Building Muhammadiyah's Political Image Strategy: Case Study of the PP Muhammadiyah Public Policy Wisdom Institute 2023

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ABSTRACT

Muhammadiyah is an Islamic-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) in Indonesia, established in 1912. Muhammadiyah is actively involved in humanity and community empowerment sectors. As one of the largest Islamic-based NGOs in Indonesia, Muhammadiyah plays an active role in politics and public policy. Muhammadiyah established the Public Policy Wisdom Institute (Public Policy Wisdom Institute, LHKP) in 1950 as a supporting institution under its umbrella tasked with responding to political issues and public policies. This research aims to analyze the role of LHKP in developing Muhammadiyah's political image strategy through its social media content, and to explore the factors influencing the success of these strategies for a smart environment in digital media. This study employs a descriptive-qualitative research approach using a case study method. Data analysis techniques include interviews, observations, and documentation. The findings of this research conclude that: First, effective communication strategies through various public platforms, particularly using social media content by LHKP, have strengthened Muhammadiyah's positive image. LHKP PP Muhammadiyah has successfully positioned itself as a key driver in practical politics and public policy by placing potential cadres in strategic political positions. Second, Muhammadiyah can play a political role as a significant political force influencing the national political process without transforming itself into a political party.

1. Introduction

The Muhammadiyah is an Islamic-based Non-Govermental Organization (NGO) in Indonesia which was founded in 1912 (Mursyid, 2023). Muhammdiyah as one of the largest Islamic da'wah organizations has had a long dynamic journey with the world of politics, especially the politics of power and government (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2020). Even though from the start Muhammadiyah was not founded for political purposes, Muhammadiyah cannot avoid the nation's political processes. Therefore, the influence of the image of Muhammadiyah's political attitudes also plays a role in political dynamics in Indonesia (Tanthowi, 2019).

If we look at the current era of modernization, digital media plays an important role in building Muhammadiyah's political image. Muhammadiyah in building a political image strategy cannot be separated from political communication techniques. According to Haris et al. (2022) political communication is a communication activity that is assessed as political communication based on its consequences that regulate human actions in conditions of conflict (Harris et al., 2022). A similar thing was stated by Hayat et al. (2021) define political communication as a communication process that involves interaction between the government and society for the making and implementation of decisions in certain areas. Political communication includes political messages from political actors regarding government power and policies (Hayat et al., 2021).

Image is the public's representation and perception of an individual, group or institution related to its role in society. Kaukab (2020) defines image as the impression, feeling and public image of a

company or the impression that is deliberately created of an object, person or organization. Based on this definition, Soemirat in (Kaukab, 2020) explains several factors in the imaging process: (1) Perception: The results of observations of environmental elements that are associated with an individual's meaning based on experience. (2) Cognition: An individual's self-confidence towards a stimulus that arises from understanding the stimulus. (3) Motive: The drive within an individual to carry out certain activities to achieve goals. (4) Attitude: The tendency to act, perceive, think and feel in the face of objects, ideas, situations or values, which is a tendency to behave in a certain way (Kaukab, 2020)

To build a political image, mass media is needed as a channel to convey positive messages to the public (Harris et al., 2022). In the era of increasingly rapid globalization, the role of mass media in everyday life cannot be avoided. Considering the important position of mass media in society, the success of mass media in carrying out its role as a communicator can be seen from the increasing development of the media, the survival of the media to this day, and the increase in stations, companies, websites and programs provided by print and electronic media managers. Mass media will survive if there are people who use it, because mass media depends on large numbers of viewers (Harris et al., 2022). According to McQuail, there are six perspectives in viewing the role of mass media in social life, especially in modern society: (1) Window on event on experience: Media is seen as a window that allows the audience to see outside events and experiences. (2) A mirror of events in society and the world, implying a faithful reflection: The media functions as a mirror that reflects various events in society and the world as they really are. (3) Filter/Gatekeeper: The media acts as a filter or gatekeeper who selects issues and information for attention. (4) Guide: Media acts as a guide or translator, showing direction over various uncertainties and alternatives. (5) Forum: Media provides a platform to present a variety of information and ideas to the public, allowing for response and feedback. (6) Interlocutor: Mass media acts as a communication partner that allows interactive communication to occur (McQuail, 2016).

The PP Muhammadiyah Public Policy Wisdom Institute (LHKP) as an institution under the central leadership structure of Muhammadiyah which operates in the fields of policy, politics, democracy and civil society is a representation of Muhammadiyah as an entity that has a strategic role in encouraging and shaping public policy in Indonesia (LHKP, 2024). LHKP Muhammadiyah is part of the Muhammadiyah movement which focuses on policy analysis and provides views on various important issues that affect society (Kholikir, 2023).

The Public Policy Wisdom Institute (LHKP) PP Muhammadiyah is a supporting element within Muhammadiyah, which deals with two main issues, namely national politics and public policy. LHKP is a long-standing central leadership that was born from the decision of the 33rd Muhammadiyah congress in 1950 which was appointed by the Hikmah Council. The Yogyakarta Muhammadiyah Central Leadership Institute for Public Policy Wisdom is one of the institutions under the auspices of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership which focuses on legal and public policy issues (LHKP, 2024).

LHKP plays a role in analyzing, formulating and recommending policies related to legal and public policy issues, as well as providing Muhammadiyah's views on various important issues in society. As part of the Muhammadiyah Central Leadership, LHKP has a strategic role in overseeing and developing Muhammadiyah's vision and mission in achieving its noble goals.

Public opinion can influence the image of an institution, in this case media coverage, all news on social media, both positive and negative, can be easily accessed every year. The media becomes a reflection as these institutions can provide positive value in the eyes of society. Therefore, social media or internet media is very important for institutions to create an image of the institution to create a positive image of the institution using all the management strategies. Public opinion is a collection of individual opinions on certain issues that affect a group called society (Ishaq, 2017).

Figure 1. Social Media Institute for Public Policy Wisdom

Based on this research, the author wants to examine the Public Policy Wisdom Institute (LHKP) in responding to public thoughts so that the image of LHKP is maintained, especially for the 2023 period. This research aims to analyze the role of LHKP in building Muhammadiyah's political image strategy through content on its social media, as well as to explore the factors that influence the success of such strategies for a smart environment for digital media.

2. Method

This research uses descriptive-qualitative research with a case study approach method. The case study method is research carried out by researchers to explore in depth events, processes, activities of one or more people (Sugiyono, 2018). The object of this research is the PP Muhammadiyah Public Policy Wisdom Institute for the period 2023. The data collection techniques used are interviews, observation and documentation studies. The selection of research subjects was based on selected sources based on the following criteria; (1) Become the core administrator of LHKP Muhammadiyah for the 2023 period. (2) Have an active role in Muhamamdiyah's LHKP during the 2023 period. (3) Understand the LHKP image strategy. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique used in analyzing qualitative data is data triangulation which consists of data reduction, data presentation, and data verification (Miles et al., 2016).

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Brief History of LHKP

LHKP is a sub or inseparable part of the Muhammadiyah organization, where LHKP's duties focus on political issues and public policy, a strategic institution in responding to political issues and public policy. LHKP also serves as an assistant to the leadership such as an expert assistant to PP Muhammadiyah (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024). Wahyudi Saputra SH as the executive secretary of LHKP added that LHKP is a field, an institution where this institution is under the leadership of 13 Muhammadiyah and is used as path for Muhammadiyah to study and also pursue matters of a political nature (Saputra, 2024).

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Based on the results of interviews with Dr. phil. Ridho Al-Hamdi, S.Fil.I., MA, the image that the public currently hopes for LHKP is as Muhammadiyah's main driver in practical political issues and public policy. LHKP plays an important role in placing Muhammadiyah cadres as legislative

candidates in the upcoming regional head elections (PILKADA). In this context, LHKP is tasked with plotting potential cadres in strategic positions to support Muhammadiyah's political goals and public policies (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024). Thus, LHKP not only acts as a policy guard, but also as the main driver in determining Muhammadiyah's political direction and publications in the local and national political sphere.

LHKP plays a role as the main driver in practical politics and Muhammadiyah public policy. LHKP PP Muhammadiyah has a vision and mission, namely the development of active participation and the role of Muhammadiyah citizens in national dynamics based on the principles of akhlaqul karimah, personality and struggle sermons in line with Muhammadiyah's position as a social missionary movement towards the realization of a more advanced, just, prosperous national and state life. independent, dignified and sovereign (LHKP, 2024). There are several development programs carried out by LHKP PP Muhammadiyah in its formulation, namely movement systems, organization and leadership, networks, resources and service actions (LHKP, 2024).

3.2. Muhammadiyah Political Communication and Publication Efforts

Muhammadiyah in building a positive political image is by conducting a study in using mass media as a means of publication to convey political messages and public policies through LHKP PP Muhammadiyah (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024). LHKP is part of the development process, one of which is through the use of the Muhammadiyah cadre network. LHKP Muhammadiyah is active and creative in various strategic alliances as an effort to strengthen civil society and uphold a more substantive and civilized democracy. Muhammadiyah is involved in various government and non-government organizations along with the development of forums and cadre networks as a vehicle for progressive Islamic da'wah in the field of national politics (LHKP, 2024; Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024).

According to (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024) LHKP plays an important role in advocating political issues. The LHKP institution is an institution that represents Muhammadiyah as a supporting element for Muhammadiyah leadership in practical political issues.

Figure 2. Public Discussion of Online Seminar

Meanwhile, the use of various means of publication through digital, electronic and print media plays an important role in assessing the perception of the wider community regarding Muhammadiyah, one of which is the online seminar organized by LHKP. LHKP's role as a representative of Muhammadiyah is carried out in various ways, such as publishing public policy activities through social media content such as Instagram, X (twitter), Facebook, Youtube, Tiktok and so on. One of the LHKP Muhammadiyah social media accounts that is most active in publishing information is the Instagram account @lhkp_ppmuh. The @lkpp_ppmuh account actively utilizes the features provided by the Instagram platform such as post, story and reels features to inform efforts regarding issues related to public policy, environmental issues, politics and so on.

3.3. Muhammadiyah Political Image Strategy

Muhammadiyah, in building its political image, carries out various activities such as helping to advocate in the judicial process at PTUN regarding environmental issues in wadas cases. One of these activities is aimed at managing and maintaining the image of LHKP PP Muhammadiyah in society (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024). Image is the public's representation and perception of individuals, groups or institutions related to their role in society (Harris et al., 2022). Kaukab (2020) defines image as the impression, feeling and public image of a company or the impression that is deliberately created of an object, person or organization. Based on the results of interviews with Dr. phil. Ridho Al-Hamdi, S.Fil.I., MA said that LHKP's strategy in building a political image is by using social media, meeting forums, as well as spreading LHKP structural networks spread across various regions, from district to provincial levels throughout Indonesia. (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024).

Figure 3. Al Maun Goes To Village Program

One of the Al Maun Goes to Village programs is the large contribution made by LHKP in order to serve and make a big impact in remote villages. This program will focus on funding education and strengthening children's psychology, assisting with community-based livestock capital, and increasing civic advocacy capacity (Political, Legal, Human Rights and Ecological). Apart from that, due to the current acceleration of digital information literacy, the Public Policy Wisdom Institute (LHKP) has an increasingly important role in ensuring the correctness of information and the right approach in conveying messages to the public. Wahyudi Saputra SH explained that LHKP content never mixes facts and opinions (Saputra, 2024). The news content provided has been confirmed as valid or valid data to ensure credible news content from trusted sources. LHKP creates a narrative or framing to suit its goals and values by making statements and conducting opinion polls in the media, both public discussions and webinars.

LHKP actively participates in following contemporary political issues by providing views, suggestions and criticism. Wahyudi Saputra said that one example of LHKP's active participation in building a political image was providing comments on various Constitutional Court decisions regarding disputes over election results (Saputra, 2024). Other efforts that have been made by LHKP include coaching and developing cadre schools (Madrasah Mu'allimin, Mu'allimat, Islamic Boarding Schools), autonomous organizations, and Muhammadiyah educational institutions as centers for nurturing Muhammadiyah cadres in collaboration with the Majlis /Institutions/Related bodies throughout the Persyarikatan (Ridho Al-Hamdi, 2024).

Apart from being a guardian of public policy and national politics, LHKP actively participates in following and responding to developing contemporary political issues. They provide views, suggestions and even criticism of policies taken by the government or related institutions. A clear example of LHKP's active participation was when they provided comments on various Constitutional Court decisions regarding disputes over election results. Wahyudi Saputra emphasized that this was one form of LHKP's contribution in building Muhammadiyah's political image.

Apart from that, LHKP has also made various efforts in coaching and developing Muhammadiyah cadres. One of the efforts that has been made is to pay attention to the guidance and development of cadre schools such as Madrasah Mu'allimin, Mu'allimat, and Islamic Boarding Schools. They also play a role in managing autonomous organizations and Muhammadiyah educational institutions as centers for nurturing Muhammadiyah cadres. Collaboration carried out with related assemblies/institutions/bodies throughout the Persyarikatan is a form of synergy in strengthening the network and base of Muhammadiyah cadres broadly. This effort shows LHKP's commitment to maintaining the sustainability and development of quality human resources in accordance with Muhammadiyah values.

Muhammadiyah in building a political image cannot be separated from Muhammadiyah's political paradigm in determining its attitude towards the current state of government. Based on the results of interviews with sources, Ridho Al-Hamdi (2024) said that currently Muhammadiyah seems closer to the government and maintains harmonious relations with the government. Ridho Al-Hamdi (2024) stated that this can be seen from the intensive communication that exists and the Muhammadiyah cadres who fill ministerial positions in the current government cabinet. However, this does not necessarily mean that Muhammadiyah does not criticize the government.

Another opinion was expressed by (Saputra, 2024) that Muhammadiyah's position is in accordance with its moderate vision and mission because Muhammadiyah does not only focus on politics as Muhammadiyah is a non-governmental Islamic religious organization. Muhammadiyah in its capacity as a social religious organization, Muhammadiyah must be able to present itself with more effective political articulation as a form of moral responsibility in participating in directing the historical path of this nation towards a just, prosperous, democratic and civilized future for Indonesia (Tanthowi, 2019).

However, this opinion also causes controversy, especially among those who criticize religious interference in political affairs. They argue that although Muhammadiyah has a moderate vision and mission, interfering in politics could have a negative impact on the principles of separation of religion and state and pluralism in Indonesia. Therefore, discussions regarding the role of Muhammadiyah in politics are still a hot debate in the public sphere.

4. Conclusion

Based on the explanation above, the author concludes that; first, effective communication strategies through various means of publication, especially the use of LHKP social media content, have strengthened the positive image of Muhammadiyah. LHKP PP Muhammadiyah has succeeded in positioning itself as the main driver in practical politics and public policy through placing potential cadres in strategic political positions. Second, Muhammadiyah can play a political role as a political force that significantly influences the national political process, without having to change its identity to become a political party organization.

5. Acknowledgment

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