Virtual Opinion Leader: The Emergence of Boy BNR Figure in #tolakpermen20 Movement

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Abstract. The development of social media in Indonesia seems to encourage the emergence of some opinion leaders. Since the rise of social debates on social media, several figures become new influencers in the community. These figures are not famous persons like artists or public officials. Instead, they are ordinary people that appear because of their ability to manage netizens’ interest through social media accounts. This phenomenon happens to Boy BNR, a Facebook account. In the range of July-September 2018, Boy BNR’s popularity surged because of various posts containing protests over the existence of singing birds in the Regulation of Minister of Environment and Forestry No. P.20/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/6/2018. This regulation categorized some plants and animals as protected subjects. In its development, Boy BNR emerged as an opinion leader in the #tolakpermen20 movement that created by Kicaumania Singing Bird Community to protest the P.20 regulation. In Kicaumania’s perspective, Boy BNR was a hero. By observing social media activities on Boy BNR’s Facebook account, focus group discussions within Kicaumania community members, and an interview with the Head of the Regional Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA) Ciamis III, this study maps Boy BNR’s role as the leader of virtual opinion in the #tolakpermen20 movement. The analysis was done by using Marshall Scott’s Poole adaptive structuration theory. This article describes the existence of Boy BNR as the leader of the #tolakpermen20 movement and defines the message conveyed through Facebook. Along with the influence that has been developed through social media, the #tolakpermen20 movement succeeded in forcing the Minister to exclude five singing birds from the list of protected plants and animals.

Keywords: Virtual Opinion Leader, Boy BNR, Kicaumania Community, #tolakpermen20, Adaptive Structuration Theory.

1. Introduction

The rapid use of social media gave rise to what Hananto (2014) calls as a new opinion leader. This new opinion leader is different from the one that we know so far. However, it still has the characteristics of conventional opinion leader refer to the term in Diffusion of Innovation by Everett M Roger. Opinion leaders are known to have the ability to influence those around them, in this case their followers or friends. The message delivered by opinion leaders is able to change the perceptions and attitudes of their followers or friends.

In social media activism, figures of opinion leaders often emerge when there is controversy over the actual social situation, such as controversy over government policies. One of the government policies that caused controversy was the issuance of Minister of Environment and Forestry Regulation Number P.20/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/6/2018 regarding types of
protected plants and animals, known as Permen 20. This regulation stipulated 919 protected plant and animal species, where 562 species or 61% of them were bird species. chirping bird hobbyists were worried that the determination of this regulation would disrupt the continuity of their business and hobbies. This concern resulted in an attitude of rejecting Permen 20, which was promoted through Facebook with #tolakpermen20 movement. On the other hand, biodiversity observers supported the existence of Permen 20 because it was considered to be a legal force in efforts to conserve wildlife in Indonesia.

A number of chirping birds that were often pitted in the chirping contest appeared in the regulation, as part of the list of protected plants and animals. Some popular chirping bird species such as Jalak Suren, Kucica Forest (Murai Batu), and Cucak Rawa, were included as protected animals. This meant that all types of hunting, trade and even ownership could be ensured by Law No. 5 of 1990 concerning conservation of biological natural resources and their ecosystems. It also meant that hunters, traders and owners of these birds could be charged with a maximum of five years in prison and a maximum fine of Rp100 million.

Strong criticism has made by supporters of #tolakpermen20. It was motivated by concerns over the continuity of their business and hobbies. They unanimously rejected a number of chirping bird names in the list attached to Permen 20. Concerns were mainly related to the economic survival of those who depend on chirping bird business for their lives. Not only groups of hobbyist and breeders, bird feed producers and cage craftsmen also claimed to be threatened with a collapse.[1]

The opinion leader figure that emerged from the stronghold of Kicaumania in the midst of this controversy was someone called Boy. Boy was the owner of the Indonesian BNR business, which is engaged in the production of feed, medicine and cages for chirping birds. In addition, Boy also a director of the BNR foundation, which was engaged in the national chirping birds contest. Boy figure looked so dominant through a number of statuses or posts in his Facebook account that were read and shared by his followers and friends. Boy's activity on social media was even considered successful in uniting the Kicaumania community. Boy's figure was believed to have important role in encouraging the issuance of regulation number P.92/MENLHK/SETJEN/KUM.1/8/2018 that amended Permen 20. In the new regulation, the Minister of Environment and Forestry took out five species of birds from the list, they were Murai Batu (Kittanicia malabarica), Cucak Rawa (Pycnocotus zeylanicus), Jalak Suren (Gracupica jalla), Anis Bentet Kecil (Colluricincla megarhycha), and Anis Bentet Sangihe (Colluricincla sanghirensis).

Boy's role in influencing the national Kicaumania community to be able to unite for the rejection of Permen 20, as well as encouraging the exclusion of five species of chirping birds from the list of protected animals had encouraged this study. The main objective was to map the Kicaumania community activism in the context of environmental communication, which made this study has a strong significance. The results of this study would become inputs for academics in the field of environmental communication related to communication strategies of community that claim to be pro-conservation. In addition, it is also expected to provide input to stakeholders in mapping government partners in the field of animal protection.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Virtual Community

A virtual community is a group of networked Internet users through the development of personal relationships. Virtual community becomes a new form of reality in the relations between individuals in the virtual world. This relationship offers a variety of access without
boundaries so that it can have an unexpected impact in real reality. Virtual communities, as can be found in *Facebook*, have interdependent components between community members. Unwittingly, the human community has lived in two realms of life, namely real life and the lives of virtual communities (cybercommunity). Not infrequently this makes humans, both individuals and groups, more interested in communicating in cyberspace rather than the physical environment.

The virtual community aims to provide a new space for each member with online feedback to make social contact, connect and share information. Ethnic similarities, interests and ideas allow them to discuss with each other and share the information they need. Virtual communities are a new form of social relations between individuals on the internet that offer a variety of unlimited and sometimes unexpected access in practice. Two important components in seeing virtual communities are 1) virtual communities will always exist and depend on the needs of each individual, 2) not always virtual communities are placed in the context of separation between physical and virtual.

Members of the virtual community actively exchange information, photos and videos through social media without the need to physically meet. Virtual reality in this community becomes a real reality even though it takes place artificially. Members of the community can share information without physical meeting. Someone can be a source of trusted information without having to be conveyed through the real world which requires the presence of a physical opinion leader.

### 2.2 Social Media

Virtual communities use social media as a communication channel between members. Activities on social media make it possible for everyone to share information widely or be limited to people they want. The specific character of social media according to Nasrullah [2] is first, intertextuality. This means that each text and several other texts can be linked and ‘talk’. Therefore, one text can sometimes only be ‘read’ and understood its meaning if you first read other texts. Furthermore, the network between texts can create context. Second, nonlinearity. This means that any movement of conversation cannot be predicted directly and linearly. One topic of conversation can develop and give birth to other new topics.

The next characteristic is blurring the reader/writer distinction, which means there is a blurring difference between the reader and the writer. It could be a netizen initially as an information consumer. However, the information is repackaged and then distributed again into new content. At the same time the reproduction of information becomes a delicate boundary between consumers and producers of information. The fourth characteristic is *multimedianess*, meaning social media is convergent in nature that can contain text, audio, video and so on.

Fifth, no gatekeeper. This means that in social media there are no ‘goalkeepers’ who function in selecting information coming in and out on social media as happened in the mainstream media. Finally, the sixth characteristic is ephemerality, which means the text on social media is unstable. At its own volition, a text on social media can be deleted intentionally or unintentionally.

Based on the above characteristics, social media can identify the direction of the message or use special tools such as *Facebook* or *Twitter* to show the interaction model. [4] The interaction and dissemination of this information can be obtained from various sources on the internet or produce it yourself. These activities have become more dynamic because Indonesia is a democratic country that gives everyone the freedom to express their opinions on social media. Thus indirectly, netizens and social media can act as social agents of political change. [5]
The role as a social agent of political change shifts the communication pattern of opinion leaders. Communication networks in social media emphasize interpersonal communication networks. The influence of opinion leaders and interpersonal communication networks on information communication and individual decisions is far greater than mass media.[6]

2.3 Adaptive Structuration Theory

This theory was developed using the basic concepts of micro processes in group processes involving the use of information and communication technology.[3] This theory presents a model that describes the relationship between communication technology in the network (online), community and human interaction. According to Marshall Scott Poole, the core adaptation structure theory is to make people the rules and resources they do in groups.[7] Changes in groups can occur if the people involved do it in a group, then do something to spin. Poole explained that group members formed their groups according to their actions in it. The basic question is 1) Can this process change? 2) Are group members really given the freedom to make decisions, or are there rules that contain that freedom? The first question relates to stability versus change. Second notification questions with free choice and specified behavior.

Adaptive structuration theory is formulated as the production and reproduction of social systems through the use of rules and resource members in interaction, studying the interaction of communities and organizations with information technology. By emphasizing the use of technology and social aspects. Groups and organizations that use information technology for their work dynamically create perceptions about the role and usefulness of technology, and how it can be applied to community, group or organizational activities. It is called adaptive structuration because it adapts the Giddens structuration theory from the macro level, to the micro level in small groups. He sees that groups, intentionally, adjust rules and resources to achieve their goals. Where each individual has the freedom to choose and take part in producing a change. Adaptive structuration theory is able to help understand how to use advances in communication technology interactively to members of the virtual community.

Poole asserts that group members are active agents. Structuring is the production and reproduction of social systems through the use of rules and resources by members in interaction. Interactions in the theory are actions based on free pitch. While rules are propositions that make a decision worth or show how something should be done. While resources are materials, property, and characters that can be used to influence or control the actions of groups or members. Production occurs when group members use rules and resources in interaction, while reproduction occurs when the action strengthening feature of the system is in place. In the research he conducted with his colleagues, Poole found in general there were three types of decision sets. First, a standard unitary sequence, which is similar to a single sequence model. Second, complex cyclicequence (complex rounds of rotation), where groups will look forward or backward in order to find clarity of the problem and produce the right solution. Third, solution-oriented sequence, where in this series there is no deep analysis of the problem, the focus is placed on the future solution.

Breakpoint is very important because it signifies key points in the development of group activities. There is a normal breakpoint; this transition is expected and unexpected. This point includes rest and topic change. There is also a delayed breakpoint, i.e. problems that do not occur that cause pauses in normal group functions. Delay includes discussing issues that groups need to solve conflicts or seek understanding. Delay can indicate difficulties in the decision-making process, but it can also be a positive sign that shows caution in thinking and creative activities. Another one is disruption, where the levels are more serious, including disagreements on a large scale and group failures.
3. Methodology

This research is a qualitative study with data collection techniques through observation and focus group discussions. Observations were made during July-September 2018 through monitoring the status of certain Facebook accounts (personal account of Boy and a fanpage of Boy BnR) and mass media publications.

During July-September 2018, observation data were gathered from Facebook publications (status posts, picture shares, video shares) and stakeholder statements in mass media on responses of the determination towards protected animals in Indonesia. Focused group discussions involving chirping birds’ hobbyists, breeders, the Kicaumania community coordinator of Priangan Timur, and an officer of the Natural Resources Conservation Agency (BKSDA).

To obtain secondary data, the researcher collected data needed in writing articles or references and literature related to this research. The literature review was taken from journals, reference books and other supporting data on various websites that are related to this article.

4. Results and Discussion

Boy has two Facebook accounts (Boy and Bang Boy) and three Facebook fan pages (Boy BnR, Bang Boy BNR, and BNR Indonesia). From those, only the account Boy and Boy BnR fanpage accounts were active in voicing the #tolakpermen20 movement as well as Kicaumania activities.

During July-September 2018, Boy account status reached 271 status, whereas Boy BnR’s fan page posted 13 statuses. Most likely a number of statuses on this page were deleted as of 13-14 August 2018. This abolition of status was in accordance with the concept of ephemerality, where the text on social media is unstable. On its own volition, a text on social media can be deleted intentionally or unintentionally. In this case the status was deleted intentionally because only posts of 13-14 August 2018 were lost. The missing status contained an invitation to protest in front of the KLHK office on August 14th, 2018.

Based on information from a closed source, the removal of that status was part of an agreement between Boy and the KLHK to ease disquiet in the region. The interactions that take place on the Boy account and Boy BnR fan page are illustrated in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Account Boy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Followers</td>
<td>45755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends</td>
<td>5000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Status</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue’s Photo</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tags</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Page Boy BnR</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Followers</td>
<td>20269</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likes</td>
<td>1900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Photo</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issue’s Photo</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Video</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 illustrates that Boy’s communication patterns tend to be one-way, where Boy acted as a messenger from self-statements, photos and videos taken with Boy’s statement caption. Boy never forwarded or shared status, photos or videos from people’s account other than his own. The pattern shows that Boy acted as opinion leader through his social media. He arranged the messages conveyed through his social media, all aimed at the topic of pro-kicaumania and rejecting Permen 20. This arrangement shows the occurrence of the process of blurring the reader/writer distinction. There was a vague differentiator between the reader and writer in this case. Boy who started as an information consumer, then repackaged the information and then redistributed it into new content in accordance with a particular mission. The intended mission was to expand the movement to reject Permen 20.

This pattern gave rise to the trust of Boy followers. Ujang (FGD informant, chirping bird breeder from Banjar, West Java) revealed that he has been monitoring Boy’s Facebook account during July-September 2018 to find out the development of the #tolakpermen20. He claimed to believe all messages in Boy’s Facebook account because the contents were relevant to his need as a breeder. Furthermore, the similarity of his attitude with Boy related to the refusal of Permen 20 has made him to obey whatever Boy’s appeal or order on Facebook.

I have never commented (on any posting), but always read every status on Bang Boy’s Facebook account. (I believe) whatever Bang Boy said. I am sure Bang Boy is fighting for our sake, Kicaumania.\footnote{Ujang. Focused Group Discussion. Banjar. September 24, 2018}

Ujang’s words above show Boy’s great influence on the members of Kicaumania. However, it did not always happen like that. This influence only emerged after the publication of Permen 20. Ujang claimed he followed Boy BnR’s Facebook fanpage since 2016 only to find out BNR’s products and bird maintenance tips. Since Permen 20 controversy became widely discussed, Ujang felt the need to make friends with Boy’s Facebook account.

I saw the contents of the Boy BnR page lately often published delayed info regarding Permen 20 rejection, maybe because the one who managed the page wasn’t Bang Boy himself, but the admin. As for Boy’s Facebook account, it was said that directly Bang Boy is the one who directly filling in.\footnote{ibid}

Fig. 1. Status of Boy BnR’s Facebook fan page which was considered to show Boy’s empathy towards the fate of Kicaumania

Source: Research results.

Agus Ayub, a chirping bird hobbyist from Ciamis, West Java, admitted he felt close to the figure of the BNR business owner through Boy’s Facebook account. Boy’s influence was so strong for him since Boy always confirmed rumors about the fate of Kicaumania after the publication of Permen 20 through his Facebook account status. This is interesting considering
that in the Kicaumania community, Agus Ayub is known as a member of the upper class who possessed a collection of expensive and champion birds. Agus Ayub's position as a legislative candidate from one of the major political parties made him considered as one of the important figures of Kicaumania in the East Priangan region.

I monitored the the growing rumors about the installation of a ring that will be subject to a certain tariff. Bang Boy discussed on his Facebook status that the ring installation had the potential to involve the game between BKSDA and certain Kicaumania organizations. So yes, I obey the word of Bang Boy, to calm down first.3

Fig 2. Status of Facebook Boy BnR page related to rings installation on chirping birds
Source: Research results

Agus Ayub admitted that in the midst of the excitement after the publication of Permen 20, the Kicaumania community needed someone who was able to provide direction and certainty in information. In that situation, Boy BNR’s social media was felt to be able to meet the needs of Kicaumania. This emotional perspective has caused many impromptu followers and friends of Boy BNR fanpage. They started to follow Boy's Facebook account and Boy BNR’s Facebook fan page in August 2018, when the situation was in a high tense.

The level of trust towards information disseminated by Boy's account even exceeds people’s belief in news in the mass media. This condition is in accordance with the strength of the influence of opinion leaders said by Zhang & Dong (2008: 21), namely the influence of opinion leaders and interpersonal communication networks on communication of information, which made individual decisions far greater than the mass media.

Table 2. List of the most popular Facebook Boy statuses related to Tolak Permen 20
Source: Research results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Like</th>
<th>Views</th>
<th>Shares</th>
<th>Comment</th>
<th>Content</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Juli 30</td>
<td>06:46</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>SALAM SATU HATI SATU HOBI. Mari kita tukar pendapat burung yang dilindungi kalau tidak ditangkar kira-kira akan punah atau akan bertambah? (GREETING ONE HEART OF A HOBBY. Let's exchange the...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3 Ayub, Agus. Focused Group Discussion. Banjar. 24 September 2018
The existence of Boy was acknowledged by Untung Wantoro, a BKSDA officer in the Region III West Java, as a figure who encouraged *Kicaumania* to collectively reject *Permen 20*. Besides Boy, Wantoro did not see other figures as strong as Boy.

Boy's figure has existed long in chirping bird’s business, and even once was a committee for national chirping bird’s competition in the era of President Soeharto. However, after *Permen 20* appeared, his character became even more brilliant. Untung acknowledged Boy's new strength was in his social media strategy. Through social media, Boy managed to unite *Kicaumania*, which had been fragmented due to various business interests. Boy even succeeded in calming down the mass action that was about to hold a strong rally on August 14th, 2018 in front of the KLHK headquarters in Jakarta. This action was canceled because the government banned all forms of mass action in Jakarta during the 2018 Asian Games. However, a number of BKSDA offices in Java were visited by thousands of *Kicaumania* members who protested the *Permen 20*. Boy then asked *Kicaumania* to ignore any invitation from BKSDA or KLHK.
Boy's influence has not only touched Kicaumania members personally. The map of the Kicaumania organization has also changed with the strengthening of the #tolakpermen20 movement. Based on the author's observations until June 2018, Kicaumania was divided into several groups originated from the organizer of the chirping birds’ competitions. There were at least six groups of Kicaumania: the Indonesian Bird Association (PBI), Rajawali, Radja, BNR, Ebod Jaya and Ronggolawe. When the Permen 20 controversy intensified, Rajawali, Radja, BNR, Ebod Jaya and Ronggolawe joined the Chirping Mania Indonesia Forum (FKMI) led by Boy BNR. PBI did not join because the organization supported the enactment of Permen 20. Boy was the figure who gathered a number of businessmen of bird feed, medicine, cage and event organizer at the meeting in Pondok Indah, Jakarta. This meeting was published in the status of Boy BNR Facebook fan page on August 6th, 2018 and August 9th, 2018.

Wantoro explained that Boy divided the movement area by utilizing the business power of FKMI members. However, all had to be rooted in Boy's direction. Priangan East-West Java Region was handed over to H. Ebod, a food and medicine entrepreneur from the Ebod Jaya brand and Ronggolawe event organizer, which has often held chirping competitions in this area. Chairperson of the Chirping Mania Banjar Association, the local Kicaumania community, Haloman Manurung admitted he had been invited by H. Ebod to attend the consolidation event of #tolakpermen20 in Cilacap, Central Java. The program included a description of the...
development of the #tolakpermen20 movement, the statement that needed to be taken, and a joint statement of attitude.

All direction come from Bang Boy to make a solid kicaumania movement. Actually, there is a group that is pro Permen 20, namely PBI (Indonesian Bird Association). This PBI group is weakened persuasively with labels that are not pro-poor, there are collusion game with certain BKSDA members through rings and certificates. Because of the greater mass, PBI finally weakened and became unpopular. Ironically, PBI is actually the oldest organization in the Kicaumania world.4

The dynamics that have occurred in the Kicaumania community throughout July-September 2018 are consistent with Poole's (1994) explanation that group members form their groups according to their actions in it. Ujang and Agus Ayub's personal actions to join the #tolakpermen20 movement and obey Boy showed a personal awareness to form groups. In an organizational context, FKMI formed by Boy in the midst of the Permen 20 controversy succeeded in changing the organizational structure of the Kicaumania community. The group which has been fragmented has joined FKMI with full awareness. FKMI, which is an organization, then dominated, defeating PBI, which was considered the pioneer of the Kicaumania organization. In connection with Poole's basic questions, the actions of Kicaumania in person and in the organization were an attempt to make changes with free choice.

Manurung recognized the consolidation in Cilacap as a personal initiative of Haji Ebod. Ebod spread the invitation openly through WhatsApp group Kicaumania West Java, information from the Ebod Jaya agents, and status on several Kicaumania Facebook groups. Attendance at the event was voluntary, all might come to represent the Kicaumania group or personally. This shows that group members are active agents. Based on the series of decisions described by Poole, FKMI led by Boy applied Solution Oriented sequences (series of solution orientations). There is no deep analysis of the problem, the focus is put on the solution in the future, that is to take chirping birds out of the list of protected animals.

Boy's peak of popularity occurred on September 4, 2018 when Boy aired a live meeting with KKH Director. The video was considered a heroic appearance by Boy BNR in defense of Kicaumania because he dared to debate directly with the regulator. This video was responded by 5,400 people, watched by 179,000 people, 5,000 shares and 1,300 comments. FKMI pressure finally resulted in the issuance of Regulation No. P.92/2018 concerning amendment to Permen 20.

4 Wantoro, Untung. Focused Group Discussion. Banjar-Jawa Barat. 24 September 2018
5. Conclusion

Boy BNR was a virtual leader that appeared amidst the controversy of Permen 20. The role as virtual leader made Boy led the growth of #tolakpermen20 movement in the national level. The pressure made by the #tolakpermen20 group encouraged the Minister to take five types of chirping birds out from the list of protected animals through the issuance of P.92/2018. This successful achievement of the people movement has proven the application of structuration that involved the relationship between online communication technology, virtual community and human interaction in physical environment. According to the theory, Boy as the opinion leader has treated the community members as active agents, who were willing to pursue the solution-oriented sequence. This is the journey to achieve the goal that was already set. As a consequence, Boy with the movement has succeeded to create a normal breaking point that equivalent with their expectation in a form of P.92/2018. In conclusion, Boy, along with the #tolakpermen20 movement, has proven the significant power of virtual influence through the use of social media communication.

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