

Analysis of Lasswell Communication Model in Marriage Services during the COVID-19 Pandemic at KUA

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Abstract

The pandemic situation has hampered marriage services at the Office of Religious Affairs (KUA), one of which is in the South Binjai District, North Sumatra. The government's policy regarding the postponement of marriage in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak in Indonesia resulted in the absence of registration and the marriage process for the bride and groom (catin) during the years 2020-2021. This condition is feared to increase the number of sexual crimes and adultery that violate state and religious laws. The purpose of this study was to analyze the Lasswell communication model carried out by KUA in South Binjai District in marriage services during the pandemic. The research method used is descriptive with a naturalistic approach. The theoretical reference is Lasswell's communication model. The data were collected through observation and in-depth interviews with a number of informants including the Head of KUA, South Binjai District, penghulu, Islamic religious educators (PNS and non-PNS), and general administrative staff, SIMKAH operators, and two informants from the catin party. This study concludes that the KUA of South Binjai District has implemented the Lasswell communication model, namely communicator, message, media (channel), communicant, and effects. However, its implementation has not been fully maximized because there are still obstacles to the use of the nationally integrated web-based SIMKAH application as an information channel. For this reason, KUA needs to combine conventional communication through face-to-face counseling, the installation of banners and posters, with the use of social media such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube.

Keywords

lasswell communication model;
marriage service; KUA



I. Introduction

It is undeniable, that even though humans have studied communication for centuries, attention to the importance of communication between humans and other humans is still very complex to this day, especially in providing public services to the community (Morrison, 2013).

As well as reviewing the Law (UU) of Public Services 5/2009 that every individual has the right to obtain maximum service and right on target. In practice, the communication process in the aspect of public services is also influenced by environmental factors. The outbreak of this virus has an impact of a nation and Globally (Ningrum *et al*, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic situation facing the whole world certainly has an impact on all social fabrics of society, including the procedure for marriage services at the KUA, South Binjai District, North Sumatra.

If outside of the pandemic conditions there were at least 70 pairs of prospective brides (catin) who collected data and the wedding process in every sub-district KUA spread every month, then throughout 2020-2021, the data collection was very low, and

even almost non-existent considering the government policy through the Ministry of Religion (Ministry of Religion). Ministry of Religion) of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the postponement of marriage amid the COVID-19 outbreak. These rules are contained in Circular Letter P-004/DJ.III/Hk.00.7/04/2020 concerning Control of the Implementation of Marriage Services for the Emergency Period of the Covid-19 Disease Outbreak issued in March 2020, including among others:

- a. The marriage contract was held at the District KUA.
- b. Catin registered marriage at KUA before 23 April 2020.
- c. Marriage registration after 23 April 2020 cannot be carried out before 29 May 2020.
- d. Rules related to officials, officers, the time and place of the implementation of the marriage contract, as well as health agreements are carried out by the District KUA.
- e. Marriage contracts at the Sub-district KUA are only allowed a maximum of eight pairs of catin a day.
- f. If it exceeds the amount in the provisions of Article 5, the marriage will be temporarily suspended.
- g. If in an emergency that prevents the catin from carrying out the provisions of Articles 1, 2, and/or 6, the person in charge of the District KUA may consider the application on stamp duty for the implementation of the marriage contract with one of the catin.
- h. If the health agreement is not fulfilled, the District KUA has the right to refuse marriage services with clear reasons.
- i. The implementation of the marriage contract during the pandemic will be carried out carefully according to the policies of the central and regional governments.
- j. The District KUA coordinates with other relevant parties and local security forces to monitor the marriage process (Directorate General of Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Religion, 2020).

It is feared that the postponement of the marriage contract will increase the number of unregistered marriages that are not officially registered at the KUA and the state, cases of sexual crimes, as well as adultery and/or deviant acts that violate state and religious laws. To anticipate obstacles and potentially higher risks, the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia evaluated by issuing Circular Letter P-006/DJ.III/HK.00.7/06/2020 concerning Guidelines for the Implementation of *New Normal Marriage Services* on June 10, 2020. This new regulation contains some important points to note:

1. Data collection and marriage registration at KUA are carried out every working day.
2. Marriage registration can be done through the simkah.kemenag.go.id page, telephone, and official email, or directly to the KUA.
3. Regarding Articles 1 and 2, catin must follow the health examination procedure and minimize physical contact with KUA officials.
4. The marriage contract can be held outside the KUA provided that each catin must meet the specified requirements.
5. The marriage contract at the KUA or home can be attended by a maximum of 10 people.
6. Meanwhile, the marriage contract in a mosque or building may only be followed by a maximum of 20 percent of the room's capacity or a maximum of 30 people.
7. The KUA regulates all matters related to officers, catin, time and place of marriage, as well as health protocols.
8. If the marriage contract is carried out outside the KUA, the KUA must coordinate with related parties and local security officers in supervising the marriage process and ensuring compliance with health protocols.

9. If the health agreement in Articles 5 and 6 is not fulfilled, the KUA has the right to refuse the service and give a clear reason in writing in the form.
10. The Head of KUA coordinates the plan to implement the procedure for the *new normal marriage service* to the Head of the Sub-District Task Force.
11. *New normal marriage service* will be supervised by the Head of the Regency/City Ministry of Religion in each region concerned (Directorate General of Islamic Guidance, Ministry of Religion, 2020).

Website-based Marriage Management Information System (SIMKAH) application. This *platform* was launched on November 8, 2018, and can be downloaded on the www.simkah.kemenag.go.id page. The presence of the SIMKAH application is a solution step so that marriage data collection for catin in all corners of the country can be carried out more easily and flexibly.

In Islam, if someone is physically and mentally able to carry out the intention of getting married, then it needs to be rushed. As the will of the Prophet sallallaahu 'alaihi wasallam in the hadith narrated by Tirmidhi and Ahmad that three things should not be postponed, namely praying on time, taking care of and burying the corpse, marrying a woman who has come to him a pious man who is devoted (Abdurrahman, 2020).

The word of Allah subhana wa ta'ala about marriage is also explained in QS. Ar-Rum verse 21.

اَلَيْتَ اَنْ لَقَى لَكُمْ اَنْفُسِكُمْ اَزْوَاجًا لَتَسْكُنُوْا اِلَيْهَا لَ اِنَّ لَكُمْ لَآيٰتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ (الرُّوم/21:30)

Meaning: Among the signs of His greatness, He created a partner for you from your kind to feel at ease; and He also made love between you. Indeed, it is true that there is a sign of God's greatness for people who think (Kemenag RI, 2017).

From the verse above, it is clear that Islam positions marriage as an important matter for mankind. However, before carrying out the purpose of marriage, of course, you need to prepare many things besides the physical and spiritual readiness of the bride and groom. Marriage is said to be valid if it follows the rules and is legally and religiously recognized. This is where the role of the KUA is the institution responsible for running and supervising marriage services in Indonesia.

The pandemic conditions that hit limited public services, including the marriage services carried out by the KUA. This demands changes to the procedure which was originally carried out directly at the KUA to use the online SIMKAH application so that the marriage continues to take place following the health protocol. This application is supported by the KUA of South Binjai District as an effective communication medium for catin. In addition, conventional communication is also carried out such as the installation of banners and/or posters as well as face-to-face socialization.

Several previous studies have discussed KUA marriage services during the pandemic. For example, Sitti Arafah's 2020 research entitled "*Simplified Marriage in the COVID-19 Pandemic Period in the Bugis Community of Palopo City*" focuses on three main urgencies, namely marriage services at KUA during a pandemic, Bugis community wedding processions, and sacred values, and community response to marriage during the pandemic (Arafah, 2020).

Research from Alfi Syahri, et al in 2021 entitled "*Services for Implementing Marriage Contracts at KUA Medan Maryland*". This study analyzes the effectiveness and barriers to marriage contract services during the pandemic including administrative

procedures, correspondence, minimal online-based facilities, and the difficulty of accessing information by the public (Syahri, 2021).

Furthermore, Dakwatul Chairah's research in 2021 is entitled "*Implementation of Marriage Agreement during the COVID-19 Pandemic at KUA, Sampang Madura District*". As a result, there is a new procedure in the marriage contract called '*ageppak bumih*' (patting the earth) which is carried out by the penghulu as the representative of the female guardian. Here, there is the involvement of cultural elements that are full of meaning (Chairah, 2021).

Based on the background of the problem above, researchers are interested in analyzing the communication model used by the KUA in South Binjai District in marriage services during the 2020-2021 pandemic. The theoretical reference used is Harold Lasswell's "*Who (says) What (to) Whom (in) Which Channel (with) What Effect*" communication model, which includes elements of communicator, message, media or channel, communicant, and effects.

- a) Communicator (*source/sender*): the sender of messages, message sources, or sources of information originating from individuals or institutions.
- b) Message (*message*): material/content of the message that is delivered directly or indirectly.
- c) Media (*channel*): a tool or means of conveying messages used by the sender and recipient of the message.
- d) Communicants: individuals/institutions who are parties to receiving information from the communicator.
- e) Effect (*effect/impact*): results in the form of a response given by the communicant to an information content (Oktarina, 2017).

According to Lasswell in his book "*The Structure and Function of Communication in Society*", communication is an activity of delivering messages by communicators to communicants through channels that produce an effect on the acceptance or rejection of the message content. In this case, it appears that the sender of the message has a persuasive communication goal to influence the recipient's message (Onong, 2019).

The reason the researcher uses the Lasswell communication model is that the five elements in it can describe the KUA communication in the South Binjai District in the comprehensive socialization of marriage services during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lasswell's theory is also the oldest communication model since 1948, the basic communication principle, and is still relevant to be used as an analytical knife for researchers in the field of communication to this day (Kurniawan, 2018).

II. Research Method

This study uses a descriptive method with a *naturalistic approach* which is commonly used in qualitative research. Sources of research data in the form of primary data through *in-depth interviews* with the Head of KUA South Binjai District, religious leaders, Islamic religious educators (PNS and non-PNS), general administration staff, SIMKAH operators, and two additional informants from catin (Sugiyono, 2011). Meanwhile, secondary data was obtained from *literature reviews* such as books, journals, and other sources relevant to the problems studied related to the KUA marriage service and Lasswell's communication model.

Research informants were determined through the *purposive sampling* technique, namely the sampling technique based on the researcher's assessment of the specific criteria that had been determined by looking at the suitability of the objectives and the validity of the data (Azwar, 1998). Research data collection techniques use interviews, observations, and documentation of written materials and other information related to the research topic (Bungin, 2007).

Data analysis was carried out in several stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, conclusion drawing, and verification. For the validity of the data, researchers conducted tests of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility testing uses source triangulation, data collection techniques triangulation, and time triangulation (Sugiyono, 2011).

III. Results and Discussion

3.1 Marriage Service at KUA, South Binjai District

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the rhythm of the KUA marriage service in the South Binjai District underwent a significant change. One of them is a shift in the flow from before the pandemic and during the pandemic. There are some differences in implementation.

Table 1. Differences in Marriage Service Procedures before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Before the Pandemic	Pandemic Time
In accordance with PP 19/2015 concerning the flow of marriage services and PMA Number 20 Article 4 concerning the administration of marriage registration.	In accordance with SE number: P-004/DJ.III/Hk.00.7/04/2020 concerning Control of the Implementation of Marriage Services in the Emergency Period of Disease Outbreaks Due to Covid-19.
Weddings can be held in two different locations other than the KUA according to the catin plan with the approval of the local KUA; regulated in PP 48/2014.	Marriage registration can be done online via the SIMKAH application, email, and/or telephone.
Specifically for the Binjai City government area, there are additional requirements for catin according to the Binjai Mayor Regulation Number 39 of 2017 concerning Standard Service Marriage Procedures in Binjai City.	Marriages can be held at the KUA Marriage Hall or at homes, mosques, and buildings by following health protocols. The marriage contract at KUA is attended by a maximum of 10 people, while outside KUA no more than 30 people.
If all requirements are met, catin will receive a marriage certificate from the KUA.	KUA South Binjai District provides facilities and facilities according to health protocols.

Source Table: Researchers, 2022.

Based on the results of observations, the researchers found data on catin who were married in the KUA of South Binjai District during the 2020-2021 pandemic which was collected in the following data:

Table 2. Data for Married Catin at KUA South Binjai District in 2020

Month	Number of Married	Wedding Location	
		KUA	Outside KUA
Jan	33 Pairs	15 Pairs	18 Pairs
Feb	36 Pairs	16 Pairs	20 Pairs
Mar	42 Pairs	27 Pairs	15 Pairs
April	6 Pairs	6 Pairs	-
May	nothing		
Jun	54 Pairs	33 Pairs	21 Pairs
Jul	33 Pairs	21 Pairs	12 Pairs
Aug	43 Pairs	21 Pairs	22 Pairs
Sep	23 Pairs	15 Pairs	8 Pairs
Oct	33 Pairs	19 Pairs	14 Pairs
Nov	27 Pairs	17 pairs	10 Pairs
Des	37 Pairs	22 Pairs	15 Pairs
Total	367	212	155

Source Table: Researchers, 2022

Table 3. Data for Married Catin at KUA, South Binjai District in 2021

Month	Number of Married	Wedding Location	
		KUA	Outside KUA
Jan	42 Pairs	20 Pairs	22 Pairs
Feb	34 Pairs	16 Pairs	18 Pairs
Mar	40 Pairs	17 pairs	23 Pairs
April	31 Pairs	23 Pairs	8 Pairs
May	16 Pairs	8 Pairs	8 Pairs
Jun	40 Pairs	20 Pairs	20 Pairs
Jul	43 Pairs	28 Pairs	15 Pairs
Aug	36 Pairs	24 Pairs	12 Pairs
Sep	17 pairs	12 Pairs	15 Pairs
Oct	41 Install	23 Pairs	18 Pairs
Nov	33 Pairs	20 Pairs	13 Pairs
Des	34 Pairs	28 Pairs	6 Pairs
Total	407	239	168

Source Table: Researchers, 2022.

3.2 KUA Communication Model in Pandemic Marriage Services

The KUA of South Binjai District implemented two communications in the socialization of marriage service procedures. *First*, direct communication to the field in collaboration with religious leaders and counselors in providing teaching to catin using the SIMKAH application including preparing the necessary files. *Second*, indirect communication through written media in the form of banners and posters pasted on the

KUA information board, as well as social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.

Periodically, KUA staff are given training on understanding digitalization, transformation, and innovation so that the use of the SIMKAH application as a media for online marriage services is more optimal so that the vision, mission, and motto of KUA in South Binjai District are achieved and synergize with each other.

When viewed from its effectiveness, the KUA communication model in the socialization of marriage services directly has advantages and disadvantages. The advantages are easy to understand, applicable, and responsive because catin can immediately get responses, transparent and clear. Meanwhile, the drawback is that it cannot reach a wider area due to the limited distance and time that must be taken by KUA officers, penghulu, and Islamic religious educators.

The indirect communication model, especially through the use of social media, also has the advantage of covering a wider range, information being conveyed to the audience more quickly, not being hindered by distance and time, and being able to communicate on a large scale.

In addition to marriage service procedures, KUA also remains active in direct marriage counseling for catin even in the midst of the COVID-19 outbreak. The material provided includes premarital science based on religious jurisprudence and the mental psychology of marriage (Kemenag RI, 2020). However, marriage guidance is carried out by implementing health and wavy protocols. This means that each day is limited to only three pairs of catin with two-hour tutoring sessions each. Each catin partner was contacted by telephone beforehand to be directed to come to KUA. At least, KUA scheduled three meetings before cat's wedding.

Several obstacles are also often encountered in the process of socializing marriage services during the pandemic. Among them, the public's ability to understand the use of the SIMKAH web application, the concerns of the catin if an error occurs in the data upload process, the catin does not have digital files, *the smartphone* or *gadget* used is inadequate, does not have an internet package, and is technologically stuttering which is dominated by underage catin and /or have a low educational background.

On that basis, most catin are reluctant to upload data independently because they consider the digitization system to be complicated and ask for assistance from SIMKAH operators at KUA to process marriage registrations. The next obstacle experienced by SIMKAH operators is related to signal instability in the event of a power outage or when the central system undergoes *server maintenance* or *the server is down*.

Another obstacle in marriage services during the pandemic also comes from KUA officers, which unfortunately is still not optimal. This tends to be caused by the age factor and low understanding of digitalization, transformation, and innovation related to the government's KUA revitalization goal. KUA revitalization includes physical improvements in each *model KUA*, improving public service standards at the District KUA, digital transformation, and strengthening *capacity-building programs* for KUA officers (Kemenag RI, 2021).

Seeing conditions in the field, the KUA still accepts marriage registration manually or *offline*, thus demanding extra work from KUA officers in South Binjai District, especially SIMKAH operators.

3.3 Lasswell Communication Model in KUA Marriage Services during a Pandemic

Based on the explanation scheme above, the researcher analyzed the communication elements in Harold Lasswell's communication model theory related to marriage services during the 2020-2021 pandemic conducted by KUA, South Binjai District. That there is a need for close synergy between the five elements including communicators, messages, media, communicants, and effects.

- a. The communicator is the KUA of South Binjai District, in this case, the Head of the KUA along with the staff and related devices.
- b. Message. Information regarding marriage service procedures during the COVID-19 pandemic according to Circular P-004/DJ.III/Hk.00.7/04/2020 concerning Control of Marriage Service Implementation in the Emergency Period of the Covid-19 Disease Outbreak issued in March 2020 by the Ministry of Religion of the Republic of Indonesia through the Director-General of Islamic Community Guidance. These rules are evaluated and re-rolled through regulatory updates in letter P-006/DJ.III/HK.00.7/06/2020 concerning Guidelines for Implementing Marriage Services during the *New Normal* Period. In addition, marriage guidance materials include basic premarital knowledge and mental psychological settings to build a *sakinah, mawaddah, warrahmah* family.
- c. Media. KUA South Binjai District uses two media, namely conventional and digital. For conventional media such as banners and posters, while digital media through the use of the SIMKAH web application and social media such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube.
- d. Communicate. In this case, the recipients of the message are the bride and groom who are getting married and the general public.
- e. Effect. The effects are divided into two, namely positive and negative effects. The positive effect is that the community has an alternative way to keep registering marriages during the pandemic without having to congregate by accessing the nationally integrated SIMKAH web application. Catins who are about to get married has more time to prepare files and understand health protocols. Meanwhile, for the negative effect, the utilization of the SIMKAH web application has not been maximized because Catin is reluctant to be involved in the data upload process independently and relies entirely on SIMKAH operators at KUA. The low level of education, age, and preference for knowledge about technology from the community, catin partners, and KUA officers are also inhibiting factors in marriage services during the pandemic.

IV. Conclusion

The results of the above study indicate that the KUA of South Binjai District has implemented the Lasswell communication model which includes five basic elements of communication, namely communicators, messages, media, communicants, and effects. Based on the results of the study, it was concluded that the marriage service procedure during the pandemic was not optimal because there were still obstacles in the field, especially from the channel element *used*, namely the SIMKAH web application as an alternative media for marriage registration for catin.

The biggest inhibiting factors are age, education level, limited equipment, and understanding of digitalization from the general public, catin who are about to get married, and local KUA officers. This condition makes SIMKAH operators work extra because Catin has difficulty uploading data and files.

To overcome this problem, the KUA of South Binjai District conducted indirect communication with conventional media such as pasting SIMKAH posters on the information board at the entrance of the KUA. In addition, they also utilize social media Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube so that information can be reached more broadly, as well as *upgrading* knowledge for KUA staff through *capacity-building programs in the form of training on understanding digitalization*.

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