



Hashtag Construction as Product of Symbolic Convergence: Berger and Luckmann's Approach

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author Rewindinar designed the study, performed the research analysis, wrote the protocol and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors PT and FN guide the theoretical and methodological paths. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

Social media refers to technology in which organizations and individuals interact with their audiences. Organizations and individuals interact through messages that each can produce. On the Twitter platform, conversation occurs through its special characteristic, namely the hashtag symbol. This interaction is interestingly analyzed through Berger and Luckmann's view that interpersonal social interaction is a social construction of reality. A view through this objective, symbolic, and subjective reality can then be a way for public relations to overcome the initial stage of a crisis. This research aimed to explore symbolic convergence process on Twitter hashtags in the construction of the reality of Berger and Luckmann as a mechanism for crisis communication management. This research used a constructivist paradigm with a netnographic method. The interactions observed at #BUMNdukungUMKM on August 16, 2020, were then analyzed with the Berger and Luckmann social constructionist approach. The results of this research are able to answer the research

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objectives where symbolic convergence is a process in social construction of reality. Hashtags are dynamic processes that can lead to social discourses. Hashtag construction is product of symbolic convergence on social media as a mechanism for crisis management.

Keywords: Symbolic convergence; social construction; hashtag; interactions; crisis communication.

1. INTRODUCTION

Social media refers to technology in which various communication activities occur. In organizations, social media is a tool to communicate and build relationships with audiences. Likewise for individuals, social media is used to interact, find or share information and as entertainment [1,2]. Every organization and individual through their social media can produce messages according to their motives and goals.

One of the popular social media to date is Twitter. Digital 2020 Global Overview Report January 2020 (wearesocial.com) shows that Twitter is ranked thirteenth globally. Meanwhile, the trend in the number of Twitter users globally is also reported to have reached 340 billion monthly active users. Whereas in Indonesia, Twitter is in the fifth position with 56% of the population (We Are Sosial Indonesian Report 2020).

Twitter is a social media with a special characteristic, namely the hashtag symbol [3]. Through the hashtag, each personal account can interact with each other on the same topic but with different responses.

Interestingly, if the conversation on the hashtag gets bigger, trending topics will emerge and will become a wider public's attention. The more it occupies the top rank, the mass media will further increase the publicity of the hashtag and even then it will become a concern on a national or international scale.

As happened in Indonesia, #BUMNdukungUMKM became a trending topic and enlivened social media in August 2020. #BUMNdukungUMKM became the first ranked topic in Indonesia. Although it initially ranked fifth, Twitter user interaction [with that hashtag] is getting bigger with varied responses so it increases the hashtag popularity to number one [4].

This incident was motivated by the COVID-19 pandemic which affected micro, small and medium enterprises in Indonesia. MSMEs are productive economic enterprises owned by

individuals and business entities in accordance with the criteria of Law No. 20 of 2008. The COVID-19 situation has had a particularly negative impact on the economy in almost all forms of business.

The reaction of these Indonesian people here are varied; some of them are starting to put their hopes up, but some are starting to feel pessimistic and some are even starting to distrust BUMN (State-Owned Enterprises) to save MSMEs. However, the government through #BUMNdukungUMKM¹ has given some commitments through a number of its programs to help MSMEs survive the pandemic.

Bormann's Symbolic Convergence [5] explains the interactions that exist between individuals in the group through the responses given to one another. These responses are fantasies or themes that ultimately result in the formation of a sense of group unity.

On Berger's understanding (in Golob [6]), interpersonal social interaction is a social construction of reality. Thus, what is being said is based on the understanding, experience, and existence of individuals. Heide (in Golob [6]) provides an understanding of Berger's social construction, namely how public relations can work in the pre-crisis process through social construction, in which organizational conversations can build relationships with their audiences which in turn become a management in pre-crisis communication.

Based on the above conceptualities, this research aimed to explore how symbolic

¹ #BUMNdukungUMKM is a hashtag that appears on Twitter which refers to the support of BUMN (State-Owned Enterprises) for UMKM (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises). BUMN is a business entity under the management of the Indonesian government. Its role is as an economic actor that applies nationally in the economic system in Indonesia. BUMN aims to build community welfare and equitable development results for all Indonesian people (bumn.go.id). Meanwhile, MSMEs are productive economic enterprises as regulated in Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 20 of 2008 concerning Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

convergence process on Twitter hashtags in the construction of the reality of Berger and Luckmann as a mechanism for crisis communication management.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Social Media Communication Patterns as New Media

The society today that we live in is a new form that is very different from any previous form of society. This new form of society is inseparable from digitalization due to expanding technological developments. One of the uses of communication technology is characterized by a gadget attached to the internet which is everyone's main activity because with gadgets everyone can do anything, anywhere, and with anyone.

Everyone already has a gadget in which there is media connected to the internet such as social media. Thus, with the ownership of gadgets that can be operated easily and personally, individuals can manage their own media. Individuals become managers and as media owners. Through media management by everyone, the concept of the media itself shifts [7]. Old media is characterized by a high degree of intimacy because everyone is connected to the same screen and interface for a long time. In addition, old media is passive because it is one-way communication and only plays a role in transmitting or moving messages while the recipient is also a passive audience because it is only a consumer in consuming messages.

In contrast to old media, new media refers to digital media, interactive, two-way communication, and involves forms of computerization. The characteristics of new media are interactive where each individual accesses different material at a different time and media. New media are also interactive media that are individualistic in nature, tailored to the characteristics of users and their respective needs. In new media, individuals or users are active producers who can produce news.

Through the different characteristics of the old and new media, there is a change in the dimensions of content and audiences. Content on old media is a message produced by the media, with the interests of the media owners aimed at a specific audience. The stronger the role of the media, the higher their influence on

the audience is. Meanwhile, content in the concept of new media is produced by each user based on their interests and needs. Users have the power to create messages including their creativity. Users are an active audience in composing messages. Thus, through one example of the form of changes that occur in the media, it becomes an example of social change, namely in the structural order.

Through ever-expanding technology, it has led to a transformation that simultaneously generates a new form of society called by Castell as a network society [8]. This view sees the form of new communication patterns that exist in society. In a network society, communication that is established through technology is in a situation that is interconnected and typologically can transcend distance and time, and relationships can occur as an open and dynamic structural system.

New communication patterns are interactions that occur in a society where technology can become a medium between individuals to interact. Then, through the networking society, it can be seen how individuals, namely agents and structures, work in society.

This communication pattern occurs on social media and one of them is Twitter. Through Twitter, everyone can communicate in mass and interpersonal way. Unlike other social media, Twitter has specificity, namely the hashtag symbol used in interactions between users.

The hashtag symbol was officially used on Twitter since July 2009 which was followed in 2011 by Google+ and Instagram while Facebook started using it in June 2013 [9]. Until now, the use of popular hashtags is used in various emerging social media platforms.

The hashtag was originally used in chat rooms on the internet. In 2007 Chris Messina became the first user to use hashtag in a different context. Messina used hashtags in blog posts and then designed how the hashtag feature should be used on Twitter. Previously, the hashtag feature was called channels, until Stowe Boyd suggested to use hashtag name [9]. Hashtag then, becomes a symbol that is an important element in Twitter's identity [10]. When a Twitter account user creates a hashtag accompanied by words, then other users will reply to the hashtag and retweets occur.

2.2 Symbolic Convergence Theory

Communication Theory which explains how interactions occur in groups is the Symbolic Convergence Theory (SCT) developed by Ernest Bormann [5]. SCT originated from research conducted by Bale at Harvard University and Bormann at the University of Minnesota where this research has shown that not all group communication only talks about solving problems, rules or relationships and how to overcome them. The research looks at other components in the group that can bring the feelings of the individuals within it into a sense of group unity.

Bormann's SCT is a general theory of communication, namely a theory related to communication events that cannot be avoided by group members as participants. General theory is a theory that is transhistorical, transcultural, and a theory that explains on a broader scale. General theory is in contrast to a special theory, in which it is practical in nature which is a necessary condition in order for the phenomenon to repeat itself. Special theories contain conventional agreements between practitioners, namely about how communication can be formed or applied, such as broadcasting communications in media like television or radio.

A general theory such as SCT is a theory that explains how special theories are created and used. Then, as a general theory, SCT works in a broad framework that describes humans as homo narrans who share narratives with other humans or in the sense of sharing socially. Therefore SCT is a social theory of communication [5].

The structure of the SCT consists of three parts; the first is the communication arrangement that repeats its form and pattern, which shows the evolution and existence of group consciousness. The second is a description of the dynamic tendencies that occur in the communication system, which explains the existence of group awareness that appears, occurs continuously, then disappears, as well as the effect that group consciousness has in terms of meaning, motive, and group communication. The basic process of communication that can be mutually understood in groups is the dynamic of people who share fantasies in the group. The third is the factors that explain the reasons when individuals in the group share fantasies. The third part of the SCT

structure is the most important part to understand.

The occurrence of symbolic convergence begins when an individual, namely a group member, triggers a message in the group. This message can be anything that can be related to events in the past or present that are happening or are being discussed. Bormann provides an explanation of the message, for example through examples of figures related to rhetoric, namely politicians, news in the media or from other groups. Initially, SCT Bormann was used in the rhetorical community that occurs at a certain place or time. This theory then developed in other areas of study.

The message Bormann mentions refers to fantasy. Fantasy in Greek, namely phantastikos, is referred to as a symbol, which represents how to show a thought to be seen. Fantasy deals with the past and future and fantasy forms the basis of communication and group awareness [5]. SCT is the basis for communication and group awareness because fantasy is a trigger for the group so that the group can tell each other.

When a fantasy is triggered by someone in the group, this fantasy is then responded to by other members of the group. This response can take the form of word plays, multiple meanings, figures of speech, and fairy tales; these responses are a process of sharing fantasies in the group. The process of sharing fantasies is seen not through what is not heard but at the tempo of the conversation which is seen through the enthusiasm, interruptions, edits, laughs, and emotions that arise as well as the moment in which individuals can forget their insecurity. The process of sharing messages, namely this fantasy, becomes a fantasy chain that results in a group fantasy. Meanwhile, the content of the dramatized message that triggers reactions and feelings is called a fantasy theme.

According to Bormann, these fantasies are narrated, because basically humans are Homo Narrans, namely creatures who exchange stories or narratives that describe their experiences or social reality. Homo Narrans has the view that humans are social storytellers who share fantasies and build group consciousness to create social reality [5]. Humans as Homo Narrans are the basis of Bormann's thought in SCT where individuals will exchange narratives in groups. The conversation process is through a

narrative that is constructed and shared and linked in real life [11].

Fantasy is dramatized by individuals in the group in the form of a narrative – and, like a drama, there are elements in it. The first element is the character of the player, whether [it is] a hero, villain, or supporting player. The second element is the story line in which it is a series of stories that are developed and the actions taken. The third is the background in which it includes the location, related tools and equipment, as well as the socio-cultural aspects of the setting. The fourth element is the genre that determines the truth of the story.

This dramatization is then responded to in the conversation that makes it become more interesting, for example being responded by interruptions of other members, being laughed at, or being responded by emotions showing by other members so that they forget about their self-awareness. How the response that occurs in the group is central to SCT [12]. Meanwhile, the response is the result of the interaction expected by the individual. Bale (in Bormann [13]) states that through dramatization, one will get empathy; this dramatization increases the same theme or emotional responses which in turn produces or leads to a feeling of similarity to the group.

According to Bormann, there are reasons why people want to share fantasies, namely individual psychodynamics and group concerns; rhetorical skills on represented fantasies and the idea that when people share fantasies is that they dramatize or share fantasies that are different or the same from themselves. Dramatizing messages can be seen, first through wordplay, narrative, figure, analogy in group meetings; second is through sharing fantasy themes, and; third, through using fantasy themes and dramatizing them into a form of symbolic convergence.

Sharing this group fantasy in Bormann's view is an appropriate convergence of feelings among group members and this becomes the basis of communicative dynamics [5]. When members can feel the same in a narrative, this is called symbolic convergence, which is about sharing experiences together.

Sharing meaning does not only have an influence on psychological factors but also on the group who then makes the decision to make unique symbols that are used and only

understood by the group members. Basically symbols are a fundamental need of humans. Humans have the ability to use symbols and have a need for symbols. Symbol is the language used by humans, in which the terminology of symbols can be interpreted as anything that represents something behind its true meaning.

The symbol is one of the various types that appear and are standardized through the communication process. This process then creates a group culture. Symbols result from the systematic effort made by group members and in some cases symbols are created to establish group identities. Group identities are made to make a difference between one group and another [14].

The decision to make symbols in this group is an action that results from the meaning that is shared and believed together as well. The symbols that are created then become group symbolic identities that can give pride and motivation to group members [15]. Furthermore, whether pride, motivation, and other psychological fulfillment of individual needs bring individuals to group awareness.

Bormann then finds a link between group dramatization and the level of group awareness and solidarity. Through the causal hypothesis, these relationships speak of who they are, where they meet, and why group members stay together. This group shared awareness is built from the awareness possessed by the individual. Individuals who share fantasies are sufficient to develop a shared awareness that has a basis for communicating with each other - to raise new awareness, maintain group awareness, and make informed decisions [5]

Thus the two main assumptions in SCT are (1) reality is created through communication, namely through the connection between the words used and the experience or knowledge gained, (2) the individual meaning of symbols experiences unification so that it becomes a shared reality [16].

2.3 Reality as a Social Construction in Berger and Luckmann's Perspective

Heidi (in Golob) explains social reality base on Berger and Luckmann perspective that consists of three kinds of reality, namely objective, symbolic, and subjective [6]. These three realities cannot be separated from the relationship

between human thought and the social context in which that thought arises, develops, and is institutionalized. Objective reality is formed from experiences in the objective world that are outside the individual and are assumed to be a reality. Symbolic reality is a symbolic expression of objective reality in various forms. Meanwhile, subjective reality is a reality that is formed as a process of re-absorption of objective and symbolic reality into the individual through a process of internalization. In other words, humans are seen as creators of objective social reality through a process of externalization, just as objective reality re-affects humans through a process of internalization that reflects subjective reality.

In short, it can be understood that reality is the result of a creative human creation through the power of social construction of the social world around it. Reality which is a creation occurs because of the relationship between human thought and the social context in which that thought emerges, is developing and institutionalized. In the next development, people's life is continuously constructed, so that in the end there is a clear difference between reality and knowledge. Reality is defined as a quality contained in reality which is recognized as having existence (being) and which does not depend on our own will. Meanwhile, knowledge is defined as the certainty that realities are real and have specific characteristics.

In *Invitation to Sociology: A Humanistic Perspective*, Berger [6] presents a sociological perspective as "forms of consciousness" organized around four motives (or themes). According to Berger, things are not what they seem; reality has many layers of meaning. The hallmark of sociological consciousness is its ability to try to understand reality from several meanings, and often compete with, and present it through a system of interpretation.

The first motive is the debunking motive, namely the ambition to reveal the situation and try to see through the appearance of social structures. The roots of this motive are methodological in nature and are achieved by (1) being interested in answers or goals other than generally accepted answers or the official aims of human action; (2) being aware of different levels of meaning in human events that people are often not aware of; and (3) being suspicious of official interpretations by authorities such as organizational leaders.

Ideology has also been linked to the motive for dismantling by Berger.

The second motive is unrespectability. Berger argues that modern society is divided into two sectors: The respectable sector, which includes the middle class, dominates the definition of social reality. A sector that cannot be respected is anything beyond what the middle class deems respectable. One of the most distinguishing features of these two sectors is the language, which is also the most reliable identification tag. The unrespectability motive according to Berger means that scholars (intellectuals) must see and try to understand reality from several different perspectives, not only from people with conventional middle-class jobs but also from the point of view of taxi drivers, dancers, professional boxers, or jazz musician.

The third motive is relativization. This motif emphasizes the importance of seeing the value from various points of view in understanding the world. This motif highlights the importance of not understanding the world as a given that comes naturally (for granted). Thus, different cultures with varying values and beliefs can provide other and new ways of understanding the world. In the modern world, sociology represents the consciousness of a world in which values have been radically relative. Unlike the traditional mind, the modern mind is mobile, spends time with other people in different locations from him/herself, and can easily consider changing professions or locations. Hence, modern identities will always be uncertain and unstable.

The fourth and last one is cosmopolitan motive which implies openness to the world and other ways of thinking and acting, an attitude that often occurs in people living in urban areas. Berger [6] states that: "his/her mind... is at home wherever anyone else is thinking. We will say that sociological consciousness is characterized by the same kind of cosmopolitanism" (p. 53). In short, Berger argues that sociologists must be open-minded and interested in other cultures and want to understand new horizons of human meaning.

2.4 Public Relations and Crisis Management

A crisis is an unexpected situation. In the organizational context, this situation arises and impacts on company damage. Coombs defines crisis [17] as a significant threat to the operations

and reputation of the organization. Crises cannot be ignored because they have consequences for the organization. Communication is one of the actions in crisis management [18]. Therefore, Public Relations are the key in crisis management. Because the role of Public Relations in the organization is as a function of organizational communication management both internal and external [19].

Coombs [20] divides crisis management into three phases, namely pre-crisis, crisis response, and post crisis. The pre-crisis phase focuses on prevention and preparation. The crisis response phase is when management must respond to a crisis. The post-crisis phase is the phase where the organization is looking for better preparations for the next crisis. This phase is also the phase of fulfilling commitments made by organizations during a crisis and this, includes, following up on information. As an organizational communication function, public relations play an important role in every stage of crisis management.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to explore symbolic convergence process on Twitter hashtags in the construction of the reality of Berger and Luckmann as a mechanism for crisis communication management.

The study in this research is in the field of public relations studies, where public relations action through technology cannot be separated from its impact on organizations. This research used a constructivist paradigm with the netnographic method to understand how interactions occur in the online world.

Netnography is an approach that is carried out in combination, namely between the internet and ethnography, in which the online group analysis is systematically carried out [21]. The netnographic method looks at computer-mediated social interactions [22]. Netnography is used to see the interactions that take place online between audiences and organizations [23]. Besides, it is also used to understand active audiences online who are a source of information, opinions, experiences and behaviors [24].

The stages in netnography include: first, defining research questions, social sites or topics to be studied; second, identifying and selecting research segments; third, observation by building

relationships and data collection; fourth, data analysis and interpretation of findings, and; fifth, writing research reports or theoretical implications [22].

Netnography is an adaptation of a methodology that can be used with other methods both online and offline [25]. This research made observations on online interactions and used literature studies such as articles and journals to support the research.

Observations were made on online participants, namely 300 tweets that occur on Twitter through the #BUMNuntukUMKM interaction on August 16, 2020. The researcher then categorized the interaction into units, namely the broader theme of the information obtained. These data then analyzed through Berger and Luckmann approach, namely seeing the concepts in symbolic convergence as a social construction.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Symbol as a Trigger for Social Construction in Pre-crisis

Symbols in language can be in the form of codes to define something. Symbols seen are symbols in written form or that use visual media. Words are also symbols because they represent objects, ideas, relationships, people, places, or feelings. Symbols can also be values that we know through the process we have learned. Symbols are visible components of the communication process [14].

Hashtag is a symbol or (#) sign that precedes a word or phrase. This symbol is used on internet-based media such as websites, social media, blogs, and so on. Hashtag can also be used by combining them into several hashtags of words so that they become a sentence.

Symbol as language is a product of humans. Language, according to Berger, is a vehicle for producing and reproducing social reality, as well as a vehicle for understanding the world around us. Language is everything that humans name [6]. Thus language is made by humans for a purpose.

#BUMNdukungUMKM became a trending topic on Twitter on August 16, 2020. This hashtag coincided with the Minister of MSMEs who provided support for MSMEs who are struggling economically during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Previously, the National Day of MSMEs was commemorated on August 12, 2020. Then on August 14, 2020 the Ministry of BUMN signed a Joint Agreement between the Ministry of BUMN and the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs regarding the development and fostering of Cooperatives, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (KUMKM). This is a form of collaboration in an effort to assist the recovery and development of MSMEs (Press Release Number PR-57/S.MBU./8/2020 regarding the Collaboration for Indonesian MSMEs).

The Joint Agreement includes mentoring and developing human resources, providing raw materials, logistics, marketing that is not only limited to digital platforms. Erick Thohir as Minister of BUMN in the event also revealed that the resources owned by BUMN can be optimized in efforts to develop MSMEs. Erick, through his statement, gave support to MSMEs because BUMN is for Indonesia.

After Erick's expression for BUMN's support for MSMEs, in which MSMEs are one of the drivers of improving the Indonesian economy, the hashtag #BUMNuntukUMKM appears on Twitter continuously per second.

The hashtag symbol is the beginning of interaction between Twitter users; where after someone triggers a hashtag, it invites Twitter users to respond. As in some of the responses above, after #BUMNdukungUMKM was first triggered, other Twitter users gave various responses. This is where the symbolic convergence process begins. Symbolic Convergence, in Bormann's Theory, occurs through the existence of triggers.

The hashtag #BUMNdukungUMKM is related to the expression of the Minister of BUMN who was sparking his support for MSMEs during this pandemic. Bormann's Symbolic Convergence Theory in its historicity deals with rhetoric that occurs in a particular situation. In this case, #BUMNdukungUMKM became a trigger associated with the rhetoric of the leadership of the Minister of BUMN in a situation that was the beginning of a crisis of BUMN confidence. Furthermore, this is inseparable from the current situation of MSMEs which have begun to be affected by the economic crisis due to the pandemic.

@XXX. Aug.16
#BUMNdukungUMKM
#BRIVirtualFashionShow
Fyi, the highlight of the Virtual Fashion Show and Virtual Gala Show will be held on August 16 and 17, 2020 which presents the work of 75 designers and fashion labels

@XXXX. Aug.16
Hello, tweeps there is an interesting quiz, there will be a prize in the form of balance of electronic money for 2 people, What is the name of the type of BENGKULU FABRIC?
Don't forget to answer in the comments column and use the hashtag #BUMNdukungUMKM. Also mention 3 of your friends to join in.

@XXXXX. Aug.16
Agree sis/bro, I hope the MSMEs will keep the spirit to continue working by producing cool works. #BUMNdukungUMKM
#BRIVirtualShow

4.2 Hastagging Interaction #BUMNdukungUMKM as Objective and Subjective Reality

The emergence of the first hashtag on Twitter as a trigger, triggered responses to Twitter account users, namely MSME owners, MSME institutions, and the general public. These responses were shown freely and vary from one another.

There are four categories of tweets (messages posted on Twitter) that accompany #BUMNuntukUMKM that appeared on Twitter August 16, 2020, namely information tweets on MSMEs products (52%), information tweets on events held by BUMN for MSMEs (36%), support tweets for BUMN and MSMEs (8%), and information tweets from the media about BUMN (4%).

The MSME owner Twitter user account gave a response, in which sharing information. MSME owners informed their products in the form of specifications by providing narratives that contain fantasies of what if the product is worn by consumers.

Guys~ this is one of the really cool fashion products from the local Pala Nusantara brand.

Handmade wooden watch, the head of the watch is made of maple wood. And, the strap

is made of genuine leather.
#BUMNdukungUMKM
#BRIVirtualFashionShow

That's why there is the Nusantara Fashion Show, one of which is aimed at supporting MSMEs while preserving the nation's culture. #BUMNdukungUMKM #BRIVirtualFashionShow

Yes, an interesting conversation about the state-owned enterprises that supports local products of MSMEs which continue to grow and compete with foreign products. #BUMNdukungUMKM #BRIVirtualFashionShow <https://t.co/1nZFqoKHow>

Information sharing responses were always accompanied by #BUMNdukungUMKM. It is not only one hashtag, #BUMNdukungUMKM, in one response or tweet, but there is another accompanying hashtag. These hashtags mark their participation in activities organized by BUMN as support for MSMEs and provide a forum for MSME actors/owners to develop their business. Inclusion of hashtags as a reproduction of the first hashtag is a response to information received by MSME actors.

Hashtags have varied functions from different approaches. Laucuka's research, through

semantic hashtag analysis, make ten identification of hashtag communication functions, namely indicating topics, aggregation, socialization, excude, irony, building metadata, expressing behavior, initiating movements, propaganda to brand marketing [26]. Meanwhile, in the social semiotics approach, hashtags on Twitter have a function, namely indicating experiential topics, building interpersonal relationships, and organizing texts [27].

#BUMNdukungUMKM is information provided by BUMN to provide support to MSME actors during the pandemic. Various supports through the policies made include assistance of up to Rp. 22 trillion for 9.16 million MSME actors in 34 provinces in Indonesia.

BUMN as the Indonesian government pays great attention to MSMEs during this pandemic through various National Economic Recovery policy packages, including tax stimulus, credit restructuring, interest subsidies, provision of working capital, and credit guarantee contribution subsidies. The Ministry of BUMN is also collaborating with other ministries in efforts to restore and develop MSMEs. These programs include assistance and development of human resources, provision of raw materials, logistics, and marketing including through digital media (Press Release Number PR-57/S.MBU./ 8/2020 about Collaboration for Indonesian MSMEs).

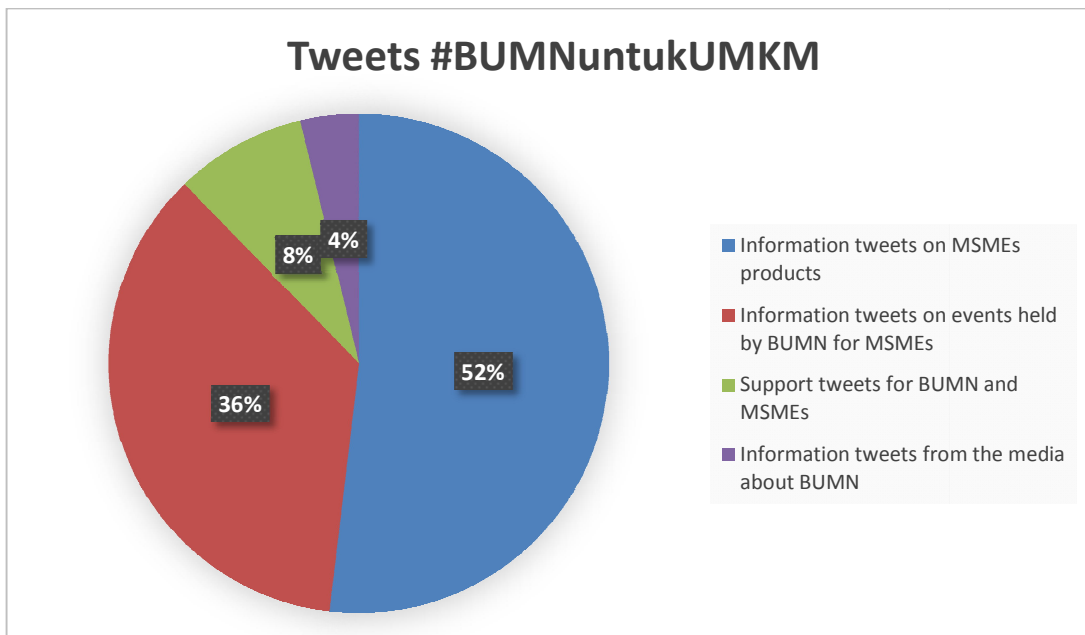


Fig. 1. Percentage of 300 Tweets using #BUMNuntukUMKM as of August 16, 2020

The information communicated by the organization is one of the strategies implemented by public relations in entering the pre-crisis stage. Several ways can be done at the initial crisis stage, such as [mentioned] in the research conducted by Cheng [28]. Through crisis communication strategy theories, what can be done in the pre-crisis organizational stage are information adjustment, providing guidance, attracting sympathy, monitoring, creating dialogue, manipulating, covering up, and not providing comments. But providing information is becoming a more plentiful and effective way to do it.

Providing information can provide support during a crisis or after a crisis, where the information can bring hope, satisfaction, and optimism. Dissemination of this information needs to be as broad and accurate as possible [29]. Public relations can provide this information through media such as press releases through websites and through social media, namely Twitter.

#BUMNdukungUMKM is a public relations action taken by BUMN to provide information to the public regarding the support programs provided to MSMEs. BUMN through the hashtag symbol communicates in the early stages of the crisis when the public questions how MSMEs can survive the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia. BUMN through the hashtag BUMNdukungUMKM communicates with symbols, namely by utilizing digital platforms in the pre-crisis stage through the hashtag symbol, which is a language that is specialized in Twitter social media.

Other hashtags accompanying #BUMNdukungUMKM are:

#BRIVirtualFashionShow #BUMNKerjaSehat
#BUMNLawanCorona
#BUMNuntukIndonesia
#BanggaBuatanIndonesia
#NusantaraFashionFestival
#bumnatacorona #semangat
#PLNuntukIndonesiaMaju #indonesia

These hashtags show that MSME actors are related to products that are the pride of Indonesia. MSME is a government program to improve the Indonesian economy which promotes goods made in Indonesia. In addition, it also encourages Indonesians to consume products made in Indonesia.

Thus, the institutionalization process in the role of MSMEs in the development of Indonesian

society becomes an existing objective reality. MSMEs are aware of what the Indonesian government is doing to MSME actors. In practice, MSMEs are efforts to contribute to the country's economy. Besides, they are also efforts to increase competitiveness of Indonesian's products compared to foreign products. Therefore, MSMEs cannot be separated as part of a sector that has an impact on Indonesia as a state.

Here, Twitter account users especially in the hashtag #BUMNdukungUMKM are objective realities that imply the involvement of legitimacy, namely the objectivation of meaning in which this is knowledge with cognitive and normative dimensions because it does not only involve explanations but also values. Legitimacy serves to make objectivation that is institutionalized and makes subjective sense [30].

Another form of response shown is related to the reputation of BUMN, namely referring to the figure of the Minister of BUMN, including how the BUMN form under his leadership is an expectation of new leadership.

Mr. Minister of BUMN, Erick Thohir, do support MSMEs to keep rising #BUMNdukungUMKM
<https://t.co/2T5eBcOtmS>

This is a summary of what Mr. @erickthohir talked about at #nusantarafashionfestival this afternoon
Great!! #BUMNdukungUMKM
Just waiting for #BRIVirtualFashionShow @promo_BRI <https://t.co/L3o49SVxWN>

BUMN is still transforming, at the time of Covid19 as well as for accelerated recovery.

These responses show information on the activities that are taking place in which the Minister of BUMN communicates what efforts he is doing for MSMEs. Not only that, the form of the program being carried out is also informed in line with the expressions of the Minister of BUMN. Next, government organizations that provide support for the program also show their responses.

Meanwhile, there were also media publicity that show their responses by including hashtags which then increased the number of responses on Twitter. Likewise, with the general public who show their responses in positive sentences that gave support to BUMN.

The subsequent responses were getting bigger, especially with regard to information from various actors of UMKM, BUMN, and society in general. Until then #BUMNdukungUMKM became a trending topic on Twitter and was widely known by the public. Through interactions, namely the responses of Twitter account users that include #BUMNdukungUMKM - these encourage the subjectivity of account users so that they continue to take action through their responses on the Twitter social media platform.

BUMN, which initially provided program information for BUMN in online mass media which was supported by rhetoric from the Minister of BUMN through the use of the hashtag #BUMNdukungUMKM on Twitter, has succeeded in shaping public opinion and building a positive image before the existence of #BUMNdukungUMKM.

4.3 Discussion

4.3.1 Symbolic convergence and social construction in pre-crisis

In today's modern era, according to Giddens [31], organization is in a condition that cannot control the conditions of the environment outside the organization itself. This can lead to consequences for the organization. Here, Giddens talks about the social changes that have occurred, because there is a role for modernity, including technology which allows a crisis for the organization.

Technology, namely through social media, can bring organizations to unpredictable situations, namely crisis situations [32]. But social media can at the same time be an effective tool in overcoming crises [33]. This is undeniable because social media is a new media as a space that allows extraordinary interaction from users [34].

Interaction is the key to the role of public relations, especially in dealing with crises [35]. Through interactions in social media, it provides opportunities for government public relations to build relationships with the public [36]. The goal is to open dialogue and receive support from the public for the organization.

Interaction in Symbolic Convergence [5] are fantasies or responses that occur in conversation. However, the responses emerge from a given trigger. Triggers on the Twitter

platform are manifested in the language of symbols, namely hashtags. This hashtag symbol is the beginning of the symbolic convergence process in social media. Then, through this special feature that Twitter has, everyone responds continuously. As the responses get bigger, it is in this convergence process that meaning is formed.

Meaning is built through the interaction of individuals in a group [37] in social construction, according to Berger's understanding, it is a reality. Meanwhile, reality is a subjectivity, namely from general experience as objectivation to individual consciousness [38].

Symbolic convergence is a process of change [39]. This change occurs through stages, namely groups, where there are agents at the micro level. Then the triggers in groups' communication occur. From these triggers, interactions occur continuously with each other, thus forming a similarity in the meaning of the group. This meaning is what ultimately brings changes in group action. Interactions become the main process so that changes in a form that is different from its initial form is achieved.

A common experience in interactions on social media, namely Twitter, occurs with responses that share information. The response to sharing information is attached to the hashtag symbol. This hashtag symbol becomes objectivated by sharing information. Objectivation which is carried out by the role of public relations through mass media which is one way communication, but through Twitter, it becomes many to many and this can be done by the public. Through the Twitter platform, especially through its specialty, namely hashtag, each individual user of an account can become a public relations medium in carrying out objectivities, namely providing information to the public. Public relations can maximize communication that can be mediated by technology that could not be done before with conventional media or PR techniques.

Furthermore, the process of continuous interaction through response, in symbolic convergence, can eventually create a new form or identity from what previously existed. On Twitter, this is marked by the occurrence of trending topics that became of widespread public attention. Various hashtags on Twitter can be used by each account user, but if there is no continuous response the hashtag will become a flat-valued hashtag. It is different if it becomes a

trending topic and becomes the public's attention, there will be an increasing condition, such as the use of the hashtag symbol in music, namely raising the tone. This process is a social construction that can be carried out by public relations in the pre-crisis period so that it can gain public understanding and prevent the public from entering the next crisis stage.

5. CONCLUSION

Symbolic convergence works through the relationship between agents and structures, namely individuals and groups. But on social media, symbolic convergence can be used in a macro context. Because the process of interaction that occurs on social media through hashtags can lead to social discourse.

Hashtags are dynamic processes. Crisis can be managed through social media, namely through hashtag construction. Thus, hashtag construction is product of symbolic convergence on social media as a mechanism for crisis management. In the context of MSMEs, crisis handling is through hashtags. In this case, public relations professionals can take advantage of social media, namely Twitter, to construct social in order to manage crises at an early stage.

DISCLAIMER

The products used for this research are commonly and predominantly use products in our area of research and country. There is absolutely no conflict of interest between the authors and producers of the products because we do not intend to use these products as an avenue for any litigation but for the advancement of knowledge. Also, the research was not funded by the producing company rather it was funded by personal efforts of the authors.

CONSENT

As per international standard, participant's informed written consent has been collected and preserved by the author(s).

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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