Political Communication of Members of the Legislature and the Social Welfare Party (PKS) in Building Public Perceptions of DPRD Performance Ahead of the 2024 Election

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Abstract

The emergence of many political parties and the method of directly electing people's representatives and national leaders has driven increasingly sharp competition between candidate political parties and political institutions to gain sympathy and support from the public, ahead of the 2024 General Election. Therefore, the professionalism and expertise of politicians and legislators Regional people's representatives in communicating indirectly can trigger public perceptions of the performance of political information services. On the other hand, the disharmony of communicating political institutions and political actors with the public can create political activity that can support the formation of positive perceptions of institutions from the public. The phenomenon of political communication is part of communication events in the information technology era which is a democracy while it is related to people's understanding of social and political realities carried out by politicians or legislators who have a considerable influence on the determination of a policy set by this research. DPRD politicians or legislators at the district/municipality level in West Java Province in forming positive public perceptions of the DPRD institution.

Keywords

Political communication, legislators, political institutions, elections, public

perceptions

JEL Classifications: J11, F43

1. Introduction

The reality of Indonesian political communication is rich in color as shown by the many issues of political dynamics related to elections, government administration, management of political parties and their communications in the mass media and social media (Hariyanto and Köhler, 2020). The government through the president has determined that simultaneous general elections and regional head elections will be held in 2024, this election plan is a momentum for political elites to immediately build political communication with their constituents. However, the election issue becomes political merchandise that is used by certain interest groups to try to perpetuate their power in the future.

Approaching the election, polarized political information in the midst of society has given birth to a situation and a nation's political culture that lacks ethics. Currently, the condition of the political culture of the Indonesian people is still an "object of political sufferers" because it is only used during political campaigns, to simply attend and their votes are bought by the political elite to fulfill the quota of votes for local and national political stages. People only become loyal listeners to messages from political actors to fulfill their desires for power. This political culture is quite justified because there is still a lack of public knowledge and understanding of political literacy, especially in the midst of economic uncertainty after the Covid-19 pandemic hit, resulting in speculation and a decrease in the level of public trust in political elites, legislative, executive and judicial institutions which are considered to be more concerned with issues power rather than solutions and strategies to solve the nation's problems. Instead of Bipolarization, the people's political views are currently getting sharper and are likely to continue until the upcoming 2024 Election.

Political communication as access to formulate policy issues and run the political system must be carried out in a patterned manner. Political communication by political elites will not run optimally without the formation of public opinion. The popularity of political candidates will not increase if it is not supported by the significant public opinion towards society. The existence of DPRD members in managing public perception is still limited to work visits and recess, even though positive perceptions from the public are very important for personal members of the legislature and DPRD institutions so that received social and political support. The reality is that every human being has limitations in receiving and remembering information submitted by a person or institution, including political information. In addition, the community also has different acceptance depending on educational background, culture, religious experience and so on, these factors cause people's political participation to be more passive in discussing political issues.

Meanwhile, the contribution of the public relations of the legislature is still trapped in the routine of conveying information from the activities of legislators in conducting faction meetings, coverage of visits, and ceremonies attended by faction leaders or DPRD institutions in the community. With the limited performance of public relations institutions in the DPRD and the egoism of legislators who pay little attention to public perceptions of the DPRD institution, the current political behavior of the people is less appreciative of the performance of the legislature, made worse by the large number of legislators who have been personally affected by corruption law cases and other cases (Sihombing et al., 2022). make people less enthusiastic about political participation. With a central position in the network of political events, legislators can become the most important political tool to gain personal attention if they comply with the rules of political communication. The political communication network carried out by members of the legislature still prioritizes popularity and personal circulation which does not involve the existence of the legislature's public relations as a partner to build or shape positive public perceptions of the DPRD. The socio-political reality that occurs among legislators who are still traditional and conventional in establishing good relations with the public and the less optimal role of the legislative body's public relations which is still limited in processing public perception can be seen from the pattern of political communication of political parties and DPRD in the following fishbone Figure 1:
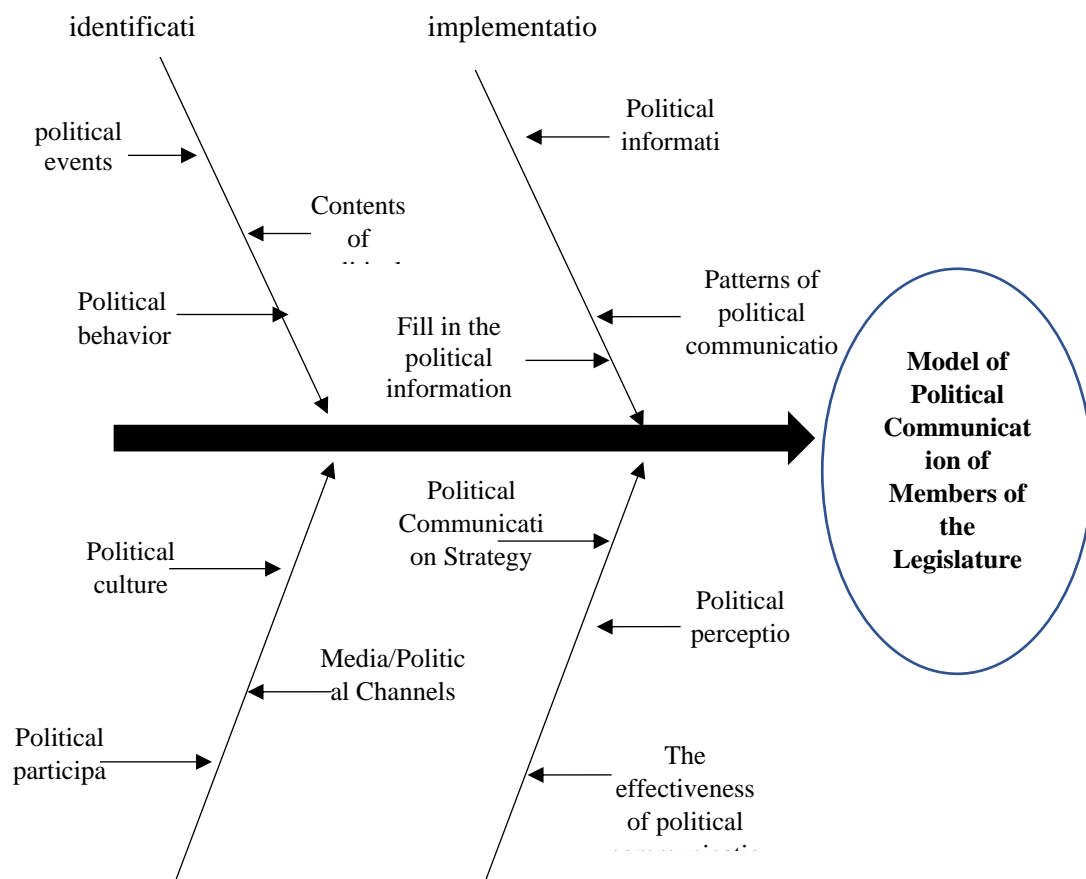

Figure 1. The Pattern of Political Communication of Political Parties And DPRD

This study intends to determine the extent to which the political communication of DPRD politicians/legislators at the district/city/provincial level of West Java has shaped the positive perceptions of society towards the DPRD institution. Through this research, it is hoped that it can provide suggestions or suggestions regarding the implementation of political communication models for politicians or legislators in the era of Public Information Openness ahead of the 2024 Election.

2. Theoretical Study

Communication is an element of delivering messages with an emphasis on both positive and negative effects (Nimmo, 2006). According to Gabriel Almond, political communication is one of the functions of the political system which causes all functions in the political system to work. Political communication flows political roles in the form of demands for protests and support for aspirations and interests to the processing center of the political system and the results of the processing are summed up in the output function and then become political system feedback. Almond further divides three elements in political communication into micro, meso and macro. The micro context can be seen in the realm of Citizen which is the involvement of individuals who have political aspirations or goals for certain interests. The meso context can be seen from the realm of political organization and the macro context can be seen from the realm of the ongoing socio-political system. The socio-political context has the power to shape or produce a policy. In the social system itself there is a superstructure consisting of the legislature, executive and judiciary. According to Muslimin (2020), political communication is communication that

involve political messages and political actors or related to government power and government policy. From the collection of definitions of political communication above, it can be formulated that political communication is the process of conveying political messages from communicators, both individually and in groups, to communicants that have an impact on social systems or audiences. According to Cangara (2011), the elements in political communication include political communicators, political messages, political channels or media, political goals or targets and the influence or effects of political communication. To present good political communication, the political process must also be systematic. The process of political communication focuses on how messages from interest groups such as political parties are channeled through direct or indirect channels (Pureklolon, 2016). One of the goals of political communication is to give birth to the perception and formation of a positive political image of a person or institution from society. In general, if we look closely at this, of course it shows an attempt to renew the political behavior of political elites which was previously packaged as mediocre (Yahya et al., 2017).

Perception is a process of receiving a stimulus by an individual through sensing where the stimulus is then transmitted by the nerves to the brain through

the central nervous system and then organized and interpreted (Davidoff, 1980 in Adrianto, 2006). Through individual perception can be understood about the state of the individual concerned. Perception is an integrative activity, so all that exists within the individuals such as feelings, experiences, thinking abilities, frames of reference, and other aspects that exist within the individual community will play a role in that perception (Walgito, 2000 in Adrianto, 2006). Based on the foregoing, it can be argued that even though the perception of the stimulus is the same, because experience, thinking skills, frames of reference are not the same, there is a possibility that the results of perception between individuals and other individuals will not be the same. Meanwhile, what is meant by public perception is the response or knowledge of the environment from a collection of individuals who interact with each other because they have values, norms, methods and procedures which are a common need in the form of a system of customs that are continuous and bound by a community. shared identity obtained through the interpretation of Indra's data. Through public perception, the goal of communication between legislators and various constituents of society is used as a direction and goal for carrying out political activities that are implemented continuously in order to obtain a healthy political culture process. This public perception can be separated from the habits of legislators and the community itself in understanding political momentum.

Political public relations is the management process of an organization or individual through communication or action with political goals, this management process is an attempt to influence, build, and maintain relationships and reputation with the public to help and support its mission in achieving goals (Stromback and Kiousis, 2011). In line with the definition above, Zipfel (2008 in Stromback and Kiousis, 2011) says that political public relations is a strategic communication activity of actors or actors who are participating in the political process with the aim of being informative and persuasive to realize a single interest. Another definition of political public relations is presented by McNair (2003 in Stromback and Kiousis, 2011) according to him political public relations is the tactic of managing the media and information to ensure that a party receives maximum favorable publicity. Kelley (1956) said that public relations would be useful if he was present and involved in all the planning sessions and did his part in selecting the issues raised. Putting public relations in a policy-making position means placing public relations in a place that has great influence in the relationship between the public and its government. The deeper the involvement of public relations in the political process, the more useful and important the role of public relations in management and strategic decision making. With the existence of public relations within the scope of management, it will be more effective in monitoring the environment, assessing risks, detecting possible crises and managing work and communication. Political communication is the basis for legislators in behaving in response to political events to get positive perceptions from the public and institutionally political communication is also needed by DPRD public relations to

get support regarding the existence of institutions in carrying out their performance to serve the interests of the people.

3. Research methods

This research is case study research, which according to Yin et al (1996), case study research seeks to explore, explain and describe in detail and in depth the political communication of legislators and the contribution of DPRD public relations institutions in districts/cities/West Java Province in shaping positive public perceptions. ahead of the 2024 election. The data collected in this study comes from primary data, namely the results of observations and interviews with informants from legislative members and political party officials at the district/city/West Java province level, as well as secondary data obtained through literature studies and documentation related to the phenomenon political communication and public relations activities DPRD. Data from interviews, observations and documentation results are processed starting from organizing the data, sorting it into units that can be managed so as to find important things to study and describe the phenomena being studied. In this study, interviews were conducted with the Social Welfare Party (PKS) regarding political communication strategies and the role of public relations carried out by PKS in building positive public perceptions of the performance of the political party.

4. Research Results and Discussion

In building a positive public perception of legislators' performance ahead of the 2024 elections, political parties need to carry out political communication strategies including providing an information service system, information disclosure, and communication management.

4.1 Information service system provided by political parties in districts/cities in West Java

The PKS party provides information system services to make it easier for the public to access programs carried out by DPRD members from PKS and the PKS party itself. This information service is provided through various social media accounts managed by special officers from factions and from party public relations, so that the information provided is always updated. The information services provided by the party's public relations team are very different from the information services provided by individual party members/legislators. Not all information services managed by individuals run well, because they do not recruit admins to manage these information services. Of all party members who are DPRD members, it is estimated that out of 5 only 3 DPRD individual accounts are capable of managing information services properly. The rest are still not active to communicate personally. It's different with the party and those in the faction,

because we have separate admins for our faction to communicate the programs and activities of the party and DPRD members.

One of the reasons PKS DPRD members in Cianjur Regency did not provide their own information system was because in addition to having provided a website by PKS, the constituencies in the election district for the members of the council generally did not use social media too much, due to difficulty with internet signals (blankspot) and limited availability of electricity. So that digital information systems are not an option to be used in conveying their performance information. Instead, these DPRD members carry out outreach (conventionally) every week, by providing time for residents to come to the office to express their aspirations. Not only on weekends, even on weekdays, DPRD members provide time to accommodate the aspirations of these residents.

Even though information services are still delivered manually, the information system delivered by PKS political parties, especially in the Cianjur Regency area, can be said to be running well, because whoever the DPRD members are, the public's public perception is only about PKS information. Unlike the case, in other regions, generally the people only know the DPRD members individually but are not familiar with the political parties that represent the DPRD members. In contrast, in Cianjur, people only know about political parties, regardless of who the DPRD members are. This shows that the information system delivered by party institutions in Cianjur is more dominating than the information system delivered by individual DPRD members. This is as stated by one of the informants in an interview excerpt, "people only know the DPRD but don't know the party, but in Cianjur people actually know the party rather than the DPRD itself, so the party institutional system dominates compared to individuals from the DPRD".

Institutionally, information services to the public are the obligation of political parties at both the DPP (Central Executive Board) and DPW (Regional Management Council) levels to communicate all activities of parties and DPRD members from PKS to social media. The information media platforms used are Website, Facebook, and Instagram. However, the most used media are Facebook and Instagram. The selection of the two social media platforms (Facebook and Instagram) that are most widely used for conveying information is because these two platforms are the most used by various political parties in Cianjur, besides being more familiar to the public, rather than using a website platform. PKS itself has even developed special WhatsApp groups for people who are PKS members as a medium for conveying information about activities carried out by PKS and its cadres. The content of this information service is more about the activities and vision and mission of political parties.

It was further explained that the use of the website was not yet very effective, however, the PKS party institution continued to provide information and communication facilities to strengthen ties with its constituents, including making the Cianjur Empowered application which contained all the information and programs carried out by the Cianjur PKS. Through this application, people can

access it openly. If the community wants to take part in the PKS empowerment program, then the community is indeed required to become party members. However, even if they don't join as party members, the community can still access information and empowerment programs, including through webinars every 2 to 3 times a week, to discuss political affairs to social affairs. Information system services provided by political parties are an important means of achieving party goals and meeting information needs (Tozer, 1996) for the public to find out how the patterns of recruitment and cadre are carried out by parties in order to provide legislator candidates who are worthy of being chosen by the public, deliver services and party performance, as well as to assess whether the party's policies and programs are in accordance with the aspirations of the community (Suhandono, 2018). The availability of information services provided by political parties can make it easier for the public to make choices in the upcoming 2024 elections.

4.2 Transparency in conveying information on the performance of political party members sitting in the district/city DPRD in West Java

The issue of transparency over the funding of political parties is still a challenge today. The public's expectation to be able to access financial report documents is still difficult to guarantee. For PKS, accountability and transparency are carried out through the delivery of information on the activities of political parties. It's just that information about the sources and use of party finances (both income and use) has not been published to the public. Even though it is not published directly through the information media, PKS is open when there are people who need this information. Regarding political party financial management, party funds are obtained in 2 states or 2 times a year, namely in early April and August or September. Audits of party finances are always carried out and accountability reports are available, but they are not published. The reasons for the management and accountability of political parties' finances are not published, due to the limited capacity of the human resources of political parties and the legislature team in submitting interesting publications. The information system delivered by individual DPRD members, even though it is done manually (socialization, receiving visits from residents, and disseminating performance and program reports in the form of bulletins), conveying information like this is still considered effective and creates positive public opinion regarding party transparency and accountability political.

In general, the source of acceptance of political parties in a democratic political system comes from three parties. First, it comes from internal party sources, such as member fees and contributions from party cadres who sit in the government and legislative bodies. Second, originating from the state (APBN and APBD) because political parties carry out public duties, at least preparing and submitting candidates for members of the DPR and DPRD, and presidential candidates and regional head candidates, and to ensure fair competition between

political parties participating in elections or between candidates, it is also very natural that the state through the APBN provides public funding, whether allocated directly or indirectly, whether given as an incentive for parties to carry out their functions or as an effort to guarantee the same minimum basic capital between parties. Third, come from the community, both individuals and organizations (Surbakti and Supriyanto, 2011).

Transparency and accountability in the financial management of political parties is a necessity because as a public institution, political parties have a major role in maintaining democracy and managing government. The management of internal party funds greatly determines the existence of parties in politics, and determines public perception whether political parties can be trusted or not? Demands regarding transparency of financial reports that can be accessed provide an opportunity for the public to participate in carrying out effective oversight so that the implementation of the principle of transparency can be understood as an effort to increase public awareness to all parties that prevention and eradication of corruption in political party finances as well as opportunities for corruption from the political process during elections can be avoided. Increased public awareness and transparency of political parties determines the functioning of a healthy democratic life. The basic principles of political party financial management are transparency and accountability. This principle requires political parties to be open to all processes of political party financial management.

Communication management carried out by political parties and legislators in building positive public perceptions of evaluating the performance of political parties and legislators who sit in the district/city DPRD in West Java.

Issues and demands will usually arise ahead of simultaneous elections. Regarding issues and demands that arise, what PKS does is map issues so that it is easy to choose priority issues that are worth fighting for. For example, issues regarding poor road infrastructure, both road access and road conditions. Regarding this infrastructure imbalance, PKS and its cadres try to formulate solutions based on the root of the problems faced by constituents. For example, regarding the poor road infrastructure, the most appropriate solution for PKS is fighting for the division of new autonomous regions, so that regional development becomes faster and spread evenly so that it can accelerate regional development including infrastructure development and accelerate community welfare.

In terms of communication management, PKS learned from various experiences and mapped areas that were often attacked by negative issues that damaged the party's image. From this mapping, the cadres prepare answers that are appropriate and acceptable to each of their constituents. The ways in which this was done varied, there were certain people who were indeed consulted intensively, some were given information leaflets only, and there were also points in areas where they were left alone without any information being conveyed.

today we really learn from the experience that has been pointed out today we already know the point where this issue will appear has been identified and now

we have mapped it out later When something appears here we have to talk about what it is we have prepared so they just have to read it but we don't convey it specifically to certain people because if the one below When asked then he answered it stopped there it didn't spread so let's let someone know if someone doesn't know

This method was carried out because according to the informant, some information was not conveyed because not everyone should know and care about party information. In terms of conveying information, PKS often waits for the right moments to convey this information directly to the public. The ability to manage messages shows the ability of political party communication management. The management of messages designed by PKS generally waits for the wave of slander to subside until finally at the right moment, politicians and PKS cadres try to correct negative public perceptions. This technique is quite successful in maintaining the stability of support and controlling the public's emotional acceptability so that it does not lead to wild issues that are detrimental to political parties.

The political communication strategy applied by political parties and legislators in building positive public perceptions of evaluating the performance of political parties and legislators who sit in the district/city DPRD in West Java.

In political competition, PKS is often hit by various accusations and sensitive issues that discredit PKS, especially in the run-up to general elections. For example attacks on gender issues and hoax parties. Regarding issues that are developing in society, PKS has experienced discredit towards political parties. In Cianjur, PKS was often rumored to be related to Wahhabism. Rumors in the community think that PKS people have different Islamic rituals of worship from other Islamic community groups. Even though the daily practice of worship for PKS cadres and members is exactly the same as the Islamic procedure as practiced by society in general. All cadres try to answer this issue by demonstrating the practice of Islamic worship, for example if there is a PKS member as head of the DKM, the PKS member performs prayers anywhere to show that the procedures for worshiping PKS cadres are the same as those of other Islamic worship. This method was used by PKS cadres to counter the Wahhabi issue, so that the PKS party and its cadres were eventually accepted by society. This method has been carried out since 2009. In addition to showing the public the procedures for cadre worship, PKS also cooperates with the MUI, so that the rumors pinned on PKS have the support of the MUI to counter this issue in society. The Wahhabi issue is not answered on social media, because the debate that occurs is actually counterproductive. Debate on social media to counter negative issues is felt to drain energy. Every issue addressed to PKS is also taken into account whether it has a major impact on vote acquisition or not. Besides the issue of Wahhabism, in 2014, PKS was also attacked by issues related to the Luthfi Hasan case. Even though issues were raised, they did not affect the PKS electoral system, so that they were still able to maintain their votes and gain 5 seats, despite being attacked by extraordinary issues. The strategies undertaken by PKS and DPRD members in dealing with these issues

usually take advantage of the moments of holidays. This strategy is carried out both at the central and regional branches. Dissemination of party work programs and performance to the public by taking advantage of major holidays.

For example, conveyed through sermons, inauguration of aspirations, inauguration of mosque renovations, as a medium to convey the ideas of parties and party cadres who will become DPRD members in the future to be conveyed to the public.

Usually, we take advantage of the momentum of the big day, at least we, as those concerned, can convey what PKS is currently carrying out, both at the central and regional levels, so we take advantage of those moments, apart from being a program from the center. if the position is attached, there are many activities for the community, there are inauguration of our aspirations, for example, for example, we have aspirations to renovate a mosque, so in the inauguration we participate there, our media conveys our ideas in the future, what we have done is also conveyed there (Interview with Mr. Wilman Member of PKS Fraction DPRD Cianjur)

The strategy used is conventional, but is considered more effective than through social media or websites. Until now, this strategy has succeeded in obtaining a positive response from the public. In addition to conveying party programs, they also convey government programs, political parties accommodate comments and public criticism of these programs. This strategy was chosen, because in communicating the people of Cianjur prefer face-to-face meetings than other meetings.

Accountability and transparency of information itself is used by people who have an interest. However, in general, public awareness and sensitivity to information disclosure and access to party information data is still low. Not only in society, the sensitivity and concern of community leaders towards political life, accountability and transparency is still lacking. The push for people's demands for transparency and accountability to parties is actually not that big. Issues that arise in the upcoming elections are still about road access and damaged roads. The various demands of the community, the solution is through a service approach with the issue of expansion. Therefore, PKS and DPRD members are fighting for the division of a new autonomous region (DOB).

In addition to the strategy of fighting for the expansion of new autonomous regions, PKS is trying to be more open by embracing community leaders who have the same vision, even though togetherness has not been long but PKS is trying to invite them to work together to fight for the realization of a joint work agenda.

PKS's efforts to fight for improving people's welfare through the formation of a new autonomous region were also carried out in the South Cianjur region. However, this party cannot be separated from issues that discredit them, especially when approaching elections. According to one PKS cadre informant, said that in 2019, PKS had issues that discredited the party. PKS was rumored as a political party that does not support pemekaran. As a result of this issue, the PKS lost up

to 10,000 votes. The spread of issues that discredit PKS occurs in almost every election. The political communication strategy to counter this issue is carried out by assigning all political party cadres and administrators to visit all community leaders in the electoral area where the negative issue is spread.

In conveying information, PKS does not fully rely on the power of the website or social media. Manual delivery of information is also carried out, because negative issues on social media are more easily spread and accepted by society. The people of Cianjur are considered to easily believe all the negative issues circulating on social media as well as online news that discredits PKS, without first checking or confirming these issues or news. This shows that political parties in conveying information to the public cannot fully rely on digital information platforms, because the digital literacy of the Indonesian people is generally still low. Therefore, the communication strategy implemented is not only countering issues on social media, but also conducting door-to-door visits, keeping bulletins in stalls. So the PKS itself has assigned its cadres to deliver verbal information directly to the public and there are also cadres whose only job is to convey/distribute information to the public through the dissemination of bulletins on the performance reports of PKS and their parties.

4.3 Public perception of transparency of information from political parties and legislators in district/city DPRDs in West Java

Various political communication strategies implemented by PKS so far have received responses and have been able to obtain positive perceptions from the public regarding transparency and performance shown by political parties and their members who sit as legislators in the district/city DPRD.

in my opinion, it's positive because when we convey it, the party's programs are actually for development as well, so the programs that we convey are government programs, right? which is the most acceptable to the community because the community communicates well, if you want to have face-to-face meetings instead of other meetings (interviews with Wilman, legislators and PKS cadres)

The positive response that built public perception was indeed uneven and widespread among Cianjur residents. This information is only accessed by the public for certain interests. It is very rare for the public to intentionally and consciously seek information on political parties and the performance of party members sitting in the West Java DPRD, unless there are certain interests from the community that require data and information submitted by political parties and members of the legislature.

Although the PKS political party officials acknowledged that the public's demand for public information disclosure was low, such as transparency, accountability, as well as demands for increased performance of legislators sitting in the DPRD. Although there are some people who directly convey these demands to political parties.

Building positive public opinion against PKS was carried out in various ways, to prevent a drastic decline in public support from attacks on issues that cornered PKS. However, even though there has been a decrease in support from constituents, both institutionally and personally, the party realizes that public support is very dynamic and fluctuating in nature, this is realized by party leaders and members. In conveying information and countering negative issues that attack, PKS does not only rely on digital information and communication platforms, but also conducts political communication that goes to the grassroots, this method is considered to be far more effective. According to informants, millennial voters who understand IT and are familiar with social media do not guarantee high political knowledge and support just by obtaining information through websites or social media. Millennial voters still want DPRD members to go to the field and involve them, not just conveying information in various media.

The communication strategy implemented by PKS does not only rely on information technology sophistication, but conventional communication strategies are considered adequate. Conventional strategies include intensive vertical consolidation, including asking for support from the MUI, in addition to carrying out a horizontal strategy, namely taking an inclusive communication approach to millennials, socializing party goals and programs, and trying to build trust in the community through political communication that is always directed to facts on the ground. about the real social role of PKS in society.

5. Conclusion

Political parties are necessary for a democracy to exist because their role is very important in various political processes in the legislature, government and other state institutions. Political parties are the foundation upon which Indonesian democracy is built. Based on the public's perception of the existence of political parties, the role of political parties at present is only to use the public for the benefit of political parties and first-time voters. Efforts to increase political communication and transparency carried out by political parties (especially PKS) through the provision of information systems are indeed still limited and generally the use of digital information services provided by political parties still uses social media intermediaries. Submission of information through social media, openness in conveying performance information Submission of information carried out by political parties and legislators in the DPRD of West Java regency cities so far still follows the mechanism of political party regulations and DPRD institutional regulations.

What can be suggested in this study is that the best way for legislators and political parties to place Public Information Disclosure as a strategy to gain public sympathy and participation in the upcoming 2024 election period

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