

# Effectiveness of the MentalCare Website in Addressing Depression Among Failed Legislative Candidates in Ambon City, Maluku Province

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## Abstract:

Elections are a fundamental mechanism of democracy, granting citizens the right to select leaders or representatives who will advocate for their interests and aspirations in political decision-making. Achieving electoral victory and securing a legislative position is the ultimate goal for all candidates. However, legislative candidates who face defeat, especially after significant financial investments, may struggle to cope with the harsh reality of failure. This increases their vulnerability to stress and even severe depression. While the provision of hospital facilities for failed candidates has been attempted, concerns over misuse render it less effective. Therefore, an alternative approach is needed, such as utilizing the MentalCare website to mitigate depression among unsuccessful legislative candidates.

This study aims to evaluate the effectiveness of the MentalCare website in addressing depression among failed legislative candidates in Ambon City. Using a qualitative descriptive research method, the findings reveal that the MentalCare website demonstrates significant potential in positively impacting mental health, particularly in managing depression among candidates who experienced electoral failure. By overcoming existing barriers and continually improving service quality, the MentalCare website can emerge as an effective and sustainable solution for promoting individual and community mental well-being.

**Keywords:** Website effectiveness, depression management, failed legislative candidates.

## 1. Introduction

Elections are a cornerstone of democratic systems, granting citizens the right to elect leaders or representatives who will advocate for their interests and aspirations in policymaking. The policies enacted by elected officials significantly influence all aspects of societal life. Citizens can also participate as candidates for legislative positions in these democratic processes. To secure public support, candidates devise various strategies and programs aimed at garnering votes (Dwitama, 2022).

Article 168, Paragraph (2) of Law No. 7 of 2014 on General Elections stipulates that the election of members for the House of Representatives (DPR), Provincial Legislative Council (DPRD Province), and

Regional Legislative Council (DPRD City/Regency) adopts an open proportional system. In this system, legislative candidates are selected based on the number of votes they receive rather than their placement on party lists. Achieving electoral success and securing a legislative position is the ultimate objective for all participating candidates.

<i>Caleg</i>	<i>Tahun</i>	<i>Jumlah Caleg</i>	<i>Jumlah Kursi</i>
<i>DPR</i>	2014	6.607	560
	2019	8.068	575
	2024	10.323	580
<i>DPD</i>	2014	945	132
	2019	811	136
	2024	683	152

Figure 1: Data on DPR and DPD Candidates (2014, 2019, and 2024)

Source: <https://www.kompas.tv/>, accessed May 24, 2024.

The data above highlights the intense competition for legislative seats, which demands well-planned strategies. Marijan (2010) identifies three essential assets for participating in regional elections: political, social, and economic capital (Marijan, 2006). Rinakit (2010) further explains that gubernatorial campaigns typically require funds amounting to IDR 100 billion, while mayoral or regent campaigns cost between IDR 1.8 billion and IDR 16 billion. As such, legislative candidates who experience electoral defeat after significant financial investments often struggle to cope with the harsh realities of failure. This increases their likelihood of experiencing stress and severe depression.

The Ministry of Health compares the psychological pressure following elections to unpredictable natural disasters. During the 2009 legislative elections, the Ministry reported 7,736 candidates suffering from mental health disorders. Indah (2016) highlights cases where candidates faced such severe stress and depression that they required hospitalization. Unsuccessful candidates often experience emptiness and a sense of worthlessness, accompanied by excessive shame and diminished interest in activities. These findings align with Kelleiat's definition of depression as an emotional disorder characterized by profound sadness, disrupted sleep, loss of motivation, feelings of inadequacy, emotional void, and hopelessness.

In response, the government has established hospital facilities to support candidates suffering from depression. For example, Ambon City reported that one failed legislative candidate from the Nasdem Party

allegedly disrupted water supply for 15 households serviced by Ambon's municipal water company (PDAM) after failing to secure a seat in the DPRD.

To address such issues, the Ambon City government has initiated measures to support failed candidates. CNN (2024) reports that RSKD Maluku, located in Nania Village, Ambon Bay District, has prepared 65–70 rooms for legislative candidates facing mental health challenges after losing elections in 2024. According to RSKD Director Sherly Jacobus, these rooms are specifically allocated to address their mental health needs. This initiative reflects governmental concern for candidates' mental well-being and highlights the significance of mental health in politics.

However, providing hospital rooms exclusively for legislative candidates raises concerns about misuse by individuals who may not require such mental health support (Situmorang, 2024). A more effective approach would involve proactive measures, such as mental health support and stress prevention during election campaigns, rather than solely responding to post-election issues. Limited mental health resources and facilities further complicate these efforts (Faturizky, 2024). Early education for legislative candidates on managing potential stress and loss is essential to prepare them for the pressures of political competition (Uswah, 2024).

Widianto (2021) proposes information technology solutions, such as the MentalCare website, to address these challenges. As an innovative platform, MentalCare supports mental health by addressing depression among failed legislative candidates. This digital approach promotes inclusivity and accessibility, offering a paradigm shift in mental health management.

The MentalCare website provides round-the-clock access, enabling users to seek help without geographic or temporal constraints. For candidates burdened by the social stigma surrounding mental health (Ide, 2013), the platform ensures confidentiality, offering online counseling and therapy services. By safeguarding user privacy, the website encourages candidates to seek assistance without fear of judgment.

The MentalCare platform integrates data and fosters collaboration among stakeholders, including mental health professionals and government agencies, to address depression effectively. This ecosystem ensures candidates gain streamlined access to resources and comprehensive support tailored to their recovery needs (Manik, 2022).

However, the platform's success depends on candidates' ability to utilize digital tools effectively. Limited digital literacy and inadequate internet access, especially in remote areas, hinder adoption (Inzana, 2024). Massive public awareness campaigns are necessary to eliminate mental health stigma and encourage openness among candidates. Partnerships with political organizations, mass media, and influential figures can amplify these efforts (Sakti, 2020). Improving digital literacy and infrastructure is also a priority. Collaborations between local governments and internet service providers can expand access in underserved

areas (Syifa, 2024). Additionally, digital literacy training programs can equip candidates with the skills needed to utilize platforms like MentalCare effectively.

Continuous evaluation and feedback mechanisms are critical for ensuring the platform's relevance and effectiveness. Engaging candidates and support organizations in this process can help identify and address specific areas for improvement (Fauzia, 2014). Collaborative efforts among governments, mental health professionals, and candidates themselves are essential to overcoming obstacles and realizing the platform's full potential. By leveraging technology, the MentalCare website can significantly improve the mental health and well-being of failed legislative candidates, fostering a more supportive and inclusive political environment.

## **2. Research Methods**

This study employed several methods, including interviews, field observations, and document analysis. Data collected through these methods were thoroughly analyzed and presented in conclusions that are both accurate and grounded in observed facts. The process of formulating conclusions adhered to high levels of accuracy and systematic rigor, consistent with standard research reporting formats.

The study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the data. The qualitative data analysis techniques used include:

1. Data Collection: Conducted during pre-research, research, and post-research phases.
2. Data Presentation: Relevant and necessary data were selected and organized into tables or visuals to comprehensively explain and analyze the qualitative data.
3. Conclusion Drawing: The presented data were interpreted into valid, scientifically accountable findings.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **a. Effectiveness of the MentalCare Website in Addressing Depression Among Failed Legislative Candidates**

This study explores the effectiveness of the MentalCare website as a solution for addressing depression among legislative candidates who experienced electoral defeat. The inability to achieve significant political goals often triggers depressive symptoms in individuals, including candidates who have invested significant time and resources in their campaigns. Depression can severely affect mental health and overall well-being, necessitating appropriate intervention.

The MentalCare website serves as an innovative digital platform offering accessible and affordable mental health services. By leveraging advancements in digital technology, this platform bridges the gap

between the mental health support needs of failed candidates and the limitations of traditional services.

One of the website's main advantages is its high accessibility. Legislative candidates can access its services anytime and anywhere, provided they have internet connectivity. This is especially important given the busy schedules and high mobility often associated with political candidates. The ease of access allows candidates to seek help without being constrained by time or geographic limitations.

Additionally, the MentalCare website ensures confidentiality during the process of addressing depression. For candidates concerned about the social stigma surrounding mental health issues, confidentiality is a crucial factor that encourages them to seek assistance openly. The platform allows users to access services while protecting their identities, reducing feelings of shame or fear of judgment from their surroundings.

The website also provides comprehensive and integrated services, ranging from online counseling by qualified mental health professionals to discussion forums and educational articles. Candidates can select services that align with their individual needs and interact with peers who have similar experiences.

Collaboration and integration are central to the platform's success. MentalCare fosters the involvement of multiple stakeholders, including mental health professionals, support organizations, and government agencies. Through close collaboration, candidates can access resources and services from various parties in an integrated manner, ensuring comprehensive support for their recovery process.

This study concludes that the MentalCare website effectively addresses depression among failed legislative candidates. High participation and accessibility rates, significant reductions in depressive symptoms, and high user satisfaction levels reflect the platform's success in meeting its target audience's needs.

However, several challenges must be addressed to maximize the website's potential. These include digital literacy gaps, the need to improve service quality and security, and the necessity for more intensive promotional efforts. Recommendations include enhancing digital infrastructure and literacy, investing in skilled personnel, and fostering closer collaboration with various stakeholders.

Overall, this study highlights the vital role of digital technology in providing accessible and affordable mental health solutions. The MentalCare website exemplifies how technological advancements can address challenges in mental health, particularly in supporting failed legislative candidates. By continually improving service quality, expanding reach, and strengthening collaboration, MentalCare has the potential to make a greater positive impact on public mental health.

#### **b. Challenges in Implementing the MentalCare Website for Depression Management**

The implementation of the MentalCare website as a solution for managing depression among failed legislative candidates faces several challenges:

### 1. Stigma and Negative Perceptions of Mental Health

Social stigma and negative perceptions about mental health remain pervasive. Many individuals, including legislative candidates, feel embarrassed or reluctant to acknowledge and seek professional help for depression or other mental health disorders. This perception inhibits their willingness to use MentalCare's services.

### 2. Digital Literacy and Internet Access Limitations

The website's success heavily depends on users' ability to access and utilize digital technology effectively. However, limited digital literacy and inadequate internet infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, hinder its reach and engagement.

### 3. Data Security and Privacy Concerns

Concerns about data security and privacy can deter candidates from sharing personal information through online platforms. Building a robust security system and maintaining user trust are critical for overcoming this barrier.

### 4. Quality of Services and Human Resources

The platform's effectiveness relies on the quality of its services and the competence of its personnel. Services that fail to meet quality standards or are provided by less qualified professionals can erode user trust and result in unsatisfactory experiences.

### 5. Coordination and Collaboration Among Stakeholders

Effective implementation requires close coordination and collaboration among mental health professionals, support organizations, government agencies, and candidates themselves. A lack of communication and coordination can lead to service gaps or overlapping efforts.

### 6. Sustainability of Funding and Support

Adequate financial resources are necessary to ensure the platform's operational sustainability and service development. Limited funding or lack of stakeholder support poses significant risks to the website's long-term viability.

## c. Addressing Challenges in Implementing the MentalCare Website

To overcome these challenges, comprehensive efforts involving various stakeholders are essential. Proposed solutions include:

### 1. Public Education and Awareness Campaigns

Raising awareness about the importance of mental health through partnerships with legislative organizations, media, and influential figures can help combat stigma and encourage candidates to seek help.

## 2. Improving Digital Literacy and Internet Infrastructure

Training programs to enhance candidates' digital literacy and partnerships with local governments and internet service providers can expand access to the platform in underserved areas.

## 3. Strengthening Data Security and Privacy

Adopting advanced security technologies, conducting regular audits, and implementing transparent privacy policies can build trust and address user concerns.

## 4. Investing in Qualified Human Resources

Collaborations with professional associations, universities, and research institutions can ensure the recruitment and training of skilled mental health professionals.

## 5. Fostering Stakeholder Collaboration

Establishing working groups that include mental health professionals, support organizations, government representatives, and candidates can improve coordination and develop effective strategies.

## 6. Ensuring Sustainable Funding

Exploring partnerships with non-profit organizations, private companies, and corporate social responsibility programs can provide additional funding sources. Government support through dedicated mental health budgets is also crucial.

## 7. Continuous Evaluation and Adjustment

Regular feedback mechanisms and involvement of candidates and support organizations in evaluation processes can identify areas for improvement and ensure the platform's relevance and effectiveness.

### **d. Features of the MentalCare Website**

The MentalCare website offers features designed to connect users, especially trauma survivors, with nearby psychologists and provide education about psychological conditions. Key features include:

- Scheduling appointments with psychologists
- Accessing educational articles and news
- Viewing profiles of mental health professionals

These features enhance accessibility, convenience, and user support, making the platform a valuable tool for mental health management.

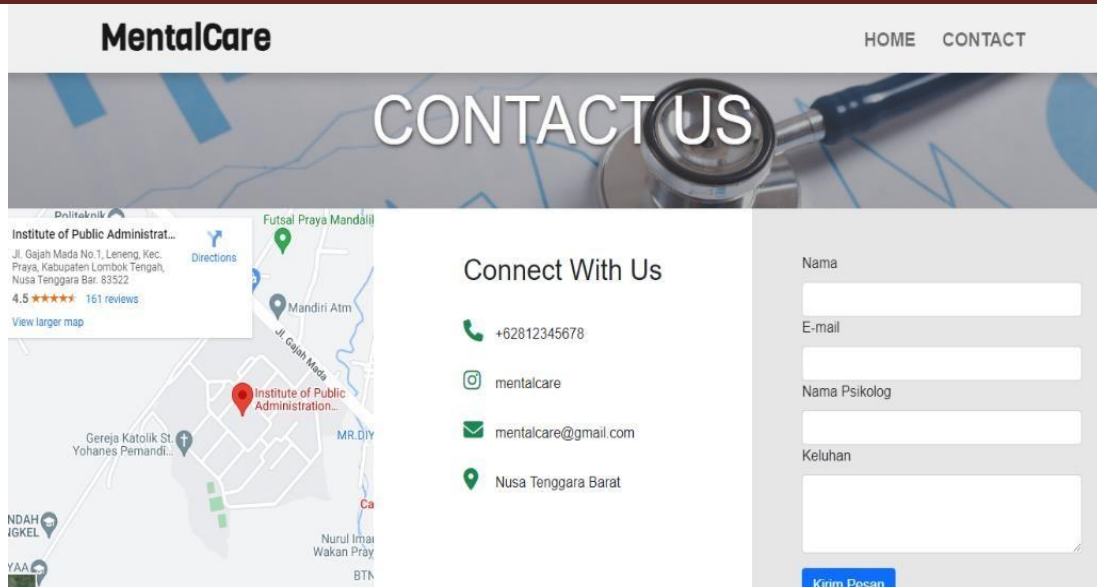


Figure 2: Interface of the Appointment Feature with Psychologists



Figure 3: Interface of Social Disaster News Feature



Figure 4: Interface of Social Disaster Data Feature

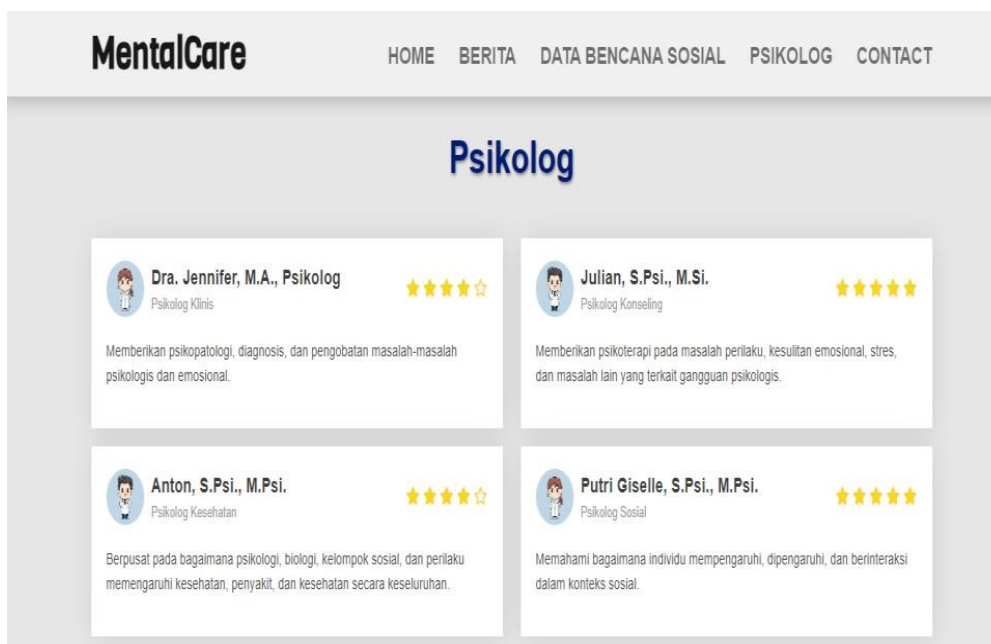


Figure 5: Interface of Psychologist Profile Feature

#### 4. Conclusion

The MentalCare website offers an innovative and effective solution for addressing depression among legislative candidates who have experienced electoral defeat. By leveraging advancements in digital technology, the platform provides mental health services that are accessible, affordable, and maintain user confidentiality. This study highlights that the MentalCare website achieves high levels of participation and accessibility among legislative candidates and has been proven effective in significantly reducing symptoms

of depression. Additionally, users report high satisfaction levels, particularly regarding the quality and variety of services offered.

However, several challenges remain in implementing the MentalCare website, including stigma and negative perceptions surrounding mental health, limited digital literacy and internet access, concerns over data security and privacy, the quality of services and human resources, stakeholder coordination, and the sustainability of funding and support.

Addressing these challenges requires comprehensive efforts involving various stakeholders. Key measures include public education and awareness campaigns, improving digital literacy and internet infrastructure, strengthening data security and privacy systems, investing in skilled human resources, fostering stakeholder coordination and collaboration, and ensuring sustainable funding and support.

Overall, the MentalCare website demonstrates significant potential to positively impact mental health, particularly in addressing depression among legislative candidates who have experienced failure. By overcoming existing challenges and continuously improving service quality, the MentalCare website can become an effective and sustainable solution for supporting individual and community mental well-being.

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