

The Meaning of Information Accumulation in Digital Conversation Spaces: Study on WhatsApp Application Group Communication Medium

Abdullah Khusairi*

Universitas Islam Negeri Imam Bonjol, Padang, Indonesia

* Corresponding author: abdullahkhusairi@uinib.ac.id

Article History:

Recived: June 16, 2024

Accepted: June 21, 2024

Published: June 25, 2024

How to cite this article:

Khusairi, Abdullah. 2024.

"The Meaning of
Information Accumulation
in Digital Conversation
Spaces: Study on WhatsApp
Application Group
Communication Medium."
*IJoRIS: International Journal
of Religious and
Interdisciplinary Studies*
1(1): 21-46.

Copyright © 2024 by
IJoRIS: International Journal
of Religious and
Interdisciplinary Studies.

This publication
is licensed under a CC BY-
SA.

This study explores the dynamics of group communication and information in the digital conversation space, using descriptive qualitative research methods, through participatory data collection and interviews with 112 netizens who are members of WhatsApp Groups. Meanwhile, the analysis of the results uses the theory of *Critic Analysis Discourse* (CDA) Ruth Wodak (1980). Wodak said that every discourse needs to be examined by the reproductive process, the social and historical context, as well as the power relations and ideologies that make up the discourse. Supported by the *Media of Dependency Theory* theory carried by Melvin L. Defleur, Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1989). The results show that the dominance of active members in the digital conversation space, which takes place quickly all the time, in WhatsApp Groups (WAGs) creates a buildup of informational messages. The information is ignored by passive group members, this is evidence of inhibition and delay in communication goals. Research findings show that there are more passive members than active members. The dominance of active members in the discourse in the WAG has shown the picture of the WAG of unbalanced group communication between members. There is a certain individual discourse power in each WAG.

Keywords: Digital Conversation Room, WhatsApp Groups, Critical Discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

WhatsApp ranks at the top as the most used social media by netizens in the world. According to data released by WeAreSocial, WhatsApp has been in the position of 15.7% of the 5.16 billion internet users in the world at the end of 2022. Followed by Instagram

Copyright© 2024 Abdullah Khusairi

This article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike 4.0
International license. (CC BY-SA 4.0)

14.8%, Facebook, 14.5%, WeChat 11.4%, Douyin 5.1%, TikTok 4.3% and Twitter 4.3%. (wearesocial.com, 2022). WeAreSocial also released that there were 5.44 billion mobile phone users at the beginning of 2023. This is equivalent to 64.4 percent of the world's total population is now online. This position soon changed the development and rapid growth of internet users every year. (wearesocial.com, 2023).

The name WhatsApp is a *pun* on What's up. WhatsApp is a simple, secure, and reliable messaging and calling app that can be downloaded to phones around the world for free. WhatsApp was built by Brian Acton and Jan Koum, former Yahoo! employees, in 2009 under the business flag of WhatsApp Inc. ([whatsapp.com](https://www.whatsapp.com), 2023). Then it grew rapidly until it had a valuation of \$19 Billion and was acquired by Mark Zuckerberg, the owner of Facebook.com and Instagram.com (bbc.com, 2023).

Whatsapp is also the peak in the use of social media in Indonesia. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kemenkominfo) together with the Katadata Insight Center (KIC) noted that the social media with the longest duration of use in Indonesia is the WhatsApp application. Average use is 2-8 hours a day. Followed by the TikTok application with an average usage of 2 hours per day, Youtube also averages 2 hours per day. This is followed by Instagram and Facebook with a duration of 42.4% and 41.4%, respectively. (dataindonesia.id, 2023). Internet users in Indonesia have reached 78.19 percent in 2023 or reached 215,626,156 people out of a total population of 275,773,901 people (apjii.or.id, 2023).

The presence of smartphones on the market at affordable prices makes it easy for the public to own and access the internet. On smartphones, various applications are available, including various social media (Baym, 2015). Social media manufacturers are competing to complete features on the application so that users are more comfortable in operating it. The information technology revolution has brought major changes in people's social lives (Kristiyono, 2015: 23-30). Digitalization is inevitable in all sectors, resulting in unprecedented disruptions. This era of information abundance is driven by the information technology industry which targets all circles. The momentum of the Covid-19 pandemic in the world has also increased support for the use of higher information technology. The problem arises here, the attire has not been supported by the evolution of culture as a consumer who is in accordance with the rules of use of the technology. There is a gap in individual attitudes and actions. The information technology revolution has brought life into two realms, real life and virtual life (Gunawan, 2021). Life in the cyber community is more lively with digital conversation rooms, video call facilities, image sending, and social media with interesting features to use at any time.

WhatsApp is not the first to be present as a digital conversation space. Before its presence in 2009, netizens around the world used the Blackberry application, Facebook Messenger, Yahoo Messenger, etc. WhatsApp is now being used as a trend that ended the success of the previous application. WhatsApp is now competing closely with the Telegram application, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, etc. (Sulianta, 2015). Manufacturers of these applications compete to understand the needs of the community in using information technology, so that new features always appear that can make information so quickly sent in various forms. Starting from text, photos to videos. One of the facilities provided by the WhatsApp manufacturer is, each user can create a conversation group; WhatsApp Groups (WAG).

WAG is basically a means of group communication in the digital space. The gathering of individuals in one conversation room, discussing matters that are of interest to all individuals. Group communication in the context of communication is an advanced form of intrapersonal and interpersonal communication. Group communication itself also involves interpersonal communication (Tutiasri, 2016; Utama, 2018). Communication in digital conversation spaces on social media is essentially the development and enrichment of group communication, which previously required space and time.

This is where the problem arises, when group communication is no longer face-to-face without any different time and place. There is a limitation of the medium's ability to send messages (Willis, Khusairi, Yazan; 2022). Some of the things that make the group communication process fail, namely: the ability of non-verbal expression, although the presence of emoticons in each application has been tried , there are limitations and accuracy of the information conveyed, unevenness in the interpretation of semiotic meanings, the activeness of group members and the influence of time zones. (Khusairi, 2020). This became a serious problem without being realized by members of the communication group within the WAG. When there is a debate until the conflict leads to the legal side, then there is an awareness of the limitations of communication in the digital conversation room (Jasman; Khairul; Interview, 2021).

This study explores the opinions of group members in the process of group communication and information in the digital conversation space. It includes being active as a member of a group, the themes followed, the things that are liked and disliked in the digital conversation space through the approach of the department of media theory and discourse critic analysis.

2. Methods

This type of research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative field research using the *Critic Discourse Analysis* (CDA) theory approach of Ruth Wodak (2015) supported by *the theory* of Dependency of Media (Dependency of Media) proposed by Melvin L. Defleur and Sandra Ball-Rokeach (1989). According to Wodak, every discourse needs to be examined in terms of the reproductive process, social and historical context, as well as the power and ideological relationships that shape the discourse (Wodak, 2015). Meanwhile, Melvin and Ball revealed that communication media affects interaction in groups. The factors of speed, clarity, and availability of communication media can affect the effectiveness of communication and decision-making in groups (Ball and Melvin, 1989). The communication and information process in the WhatsApp Group space will be analyzed using the opinions of both in a complementary combination.

Data collection was carried out through structured interviews through digital conversation means with 112 netizens who used WhatsApp. In addition to structured interviews, the researcher used a participatory method in the WAG to observe and participate in the dynamics of the group's communication. Researchers participated in 93 more WAGs, with a variety of groups of most, moderate and inactive in the communication process. The dynamics of communication in WAG are observed and observed and data is collected which is then reduced and compiled systematically. It is then analyzed to draw conclusions.

3. Result and Discussion

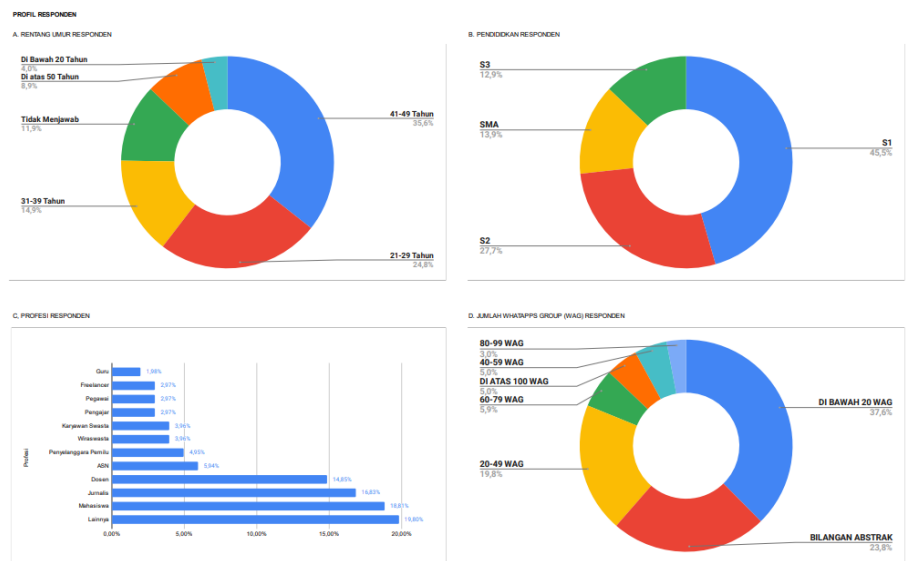
The results of digital interviews with 112 netizens revealed the fact that the digital conversation room has a number of problems in the group communication process behind the optimism, smoothness in its utilization, and the common goals to be achieved. The problem is the continuous hoarding of information, at all times by the dominant individual in the WAG. This individual power brings discourses that other WAG members do not like. Often WAG members want to leave the conversation room, but they consider breaking up friendships, also afraid of losing the latest information. The path they take is to be silent, just be a silent reader of incoming messages or let all the conversation information pile up. As shown in the following image, the buildup on WAG is marked with the number 99+ on the WhatsApp application. It takes time to open and read the entire message, but it is rare. According to the respondents' confession, they tend to delete messages and mark messages that are useful for keeping.

A total of 72 (74.74%) netizens admitted that they were able and mastered the operation of WhatsApp features well, and did not find any significant obstacles, except for

technical things such as damaged smartphones and jammed internet networks. WhatsApp does issue features that are easy to understand, like other android applications. This response admitted that he was very active in using this application so that he understood quickly in using it. If there are still people who don't know, then immediately ask the search engine, then when you try it directly, you can. Only a few stated that they were not so familiar with some features because there was an update from the manufacturer. (Amen; Willis; Ilhamdy; Nickel; Wulan; Faulina, Hartomi, Ficky; Interview, 2023) According to them, some of these poorly understood features are because they are rarely used.

In addition to using text (90.1), it also uses emoticons (5.0%), video calls (2.0%). The rest admitted that they could use it but did not master it well, so it was not optimal. These netizens also have other conversation apps, such as Telegram, Wechat, Facebook Messenger, etc. The netizens who were used as resource persons for this study were high school educated (13.9%), S1 (45.5%), S2 (27.7%), S3 (12.9%). They are members of 10-100 WhatsApp Groups, with a margin above 100 as much as 5.0%; 80-99 WAG as much as 3.0%; 60-79 WAG 5.9%; 40-59 as much as 5.0%; 20-49 as much as 19%. Under 20 WAGs as much as 37.6% and free variation as much as 23 percent. The age of these respondents was under 20th as much as 4.0%, above 20-29th as much as 24.8%, above 30-39th as much as 14.9%, above 41-49th as much as 35%, above 50th as much as 8.9%. As many as 11.9 percent did not answer. Meanwhile, the variety of their professions is journalists, copywriters, digital creators, lecturers, teachers, farmers, self-employed, S1 and S2 students, private employees, and housewives. As stated in the following table:

Table 1
Netizen Profile as a Respondent



Based on the critical discourse analysis theory proposed by Ruth Wodak and the media dependency theory proposed by Ball-Rokeach and Melvin, the author systematically compiles the results and discussions of this research in order to get a complete picture of the dynamics of group communication that takes place according to the perspective of this research, namely: *WAG Main Interaction House, Vehicle for Reproduction of Discourse from Public Space, Discourse Market and Ideological Battle Room, Discourse preferences in WAG, as well as experiences in WAG, advantages and disadvantages of WAG.*

3.1 WAG becomes the Main Interaction House

Sandra Ball-Rokeach and Melvin DeFleur revealed that the dependence on the media occurs because individuals cannot directly obtain information except using the media. The social context of this theory was put forward when mass media was becoming the main trend at that time in 1976. However, this theory can still be tested when the media is present in the technological revolution and the information industry. Social media in the form of sophisticated applications is the basis of this dependence. The freedom to

choose information channels is increasingly open and far from the prediction of this theory, but one important thing is that this theory is still close and humane about access to information needs. Dependence on the media is actually getting higher but not mass media but social media, one of which is WAG. As the main home today to interact and get information for netizens.

This research proves that all netizens who were used as respondents answered that they really need social media, one of which is WAG and is a member of group communication in the digital conversation room, WAG. Since owning a smartphone and installing this application, netizens have never left it again. WAG has become a part of the lives of netizens all over the world. WhatsApp has become the main interaction house for netizens (Makmur, Interview, 2023). The dependence on WhatsApp social media is very high because there is a need for interaction and a shared network is present here. Even though they still use other applications, WhatsApp is still active because everyone who is part of their lives uses it (Aidina; Nabillah; Indrawadi; Jamil; Solihin; Awang, interview, 2023). This supports the results of APJII's research on public penetration of social media use (apjii.org, 2023).

Since knowing and owning the WhatsApp application, netizens have never let go and need it as a means of communication to follow public trends. Understanding and knowledge of existing and newly released WhatsApp features makes it comfortable to continue using WhatsApp (Fitri; Varindra; Amen; Rahyu; Tobris; Wafi; Attamimi; Fadilla; Jalpida, Interview, 2023). As for the WAG facility, the netizens in this study revealed that they do not leave the group and tend to choose to remain silent if they do not like the content of the conversation or let it pile up (Trany, Nuraini, Nisa, Ikhsan; Interview: 2023).

The first time I used WAG 2018. When I was still in the 1st grade of SMK, with the existence of WAG I had a joint communication with junior high school alumni such as going to hold a Bukber. At the same time, it is also to discuss groups that are given assignments from the school. (Niken, Interview: 2023)

Niken is now a female student, making WAG a part of her life because information on college classes has been made every semester. Along with 20 other netizens in this study, Niken is a generation that has not met digital conversation spaces before, such as yahoo messenger, and has little contact with *blackberry messenger*. They only know one main application specifically for personal-to-personal conversations: WhatsApp. Although other social media places upload photos and short videos using the Instagram application (Niken, 2023). WAG is a mandatory application because it is a place to discuss lectures and receive information about classes and lecture materials (Tobris, Interview, 2023).

The research, which involved netizens from various regions in Indonesia, said that since the presence of the WhatsApp application in 2009, it has been used on a limited basis, there are still many who use blackberry mobile phones (Aidina Fitra: Interview, 2023). A year later, in 2010 it began *to boom* and move public from the *blackberry messenger* application. Social media app developer based in Waterloo, Ontario, Canada (blackberry.com, 2023). Market intervention on mobile phone usage greatly determines whether an application is loved or not. The affordability of mobile phones has beaten the blackberry mobile market. This is according to the admission of netizens, in 2015 the public began to move to mobile smartphones (Hendra Makmur, Interview, 2023).

The first time I used WhatsApp was around 2015, after the use of organizational friends switched from using the BBM application (Blackberry Messenger (BBM) to WhatsApp, and at that time all organizational conversation activities were gathered and used each other using WhatsApp Groups. Putra Chaniago, S.Sos., M.Ikom; Interview, 2023).

Respondents in this study aged 19-29 years have been using WhatsApp since their school days, coupled with their college days and the Covid-19 pandemic. WAG is used as a learning medium and forces respondents to use WAG facilities from teachers and lecturers (Nabila; Nuraini; Zikra; Interview, 2023). WAG is a part of people's lives at all ages, used for conversations of friendship groups, families, lecture halls, school alumni, organizations, friends of one profession, one office, hobby etc. In addition, there is a WAG that is made tentatively because there is an event, after it is completed, the group is disbanded.

It's been 7 years, offered by his wife and relatives. At first, I was not interested because I didn't understand. After knowing, I was happy and made WAG media in running several organizations. (Hifzon; Interview, 2023)

Media dependency theory recognizes that mass media not only affects individuals, but also interacts with existing social structures. The same applies to social media applications on smartphones. The formation of the WAG community is proof of its dependence on the media. Respondents admitted that they had been admitted to WAG by friends, relatives, colleagues and organizational networks. Some were immediately invited without prior notice.

For the first time I joined WAG about 6th ago. First time using WAG when I was 15 years old. My first group at that time was still relatively small, only consisting of 7 members. At that time, I was immediately added as a member without any prior request. (Trany; Nuraini; Chintia, Interview, 2023)

This study found one of the phenomenal WAGs, which has been present since 2015. WAG *Tukang Ota Paten* (TOP) 100, initially consisted of only 100 netizens, but along with the development of features and facilities from the manufacturer of this application, it increased to 275 members. They consist of academics, West Sumatra Provincial Government officials, socio-political activists, advocates, politicians, national entrepreneurs, journalists, etc. This group is very active 24 hours a day (Jasman, Khairul, Interview, 2023). If the mass media is able to shape public opinion, influence political policies, or influence popular culture, the WhatsApp Group TOP 100 is able to mobilize its members to make donations, publish books, hold seminars, and break the fast together.



We will publish a second book. The first book, *Spree Patent; Hot Debate in the West Sumatra Digital Space*, (Wooden House; Padang 2021). The second book does not have a title yet but has been designed. The first book is very useful for recording emerging debates and development ideas for West Sumatra. (Khairul Jasmi; Jasman Rizal, Interview 2023).

The heated debate about politics and policy in the TOP 100 WhatsApp Group never stops. The reproduction of discourse is very high. The transition of conversation from one theme to another is immediate, even though the active one is only that (Jasman, Interview 2023). It was too hot, so they had to report each other to the police. Admins have to deal with the law. Due to the battle of ideas and interests in the group, the admins make rules for their members (see Appendix). Since then, the debate has not stopped but reduced the dispute to the point of leaving the group.

Based on the recognition of the respondents above, dependence on the media, especially social media, is not only due to the information in it but also the relationship

between individuals in groups, both small and large. Small groups within social media help the intensity of conversations about daily necessities and news from, for and by their fellow group members. While large groups tend to be non-directional because there is no moderator of the conversation. The effectiveness of a WAG digital conversation room is achieved when there is an active guide from the admin, closed and limited membership, between members who have met in person.

When WAG has developed and is filled with members with very high differences, never met, across age limits, education, professions, at that time there is a speed of information in the group that immediately makes messages buried from time to time until thousands of messages are unread. The speed of sending messages is not accompanied by the speed of the recipient in reading the message so that the intent of the information provided does not reach the recipient. Meanwhile, in the digital conversation room, there are more passives. Passive members are not and are reluctant to open WAGs because they are far behind the discourse being discussed.

3.2 Vehicle for Reproduction of Discourse from Public Space

In the WAG digital conversation room, individuals amplify news from developing news in the mass media and in other public spaces. Individuals share information that allegedly has the same interests as him so that others can be affected (Jasmi; Prosperous; Body; 2023). The information is in the form of news websites from mainstream online media registered with the press council and some are not. Mainstream online media is media that has great influence and clearly has an information industry network, while online media that are not registered are media that tend to be certain political partisans, and some are even managed unprofessionally like mainstream media (dewanpres.or.id, 2023).

Information from online media that is not recorded in the Press Council can be doubtfully produced without professional journalism governance. This tends to be prone to hoaxes and fakenews (Makmur; Aidina: Interview, 2023). Even so, reproduction from another room to the conversation room is very positive and useful as initial information to continue looking for a more valid one.

Indeed, it is a reproduction of problems in other public spaces. Like religious discourse, the exact identity of religious schools is associated with the national political situation. Scientific discourse, state discourse, life discourse. Actually, the problem is not the discourse but the way people respond to the discourse. All discourses must be interesting, as a source of knowledge. But if what happens seems to be just a monologue. (Izuddin, Interview, 2023)

Since the presence of TikTok, SnackVideo, followed by Youtube Shorts, as well as videos from Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter have also become amplification material by dominant individuals in WhatsApp Groups. Netizens responded that the amplification sometimes helped but more did not. Interestingly, however, the discourses are reproduced again in the conversation in the form of discussion (Ilhamdy; Suryadi; Akbar; Syafira; Zulfendri; Fata; Maryulis; Danil; Afrinaldi, 2023).

Social media communication can affect the effectiveness of communication and decision-making in groups (Sandra and Melvin, 1967). The presence of social media as a digital conversation space, has brought significant changes in life, one of which is as social capital for political, religious, social, economic and cultural interests (Blanchard & Horan, 2015). Individuals in general strongly control their dependence on media according to their preferences for groups that offer their presence or the individuals themselves who create the groups.

The speed of information (Ball and Melvin, 1989) is not able to affect group members because the digital conversation room is no longer a comfortable place to discuss because they have different interests. There is no expected effectiveness for the sender of the message into the digital conversation room because the only one who receives it is an active member. In digital communication, often important information or context can be missed. This can lead to group members not fully understanding what is being talked about or feeling left behind.

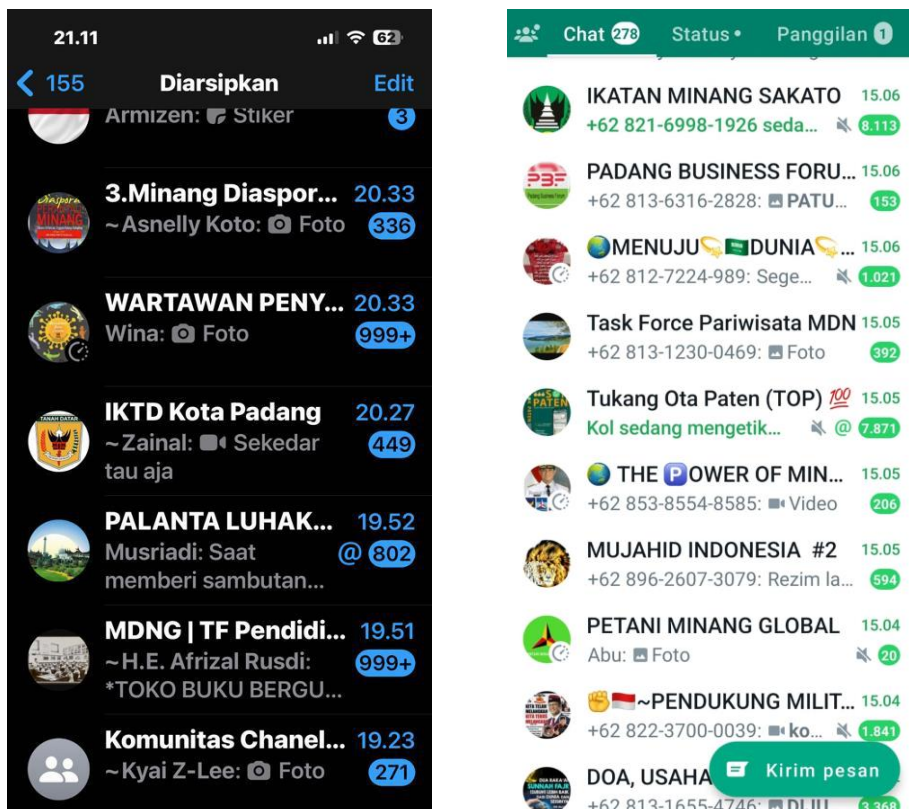
The issue of power politics ahead of the 2024 election is very compulsively discussed in WhatsApp Group. Not only in the group containing politicians but also academics, journalists and even mothers. Sharing political activities is most often carried out by politicians in groups. Although it is irrelevant, it is forced to consume information from group members. Some active group members will chimed in in the form of appreciation and criticism of the content of the information shared. There will be a lot of discussion before something new is forced to be discussed.

Wodak stated that political discourse is built by using focus groups and polls to test the popularity of policies and messages before being conveyed to the public (Wodak, 2009). WAG is often a medium to convey the rally of various survey institutions of the pair of presidential candidates and vice presidential candidates (Bacapres-Bawacapres) is most often shared to the WhatsApp Group as information for members, but when explored further, the members who divide have a preference for the winner in the survey. Basically, the rally results of the survey of presidential candidates, regional head couples, and legislative members became campaign material. This means that political discourse is reproduced from within and also from outside the WAG (Roni; Azwar; Interview,

2023), usually begins with information from online media that is shared in the group. Then it was chimed in by other members who were interested in giving a response. The heated debate always starts from here on the WAG which is filled by politicians and already has attitudes and ideologies. They will respond in the form of defense and attack, according to their political preferences.

The above is in accordance with Ruth Wodak's statement about the use of spin and propaganda to manipulate public opinion and create a good image of politicians and policies (Wodak, 2009). The politicians in the WAG did just that and were ready to fight in a long and day-long debate (Jasman; Jasmi; Azwar, Interview, 2023).

Political discourse for politicians, academics, and journalists in one WAG will be able to last for a long time, being discussed for days (Jasman, Makmur, Bobi, Interview, 2023). In addition to defending the arguments of the opinions presented, the attitude of not wanting to give in and having new arguments and facts, makes the hoarding of information occur in the WAG. As seen in the following image:



All respondents admitted to being active in WAG and receiving reproduced discourse from other WAG conversation rooms, as well as from online media. The online media that is shared with WAG is generally actual news, both in accordance with the theme of WAG and not (Chintia; Bambang; Dayu; Hartomi; Mardiana; Agung, Interview, 2023). Netizens are generally also active in WAGs that are liked with certain themes, ranging from hobby WAGs to official WAGs where they work (Reza; Djoni; Nuraini, Interview, 2023).

All claim to have experience until now, actual news is often sent and telling is sometimes very useful (Vinna, Interview, 2023). In addition to being in the form of online media links, they are also sent in the form of screenshots. Usually a unique and interesting one to comment on. As an example in the following image:



One of the reasons netizens depend on the media is the need for information. The need for information is the same as daily food intake. These needs are in accordance with the habits, preferences, and environment of the netizens. Those who like the actual news, engage with media productions, will usually consume information earlier than others (Ball. Netizens at this level are group A. That is, at the level of information society, there are three groups A, B and C. which refer to the theory of consumer behavior in general based on the level of income, knowledge, education and the environment.

3.3 Discourse Market and Ideological Battle Room

Ideologies do grow in the spaces of the fight to be won and run together sometimes without realizing it. Mass media and social media are one of the markets of the ideological discourse that is being fought. (Dianto; Bakti; Rosyidin, 2021: 119-140). The discourse of power politics is very often a source of conflict and debate between individuals and each other in the WhatsApp Group. Instead of being a gathering place, WhatsApp Group became an arena for fighting all the time (Jasmi; Body, Interview; 2023). The quarrel can last for days just sleeping and resting. In fact, there are cases of debate that end up in a police complaint (Jasman, 2023).

As Wodak expressed, the use of political correctness and euphemisms to avoid controversial or sensitive topics and maintain a positive image. So all forces are launched through the medium in order to strengthen the positive image. Even carried out personal attacks and character assassinations to discredit political opponents and gain an advantage in general elections (Wodak, 2009). The WAG filled by politicians, academics, activists, such as the TOP100 created by Khairul Jasmi and Jasman Rizal proves that the political discourse battle is relentless but not divisive. Freedom of responsibility and should not be quickly offended (Azwar, Interview, 2023).

Group communication always has certain patterns. In general, each group curvatically on the Likert scale, there are individuals who are most dominant on the left side and the least dominant on the right side. There are the most arrogant on the left side and the least arrogant on the right side (Reza; Maryulis; Jalpida, Interview, 2023). Differences in political interests of power are more often the beginning of debates and even conflicts. This difference begins with the background of knowledge, ideologies that are not in line, then satirical conversations that lead to personality that have the potential to give rise to conflicts (Ardyan; Maryulis, Yendra; Interview, 2023).

When ideas are not aligned, or the conversation is already personal, it has the potential to create conflict. Especially if it already has religious understandings, political partisanship, and tribalism (Jasmi; Nasir; Aidina; Suryadi, Danil, Interview, 2023) Power politics is indeed very loved, especially ahead of the 2024 Presidential Election (Pilpres) and Legislative Member Election (Pileg). 2023-2024 is a political year that makes prospective legislative members active in the WAG. Various political news is shared with WAG, even though it is not read and piled up (Jamil; Indrawadi; interview 2023).

Differences of opinion in politics are not necessarily understandable in WAG. The reactive and responsive attitude of the members made an extraordinary but unfortunate noise, the active one was to that alone in WAG (Attamimi; Jalpida; Nasrul; Fata, Interview,

2023). Again, the issue of individual dominance in WAG is also very disturbing for others, but the attitude of wisdom and wisdom is somewhat reduced. In certain WAGs, there are always people who have a sense of humor when someone is already fighting (Jasman, 2023). Usually by sending memes, stickers and photos. As shown in the following picture:



Memes, stickers and photos are the new faces of messaging in the digital world that can be relied on to send a specific message. It could be in the form of criticism, satire, satire, etc. (Sunaryanto; Bakti; Yunita Soleha, 2022: 339-354). Practical political discourse has always attracted the most interest, both those who are indeed involved as political operators, netizens who do have political preferences, all things that happen in the public sphere are also often associated with practical politics and the candidates who have been liked before. Here, like-dislike friction is very frequent. Various arguments were put forward to break other arguments. This is not only politics nationally but also local politics. (Wulan; Judge; Erwin; Effendi; Ari, Tusrisep, Interview, 2023).

There are also netizens who don't like to argue and avoid everything when it has led to debate. That's why they choose not to be active in a certain WAG but active in another WAG. The least acceptable thing in conversation is not conflict and quarrels but also the ethics of communication (Job ; Ihsan, Interview, 2023). The contestation of the political discourse of the Presidential Election, which was shared from other rooms, also caused debate because it was produced in certain WAGs. Moving from one WAG to another is very easy. Differences in perceptions, knowledge, and preferences are forms of character

that are evident in netizens who are members of WAG. For example, they already have a tendency to openly support certain presidential candidates (Novermal; Marzul; Bambang; Ghina; Sahran; Ficky; Hartomi; Ona, Interview, 2023)

As a discourse market, in addition to politics that is always able to attract interest for netizens, it is also a religious understanding. However, the offense between the two can increasingly be called, actually not a religious debate but a political debate that uses religious issues (Mufti; Hifzon; Ababil, Interview, 2023). This is evidenced by the netizens who argue in the existing WAG, people who have certain political views. The WAG network can see netizens who are active in one WAG and also active in the other. Social network slices make one netizen with another netizen have the same WAG (Boby; Ka'bati; Irsad; Syahrul; Yendra; Ocky; Interview, 2023).

WAG that does not come into contact with conflict and quarrels means that it is a work group because there is a dispatch organizational structure. Netizens who work in one institution, have several WAGs that are very helpful in their work. For example, the election WAG for commissioners, the Public Information Disclosure WAG, the Broadcasting WAG (July; Iswanto; Nofal, Ficky, Interview, 2023). Younger respondents, students, do not debate much about politics at WAG, are not interested and more focused on contesting conversations about the world of student affairs, lecture materials, as well as things that are their hobbies, such as sports and traveling (Meysanda; Chintia, Interview, 2023).

3.4 Various WAG Experiences

An exciting experience makes WAG a prime home. Because WAG answers the need for quick information with a circle of introduction in terms of work, neighbors, college classes, professional organizations, political organizations, student organizations, families, etc. This research found new experiences for netizens because of WAG, namely: humanitarian actions, holding seminars, writing books, reunions of old friends, getting funny stickers, getting new networks, completing work together, having friends to talk to but never meeting in person. In addition, netizens admitted to having a bad experience at WAG. Hoarding information in WAG and rarely being active and willing to read it, is disturbed by political debates all the time by partisan netizens.

Some respondents replied that they had made an attitude of choosing to leave the group and breaking off the friendship because of a misunderstanding due to incompetent writing. Typos and writing based on spoken sentences. The division and division of the WAG has also occurred due to short-term politics. The most disturbing thing in the WAG of large families, there are those who compare children's achievements in various ways.

Lack of a showcase (Rahyu, Interview, 2023) This reality is related to the dominant WAG members. Usually, WAG is always the most dominant and has more confidence and more time than others.

WAG is also prone to bullying between members. However, this can be at the level of a humorous conversation so that it is not taken so seriously. The experience of sending the wrong sticker also looks funny because it is different in the conversation. This includes embarrassing experiences. The most frustrating thing is the inconsequential talk and the inclusion of friends in the WAG of fraudulent investments.

These experiences generally do not make them WAG if they are not too embarrassing and upsetting individually. Only a few people stated that they had left the WAG because they saw that they did not need it anymore and indeed severed the relationship with the group. Some also survive because of the power of attorney who is an admin group or there is a leader in the work unit. Groups like this tend to be rigid and only disseminate information and regulations related to work. There are also groups that only close the conversation channel so that it only happens one way (one way). This group can actually be said to be illegal because it is not accompanied by a decree on official channels, if there is a legal problem, it should be punished. Especially if members are not required to open and receive the information sent like passive members in a group (Joni; Bobi; Sandijal, Interview, 2023).

All respondents to this study agreed to stay in groups that were not liked because they considered the power of position and the network of friends. Active when necessary and when their name is tagged by other members. It also survives on the grounds that there is some information needed to be known in a WAG. And still have a media dependence for various things about friendships and useful information. This is in accordance with Wodak's statement about the context of power relations and ideology. WAG has a relationship of ideological power and dominance of elite groups (Wodak, 2012).

3.5 Plus Minus of WhatsApp Groups

WAG brings the near and brings the far closer. You can meet many new relationships and experiences with different people, but the slightest mistake in using language can break a friendship that has been established for a long time. (Want; Fitri; Awang; Jamil; Solihin; Interview, 2023).

The above statement of netizens actually does not only apply to WAG but also social media in general. Public behavior in using smartphones has changed the ethics and

culture of life (Arnett, Fritz, Bell: 2009). The erosion of the ethics of speaking directly somewhere together, when all individuals are more focused on their respective smartphones than enjoying togetherness. This includes a culture shock that occurs when information technology is in the hands of the public who are unaware of the importance of ethics.

The same is true for the use of language in WAG. Spoken language that is written into written language often fails to send intent. But what if done with a good written language and correctly following grammar, the message can have a big influence on the recipient. Language is an identity as well as a political force for individuals and groups (Wodak, 2012). Being a marker of social status and a weapon in influencing others. In power politics, language is always considered to be used as well as possible in accordance with the goals to be achieved.

When asked about the advantages and disadvantages of WAG, the variation of answers from netizens in the study still answered about the number of inactive members rather than active ones. Those who are not active admit to being disturbed by the dominance of individuals who show up every day and the hoarding of information by dominant individuals. If the storage settings in the WAG are incorrect, netizens run out of storage space (Ihsan; Nuraini; Sintia; Interview, 2023). Dedicated auto-save for photos and videos takes up storage space very quickly.

The advantages of WAG, according to respondents, are that there is a lot of useful and practical new information (Rahmad, Interview, 2023), coupled with gathering and discussing necessary matters (Chintia, Interview, 2023). WAG is a vehicle for certain interests (Indrawadi, Interview, 2023) both long-term and short-term. Including to get information quickly, when asked to the WAG will get random answers from the group members who need to be considered (Nabila; Faulina, Interview, 2023).

They also stated that WAG has become the most effective, efficient and practical means of communication (Reza; Amen; Prosperous; Fitra; Interview, 2023). Always make friends and always get new information. Cheap and easy to discuss, and exchange ideas, increase relationships and information. The manufacturer of WhatsApp has also created a new *voice note feature*, open for netizens to create attractive stickers according to their feelings and make the way for discussion easier without having to meet in person (Willis; Khusairi; Yazan, 2022).

WAG where they ask each other many things and have a network of friendship with distant netizens. Can update information. Gaining knowledge. No need to broadcast

messages to all netizens anymore. It's just that WAG is very crowded and rowdy. (Amin, Interview, 2023).

The criticism of WAG is that netizens send broadcasting messages that are sometimes not filtered, so some contain hoaxes. WAG is also too noisy (noisy), especially since many messages have been reposted (Suryadi; Amin, Interview, 2023). Furthermore, there are more inactive members than active ones (Yendra, Interview, 2023). Furthermore, WAG became a showcase for some netizens who were not too wise and selfish. (Rahyu, Interview, 2023).

Further criticism is that WAG is limited in recruiting members (Achmal, Interview, 2023). It is too free for netizens to send comments without a moderator (Yendra, Interview, 2023), the accumulation of information starts from this freedom and the imagination of netizens who suspect that everyone will want to read it and preferences that do not change due to the narrowing of new perspectives. This is adjacent to the echo chamber theory, a phenomenon in which individuals or groups tend to get caught up in a circle of information that confirms and reinforces their own views, while ignoring or rejecting opposing views. People tend to interact with people who share similar views, consume media that align with their views, and gain validation and support for their beliefs (Cinelli, Morales, Galeazzi, 2021). Meanwhile, in certain WAGs, there are people who have different political views and ideologies. The impact of this echo chamber is that the tendency of political preference of individuals is easy to predict (Yendra, Interview, 2023).

Every netizen admitted that he had had a bad experience at WAG, one of which was accepting and believing hoax news and fake news (Danil, Interview, 2023). This is a bad thing that makes caution increased. WAG is very prone to fraud, piracy, and has technical shortcomings in smartphones. WAG does not store on the meta group server but on their respective smartphones so that the memory is fast and the storage is fast (Tobris, Interview, 2023).

Netizens also criticized the WhatsApp application as well as the behavior of individuals within WAG. Criticism of WAGs that can only send videos in a very limited duration, takes up quite a lot of internet quota, takes a long time to read, and consumes quite a lot of memory. Sometimes the information submitted is useless. There are also many slanderous gossips, easily blasphemed by those who don't like it, negative information is quickly recorded. The drawback is that WAG in discussing becomes less effective (Achmal, Interview, 2023).

Netizens who have forgotten to control the amount of storage and the amount of internet quota used from WAG, thus making the application error because there are too many messages in the group. Hoarding information from WAG does require resilience if it is not appropriate in the governance of smartphones. It could be that the battery runs out quickly, the memory runs out quickly (Makmur, Interview, 2023). The messages that pile up make them even lazier to open and read (Melwanti, Interview, 2023). Hoax and fakenews posts are a problem in WAG (Effendi, Interview, 2023). Plus spam chats that make a fuss, in the form of donations and product promotions (Rahyu, Interview, 2023).

According to netizens, not necessarily all WAG members have the same understanding of the content of WAG. So that it causes noise among fellow WAG members, so that it becomes noisy (Marzul, Interview, 2023). So many netizens admitted that they were only dragged into WAG without being told in advance. There are unwanted groups that invite to enter without first confirmation. This is also a problem for some netizens from the perspective of communication ethics.

Even so, the netizens of this study admitted that the information shared by netizens to WAG can be enjoyed by members but certain topics are not of interest so they are left to accumulate and not be opened. Certain WAGs are not considered relevant to the needs so they are left unopened. The problems of WAG have basically been realized by netizens as a weakness that must be understood but cannot find a way out. They verify and explain that over time they will understand every message that raises doubts. The critical attitude of netizens actually still exists and is not dead.

As a result of research on teenagers in India, there is a movement to explain and clarify hoaxes and fake news that can be done by them to their closest people directly or through personal chat. This makes it easier than fighting in WAG which can cause conflict. Because semiotically, misunderstandings often arise. The best correction is directly to avoid conflict. They see WhatsApp as a suitable place to make corrections because they connect with a known audience. The research reveals how relational, cultural, and technological factors inform responses to misinformation (Malhotra, 2023). This can be a way out rather than participating in clarifying in the WAG which can create new conflicts between WAG members.

The advantages and disadvantages of WAG revealed by netizens also prove that netizens actually only understand at the stage of practical use as mentioned at the beginning of this article is not philosophically based on communication science. Philosophically as a medium of information, WAG social media can be understood to have many limitations and dangers. The speed of information cannot be received quickly after it is sent but presents a unique obstacle, there is a hoarding of information in the WAG.

4. Discussion

The results of this research show that the dominance of active members in the digital conversation space that takes place quickly all the time in WhatsApp Groups creates a buildup of informational messages. The information is ignored by passive group members and indicates an inhibition of communication goals. Research findings show that passive members are a silent majority. The dominance of active members filling the discourse within WhatsApp Groups has shown the picture of WhatsApp Group group communication that is unbalanced between members. There is the power of discourse of certain individuals in each WhatsApp Group.

The conclusion from the discussion of the results of this study is that WAG has still survived since the last decade but the information in it has begun to be eroded due to the speed of message flow. Since its presence to the public, it has been placed as the main home of interaction, followed by other social media, but it has not yet guaranteed safety and comfort. In the WAG, netizens reproduce discourse from the public space to be talked about in countless times. It could be days, according to the personal interests of all group members. This also makes WAG a discourse market where battles are to be won, including a market for power and ideological discourse, but even if it can be won, it is not necessarily acceptable to the public. Because the public already has a discourse preference.

The experiences of netizens in groups are very diverse, both negative and positive, but negative things do not make them immediately leave the conversation group. The advantages and disadvantages of groups in the WhatsApp application are very balanced and well understood by netizens. This shows that literacy skills are at an intermediate level. The common thread of all these conclusions is that in WAGs there is a pile of information that is not all acceptable to passive members. They don't care about the pile and will erase at some point. This indicates the failure of the informational message spread by the group members.

6. Conclusion

The results of this research show that the dominance of active members in the digital conversation space that takes place quickly all the time in WhatsApp Groups creates a buildup of informational messages. The information is ignored by passive group members and indicates an inhibition of communication goals. Research findings show that passive members are a silent majority. The dominance of active members filling the discourse within WhatsApp Groups has shown the picture of WhatsApp Group group

communication that is unbalanced between members. There is the power of discourse of certain individuals in each WhatsApp Group.

The conclusion from the discussion of the results of this study is that WAG has still survived since the last decade but the information in it has begun to be eroded due to the speed of message flow. Since its presence to the public, it has been placed as the main home of interaction, followed by other social media, but it has not yet guaranteed safety and comfort. In the WAG, netizens reproduce discourse from the public space to be talked about in countless times. It could be days, according to the personal interests of all group members. This also makes WAG a discourse market where battles are to be won, including a market for power and ideological discourse, but even if it can be won, it is not necessarily acceptable to the public. Because the public already has a discourse preference.

The experiences of netizens in groups are very diverse, both negative and positive, but negative things do not make them immediately leave the conversation group. The advantages and disadvantages of groups in the WhatsApp application are very balanced and well understood by netizens. This shows that literacy skills are at an intermediate level. The common thread of all these conclusions is that in WAGs there is a pile of information that is not all acceptable to passive members. They don't care about the pile and will erase at some point. This indicates the failure of the informational message spread by the group members.

References

- Arnett, R. C., Fritz, J. M. H., & Bell, L. M. *Communication ethics: Literacy dialogue and difference*. Sage Publications, 2009.
- Jasmi, Khairul; Jasman Rizal, Abdullah Khusairi, Adrian Tuswandi (editor). (2020) *Pretentiousness of Patents; Hot Dialectics in the West Sumatra Digital Space*, (Publisher: Rumahkayu Pustaka.
- Sulianta, Ferry. *The magic of Social Media*. Elex Media Komputindo, 2015.
- Wodak, R. *The discourse of politics in action: Politics as usual*. Springer. 2009.
- Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). *Methods of critical discourse studies*. Sage. 2005.
- Wodak, R. (2009). *Discursive construction of national identity*. Edinburgh University Press. 2005.

Weiss, G., & Wodak, R. (Eds.). *Critical discourse analysis*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan (2007).

Wodak, R. *Critical Discourse Analysis*. In *The Routledge companion to English Studies* (pp. 302-316). Routledge. 2007.

Journal

Dianto, Icol, Andi Faisal Bakti, and Iding Rosyidin. "Ideological and media discourse study of Nasrudin Joha's political article." *Islamic Communication Journal* 6.2 (2021): 119-140.

Kristiyono, Jokhanan. "Internet culture: The development of information and communication technology in supporting the use of media in society." *Scriptura* 5.1 (2015): 23-30.

Malhotra, Pranav. "Misinformation in WhatsApp Family Groups: Generational Perceptions and Correction Considerations in a Meso-News Space." *Digital Journalism* (2023): 1-19.

Nurhaliza, Wa Ode, and Nurul Fauziah. "Group Communication in Virtual Community." *Commune: Media Communication and Da'wah* 10.01 (2020): 18-38.

Sunaryanto, Sunaryanto, Andi Faisal Bakti, and Yunita Soleha. "Juliari Batubara's Covid-19 Social Assistance Fund Corruption Meme in Cyber Media: Meaning and Media Perspectives." *Journal of Design* 9.3 (2022): 339-354.

Tutiasri, R. P. (2016). Communication in group communication. *Journal of Channel*, 4(1), 81-90.

Baym, N. K. (2015). Social Media and the Struggle for Society. *Social Media and Society*, April-Juli (Social Media and the Struggle for Society), 1–2. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305115580477>

Blanchard, A., & Horan, T. (2015). Virtual Communities and Social Capital (Vol. Chapter I). <https://doi.org/10.1177/089443939801600306>

Ball-Rokeach, S. J., & DeFleur, M. L. (1976). A dependency model of mass-media effects. *Communication research*, 3(1), 3-21.

De Fleur, M. L., Ball-Rokeach, S., McQuail, D., Windahl, S., Connors, T. D., Hurst, W. E., ... & Hiebert, R. E. (1982). *General Media*.

Hubbard, J. C., DeFleur, M. L., & DeFleur, L. B. (1975). Mass media influences on public conceptions of social problems. *Social Problems*, 23(1), 22-34.

- Muchlis, M., & Fakhurrazi, F. (2022). New Media Dependence on Acehese Society (Depdency Theory), *Journal of Social Dialectical Sociology*, 8(2), 181-188.
- Sulistiana, J. E., & Dermawan, K. D. (2021). The Dependency of the Use of Instagram Stories Feature as a Media for Self Disclosure, *OMNICOM: Journal of Communication Sciences*, 7(1), 1-10.
- Hajar, S. A., & Anshori, M. S. (2021). Farah Qoonita's persuasive communication strategy in delivering da'wah through New Media. *Axiology: Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 1(2), 62-66.
- Patwardhan, P., & Yang, J. (2003). Internet dependency relations and online consumer behavior: a media system dependency theory perspective on why people shop, chat, and read news online. *Journal of interactive advertising*, 3(2), 57-69.
- Komariah, K., Tayo, Y., & Utamidewi, W. (2022). The Effect of Social Network Use on Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) Behavior in Nusantara Adolescents: *Journal of Social Sciences*, 9(9), 3463-3471.
- Hubbard, J. C., DeFleur, M. L., & DeFleur, L. B. (1975). Mass media influences on public conceptions of social problems. *Social Problems*, 23(1), 22-34.
- Utami, A. B. (2018, December). Analysis of group communication networks. In *Dynamic Media, Communications, and Culture: Conference Proceedings* (Vol. 1, pp. 1-35).
- Willis, Mardiana, Abdullah Khusairi, and Sheiful Yazan. "Semiotic Analysis of WhatsApp Sticker Minangkabau Style: Semiotic Analysis." *Journal of Historical and Cultural Research* Vol 8.2 (2022).
- Wodak, R. (2006). Mediation between discourse and society: Assessing cognitive approaches in CDA. *Discourse studies*, 8(1), 179-190.
- Wodak, R., & Reisigl, M. (2015). Discourse and racism. *The handbook of discourse analysis*, 576-596.
- Wodak, R. (2012). Language, power and identity. *Language teaching*, 45(2), 215-233.
- Wodak, R. (2015). Critical discourse analysis, discourse-historical approach. *The international encyclopedia of language and social interaction*, 1-14.
- Wodak, R. (2004). Critical discourse analysis. *Qualitative research practice*, 185, 185-204.
- Wodak, R. (2002). Aspects of critical discourse analysis. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 36(10), 5-31.

Website

<https://dewanpers.or.id/data/perusahaanpers>, accessed June 8, 2023, at 08.00 WIB.

<https://dataindonesia.id/digital/detail/whatsapp-media-sosial-dengan-durasi-pakai-terlama-di-indonesia>, accessed June 8, 2023, at 08.00 WIB.

<https://apjii.or.id/berita/d/survei-apjii-pengguna-internet-di-indonesia-tembus-215-juta-> accessed June 8, 2023, at 08.00 WIB.

https://www.bbc.com/indonesia/majalah/2014/02/140220_bisnis_facebook_whatsapp accessed June 8, 2023, at 08.00 WIB.

<https://www.whatsapp.com/about>, diakses 8 Juni 2023, pukul 08.00 Wib.

<https://wearesocial.com/us/blog/2023/01/the-changing-world-of-digital-in-2023/> diakses 8 Juni 2023, pukul 08.00 Wib.

<https://www.cnbcindonesia.com/tech/20190418201017-37-67683/ini-alasan-resmi-blackberry-messenger-tutup>, accessed June 8, 2023, at 08.00 WIB.

