

Conflict and group development in the digital eyek community: A case study of Magelang Eyek Community in Facebook group

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Abstract

Eyek business is a potential micro, small and medium enterprise in Magelang district. According to Trade and Cooperative Office, there were 2,301 eyek traders in Magelang in 2022. They are also organized in one community, namely vegetable & eyek traders in Magelang. The community develops in the digital realm through the Facebook platform, with the name of the Magelang vegetable & eyek traders community group. This digital community is interesting to study from the angle of digital communication. The analytical knife used is the concept of communication patterns and the main theory of Interaction Theory and Community Development. This research uses a qualitative approach. Primary data sources are comments and interactions on the Facebook Group of Magelang vegetable & eyek traders community group. As well as the results of interviews with informants. Data collection techniques are interviews with admins and members of the Magelang vegetable and eyek trader community group. Informant selection technique using purposive sampling technique. Data analysis technique interactive analysis. Meanwhile, data validation techniques use data triangulation. The results in this study show that communication patterns in this community are hybrid, combining elements of star and wheel patterns. Meanwhile, the analysis of interaction and group development shows that this community has experienced the orientation phase, conflict phase, emergence phase, and reinforcement.

Keywords

Communication patterns, Online communities, Group development interaction

Introduction

Group communication is a group of people who have established a certain level of communication and relationships. In addition, actively communicate with each other with specific purpose [1]. According to [2] group communication refers to communication in which each member sees and hears each other. As well as arranging oral or written feedback from each member [3]. A group gives an identity to an individual, and through that identity each member of the group indirectly relates to one

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another. Through this identity, individuals exchange functions with other individuals in the group. This association ultimately creates rules that must be obeyed by each individual in the group to guarantee the rights and responsibilities of each individual in the group. These rules are another form of character of a group that can distinguish it from other groups in society. The rapid development of technology and information, the internet has now become a popular means of communication among the general public. Communities use social media to build and expand their markets and develop their businesses as a whole [4]. Based on research, the existence of a community results in positive collaboration, creating a dynamic environment where customers feel directly involved with local producers, so they can be directly involved through discussions, reviews and testimonials within the community [5].

According to research [6], open and inclusive communication patterns create an environment that supports the exchange of ideas without barriers, thus building a sense of togetherness among members. In this case, communication is not only a means of interaction. But also, as a powerful tool to strengthen social ties and ensure that each member feels involved and valued within the framework of this community. Such as the Kendari City Hydroponic Community. According to research [7] Kendari City Hydroponic Community is a place for those interested in soil-free farming. In this space, members share knowledge, experiences, and tips about hydroponics, support sustainable farming, and introduce modern farming techniques to the community. Communication patterns within a community can be defined as the established ways in which individuals interact and exchange information. Djamarah suggests that these patterns involve relationships between individuals who effectively transmit and receive messages [8]. Lunenburg identifies five common communication patterns in organizations: the circle, wheel, Y, chain, and star patterns, each with distinct characteristics and implications for information flow and leadership roles [9].

Group Interaction Theory Development emphasizes the dynamic nature of interactions within a group. This perspective, particularly relevant in online communities like the Facebook Group of the Eyek Magelang Traders Community, underscores the importance of understanding how interactions evolve over time, considering the interplay between individual members. Building upon this, Fisher's four-stage model of group development—orientation, conflict, emergence, and reinforcement—highlights the crucial role of interaction in shaping group dynamics, from initial introductions and perspective sharing to the eventual consensus-building and reinforcement of agreements [10].

From the above facts, especially in Indonesia, the Facebook Social Media Platform is used not only to provide education and support, but also to provide a platform for buying and selling activities that suit the needs and interests of each community member. Not only utilized by the community, currently the Facebook platform is used for the communication process to interact. Through image messages or text messages within the Eyek Magelang Community in the Facebook Group. In Magelang City, there is

an Eyek Magelang Community that focuses on exchanging information about the needs within the community. In terms of communication, research is a crucial foundation in strengthening the community on Facebook. So that it can help understand the preferences, language, and communicative needs of community members. Allows for the delivery of information and promotions that are more targeted. The community can adjust its communication strategy, both in delivering promotional content and interactions between community members [11].

Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand the communication patterns of Eyek Magelang Community in Facebook Group. A purposive sampling technique was used to select informants who are active and representative in community interactions. Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and content documentation. Interviews were conducted with 4 respondents, namely eyek group members, eyek group admin, group members who joined and group members who have posted. With the characteristics of all members joining the group. The data analysis process is by collecting data, reducing data, presenting data and drawing conclusions. Data triangulation was used to compare observation data with interview data. It also compares interview data with data from documentation. And finally comparing data from various informants.

Results

Based on the research data search process, there are several findings obtained from informants for researchers. So that researchers found several findings including.

Management of the eyek community Facebook Group and Magelang vegetable traders

1. There is Admin. The Facebook group of the Eyek Community and Magelang Vegetable Traders is managed by several people who act as admins. The admin is responsible for maintaining the smoothness and order of the group. This was expressed by the admin in the Facebook group.

“The role of the admin can ensure that the group runs according to its intended purpose and rules.” (interview with source 1, September 15, 2023).

2. Admin Tasks. The duties of an admin include filtering incoming posts, ensuring that posts are in accordance with group rules, deleting inappropriate posts, and blocking members who violate the rules. Admins are also responsible for answering questions and assisting members, as well as holding activities and events to strengthen community ties within the group. This condition was expressed by a group admin who had deleted a post in the group because it was not in accordance with the eyek community.

“I once deleted a post selling motorbikes. Yes, I do need a motorbike, but more precisely, I sell vegetables”. (interview with source 1, September 15, 2023).

Group rules for the eyek community and Magelang vegetable traders

The Facebook Group of Eyek Community and Magelang Vegetable Traders has several rules that must be obeyed by all members. These rules are made to maintain the smoothness and order of the group.

1. Post Filter. Posts that enter the group will be filtered first by the admin. Posts that do not comply with group rules will be deleted.
2. Community Privacy. The community that is currently allowed to join temporarily is only for street vendors and retail traders. It can be justified with the aim of strengthening community ties and maintaining friendly relations. This decision was taken after deliberation among community members, considering that the preferences and interests of traders tend to be similar and easier to agree on, than with other groups such as the general public.

“The purpose of our community is to support each other and strengthen relationships. Well, after we discussed it together, for now we will focus on our traveling and retail traders. Because, if the profession is the same, it is easier to connect and agree on many things.” (interview with source, September 15, 2023).

Topics for discussion

The topics of discussion in the Eyek Community and Magelang Vegetable Traders Facebook Group are varied, including:

1. Closeness of Friendship. In the Facebook Community, Group Members exchange news and humorous stories. One example, members of the eyek group can share conditions in the field related to sales made by each trader (Figure 1). Just like the facts that have been conveyed by one of the informants in the field.

“Yes, usually about daily matters, or selling things or sometimes getting profit or loss, I often post photos like that or mocking friends hahaha or joking with friends, yes, like that, sis, I joke a lot.” (interview with source 1, September 15, 2023).



Figure 1. Example of eyek news post

2. Buying and Selling Needs. Group members can sell and share price ranges. In the group, fellow eyek traders can comment and discuss it directly. As an example of a topic, one of the eyek traders needs vegetables/fruits as a trading need (Figure 2).

Then the informant also gave an example of a sentence that is usually used for selling on Facebook.

“For example, does anyone need tomatoes, chilies, or onions? Please comment, who knows I can help.” (interview with source 2, September 14, 2023).



Figure 2. Example of buying and selling needs post

3. Operational Needs. Another finding is the operational needs indicator, widely discussed in the Facebook Community of Magelang Eyek and Vegetable Traders. Where the information contains several operational needs needed by eyek traders or vegetable traders. One of them is like a used eyek cart used for eyek traders' mobile sales (Figure 3). Then the informant also conveyed according to the facts.

“Yeah, most of the time I’m just talking about mawon, sis, if I’m in that eyek group. Most just share the kerombong nopo vegetables and ngoten niku mawon.” (interview with source 1, 15 September 2023).



Figure 3. Example operational needs posting example

4. Solution to problem. Another topic of discussion in the group is problem solving, the community on Facebook also acts as a problem solver for eyek traders (Figure 4). Eyek traders can ask their needs directly in the community, and will get feedback through comments from other eyek members. For example, eyek traders need used motorbikes to practice trading or the need for a trading area that has not been mastered by previous eyek traders. As conveyed by the informant, the community also functions as information if one of the eyek traders needs help.

“Yes, for example, if a tire is leaking or something, it’s still often conveyed in the group like that.” (interview with source 2, September 14, 2023).



Figure 4. Example problem solving post example

5. Current Issues. Group members can discuss current issues that are hot among the community or among the eyek themselves. One example of a discussion topic in the Eyek Magelang Traders Community Facebook Group is cheap vegetables that are deliberately thrown away (Figure 5). The admin of the Eyek Magelang Traders Community appealed not to imitate this activity. This not only has a negative impact on farmers but is also experienced by eyek traders. It is feared that with the cheap price of vegetables, customers will estimate the price unilaterally. Such as field evidence conveyed by one of the informants.

“Yes, because if it is not thrown away. For example, if it is returned to the trader, it will be sold again tomorrow the vegetables are not fresh and can lower the price.” (interview with source 2, September 15, 2023).

Apart from that, the informant also said,

“Because for vegetables, they must be harvested at harvest time. For example, if it is only 5 days late, it can’t be tolerated and eventually it will rot. What else can happen if it is not thrown away and eventually it will rot.” (interview with source 3, September 15, 2023).



Figure 5. Example current issue post example

Discussion

Communication patterns

Previous research has revealed, element music group is an example of a small community with a common goal. This research reveals the communication patterns used by this group in maintaining its existence. Two communication patterns were identified: Wheel Pattern, where communication is centered on the group leader, Ferdy Tahier, while other members can only communicate through the leader; and Y Pattern, where some members communicate with each other before relaying information to the leader. These two patterns indicate the existence of open communication channels that are not maximally utilized by members. This aligns with group interaction theory, which emphasizes the importance of communication in building relationships and achieving common goals, where the Wheel pattern reflects high dependence on the leader, and the Y Pattern reflects limited interaction between members, both of which affect group cohesion and the decision-making process with limited communication channels hindering the exploration of decision alternatives [12].

In the context of the Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders Community Facebook Group, a hybrid communication pattern was found that combines elements of the star and wheel patterns. The admin acts as a leader who filters and approves each upload before it can be seen by other members, creating centralized control like in the wheel pattern. The role of the admin is shown in the sentence.

“In the past, there was a post related to a motorbike promo but it was not useful for us, so I deleted it” and “I just thought, sis, why don’t we delete photos from customers or traders?” (interview with source 3 on September 15, 2023)

The sentence shows that the community admin has the authority to control the content of the community and delete posts that are considered inappropriate. Once the post is approved, interaction between members becomes free and inclusive, allowing members to comment and discuss directly with each other, reflecting the star pattern. Interaction between members is exemplified by one of the group members who once sent a post in the Facebook group in the form of a joke photo and was responded to by other group members.

This hybrid communication pattern provides a balance between control and freedom within the community. Admins ensure that communication remains structured and focused on group goals, while members have space to interact and collaborate more freely once information is approved. This model not only increases communication effectiveness but also strengthens bonds and cooperation among community members. This hybrid communication pattern between the star and wheel patterns is similar to the findings of [13] who analyzed communication patterns in Info Cegatan Boyolali (ICB) on the Facebook platform. Rahmat found that the wheel communication pattern involves filtering information uploads in the group, where each member must wait for approval from the admin to join or share uploads, with a centralized information

flow so that the flow of information is organized and reduces hoaxes in the group [14]. Meanwhile, the star communication pattern allows for more flexible community meetings and activities, where each member can interact with anyone without limitations.

Another study by [15] also shows the application of a hybrid communication pattern between stars and wheels at PT X. Communication from the leadership in the form of work instructions given to employees and employees can communicate horizontally to other employees through work meetings. This communication pattern is considered to have a positive side, namely increasing member loyalty to the company, creating a more relaxed work situation, reducing stress, and having the willingness to communicate with each other when Covid 19 attacks [16]. Reviewed through the Facebook group of Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders Community, one of the sources mentioned that the Facebook group can create a more relaxed environment, can communicate between members, get entertainment and support. This is explained through sentences.

“Yes, that’s right, sis, what we have in common is that we both get entertainment and strengthen our friendship” and “by supporting each other, building friendships, communicating with others.” (interview with resource person 4 on September 16, 2023).

Salsabila research [17] also explains the wheel and star communication pattern in her research on employees of the East Oku Regency Communication and Information Service which occurred in the WhatsApp community group. The application of this communication pattern is considered to have a role in the process of efforts to improve employee performance [17].

Interaction analysis and group development theory

To analyze the interaction and development patterns in the Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders Community Facebook Group, the Decision Emergence model proposed by B. Aubrey Fisher was used.

1. Orientation Phase

In the initial phase, group members introduced themselves and started getting to know each other. Posts about vegetable prices and lighthearted discussions help in building familiarity and forming initial social bonds (Figure 6). These discussions usually start with simple information about vegetable stocks or other traders’ needs that spark conversations. Some members also often share trading tips or how to maintain the quality of vegetables to keep them fresh. This is in accordance with the orientation phase in interaction theory where members get to know each other and identify each other’s roles in the group as mentioned by a group member interviewee who had posted in the group in the sentence.

“I’m just adding friends, exchanging information, yes, cheap vegetable prices, the information is for friends only” (interviewee 1 on October 20, 2023).



Figure 6. Example of orientation post

2. Conflict Phase

When differences of opinion arise, such as in discussions over the division of selling areas or the determination of the price of vegetables that have dropped dramatically, the group enters the conflict phase. Members express their views, and through discussion, they work towards consensus. This conflict is not necessarily negative, but rather an important part of the group's development process that helps in reaching better agreements. Examples of cases that often arise are when a member feels that his territory is being taken over by another trader or when one member lowers the price too low, which can hurt other traders (Figure 7). One of the group members said.

“Yes sure, about the territory sometimes there are protests, but yo resolved. For example, the area of Rejowinangun Market is divided, so if dodolan can't overlap, it will be noisy” (interviewee 2 on October 22, 2023).

Through this sentence, the Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders community has also faced the conflict phase. In this phase, the group admin plays a role in reminding members to comply with the existing agreement. The admin's role is elaborated in the sentence.

“If there is a problem with the division of territories, please report directly to the admin, let it be arranged. There is no need to make a scene in the group, it should be resolved properly” (interview with informant 3 on October 22, 2023).

Apart from territorial issues, another conflict that arises is pricing. Some members feel disadvantaged if the selling price is too low because it can lower the standard price in the market. In these cases, the admin usually calls the members concerned to discuss and reach a solution together.



Figure 7. Example of conflict post

3. Emergence Phase

After going through conflict, the group reaches the emergence phase where agreements begin to form. Members begin to cooperate more effectively, such as in problem-solving territorial divisions or determining a common selling price. The agreements reached help in creating a clearer structure and more purposeful goals. The emergence phase in the Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders community is demonstrated through a joint decision to set a minimum price for vegetables so as not to undermine market prices. A follow-up agreement made by members was to set a base price that all traders must agree upon. Another case is the arrangement of selling schedules so that each member has the same opportunity to trade in a strategic location (Figure 8). The statement was conveyed by the community admin in the sentence.

“yes, like this sist, the minimum vegetable price has been agreed upon at 5000/kg, so that there will be no slamming of the price. If you violate it, we will immediately give you a warning” (interview with interviewee 4 on October 25, 2023).

In this context, the post marks the initial phase of the emergence of a collective awareness of the importance of maintaining market prices. Although it did not explicitly form an agreement, the post triggered several important things. Such as increased coordination, where the post serves as a reminder for all members to maintain price stability, and opens up space for information exchange on market prices in other areas.



Figure 8. Example of emergence post

4. Reinforcement Phase

The last phase is reinforcement, where agreements and norms that have been formed are strengthened. In the Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders community, this phase is seen through regular monitoring of vegetable prices and rotation of agreed selling areas (Figure 9). Members remind each other if someone violates the rules, and the group admin actively monitors posts that have the potential to cause conflict. A case of visible reinforcement is when vegetable prices start to drop suddenly, the group admin immediately makes an announcement to maintain the agreed minimum price.

“Girls, don’t lower the price below 5000. Let’s keep it together, don’t slam the price, everyone will lose” (Interviewee 5 on October 27, 2023).

In addition, the division of traders’ areas is also continuously monitored. If a new member violates the agreement, the community takes immediate action.

“If someone selling in my place without permission, we will immediately reprimand them, if they insist, we will meet again in the group” (interview with informant 6 on October 29, 2023).

With this reinforcement, the Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders community has succeeded in maintaining solidarity and the sustainability of the joint business.



Figure 9. Example of reinforcement post

Implications of communication patterns in social media

1. Improving Communication Efficiency

By using social media such as Facebook, communication within the community becomes more efficient and organized. Information related to stock items, vegetable prices, and changes to selling schedules can be disseminated quickly. Community members can respond in real-time, speeding up the decision-making process. For example, when vegetable prices drop dramatically, the group admin can make an announcement immediately and members respond with collective action to stabilize prices. This speed minimizes losses and increases the community's adaptability to dynamic market changes.

2. Collaboration and Social Support

Social media opens up space for closer collaboration among community members. Through open discussions in Facebook groups, members can give each other advice and solutions regarding operational issues, such as the division of selling areas or strategies for dealing with price drops. This social support creates a sense of community and solidarity among members. For example, when a member has difficulty distributing goods or faces technical difficulties, other members often offer to help, either in the form of a loan of goods or advice on practical solutions. This collaboration not only improves individual welfare but also strengthens the position of the community as a whole.

3. Widespread Information Dissemination

Social media allows for the rapid and widespread dissemination of information, reaching all community members simultaneously. Information on price reductions, new business opportunities, and community policies can be immediately known by all members without the constraints of distance. In addition, social media allows members to share news from other regions, providing greater insight into market trends in different

locations. This helps members make smarter and more timely business decisions. For example, if there is a trend of rising prices in a neighboring market, community members can anticipate by keeping more stock to earn maximum profits. This wide dissemination of information also strengthens the community's competitiveness in a competitive market.

Conclusion

This study aims to understand the communication patterns in the Facebook Group of Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders Community. The research findings show that the communication patterns in this community are hybrid, combining elements of star and wheel patterns. The admin acts as a leader who filters and approves posts before they can be seen by other members, creating centralized control like in the wheel pattern. Once the post is approved, interaction between members becomes free and inclusive, allowing members to comment and discuss directly with each other, reflecting the star pattern. In addition, the implementation of the hybrid communication pattern in the Facebook Group of Magelang Vegetable & Eyek Traders Community brings various significant benefits, especially in the digital realm. Digital platforms such as Facebook make it easier for community members to access information. With this group, members can easily get the latest information, whether it is related to price updates, operational needs, or current issues. This information can be accessed anytime and anywhere, thus increasing the efficiency of time and resources. Facebook groups are useful for expanding networks for traders. Through the group, members can connect with other traders, including those outside their business circle. This interaction opens up new collaboration opportunities that are not only beneficial for individual businesses, but also for the growth of the community as a whole. Another benefit is strengthening branding and community identity. This Facebook group serves as an effective digital space to build a more solid community image. The existence of the group also increases the visibility of the community in cyberspace, making this community better known to the wider public. This shows that social media can be an effective tool in building a more modern and adaptive community ecosystem.

This hybrid communication model provides a balance between control and freedom within the community. Admins ensure that communication remains structured and focused on the group's goals, while members have the space to interact and collaborate more freely once information is approved. The study also showed that the communication patterns within this community are in line with the Interaction Analysis and Group Development Theory proposed by B. Aubrey Fisher. This community has gone through phases of orientation, conflict, emergence and reinforcement.

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