

The Role of Communication in Conflict Resolution on Twitter Social Media

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Abstract

Basically, conflicts arise due to differences of opinion, goals and interests. So, to deal with conflict situations requires a deep understanding of the implementation of conflict resolution and good communication. This study aims to identify and analyze the role of communication in resolving conflicts that occur on Twitter social media, which provides space for users to freely express their opinions, but has the potential for conflict to arise. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method based on the constructivism paradigm, and uses the concept of conflict communication theory which examines the concepts of communication theory and social conflict. The research findings reveal that communication has an important role and has an impact on the success of conflict resolution on Twitter social media. One form of effective conflict resolution to deal with conflicts on Twitter social media is a coalition, by inviting the parties involved to discuss. Although communication has gaps to create conflict, good communication can be one way to avoid conflict escalation and achieve peace.

Keywords

conflict resolution; conflict communication; social media; twitter



I. Introduction

Due to the development of information and communication technology, especially since the emergence of social media, the paradigm of society's interaction and communication has altered drastically. Two-way community interaction is made possible through the use of social media. On the other hand, several media such as television, radio, and print, which only allow the public to receive information without any two-way interaction.

Interacting and communicating online is supported by the proliferation of social media, such as Whatsapp, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, etc. Serpil Kir defines social media as an area of virtual communication, where people gather, share feelings and thoughts, react to each other, create community, create humor, express aspirations, defy social hierarchies, and can freely express themselves (Kir, 2019).

Based on TiNewss data, it shows that in January 2022, there were 191,4 million active users of social media, or as many as 68,9% of the total population in Indonesia, which increased by 12,6% or 21 million users from 2021 (Nuryama, 2022). This shows that the penetration rate of internet and social media usage in Indonesia is very high. Indonesian people have been educated that technology can help their daily life.

The convenience offered by social media to communicate makes face-to-face communication a rarity. People tend to prefer to communicate through electronic devices that are connected to the internet and based on applications, such as social media (Taopan

et al., 2019). People prefer to convey what cannot be conveyed face to face directly through text messages.

In addition to convenience, speed, and wide reach, communicating by relying on social media also provides various other positive impacts. (Bandjar, 2021) states that the use of social media makes user relationships closer and stronger. Clevert (2002) emphasize that by interacting on the internet and social media, people can learn to tolerate each other's differences of opinion (Bandjar, 2021). Hence, the existence of social media can also help overcome nervousness and discomfort when communicating face-to-face.

However, the ease and sophistication offered by social media, also raises new problems in parallel. (Bandjar, 2021) highlight that the time spent on the internet in a long frequency, makes less time left to carry out social activities directly. This can be a trigger for direct communication disorders and increase feelings of depression and loneliness because basically these activities isolate users from the surrounding environment. Because of this, people don't know how to talk to each other or solve problems well.

The ability to communicate related to conflict resolution is important to continue to be developed (Apdillah et al., 2022). Conflict is one of the things that cannot be avoided in social life. Putnam (2006) noted that a conflict should not be avoided, but must be resolved with the best solution so as not to cause disturbance in the relationship between individuals (Bandjar, 2021).

Furthermore, Veithzal defines conflict as a form of difference, conflict and disagreement from various parties (Hasmawati, 2020). Littlejohn and Domenici defines conflict as a very sharp difference of opinion or views (Fahrimal & Safpuriyadi, 2018).

Conflict is recognized as a form of communication breakdown between individuals, specifically when individuals feel pressured, threatened, or compelled (Fajar, 2016). Communication failures are prone to occur on social media, especially Twitter. Twitter has become one of the media that many users use to express their aspirations and criticisms, articulate thoughts, disseminate information through text, and debate with other users. Communicating on Twitter is not limited by space and time, the exchange of information quickly occurs, self-existence and finding new relationships is also easy to occur on Twitter social media (Nurhadi, 2017).

In using Twitter, the user's expressions and body language are invisible, this encourages users to be freer and more explicit in conveying ideas (Anni'mah Nurul et al., 2020). Hence, conflicts often arise in communicating between individuals on Twitter social media.

A conflict arises and occurs because basically the individual feels that what is communicated and conveyed is good, but it should be realized that when communicating, there are several factors that need to be considered, such as culture, age, status, and gender that can affect the communication going well (Sudira, 2016).

Based on the background above, it is important to understand conflict resolution in communicating, especially in social media today. Due to this reason, this study focuses on how communication plays a role in resolving conflicts that occur on Twitter social media.

In practice, individuals cannot be separated from the communication process. Communication occurs when there is a process of exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, or ideas, both between individuals and groups. Good communication requires feedback from other parties in order to run dynamically (Carvalho & Judy, 2014).

However, Littlejohn and Domenici highlight that communication also has the potential for conflict (Fahrimal & Safpuriyadi, 2018). Communication views the conflict as a symbolic conflict. Conflict occurs because of differences in views, perceptions, ideas, and goals between individuals involved in interacting. Berger, Roloff, and Ewoldsen divide

conflict into interpersonal conflict and inter-group conflict (Fahrimal & Safpuriyadi, 2018). Interpersonal conflict is a conflict that occurs between individuals, while inter-group conflict involves groups that have conflicting identities (Berger et al., 2014).

Conflict as an interaction process that occurs because there is a disagreement of opinion that affects the individuals involved, both positively and negatively (Nisa, 2015). A conflict arises because: (1) There are two or more parties involved in the opposite interaction; (2) The parties are conflicting in achieving a goal, or there are opposing views; (3) In interacting there is behavior with the aim of pressuring other parties to gain victory; (4) There is an opposite action or response; (5) There is an imbalance due to different interests (Hasmawati, 2020).

According to Louis R. Pondy, who developed five stages of conflict in the “Pondys Model of Organizational Conflict” model, which consist of: (1) Latent Conflict, is the seed of conflict in the interaction that has the potential to surface at any time; (2) Perceived Conflict, the individuals involved begin to form views of the conflict situation, as well as assumptions about the motives of other individuals; (3) Felt Conflict, these individuals begin to realize that a conflict has occurred and feelings begin to arise, such as anger, frustration, anxiety and fear; (4) Manifest Conflict, one individual begins to react to face another individual; (5) Conflict Aftermath, the phase where the conflict has been processed. If it can be processed properly, it will have a positive impact, but if it is the other way around, it will have a negative impact on individuals or groups (Nisa, 2015).

Moreover, Brent D. Ruben defines communication as a process by which individuals with groups or organizations create, send, and use information to coordinate with other individuals and the surrounding environment (Nisa, 2015). Of the 4 communication models, there are several principles in terms of reducing conflict, namely (1) the encoding-decoding model, which views communication in encoding information (formulating the sentence to be conveyed), message transmission, and message decoding (receiving and processing messages) (Nisa, 2015). The principle is that effective communication occurs when there is an understanding between the sender and the recipient of the message.

(2) The intentionalist model, understands if the same words in the message can have different meanings. Effective communication can occur if there is a common knowledge, language and cultural background. Thus, the principle is that the recipient of the message tries to understand the meaning of the sender of the message; (3) Perspective-Taking, the paradigm in this model understands that individuals with the same language and culture can have different perspectives. The principle in this model is that the sender of the message must be able to understand the listener's perspective; (4) Dialogic model, which views communication as a collaborative and cooperative process. In this model, the parties involved have an active role in creating a common understanding; (5) The recipient of the message takes an active role. Effective communication occurs when there is cooperation between individuals, and allows generalizations in the context of the message (Nisa, 2015).

According to Ralf Dahrendoft, there are 3 forms of conflict resolution, namely (1) conciliation, namely the parties involved in the conflict conduct discussions to reach a mutual agreement, without any third party coercing or monopolizing the discussion; (2) mediation, namely conflict resolution carried out in the presence of third parties, such as experts, experts, institutions, figures, as mediators who provide advice or suggestions, but do not make decisions; and (3) arbitration, namely conflict resolution in which the two conflicting parties decide to get a decision from a legal institution as a solution to resolve the conflict (Lado, 2021). Communication is the process of delivering messages by someone to other people to tell, change attitudes, opinions or behavior either directly orally or indirectly through the media. In this communication requires a reciprocal relationship

between the delivery of messages and recipients namely communicators and communicants (Hasbullah, et al: 2018).

Conflict communication theory was developed from the ideas of Karl Marx and Max Weber. In essence, conflict theory understands that in a social system there are differences of opinion and conflict (Nugroho, 2021). The existence of differences in interests and goals can lead to conflicts between individuals, groups, or communities (Rofidah, 2021).

This study uses conflict communication theory, which emphasizes the process of exchanging messages between individuals or what is called interpersonal communication, to studying mass communication. In communication in the social world there is communication and interaction between individuals or groups. In conflict communication theory, there are several communication theories that are also used to understand and explain conflict.

The conflict communication theory used in this study is a coordinated meaning management theory model, which is used to analyze conflict resolution on Twitter social media. In his book *Communication Theories*, Fajar describes several paradigms used to view conflict as a form of communication, namely (1) the encoding-decoding paradigm; (2) intention paradigm; (3) perspective-determining paradigm; (4) the dialogical paradigm (Fajar, 2016). Hence, conflict communication theory is used in this study to analyze the data found in the field.

II. Research Method

This research uses descriptive qualitative method. Research with qualitative methods aims to obtain a natural picture of a phenomenon or problem. Qualitative research examines social problems and focuses on how individuals interpret their experiences to understand social reality in order to help individuals solve their problems (Yuliani, 2018). Qualitative research uses an inductive approach, which tests theory along with data and other research instruments (Setyana & Aruman, 2021).

This research was conducted based on constructivism paradigm. The preparation of interview materials for data collection was carried out based on the five stages of conflict in the "Pondys Model of Organizational Conflict" model and the theory of 3 forms of conflict resolution by Ralf Dahrendoft. The research variable in this study is conflict resolution on Twitter social media with the application of conflict resolution theory. This study uses data analysis techniques according to Miles & Huberman (Sugiyono, 2019), which consists of five stages, namely (1) data collection (data collection); (2) data reduction, summarizing and focusing on important data; (3) display data, data presented in brief descriptions, graphs, matrices, or the like; and (4) conclusion drawing, drawing conclusions at the final stage. Data were collected from informants, namely four Twitter social media users who had experienced communication conflicts on Twitter social media.

III. Result and Discussion

This study discusses the communication that occurs on Twitter social media users when doing conflict resolution. Data from Ministry of Communication and Informatics shows that the number of internet users in Indonesia reaches 63 million users, and it is recorded that 95% of these are internet users who access social media (Kominfo, 2020). This shows that the number of people in Indonesia who use the internet to access social media is quite high. Social media has become a second world for society today, from this, social media is often referred to as the virtual world (Rofidah, 2021).

At the moment, social media is at a very advanced stage of development, as evidenced by the existence of platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Tiktok, and some others. In Indonesia, there are 19,5 million people who use Twitter (Kominfo, 2020). As a result, Indonesia has moved up to the fifth position on the list of nations with the most active users of Twitter.

Given the fact that Twitter users can exchange ideas as well as information, it is common to see disagreements in opinion. Twitter offers a platform for users to freely express their opinions, just like other social media, which can lead to arguments on Twitter's social media. Twitter allows users to express themselves freely, including by reacting to other users' posts, comments, or media to express their feelings. Fajar (2016) mentions that conflict does not only arise because of differences of opinion and goals, but can also arise from situations around individuals. In general, the nature of conflict is spontaneous, can be triggered by a momentary impulse, and can be caused by "trivial" reasons and things that are less rational (Alviani & Gusnita, 2018).

Coordinated meaning management theory presents three concepts as a bridge in understanding the occurrence of conflict and freedom, namely (1) an understanding that emphasizes giving meaning to messages that can be influenced by individual attitudes and desires from the occurrence of the communication process; (2) the existence of free will in giving meaning and interpreting messages can trigger misunderstandings and create conflicts; (3) each individual involved in the conflict produces differences in the level of conflict escalation, the time required for conflict escalation, and the speed of conflict resolution (Fajar, 2016).

Two-fourths of respondents stated that the conflict on Twitter social media was sparked by differing viewpoints in response to a post, which then escalated into a debate involving additional parties. According to Pondy's conflict model, the respondents are currently in the phase of manifest conflict, where both parties have responded to each other's messages and reacted to the conflicts that have occurred. Due to the fact that both parties felt annoyed and angry during the conflict, the exchange of messages became extremely rapid, facilitated by the social media platform Twitter, which enabled rapid and instant message exchange.

While the other two respondents explained that the conflict was caused by negative comments made by other Twitter users on their posts. Both respondents chose not to continue arguing and were continuously involved in conflict situations. The two respondents are in the phase of latent conflict, in which hate speech in the comments section can serve as the germ of a larger conflict. On this basis, it can be determined that the level of conflict escalation can be avoided so that it cannot be prolonged at a more serious stage.

Of the 4 respondents, there is 1 respondent who resolves the conflict by conducting conciliation. Conciliation was carried out by respondents by conducting one-to-one discussions with parties involved in the conflict, and carried out in the direct message feature on Twitter social media. While the other 2 respondents chose to resolve the conflict by asking for advice from friends and relatives, as a third party, or better known as mediation. Respondents explained that it takes opinions and thoughts from other people regarding the conflicts they are experiencing, so that respondents can see from different perspectives and be able to resolve conflicts. Hence, it can be concluded that the respondents have a sincere intention to immediately resolve the conflict and make peace.

In accelerating conflict resolution, there are 3 out of 4 respondents who need a long time to resolve conflicts that occur on Twitter social media. Barriers to conflict resolution occur because social media Twitter provides space for free opinions, making parties

outside the conflict participate in expressing opinions and getting involved in the conflict. The more parties involved, the resolution of the conflict will also take more time, because new opinions emerge which also have the potential to exacerbate the conflict situation. While the other 1 respondent, requires a fairly short time in conflict resolution. The form of conflict resolution used is conciliation, by inviting other parties to discuss one-to-one in a more private space in direct messages on Twitter social media. Thus, it can be concluded that conciliation is quite effective in conflict resolution.

Furthermore, there are 3 out of 4 respondents who argue that the obstacle in resolving conflicts on Twitter social media is the thoughts of each party are different and unpredictable, and the delivery of ambiguous and inaccurate messages makes both parties confused and creates differences of opinion new. The existence of space for freedom of opinion and giving meaning becomes an opportunity for conflict to arise. In this case, it can be understood that good communication is needed in conflict resolution. While 1 other respondent said that the different backgrounds of each party involved in the conflict were an obstacle in resolving the conflict. Differences in culture and language make understanding of meaning between the two parties hampered because the same words can have multiple meanings.

Out of 4, there were 2 respondents who stated that in conflict resolution, the other party was very difficult to communicate with. The other party gave silent treatment and chose to spread the conflict on Twitter social media. This triggers the escalation of the conflict to become bigger because it can involve other parties. While 1 other respondent said the parties involved in the conflict were quite cooperative in communicating to resolve the conflict.

When faced with conflict situations, 3 out of 4 respondents think that a calm and relaxed attitude is needed to deal with conflicts that occur. Sticking to the norms and not taking rash actions is the respondent's choice to act in conflict situations. Wisdom in expressing opinions when responding to other parties is able to help respondents not to get carried away by emotions. However, 1 out of 4 respondents thought otherwise. Respondents feel annoyed and get carried away when the conflict occurs. As a result, respondents uttered impolite sentences and triggered an even bigger conflict. Therefore, it can be understood that the attitude in dealing with conflict has an important role in resolving the conflict itself. Wrong attitudes and steps in dealing with conflict have the potential to boomerang and make conflict more difficult to resolve.

All respondents have the same understanding when they see a conflict on Twitter social media. Respondents chose not to give a significant response to it, and chose to just observe without commenting or getting involved in the ongoing conflict, especially when it had nothing to do with the respondent.

Respondents also think that if the conflict is serious, it is necessary to communicate face-to-face directly. The weakness of communicating through text messages is the potential for ambiguity and errors in interpreting the meaning in text messages. Basically, face-to-face communication is an effective way to resolve conflicts because when face-to-face communication is carried out, the parties involved can understand each other through clearly defined facial expressions, intonation in communication, and gestures that are more readable.

Based on the discussion above, it can be highlighted that the research findings have achieved the research objectives, namely by identifying and analyzing the role of communication in conflict resolution on Twitter social media, by analyzing based on the concept of conflict communication theory.

IV. Conclusion

The findings reveal that communication can be a trigger for conflict, but communication is also important in conflict resolution. With good communication between the two parties involved in the conflict, they are able to avoid, face and resolve a conflict.

Based on data analysis, conflicts in communicating on social media generally occur due to differences of opinion and conflict among Twitter social media users, an imbalance of meaning between the two parties, as well as negative comments that have the potential to trigger conflict escalation quickly. In the coordinated theory of meaning, Twitter social media users are faced with other users who have diverse backgrounds, and users are required to enter and interpret the new culture, which can lead to misunderstandings and communication failures.

In this study, it was also revealed that conflict escalation occurs quickly when there is disagreement, fails to interpret the message, acts wrongly in communication, and is supported by social media Twitter which facilitates fast and instant message exchange. Nevertheless, the escalation of the conflict can be avoided by stopping arguing and only paying attention to the current conflict situation, without getting involved in the conflict.

Based on interview data, the most effective form of conflict resolution is conciliation. Conciliation is the resolution of a problem by inviting the other parties involved to have a one-to-one discussion. As a matter of fact, it can be determined that a sincere intention to resolve conflicts can be the basis for the speed of conflict resolution. Although conflict resolution on Twitter social media takes a long time, conciliation is still able to help parties resolve conflicts more quickly.

This study also discover that differences of opinion and different backgrounds can be obstacles in conflict resolution. Freedom in meaning makes understanding the meaning on Twitter social media difficult to achieve. Therefore, it is necessary to have a cooperative attitude, open, calm, not rash in communicating, in order to resolve conflicts and achieve peace. Practically, conflict can be avoided by not giving a significant response to the current conflict situation.

The form of conflict resolution in conflict resolution on Twitter social media will be more effective if it is continued with face-to-face communication between the two parties. Based on the results of the analysis above, it can be concluded that good communication plays an important role in resolving conflicts on Twitter social media.

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