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## The Influence of Digital Campaigns on Public Perception in the Law Enforcement Process in Society

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**Abstract:** Digital campaigns have become an effective strategy in influencing public perception about legal issues and law enforcement. This research uses a literature study and case analysis of digital campaigns related to law enforcement. This study aims to analyze the influence of digital campaigns on public perception in the law enforcement process. The results show that digital campaigns can influence public perception about law enforcement by increasing awareness of the community about legal issues, as well as promoting transparency and accountability in the law enforcement process. However, digital campaigns can also have negative impacts if not conducted properly, such as spreading inaccurate information or manipulating public opinion. Therefore, it is crucial to conduct digital campaigns in an ethical and responsible manner to ensure that public perception about law enforcement is accurate and fair.

**Keywords:** Digital campaign, public perception, law enforcement.

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## INTRODUCTION

Campaign is a communication activity carried out in a planned manner with the aim of convincing, influencing, and gaining sympathy from individuals or the public using various media within a certain period. Essentially, a campaign is an institutionalized communication process intended to create specific effects or impacts (Pipit Mulyah et al., 2020). According to Law No. 10 of 2008 concerning the elections of DPR, DPD, and DPRD, a campaign is an activity by election participants to convince voters through offering the vision, mission, and programs of the election participants, aiming to invite and encourage the public to accept or do something recommended based on success. Rogers and Storey (1987) define a campaign as systematically designed communication activities to produce certain impacts

on a large audience, carried out continuously over a specific period. This definition is often referenced by various experts in political science and public health. Cangara (2011) defines a campaign as a series of communication actions aimed at shaping the understanding, attitudes, and behaviors of the public in accordance with the communicator's wishes. Ruslan (2007) states that a campaign uses various coordinated communication methods to direct the audience towards specific problems and solutions within a set timeframe. Venus (2004) describes a campaign as a series of systematic communication-based activities intended to influence, invite, or create changes in the audience according to a target time.

From these definitions, it is concluded that communication campaigns encompass four main aspects: campaign actions aimed at producing specific effects, a broad target audience, execution within a defined timeframe, and carried out through planned and structured communication activities. Campaign messages can be openly discussed and criticized because their purpose is public interest. All campaign activities are based on persuasive principles, inviting society voluntarily to accept or do something, making campaigns a practical form of persuasion (Perloff, 1993; Venus, 2004).

The rapid development of information and communication technology, especially the internet and social media, has broadened access to information compared to the past. In Indonesia, internet growth has brought both positive and negative impacts on governance and politics, drastically changing the political landscape. In the first decade of the 21st century, the global internet user base increased from 350 million to over 2 billion, while mobile phone users rose significantly from 750 million to more than 6 billion (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014). The main role of mass media is to provide accurate, fact-based, interesting, truthful, balanced, relevant, and useful information (Falah, 2018). Digital technology has changed how society interacts with government and influenced political dynamics by opening opportunities for more open and efficient political participation.

Social media is considered a crucial pillar in the democratic system, referred to as the fifth pillar alongside the traditional three branches of government (executive, legislative, judiciary) and mass media as the fourth pillar overseeing government and democracy (Gelgel, 2019). Social media allows people to express opinions, garner support, and voice political aspirations to leaders and relevant institutions. Digital technology makes political participation more open and enables various groups to influence public policy. Moreover, social media and information exchange applications have transformed political campaigns by expanding support, spreading messages, and receiving direct feedback from the public. Campaign reach has expanded due to social media virality, providing space for people to express opinions, mobilize political actions, and push for social change.

However, the digital era also presents challenges to democracy, such as the emergence of disinformation and hoaxes that shift public views and political choices, deepen divisions, and degrade the quality of political discourse. Additionally, electoral manipulation practices threaten democracy, with political actors or groups using tactics like hacking and social media algorithm intervention to shape public opinion or gain unfair advantages in elections.

## **METHODS**

This study uses a Qualitative approach. The Qualitative approach was chosen because it is considered the most appropriate for understanding social phenomena in depth, especially in studying how digital campaigns shape public perceptions of the law enforcement process. The qualitative technique used is a combination of data from journals with targets to be studied with the aim of obtaining as much information as possible and being able to collect data.

In the context of this study, digital campaigns are understood as part of strategic communication practices carried out through various online platforms, such as social media, news portals, and official websites.

Qualitative is considered appropriate for studying the influence of digital campaigns because this phenomenon is complex, dynamic, and greatly influenced by the social, cultural, and political contexts of society. In this context, digital campaigns are not only seen as a form of one-way communication, but as social interactions that shape public opinion through social media, online news, and other digital platforms

Through this approach, it is hoped that research can provide a comprehensive and reflective understanding of the influence of digital campaigns on public perception in the law enforcement process, as well as contribute to the development of theory in the field of digital communication.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The role of digital campaigns in shaping public opinion is defined by the Indonesian Law No. 10 Year 2008 concerning the General Elections of DPR, DPD, and DPRD members, which states that a campaign is an effort conducted by election participants to influence voters by conveying their vision, mission, and programs. The objective is to persuade the public to accept or take an action based on the appeal to achieve certain goals. Rogers and Storey (1987) describe a campaign as a planned communication process aimed at creating specific effects on a broad audience within a certain period. This perspective has become a common reference among experts in various fields such as politics and public health. In line with this view, Cangara (2011) asserts that a campaign is a series of communication actions designed to shape the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of the public according to the wishes of the communicator or message bearer.

Digital campaigns are activities of conveying ideas, concepts, or specific messages through digital media to achieve a goal within a certain timeframe. This method is one of the most efficient ways to reach a wide audience due to technological advancements and widespread social media ownership. The effectiveness of digital campaigns lies in the speed of information dissemination at a low cost, with broad accessibility anytime (Ananto, Hartanto, & Sylvia, 2017).

Jungherr (2016) identifies four main components in digital campaigns: organizational structure and work routines ensure resource allocation, activity evaluation, and content production are well-directed, as campaigns cannot operate optimally without a clear structure; presence in online information spaces is important for utilizing digital platforms to expand message dissemination; external resource support increases the chance of success as messages can reach a wider audience, especially supported by influential figures; and the use of symbols such as slogans, jargon, or visual icons helps the public remember the campaign message.

Modern digital campaigns have optimized narrative approaches and sophisticated message framing to influence audience perspectives. Entman's framing concept explains this mechanism as the curation and reinforcement of specific elements of reality to form particular perceptions. Digital campaigns often implement emotional storytelling based on personal experience and testimonials to form psychological bonds with viewers. Strategically chosen visual aids like infographics, images, and videos strengthen the main message, considering studies show that visual content is 60% more effective than text alone in shaping opinions. However, this approach often reduces complex issues into simplistic dichotomies—black and white—that risk reinforcing confirmation bias among audiences.

The impact of such strategies is significant in shaping what is called a "reality tunnel," where the public tends to view reality only through the frames provided by campaign narratives. This phenomenon is exacerbated by social media algorithms that repeatedly expose users to similar frames. In the long run, irresponsible framing practices may trigger social polarization, especially if used for political purposes or controversial issues. Conversely, when done ethically and thoughtfully, framing techniques can effectively educate and raise public awareness. Hence, a balance is needed between freedom of expression in digital campaigns and the moral responsibility of content creators, alongside

improving media literacy among the public to critically respond to diverse digital narratives.

The impact of digital campaigns on the credibility of law enforcement agencies is critical, as credibility is essential for the success and function of law enforcement. Without public trust, institutions struggle to enforce laws, maintain order, and provide community security. In today's fast digital era, law enforcement cannot rely solely on traditional communication methods. Digital campaigns on platforms like social media, websites, and mobile apps offer new opportunities and challenges in building and maintaining credibility.

Digital campaigns are defined as a series of planned communication steps using digital media to achieve specific goals, such as shaping or influencing public views toward law enforcement agencies. Objectives can include enhancing transparency, socializing programs, creating positive images, or communicating important institutional issues. However, effectiveness is not always smooth and positive, as factors like content quality, communication strategies, and public response play significant roles in the final outcome.

On the positive side, digital platforms allow law enforcement to be more transparent and accessible. The public can easily obtain information about organizational structure, standard operating procedures, crime data, and performance reports. Live broadcasts of press conferences, online forums, or virtual Q&A sessions enable direct interaction that enhances accountability and public engagement. Regularly sharing relevant and understandable information demonstrates responsiveness and responsibility. Digital campaigns foster interactive two-way communication, allowing public feedback, reports of misconduct, and sharing of critical information. Agencies can use these platforms to gather public opinions, ideas, or even engage communities in crime prevention programs. Citizen journalism promoted via digital channels empowers the public as partners in security and welfare efforts. A key advantage of digital platforms is the rapid dissemination of information reaching a geographically unlimited audience.

On the negative side, a major challenge in the digital realm is the spread of inaccurate news and information. Law enforcement agencies often become targets of campaigns that spread false information to damage reputations and reduce public trust. Negative comments, baseless accusations, or fabricated facts on social media can proliferate rapidly and are hard to control. Additionally, many individuals lack adequate digital literacy, making them more susceptible to believing false information and negative narratives. The use of digital technologies in law enforcement campaigns, including online monitoring or social media data analysis, may raise privacy and civil rights issues. Publishing personal information about suspects or victims recklessly, even if well-intentioned, can violate human rights and damage institutional credibility.

## **CONCLUSION**

Digital campaigns have changed the way we interact with the legal system. On the one hand, digital campaigns have provided easier access to information, encouraged transparency and accountability of law enforcement agencies, and strengthened public participation in the legal process. The public can now easily access legal information, monitor the performance of law enforcement agencies, and participate in discussions and criticism of legal policies. This has the potential to strengthen democracy and encourage a fairer legal system. However, on the other hand, digital campaigns also present serious challenges. The spread of hoaxes and disinformation can damage the credibility of legitimate legal information and mislead the public. "Social justice" on social media can damage individual reputations and threaten human rights and the principle of the presumption of innocence. Digital campaigns can also exacerbate social polarization and cause inconsistencies in the application of digital law. Therefore, it is important to utilize digital campaigns responsibly. Increasing digital literacy, communication ethics, and moral responsibility of content creators are key to maximizing the positive potential of digital campaigns and minimizing their negative impacts. Law enforcement agencies, the public, and content creators must work together to

create a healthy digital environment that supports a fair legal system. In short, digital campaigns offer great potential for good, but require a concerted effort to minimize the risks.

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