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# **Information Literacy And Political Conflict In The Whatsapp Group**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Conflicts can occur due to lack of information literacy. Political information disseminated through Whatsapp group often creates political conflicts. The purpose of this article is to examine the political conflict that causes members to leave a group on a whatsapp group, as well as other members' reactions in responding to it. The method used is quantitative descriptive analysis. The results showed that the comments given after the members who leave the group, among others: comments on personal leaving groups, comments on conflicts that occur, comments on problems that cause conflict, and comments on social and political conditions that occur. The attitude taken by the respondents who gave comments after the leave group conducted by another WAG members was to provide anticipatory advice that reminded them that there would be no similar events will conduct in the future, in order to maintain a conducive atmosphere in the WAG, and stop the conversation that was supposed to lead to potential conflict.

**Keyword:** literacy, information, conflict, politics, whatsapp group

## **INTRODUCTION**

The increasing sophistication of communication in the world today has created a variety of internet-based applications to interact with other parties such as family, colleagues, entrepreneurs and friends. The application and use of this high-tech mobile phone has made it easy for people to communicate and share information without limits (Omar, Zakaria, & Ismail, 2017). Along with the development of online information technology and digital platforms, the emergence of social networking applications has increased interest in the field of internet-based research (Sormanen & Lauk, 2016). Increasing the intensity of communication, not only provides benefits, but can also produce conflict. Conflict in principle due to differences. For examples differences in political views. Conflicts caused by differences in political views often occur in Whatsapp groups that involve a number of members.

The Sociological approach tends to place the activity of choosing in relation to the social context. Thus, a person's choice in the election is motivated by demographics and socio-

economics such as gender, residence, employment, education, class, income and religion (Nur, Taufik, & Tahir, 2015).

If there are tensions, deviations, or conflicts in the system, the system's performance will be disrupted. This kind of disturbance will cause uncomfortable feelings within the group members. However, it is assumed that the system always moves towards a balance point, which will eventually achieve integration (Zakina, 2016). as well as with what happened in a number of Whatsapp Group which was followed by a number of students in a college. As students who study politics, they also participate in various information disseminated through the whatsapp group.

When attending talks on political topics related to presidential elections, they often encounter conflicts that develop within whatsapp groups they follow. Conflict will be measured by awareness of differences in viewpoints and feelings of tension experienced by members (Sorooshian & Tolgambayeva, 2016). Therefore, as students who quite understand the political conditions in the country, students understand the existence of information that contains elements of hoax or framing that are commonly spread on whatsapp groups. Hoax and framing is one proof that people have entered the post truth era, especially in the field of political communication. Therefore, it is not uncommon for a number of rules to be made in an effort to minimize violations in political communication that have a high enough potential for conflict (Susanto, 2013), including the rules made by the admin on a whatsapp group.

Although it has been done to make rules so that comfort in the group can be maintained, but conflicts can still occur until there are several members who leave the group. So, this paper intends to examine the impact of conflict on a whatsapp group that is followed by students who are studying in politics, as well as their reactions to conflicts in the political field.

## METHOD

This research uses quantitative descriptive method by distributing a number of questionnaires to students of the faculties of social and political science at a state university. The number of students sampled can be seen in Figure 1.

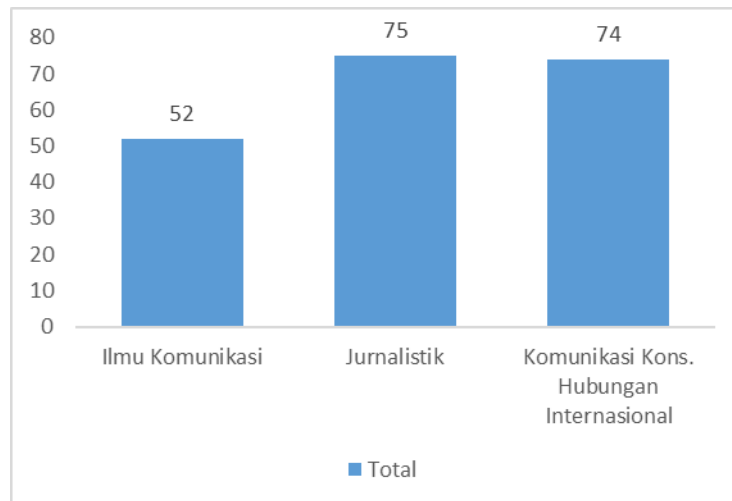


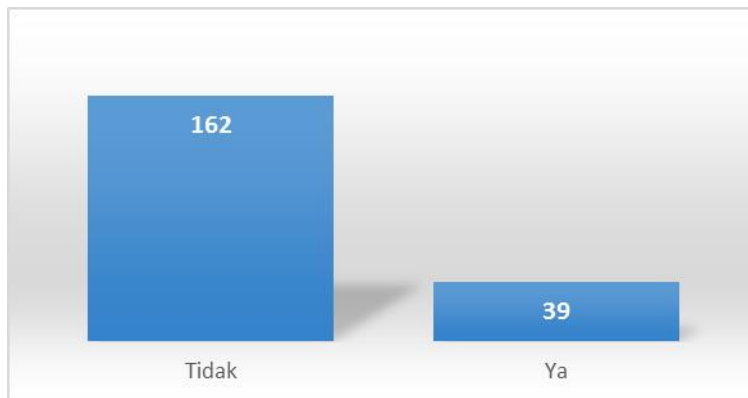
Fig 1. Sample Overview

In accordance with its objectives, this study seeks to examine the conflicts that occur within a whatsapp group. Conflicts can be caused by communication problems among members, such as

perception, prejudice, and so on. In addition, differences in cultural backgrounds, values, norms, attitudes and ways of life between them can lead to potential conflicts (Karomani, 2017). Therefore a number of questionnaire questions were distributed to produce data that referred to the conflicts identified in a number of whatsapp groups followed by respondents. Data collected through a variety of questionnaire distribution techniques, then calculated on a frequency basis. The calculation results are then analyzed to obtain a number of conclusions. Some data was also obtained through interviews to obtain qualitative data as a comparison to complete the results of data analysis.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Dis-harmonization can affect ethos and quality of performance because conflicts that occur on social media can also occur in people who work in the same institution (Liu, Li, Cai, & Huang, 2015). If there is not feeling their have the same understanding, it is not impossible if they will feel the lack of comfort in working together. Even worse, if the conflict in the WAG conversation is not able to be muted by the opinion leader in the WAG. The result is an action leave group performed by members, as illustrated in Figure 1.



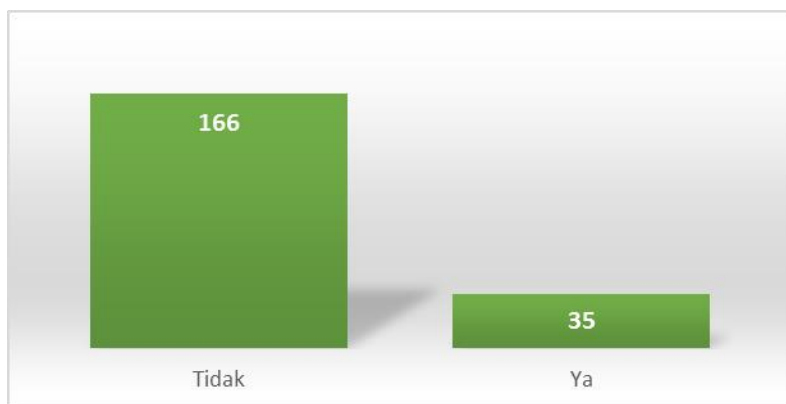
**Fig 2. There are members who leave the group after a conflict**

The party that leaves the group is not only a member involved in the debate at WAG but can also be a member who feels uncomfortable with the debate. For parties involved in debates and doing leave groups, this attitude can be explained based on the theory of information seeking. So that stated that the level of political polarization among the public is related to media effects. Findings that show that audiences have been convinced by a message will be prejudiced because discrete media audiences will tend to choose the information that matches their preferences (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). This means that parties from one camp tend to reject information that discloses negative things from the presidential candidates, he chooses so that they do refute or even counterattack.

Communication that relies heavily on personal and group ambitions can foster a variety of biases, inconsistent traits that result in misunderstanding, misinterpretation, and miscommunication. Inconsistency causes the growth of social conflicts, both horizontal and vertical (Amin, 2017), including in the WAG. Furthermore, media users will be more accustomed to rejecting messages that prove to be not in accordance with their preferences; Thus, the effect of reinforcement on preference will occur even when political sympathizers face the unilateral news that conflicts with their prior partisans (Bennett & Iyengar, 2008). Therefore, as individuals who are educated and understand the functions and purpose of making WAGs, they

should prioritize common goals in the formation of WAGs and not the post in the context of the objectives set from the beginning. Because communication that is consistent with the values of togetherness fosters peace and simultaneously becomes a solution to the social conflict (Amin, 2017), including minimizing unnecessary conflicts in a WAG.

As members of a society with a collective culture, the act of leaving a group raises certain questions and sensitivity. But in the current global village era, everyone feels that they have the right to have an equal position and have the right to show their attitude in the form of statements and actions. So that there were WAG members who did not hesitate to leave a group with various risks, including commenting on his departure by the WAG members he left behind. The willingness of respondents to comment on the leave of their group is described in Figure 5.



**Fig 2. Giving comments after a leaving**

In general, it is known that exposure to internet media and patterns of the association have an influence on individual characters. This is evidenced by the statement that exposure to internet media and patterns of association together has a significant effect on student character (Ihsan, 2016). This research was conducted at the junior high school level in Majenang, Central Java, Indonesia. The research can also be the basis that exposure to internet media and patterns of association of students who are respondents can be related to the character possessed by students. This is reinforced by field data from one of the informants who stated that members who held political debates and finally left the group, after being traced it turned out that they had carried out similar actions at the other WAGs they followed, based on the comments given by other members.

The development of information technology can actually bring a change in society. The birth of social media makes the pattern of behavior of people experiencing a shift in both the culture, ethics and norms that exist (Cahyono, 2016), including the ethics of communicating in a WAG. Maintaining an attitude that leads to debate and conflict in a WAG that is not intended to discuss political topics is not a wise act. In addition to contradicting the ethics of communication, it also shows symptoms of rejecting differences in political choice. Therefore, it is better for social media such as WAG to be directed towards building character through the values of Pancasila which can unite all diversity of the Indonesian people (Supriyono, 2014). And this, of course, requires shared awareness of each WAG member, especially for WAG, which is followed by educated and politically aware individuals.

Table 1. Comments given after members leave a group

Comments given after the members leave the group
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Comments on personal leaving groups
Comment on the conflict
Comments on issues that cause conflict
Comment on the socio-political conditions that occur

Table 2. Attitudes towards members who leave the group

Attitudes towards members who leave groups
Cannot appreciate differences of opinion
Cannot accept criticism
Because they don't understand politics
Too childish
Private rights to leave group
Avoiding discomfort
apathetic

Conflicts that occur in whatsapp groups tend to produce members who ultimately leave the group. Conflicts that occur when discussing political issues are mostly caused by differences in support for political candidates. Society tends to choose candidates who are most similar to them in terms of demographics, such as gender, race, or age (Webster & Pierce, 2019). The development of internet technology, gave birth to a number of opinion leaders who were considered influential by his followers (Jalli, 2016). Not infrequently a member in whatsapp group disseminates information obtained from opinion leaders who are in line with their thoughts. This information sharing does usually cause pros and cons, which then results in polarized conflicts. Conflict is a contradiction between members (Sidek, Tasir, & Jumaat, 2018). conflict can be caused because of the sending of communication messages that are general to other parties who are in an environment (Nouwens, Griggio, & Mackay, 2017)

The results showed that the news spread in the WhatsApp group caused chaos and anxiety, but the interaction in the WhatsApp group gave a sense of order. Most members of the WhatsApp group are also active in spreading the message as enlightenment to others (Bafadhal, 2017). Therefore, when a conflict occurs, the conflict management strategy adopted is a compromising and avoiding strategy. (Kharisma, 2017). This is also what the respondent did in responding to the conflict in the whatsapp group.

## CONCLUSION

Comments given after the members leave the group include: comments on personal leaving groups, comments on conflicts that occur, comments on problems that cause conflicts, and comments on social and political conditions that occur. While the attitude of members towards members who leave groups, tends to assume that members who leave groups are individuals who cannot appreciate differences of opinion, cannot accept criticism, do not understand politics, are too childish. Other opinions on individuals who leave groups are considered personal rights to leave groups, as well as positive prejudice that the reasons for leaving groups are to avoid inconvenience.

The attitude taken by the respondents who gave comments after the leave group conducted by another WAG members was to provide anticipatory advice that reminded them that there would be no similar events will conduct in the future, in order to maintain a conducive

atmosphere in the WAG, and stop the conversation that was supposed to lead to potential conflict.

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