

## Public Information Transparency Communication Management in Encouraging Accountability in Regional Governance

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze communication management in the implementation of public information disclosure as a primary instrument for promoting accountability in regional governance. In the era of digital democracy, transparency is not merely a regulatory obligation stipulated in Law No. 14 of 2008, but rather a strategic communication strategy to build public trust. The research method used was descriptive qualitative with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with Information and Documentation Management Officers (PPID), observations of regional government digital communication channels, and documentation studies of public information access reports. The results indicate that communication management, including planning the Public Information List (DIP) and interactive use of digital platforms, positively contributes to public accountability. However, this study identified structural barriers in the form of sectoral egos between regional government agencies (OPD) and cultural barriers in the form of a closed bureaucratic culture that views information as an instrument of power. The study's conclusions confirm that professionally managed information disclosure can transform accountability from a mere administrative formality to a real public accountability. Successful communication management ultimately strengthens public oversight and ensures the sustainability of regional development through social capital in the form of public trust.

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### INTRODUCTION

Clean, transparent, and accountable regional government is a key pillar in realizing good governance. Amid increasingly critical public demands, regional governments can no longer afford to isolate themselves from access to information (Noor, 2019). Openness to public information is an absolute requirement for a healthy democratic process, where every policy adopted must be openly accountable to the public, as the mandate holders (Sjoraida, 2015).

The enactment of Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Openness of Public Information (UU KIP) marked a new milestone in the Indonesian bureaucratic system. This regulation obliges every public agency to provide, disseminate, and publish accurate and non-misleading public information (Wardhana, 2023). However, in its implementation at the regional level, fulfilling this right to information is often considered a mere administrative burden, rather than part of a fundamental communication strategy (Hadiasih, 2013).

Communication management plays a crucial role in bridging government policies and public understanding. Without systematic communication management, information

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dissemination tends to be one-way and difficult to access (Ain et al., 2025). Therefore, integrated communication management is necessary to ensure that all data regarding budget utilization, development planning, and regional government performance evaluation results are conveyed effectively and transparently (Vientiany et al., 2024).

A major problem that frequently arises in regional governance is the information gap. This lack of transparency often fuels public suspicion, which in turn can undermine public trust (Gaol et al., 2024). When the flow of information is blocked, abuse of power becomes easier due to weak external oversight by the public and the mass media (Wibawa, 2019).

The digital era presents both opportunities and challenges for regional governments in promoting accountability. Through digital platforms, information can be disseminated in real time and reach a wider audience (Abdullah et al., 2024). However, challenges arise when technological infrastructure is uneven and human resources in regional government agencies are not fully prepared for the digital transformation of public information services (Alamsyah et al., 2024).

The link between information transparency and accountability lies in control mechanisms. With access to public information, the public can participate in monitoring government operations and provide constructive input (Hidayat, 2024). Good communication management transforms raw data into meaningful information, allowing the public to objectively assess the extent to which local governments have carried out their duties responsibly (Lathifah et al., 2024).

Based on this background, this research is relevant to explore in more depth how local governments implement public information transparency communication management. The main focus of this research is to examine the extent to which the implemented communication strategies are able to foster accountability in governance. Therefore, it is hoped that the results of this study can provide strategic recommendations for improving government communication systems in the future.

## METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to in-depth explore how information disclosure communication management is implemented in local government agencies (Assyakurrohim et al., 2022). This method was chosen based on the need to understand social and managerial phenomena in a complex, real-world context, where the researcher acts as a key instrument. The research focuses on the communication strategies implemented by the Information and Documentation Management Officer (PPID) in managing the flow of public information to realize the principle of governance accountability.

Primary data in this study were collected through in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, such as PPID managers, public relations officers, and representatives of the public who use information. Furthermore, field observations were conducted on official local government communication channels, including websites and social media, to assess the effectiveness of public information presentation. Secondary data were obtained through a documentary study of Public Information Service Reports, regional regulations, and planning documents relevant to information disclosure (Achjar et al., 2023).

Data analysis was conducted using an interactive model that encompasses data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. To ensure data validity,

this study employed triangulation of sources and methods, comparing interview results with facts found in the field and existing official documents. This process is expected to provide a comprehensive and valid picture of the role of communication management in promoting transparency and accountability at the local government level.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Communication Management Strategy in Public Information Management

Communication management within local government is a strategic process that determines the quality of the relationship between the state and its citizens. Research has found that local governments, through their Information and Documentation Management Officers (PPIDs), have implemented a systematic management cycle. This cycle not only aims to fulfill constitutional obligations but also to ensure that every development message is conveyed with high accuracy. Structured management enables public information to become a dynamic information asset rather than a pile of dead documents.

The first stage, which serves as a key foundation, is thorough communication planning. In this stage, the PPID identifies the various types of information held by each Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD). The results of this identification are compiled into a Public Information List (DIP), which is rigidly categorized into periodic information, immediate information, and continual information. This detailed planning serves as an operational guide to prevent overlapping or confusion in providing information to the public in the future.

After the planning is complete, the organizing stage is carried out to ensure a clear division of labor within the bureaucracy. Regional governments have established a coordinating team structure involving various sectors, from technical information technology teams to legal teams tasked with selecting exempt information. This organization is crucial because information transparency requires data synchronization across agencies to ensure that information disseminated to the public is a single-point access point and maintains accountable validity.

During the implementation phase, the primary focus shifts to how this information is disseminated. Field findings indicate that the effectiveness of communication today depends heavily on the government's ability to utilize digital platforms. Amid shifts in public information consumption behavior, official government websites are no longer sufficient as the sole source. Social media has taken on a central role as a more inclusive and accessible channel for all age groups, particularly the younger generation, who are critical of government performance.

The use of social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter (X), and Facebook by regional governments is not simply a trend, but a tactical necessity. Through these platforms, the government can convey technical policy messages in a more popular and interactive way. Furthermore, social media enables two-way communication, where the public can respond directly to the information provided. This creates a digital dialogue space that narrows the gap between bureaucracy and the people, which was previously often perceived as rigid and impenetrable.

However, this study underscores that good communication management goes beyond simply providing raw data on a website. The biggest challenge in implementing information transparency is how to package that data into crisp, easy-to-understand content. Often,

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government information is presented in complex legal or bureaucratic language, making it difficult for the general public to grasp its substance. This is where information literacy plays a crucial role as a bridge to understanding.

Transforming data into creative content, such as engaging infographics or short explanatory videos, has been shown to increase the readability of public information. When the public can understand the content of a policy or regional financial report, they feel more involved in the development process. This audience-centered communication management is key to ensuring that information transparency is not merely an administrative formality but provides genuine educational value for citizens.

Furthermore, responsiveness in handling information requests is a benchmark for the professionalism of the Public Information and Communications Agency (PPID). Effective communication management requires swift and straightforward standard operating procedures (SOPs). In practice, the speed with which local governments respond to online information requests demonstrates their commitment to transparency. The easier and faster the access provided, the higher the public appreciation for the performance of the local government.

The final stage in this strategy is regular monitoring and evaluation of the existing communication flow. Local governments monitor communication channels to determine the extent to which information is being consumed and any technical challenges encountered in the field. This evaluation includes analyzing negative feedback or complaints from the public about inadequate information access. The evaluation results then inform improvements in communication planning for the following period.

Overall, this communication management strategy for managing public information represents a conscious effort to create transparent governance. By integrating robust planning, appropriate use of digital technology, and communicative information packaging, local governments can build a solid foundation of accountability. Well-managed communication ultimately leads to strengthened public participation and improved democracy at the local level.

### **Barriers to Achieving Information Transparency**

Achieving ideal public information transparency at the local level is no easy task, even though digital infrastructure such as hardware and internet networks are widely available. This research found that the availability of technology often does not align with the bureaucracy's willingness to be open. There is a significant gap between the technical capacity to provide data and the political and administrative will to share it with the public. These barriers are broadly divided into two main dimensions: systemic structural barriers and cultural barriers rooted in the behavior of individual bureaucrats.

Structurally, one of the most obvious obstacles is the persistently strong sectoral egos among Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPDs). Many agencies under the auspices of local governments still feel they have full control over the data they produce and are reluctant to share it with the Main Information and Documentation Management Officer (PPID). This phenomenon creates fragmented information silos, making inter-agency coordination slow and cumbersome. The Public Information Disclosure Law (UU KIP) requires data integration to ensure fast and accurate information services to the public through a single portal.

This lack of preparedness for data integration between OPDs directly impacts the speed of local government response to public information requests. When a citizen submits a request for information involving cross-sectoral issues, the Main PPID often has to go through lengthy internal bureaucratic processes to obtain data from the relevant OPD. These sectoral egos not only hinder efficiency but also create a public perception that local governments remain slow and unresponsive to the public's right to information, as guaranteed by law.

On the other hand, cultural barriers arise from the remnants of a closed bureaucratic culture that has been ingrained for decades. In many regions, information is still often viewed as an instrument of power or a private asset of agencies, rather than as public property that must be returned to the people. The "information is power" paradigm leads some bureaucrats to believe that sharing internal data will weaken their bargaining position or even jeopardize their position if discrepancies are discovered. Fear of criticism is often the primary motive behind this closed-off attitude.

The view that overly places information as a state secret also remains dominant. Although the Public Information Disclosure Law clearly regulates the classification of exempt information, in practice, many government officials remain defensive. They tend to generalize any sensitive data as confidential without properly examining the consequences. This mentality hinders the creation of a space for honest transparency, where the government should feel safe sharing data on its performance, both successes and areas requiring improvement.

Due to this combination of structural and cultural barriers, the information clarification process often takes an extremely long time. Observations show that the processing time for information requests in the field often exceeds the standard operating procedures (SOPs) stipulated in the Public Information Disclosure Law. These delays typically arise from the lengthy bureaucratic process of obtaining approval from leaders at various levels before data is deemed suitable for public release. This undermines the spirit of openness, which should prioritize speed and ease of access.

A further impact of this impeded information flow is the disruption of transparency in the decision-making process. When the public lacks adequate access to background data on a policy, public participation becomes meaningless or even disappears altogether. Strategic regional decisions, such as spatial planning or development budget allocation, become less accountable because they are made behind closed doors without adequate public scrutiny. Without transparency, resulting policies are vulnerable to unilateral interests and lack social legitimacy.

Furthermore, human resource constraints exacerbate existing structural barriers. Many information managers at the regional level do not fully understand the legal and technical aspects of public information management. The lack of regular training on how to manage information disputes or how to digitize archives has resulted in suboptimal performance of the Public Information Agency (PPID). As a result, communication management, which should be the driving force behind transparency, has instead become a weak point in the regional governance system.

## **Correlation of Information Disclosure to Governance Accountability**

An in-depth analysis of the relationship between communication management and governance quality shows that public information disclosure is not merely a legal obligation

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but a determining factor in improving governance accountability. There is a significant positive correlation between consistently implemented transparency and the responsibility of local governments in carrying out their mandates. When information flows smoothly from the bureaucracy to citizens, every government action and policy becomes more measurable and verifiable, a core principle of accountability.

The implementation of transparent communication management directly reduces the scope for deviant practices, such as corruption, collusion, and nepotism. By providing broad access to budget documents (APBD), procurement processes, and regional spending reports, the government is creating an "automatic oversight" system. The dark corners of the bureaucracy, previously vulnerable to data manipulation, are now exposed, allowing individuals intent on committing fraud to feel under the watchful eye of thousands of public eyes.

This transparency of information is the key to effective participatory oversight. The public, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and academics can act as critical external monitors when they have access to valid primary data. Without transparent data, public participation remains superficial or merely a formality in forums like the Musrenbang (Regional Development Planning Forum). However, with transparent data, the public can provide fact-based input, correct misguided policies, and ensure that every rupiah of public money is used for the right purposes.

This research confirms that accountability in local governance encompasses broader dimensions than simply administrative compliance. Accountability has often been narrowly understood as periodic reporting to superiors or formal auditing bodies such as the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK). While this is crucial, information transparency introduces the concept of public accountability, or vertical accountability, in which the government is directly accountable to the public as the ultimate sovereign in a democratic system.

This paradigm shift from administrative to public accountability impacts service quality. Local governments that recognize the importance of transparency tend to be more careful in setting performance targets and more honest in reporting their achievements. This occurs because they recognize that all published data will be consumed, analyzed, and evaluated by the wider public. Open communication forces the bureaucracy to operate more professionally and with an outcome-oriented approach.

One crucial finding from this discussion is the role of information transparency in restoring and maintaining public trust. Amidst growing skepticism toward political institutions, honest and straightforward communication management serves as a soothing oasis. Public trust is born when people feel their government has nothing to hide. When this trust is established, social friction caused by misunderstandings or disinformation can be minimized, thus maintaining social stability in the region.

Strong public trust is invaluable social capital in ensuring the sustainability of regional development programs. Government programs, especially those that are innovative or require direct citizen participation, will be more readily accepted and supported if the planning process is communicated transparently. Communities who feel involved and given access to information will develop a strong sense of ownership over development outcomes, thus enabling better maintenance of public assets.

Furthermore, the correlation between transparency and accountability creates a healthy governance cycle. Open information leads to strict oversight, strict oversight triggers high accountability, and high accountability ultimately leads to improved public welfare. Thus, communications management is no longer viewed as a "firefighting" unit that only operates during crises, but rather as the primary engine driving clean and authoritative governance.

In closing this section, it can be concluded that accountability in local governance is impossible without communication management that upholds information transparency. Local governments must view transparency not as a threat, but as a strategic investment to build credibility. By synchronizing regulations, technology, and a moral commitment to transparency, local governments can achieve governance that is not only technically efficient but also dignified in the eyes of their own people.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion presented, it can be concluded that communication management in public information disclosure is a fundamental strategic instrument in promoting accountability in local government governance. The implementation of communication management, which includes planning through the Public Information List (DIP) and the use of digital channels such as websites and social media, has proven effective in shortening the distance between the bureaucracy and the public. Information disclosure is not merely a fulfillment of the regulatory obligations of the KIP Law, but rather a transformation of government communication that transforms raw data into meaningful information for the public, thus creating an effective participatory oversight mechanism. However, the effectiveness of this information disclosure is still overshadowed by structural barriers in the form of sectoral egos between agencies and cultural barriers in the form of a closed bureaucratic culture that views information as an instrument of power. These obstacles often cause information services to exceed SOP deadlines and hinder transparency in the strategic decision-making process. Nevertheless, this study confirms that there is a strong positive correlation between information transparency and increased public accountability. With open communication, the space for corrupt practices is reduced, public trust increases, and the legitimacy of local governments in implementing development programs becomes stronger as a manifestation of good governance.

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