

Digital Communication Strategies in Building Online Communities: A Case Study in Remote Work Communities (KKR)

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ABSTRACT

Keywords: remote work community, group synergy, communication, online communication. Komunitas Kerja Remote, or Remote Work Community (KKR), is a community of remote workers, freelancers, and solopreneurs in Indonesia. They actively establish communication to learn together and share information, insights, and experiences while networking and informing about remote job openings on the KKR website, namely www.kamikerjaremote.com. The purpose of the research is to study the communication strategy of the remote work community in Indonesia and convey information on remote job openings to all KKR members in Indonesia. The theory used is group synergy, based on research concepts about group communication, group behaviour, and communication patterns. This research uses a descriptive qualitative method with data acquisition by interview method and documentation sources. The results of the research approach are useful for exploring rich and contextual information and supporting an in-depth interpretation of community reality. So KKR's communication strategy in online communication to establish strengthening and remote job vacancy information has been successful. This can be seen from the activation of KKR members in discussing, exchanging ideas, sharing information, insights, and work experiences as remote workers, as well as the increasing number of job openings on the KKR website.



Introduction

The history of remote working in the world began with the development of the terms "telecommuting" and "telework" in 1973 when the terms "telecommuting" and "telework" were used (Fauzana, 2022). The scientist who first initiated it was Jack Nilles, an information technology expert. Remote working (United Kingdom: telecommuting, remote working) (Rawinarno, Shafira, Widiarto, & Alynudin, 2023). Another equivalent term: work from home (United Kingdom: Work From Home/WFH) is a model or employment agreement in which employees gain the flexibility to work in terms of where and when to work with the help of telecommunication technology (Wikipedia: 2023).

Thus, Remote Workers are the activity of travelling to the office or workplace replaced by telecommunication relationships. With this system, many employees end up working from home (Fonna, 2019). While other workers can work anywhere or are called nomad workers or web commuters. These people use communication technology to work from cafes or other places that are convenient for them (Mungkasa, 2020).

Another term that has a broader meaning than Remote Worker is Telework (Wikipedia (2023) from Woody Leonhard). Telework refers to the replacement of any form of telecommunication technology related to work-for-travel, which ultimately reduces the barrier of distance with telecommuting (Nursyamsi, Siregar, & Nurahlina, 2022). A person who telecommutes is commonly referred to as a "telecommuter". The motto often echoed by telecommuters is "Work is something we do, not and not the purpose of travelling."

The naming of remote work has many names, such as 'remote working', 'distance working' (Shiells, Stern, & Deardorff, 1986) or 'outwork' (OSWAR, 2020). Other scientists have categorized remote workers as 'homework', 'alternative officing' and 'mobile working. Not only that, a distinction is also made between working from home and the head office, working at the head office and branch office combined, and nomads without an office. More analytical approaches, such as (Shiells et al., 1986), have been categorized based on spatial considerations, and coordination devices (OSWAR, 2020).

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the trend of remote workers in Indonesia has experienced a significant increase. Jobstreet, an online platform that provides search and recruitment services, shows that before the pandemic, only 4% of respondents worked remotely, but this figure increased to 13% during the pandemic (Nursatyo & Rosliani, 2018).

Jobstreet surveyed 33,084 respondents in Indonesia in November-December 2020. Jobstreet conducted a survey in Indonesia as well as similar surveys in 189 other countries. As a result of a survey conducted by Jobstreet, the number of Indonesian workers working remotely has increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 4% of people surveyed worked remotely before the pandemic. The pandemic increased the figure to 13%.

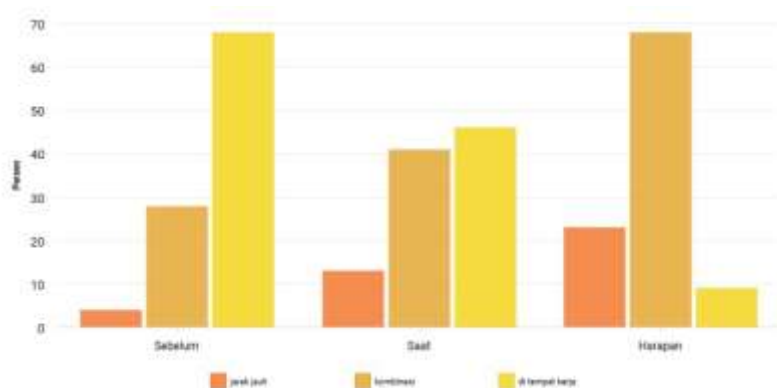


Figure 1: Remote Workers in Indonesia (Before, During, and After the Pandemic)
(source: <https://databoks.katadata.co.id/datapublish/2021/06/17/survei-bekerja-jarak-jauh-makin-marak-di-indonesia-saat-pandemi-covid-19>.)

During the pandemic, the number of respondents who combined working in the office and remotely increased from 28% to 41%. However, the number of respondents who work full-time in the office dropped from 68% to 46%. Only 9% of respondents still want to work in the office during the pandemic. This is in contrast to 23% of respondents who expected to be able to work remotely during the pandemic.

A McKinsey study found that nearly 60% of people in the United States have the option to work remotely, at least part-time. While 35% can work from home full-time (WFH) (Halim, 2023). This trend is happening across all age groups and industries, although some industries are better suited for remote work than others.

Remote Work Community (KKR) is a community of remote workers, freelancers, freelancers and solopreneurs in Indonesia. This community was established in 2015 by Rahmat Awaludin. This community aims to bring together remote workers and provide a platform to share experiences, knowledge, and support in living a career as a remote worker.

In a study entitled "Communication Patterns of Full Remote Working Workers (Case Studies on Visualabs Workers)" by Yovita Riski Aulia Dindi and Riski Damastuti (Damastuti, de Groot, Debrot, & Silvius, 2022), it was concluded that Visualabs Indonesia in carrying out remote working allows all its employees to communicate with each other without any position limitations, this communication process is called the all-channel communication pattern. The communication process at Visualabs Indonesia is mediated by various communication technologies in the form of applications such as Zoom Meeting, Telegram and WhatsApp, this process is called Computer-Mediated Communication (CMC). By using the CMC model theory as a research guide, the obstacles that often occur when remote working are missed communication, missed perception, difficulty in showing expression, lack of social relationships, only making friends through social media, communication is more work-oriented, and employees limit professional and non-professional relationships.

Meanwhile, in a study entitled "The Utilization of Social Media for Community Improvement" by Hendro Gunawan and Clara Hetty Primasari (Prakoeswa et al., 2018), it was concluded that there are still many members of the Big Bike Yogyakarta Community who do not understand how to maximize Social Media properly and correctly so that their community can develop better.

However, from the two studies, there is no information about communication strategies and communication patterns for members of Digital-Based Communities, such as those conducted by the Remote Work Community (KKR). Therefore, the question in this study is to explore "How is Digital Communication Strategy in Building Online Communities: A Case Study in Remote Work Communities (KKR)?"

Research Methods

Research on Communication Strategies Digital Communication Strategies in Building Online Communities: A Case Study in the KKR Community is by descriptive

qualitative research method (Creswell, 2014). Descriptive qualitative research is a type of qualitative research method that aims to describe observed phenomena in a systematic and detailed manner.

Descriptive research makes a systematic, factual, and accurate description of the facts and properties of certain objects (Ellulu, Abed, Rahmat, Ranneh, & Ali, 2014). This descriptive study will be by the reality that is happening without explaining the relationship between variables. Data collection for this study uses interview methods, internet searching, observation and literature studies related to verbal communication. Interviews are conducted directly face-to-face with informants or research participants so that the analysis of the resulting data can be more detailed and rich.

Descriptive qualitative research methods can be used in this case study, for example, to get a clear and detailed picture of the digital communication strategies used by communities to build and grow their online communities. Furthermore, the resulting data will be compiled into a narrative description and analyzed qualitatively.

Results and Discussion

Web Forum Communication

The Remote Work Community (KKR) has 58,252 people spread throughout Indonesia and abroad. To establish communication between members spread across various regions in Indonesia and abroad, KKR forms a multiplatform as a means of communication, discussion, information sharing, and question-and-answer. As the parent platform, it is in the form of a Forum Website with the name www.kamikerjareMOTE.com page. Although this community was established in 2015, its website was only launched in September 2023.



Figure 2 Remote Work Community (KKR) Web Forum



Figure 3 Features of the Remote Work Community (KKR) Website

The information presented on the KKR web forum is very easy to understand by KKT members and the general public who access this web forum. Overall, the feature on the KKR web forum is a means for all remote workers to find jobs, collaborate, share information, and provide education and/or products so that members can continue to grow and develop according to their respective competencies and skills.

Multiplatform Communication

While other platforms are:

1. Facebook: We Work Remote



Figure 4 Remote Work Community (KKR) Facebook Account

KKR's Facebook account has 59.3 thousand members spread throughout Indonesia and abroad. KKR's Facebook profile reads:

2. Indonesia's community of remote workers and freelancers.

What we contribute to society and the country is to build careers from home, help foreign businesses and get paid in foreign currency.

We have our village and lifestyle, spending more quality time with family, and going to the public space and services on weekdays, we refuse to be in the same stream and traffic jam as most people.

We give more opportunities to great talent from rural areas to have the same income as those who are in the big city, we value our knowledge and skill more than a formal degree.

For users who want to join, please use their real name. Users with the names of objects or other strange things will not be approved.

This group is a gathering place for Indonesian remote workers & freelancers. We speak English too. Feel free to post your remote job offering in English. The demographics of KKR Facebook members can be accessed in the image below:



Figure 5 Origin of City and Country of KKR Facebook Group Member



Figure 6 Gender of KKR Facebook Group Members.

The KKR Facebook manager explained that the information presented in the posts of the KKR Facebook account can be used by remote workers who are domiciled in Indonesia or abroad or those who obtain work projects from clients in Indonesia or abroad. The information on the KKR Facebook account post not only contains job vacancy information for Remote or Freelance Workers but also in the form of information on courses to support skill improvement for KKR members.

Instagram

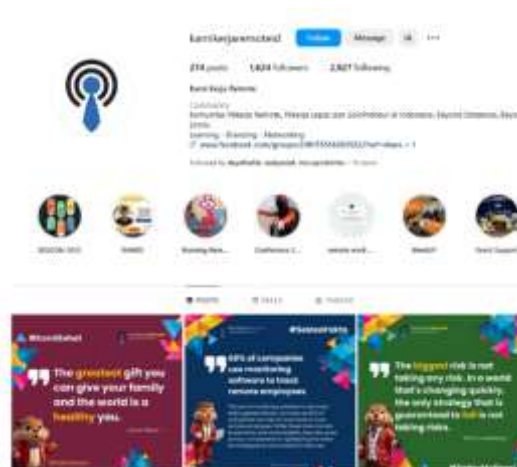


Figure 7 Remote Work Community (KKR) Instagram account

KKR's Instagram account already has 1,624 followers and has 274 posts. Some of the posts are motivational quotes in the United Kingdom.

Channel Youtube

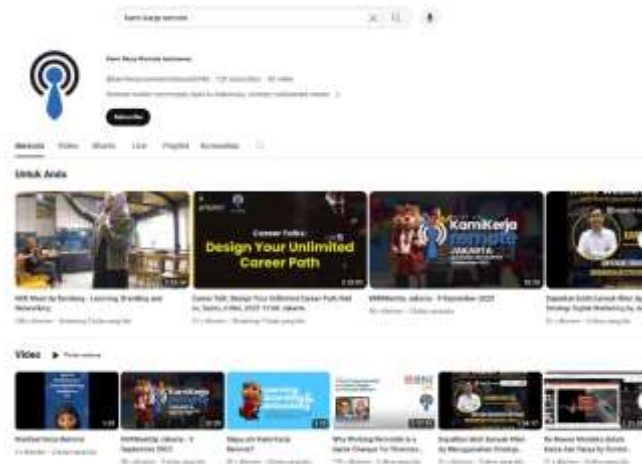


Figure 8 Remote Work Community (KKR) YouTube Channel

KKR's YouTube channel has produced 42 videos with 129 subscribers. Although the number of subscribers is still below 200 subscribers, the content presented is very useful for KKR members everywhere and is a means to communicate with fellow members (members) and/or members with mentors or experienced freelancer professionals.

Twitter



Figure 9 Remote Work Community (KKR) LinkedIn account

The KKR account on LinkedIn has only been followed by 77 followers. Ndee Siswandhi, one of the KKR administrators, who initiated this community from the beginning, wrote his post on the LinkedIn column.

Welcome New Members of Our Group Work Remotely

WeWorkRemote is a community of remote workers, freelancers and solopreneurs from Indonesia who do their work from anywhere, be it from home, cafes, warthogs, city parks, beaches, mountains and others as long as they are connected to the internet.

The group to introduce the "FUTURE of Life" which will provide FREEDOM and FLEXIBILITY in working until a balance is achieved in Work and Life.

It is hoped that members can share information related to this and also help other members how to achieve their dream of working from anywhere.

Tiktok

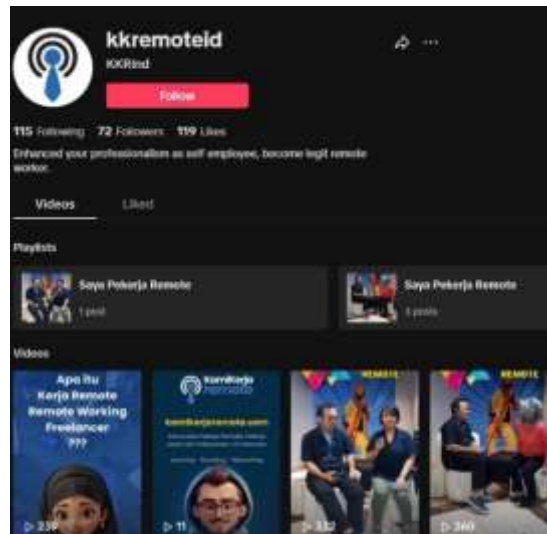


Figure 10 Remote Work Community (KKR) Tiktok Account

The KKR account on Tiktok is still followed by 72 followers, 115 followers and 119 likes. Meanwhile, the posts that became a means of communication with members were educational information about Remote Work, as well as Podcasts of KKR Members' Experiences and Success Stories on how to overcome the challenges of being a Remote Worker. Episode #01, tells the story of Rina, a Content Writer who has been working remotely for a long time from the oDesk era until it changed its name to Upwork.

WhatsApp Group (Grup WA)

KKR expands its communication through We're Working Remote WAG. The number of WAG members is 290 members. However, there is a pattern of Multi-Directional Communication Patterns (Effendy, 2017), which is a communication process that occurs in a group where communicators and communicators exchange ideas dialogically. This is a characteristic of interpersonal communication. One of the advantages of interpersonal communication is that there is emotional closeness due to the intensity of communication. In addition, interpersonal communication can also be done in cyberspace, such as on social networks, without having to meet face-to-face.

External Communication

KKR management and members not only build internal communication, KKR management and members also build communication with external parties. Here's the meeting.

1. Sharing in Jakarta Smart City

KKR Jakarta is a Community of Jakarta Smart City.

2. Participants of the FGD in Jakarta

KKR Jakarta has been a resource person (offline) for JSC Lab Sharing at the Jakarta Smart City Future Hub 3 times.

3. Members of the West Java Digital Service Community

The Bandung KKR Management before COVID-19 became the West Java Digital Service Community.

4. West Java Digital Service (JDS) FGD Participants

The Bandung KKR Management became the resource person for the FGD and the Launching of the West Java Digital Service Public Vehicle at Gedung Sate, Bandung, West Java. Become a Resource Person in the JDS Tech Update Special.

5. Launching the KKR Website Launch

KKR Management and Members Held an Offline Gathering as well as the Launching of the KKR Website in 3 major cities, namely Jakarta, Bandung and Malang.

Partnership

In addition to partnering with the government, KKR also establishes group communication in the form of partnerships with IDCloudHost, Kirim. Email, UTAS, RemoteSkill Academy, Automix.AI, LokerBot, Cdiscram Indonesia, and others.

The Group Syntality Theory, used in this study, explains the communication process of a group. Each group must have a learnable personality. In addition, this theory is related to group personality, which includes aspects such as togetherness, dynamics, temperament, and group ability. The Theory of Group Sinality on the relationship between Our Remote Work Community and this research explain how the communication process occurs in the community when they carry out their communication strategies and communication patterns. In the research conducted, the four scopes, namely togetherness, dynamics, temperament, and the ability of the group to find their meaning.

The researcher found that the togetherness of the KKR Community is built when there is active interaction in the KKR WAG, online interaction in Facebook Groups and offline meetings both as resource persons and part of the Partnership. In addition, the family aspect is intertwined when members share important information about tips and strategies as Remote Workers, answering each other when there are novice members who want to get best practices from experienced Remote Workers. In many events, WAG discussions can last for hours from day to night.

Communication dynamics in discussion rooms and dialogues in WAGs and Facebook Groups also went smoothly and smoothly even though it was done in non-formal or casual communication language. Thus, the atmosphere of familiarity between fellow members can minimize the emergence of seeds of conflict and feuds, which have the potential to give birth to disharmonious attitudes.

However, on other occasions, some statements or posts can provoke conditions for discussion and dialogue leading to conflict. Although this temperament attitude is common in income differences, in the observation of researchers, this attitude can be quickly muted and communication conditions return to normal.

What is interesting is the fourth personality of the elaboration of the Group Sinality Theory, namely Group Ability. The old and new administrators were able to provide space for several members of the KKR Community to share success stories and experiences. This sharing space is very important and useful, considering that there are

still many community members who are new to the Remote Worker profession. The abilities, knowledge, insights, and experience of experienced Remote Workers can be an oasis or source of knowledge and knowledge for new members of the KKR Community.

Conclusion

The Community Communication Strategy of KKR is establishing communication with each other without any position limitations, this communication process is called a multi-directional communication pattern using various channels or digital media platforms: web forums, social media and offline meetings. In addition, the KKR Community turns out to have a group communication personality that is appropriate from the basis of the Group Sinality Theory, namely "group personality" which includes Togetherness, Dynamics, Temperament, and Group Ability. KKR in its activities turned out to be able to establish a communication strategy so that active dynamics were built, cohesiveness in togetherness, to maintain the temperament between members in the process of discussion and dialogue, and no less importantly to improve the skills (abilities) of each member by facilitating space for group skills. Togetherness and Group Abilities can be established in intensive communication through virtual and offline forums (face-to-face).

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