messages or information through *WhatsApp Groups* also provide an opportunity to be able to see, correct and cancel messages submitted by the village government before the message is sent to community members in the group.

Information conveyed by the Sinisir Village government to the community through *WhatsApp Groups* is also not only through words or text but also through pictures or photos. The information that the government provides is not only through messages, words, but also through photographs or pictures. For example, if there is community service, I upload photos of people who are temporarily doing community service, so that other people know that service work has begun. If the community has received the information, it is hoped that they will also immediately join for community service.

Efficiency

The function of WhatsApp Group online media is quite important in the development of communication that occurs in the community, especially in Sinisir Village, Modinding District, South Minahasa Regency. *WhatsApp Group* media is a communication tool that can disseminate news or information with a wide reach, quickly and efficiently.

Communication media as a means to accelerate the delivery of information, as well as *WhatsApp Group*. Delivering information and discussions through *WhatsApp Group* is very efficient because it can directly reach many people, can be delivered in just one message and immediately received by many people, namely members of the Sinisir Village *WhatsApp Group*.

To convey information or programs to the community is very efficient, because only through *WhatsApp Group* can the information be conveyed and has reached many village communities. Using WhatsApp Group is *very helpful for the government as a medium of fast information and the target is many, namely the people of Sinisir Village in the WhatsApp Group*. If there is information, the village government conducts a meeting at the village office with other officials including the guard chiefs. Furthermore, the head of the guard forwards information or village programs to the community in their respective neighborhoods through *WhatsApp Groups*, so that direct messages can be conveyed to the community without village officials descending directly to the community.

Operationally, sending messages or information *through WhatsApp Groups can also be done by everyone, both government and society, reciprocally because responses can be directly written or delivered through WhatsApp Groups* without having to meet face to face or meet in person. If there are things that need to be questioned to the Head of Guard, there is no need to look for and meet in person, because there is limited time to meet, but can be directly asked through *WhatsApp Group*. For example, for gathering hours to do devotional work or other information, and usually the Head of Guard immediately responds by answering back. Even if the Head of Guard has not replied, then other people in the *WhatsApp Group* immediately provide information assistance as well.

In terms of time is very efficient, because both the government and the community can be in different places by doing other activities while providing information or communicating with other *WhatsApp Group* members. Even for the government, it is very convenient because in addition to providing written information through letters, but also the letter can be conveyed through *WhatsApp Groups so that it is known by the public quickly without receiving the letter directly, only enough to be read in WhatsApp Groups*.

In the past, the delivery of information had to be through a typed letter and photocopied, then sent to the village community who was the destination of the letter. But with the *WhatsApp Group*, work becomes efficient. Economically, sending messages or information through *WhatsApp Groups* reduces costs so that it is more efficient. The Sinisir Village Government made paper cost savings because messages or information were only typed or shared in *WhatsApp Groups*. The use of *WhatsApp Group* media by the Sinisir Village government is very economically efficient because with a small cost it can reach many people. The maximum result is without any waste. This means that there are cost savings to disseminate government information to rural communities.

The efficient function of using *WhatsApp Group* media in conveying government information to the people of Sinisir Village is very optimal, because with a small cost or little input it can produce a large output. This means that only from within the office or home, it can reach many village communities. With *WhatsApp Group* social media, *the* results are very optimal and as expected, because people from those who do not know to know, so they are actively involved in village development activities.

Concrete

Communication media as a means to help speed up the content of messages that have an abstract nature. Concrete based on the Big Indonesian Dictionary (BKKBI) means real or really existing, tangible, etc. That is, concrete are words that can be felt, heard and seen by our five senses. Concrete words can be felt in physical measure. Concrete is needed to describe something that actually exists physically.

Media *WhatsApp Group* is a concrete means of communication, because it can be seen and used in real terms by the government and the people of Sinisir Village. Deep *WhatsApp Group* There are interaction messages that are stored or recorded for a certain period of time, so that group members can receive through the five senses in real. Message in *WhatsApp Group* is concrete because it can be known who sent the message and who received the message, who did the reply or comment, etc.

Via *WhatsApp Group* Messages can be channeled from the government so that they can stimulate people's thoughts, feelings and attention so that government programs can run and achieve the expected goals. *WhatsApp Group* has a concrete function because it can build conditions that make the people of Sinisir Village have knowledge, skills and attitudes through

messages or information conveyed by the government. *WhatsApp Group* It is also an application that can be manipulated, seen, heard, read or talked about along with instruments used to influence others.

The Sinisir Village WhatsApp Group is very useful for us people, because by reading messages or information submitted by the Old Law and the Head of the Guard, we get information. The community also knows what we will do, such as community service, and planting vegetables to support the Kampung Sayor program.

Through social media *WhatsApp Group* can actually be used by both the government and the people of Sinisir Village who can easily participate in sharing information and communicating among group members. Currently, people cannot be separated from the use of mobile phones, including always accessing or opening applications *WhatsApp Group*. If there is free time it will open *WhatsApp* Includes *WhatsApp Group* Sinisir Village.

The message and information conveyed by the government to the people of Sinisir Village is an original and concrete message. Because, the message goes through several processes. One of the processes is typing and editing which has a function to test the feasibility of a message information before the message is conveyed to the public.

This indicates that the function of the communication media *WhatsApp Group* is a tool or means of communication that can be tested for the authenticity of information. In the presence of *WhatsApp Group* Sinisir Village, then the message and information conveyed is a true and valid message.

Motivative

WhatsApp Group communication media causes the presence of a communication process between the Sinisir Village government and the community so as to produce information that has value. *WhatsApp Group* has the function of motivating people to take the expected action.

Communication media as a means to be more enthusiastic about communication, as well as the *WhatsApp Group* of Sinisir Village, Modinding District, South Minahasa Regency because both the government and the community can exchange information in it. The government conveys a lot of programs and information that makes people motivated to do something, especially supporting village government programs.

Motivators can drive people's behavior. The size of the motivation will determine sooner or later a job and the achievement of a particular program. Through information conveyed by the government through *WhatsApp Groups*, it encourages the behavior and actions of the people of Sinisir Village. Motivation also serves to direct actions or seek goals desired by the government to be carried out by the community.

The message conveyed by the government through the *Sinisir Village WhatsApp Group* encourages the community to take action with a high level of enthusiasm so that it functions to direct actions or find goals desired by the government to be carried out by the community and determine the direction achieved. Through messages in *WhatsApp Groups* also in determining sooner or later community actions according to what is directed by the government.

The community is very motivated to act in accordance with what is conveyed by the Old Law and the Chief of Guard, for example to plant vegetables so that the Sayor Village program can run well as expected. The motivation that exists in the people of Sinisir Village is extrinsic motivation, which is the emergence of encouragement to take action because of reading messages conveyed by the village government through *WhatsApp Group*. In the *WhatsApp Group communication media* of Sinisir Village, there is a social exchange in the form of

information or messages, both in the form of words, images, videos, etc. In the delivery of messages can also be in the form of chat, voice notes, video calls or freecal. Not only involving two individuals but also many individuals who are included in the *Sinisir Village WhatsApp Group*. *WhatsApp Group* is also a fun and flexible media, because it is not dominated by submissions from the government alone, but the public can also provide information.

The results of the exchange are positive both for the government but also for the community. The information presented is information related to government programs, ideas and suggestions from the public, but also entertainment in nature. *WhatsApp Group* is also *a fun and flexible media, because it is not dominated by the delivery of information from the government but also includes informal messages or information that are entertaining for all members of the Sinisir Village WhatsApp Group*.

The village government observes what the community is talking about about common interests through discussions on *WhatsApp Groups*. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing, and reducing crowds, make *WhatsApp Groups* an effective medium used as a means of delivering policies or as a means of sharing information.

The use of *WhatsApp Group* social media in Sinisir Village has several advantages, namely: More efficient in terms of time and resources. It also makes it easier to participate in informing both the government and the public. Message acceptance and understanding are important factors in the success rate of communication using online forums in the form of *WhatsApp Groups*.

The existence of *online* forums in organizations is considered capable of reducing organizational hierarchy so that message exchange can run more easily and flexibly. Mediated and *editable* social media capabilities provide an opportunity to view, correct and cancel messages that will be delivered before they are sent to members of the organization in *WhatsApp Groups*.

Conclusion

WhatsApp Group functions as a medium of communication between the government and the community in Sinisir Village, South Minahasa Regency, *effectively* in implementing, realizing and improving services to the community, as well as a means of exchanging information between the government and the community. *Efficient* in time and cost, because in just one message can reach many people. *Concrete* as a medium or application that is seen, heard, read that governments and communities use to convey and receive messages. Able to motivate the community to support government programs with high enthusiasm. Exchange of government and public information through *WhatsApp Group* with positive values that are effective, efficient, concrete and motivative so that government policies can be conveyed and encourage the public to actively participate in government programs. The study recommends that although the government has conveyed information through *WhatsApp Groups*, face-to-face meetings between the government and rural communities are also needed to share information and interact.

References

- Abidin Y., Z., (2016). *Government Communication Philosophy, Concepts and Applications*. Bandung: CV. Pustaka Setia
- Dannerius S., (1988). *Sosiologi dan Antropologi*. PT. Intan Pariwara. Klaten
- Fuchan & Arief (1992). *Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods*. Surabaya: National Business

- Herawati E., (2011)., Communication in the Era of Information Communication Technology. *Binus Journal of Humanities* 2(1).
- Jumiatmoko, (2016). Whatsapp Messenger in Review of Benefits and ADAB. *Journal of Wahana Akademika*. 3(1).
- Larasati W., (2013a). *The Effectiveness of Using WhatsApp Application as a Means of Learning Discussion in Students (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta)*. Survei Pada Student Ilmu Komunikasi Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities Class of 2012 UIN Sunan Kalijaga., Yogyakarta
- Larasati W., (2013b). *The Effectiveness of Using WhatsApp Application as a Means of Learning Discussion in Students (UIN Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta)*. Survei Pada Student Ilmu Komunikasi Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities Class of 2012. Yogyakarta: UIN Sunan Kalijaga
- Mulyana D., (2015). Communication Science An Introduction. Bandung: PT. Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Ngazis A., N., (2018). *Continue to Soar, How Many Messages on WhatsApp Per Day?* From <https://www.viva.co.id/digital/teknopedia/1034634-terus-melonjak-berapa-jumlah-messages-on-WhatsApp-per-day>
- Rahartri, (2011). Effective Communication Media in Information Services. *Journal of Librarians* 26(2).
- Trisnani T., (2017). *Utilization of Whatsapp as a medium of communication and satisfaction in delivering messages among community leaders*, BPPKI Surabaya
- Yossita W., (2017). Effective Communication in Education. *Journal of Nomosleca* 3 (2).