

PUBLIC COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE PANDEGLANG REGENCY GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICE IN OPTIMIZING DIGITAL MEDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the public communication strategy of the Public Relations (PR) division of the Pandeglang Regency Government in optimizing digital media as a means to disseminate information regarding public policy. Effective communication management is crucial in the digital era for fostering transparency and building a positive regional image. This research employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with PR officials of Pandeglang Regency, observation of official social media activities, and documentation studies. The findings indicate that the public communication strategy implemented includes transforming bureaucratic language into messages that are informative, educational, and persuasive; planning via content calendars; optimizing the Instagram platform and the official website; and establishing partnerships with online journalists and local community accounts. However, the effectiveness of this communication still faces obstacles, such as limitations in the quantity and quality of creative human resources, inadequate supporting infrastructure, and a lack of two-way interaction resulting from slow responses to public feedback. The study concludes that while the optimization of digital media by the Pandeglang Regency PR division has successfully expanded the reach of information dissemination, it requires further enhancement of technical capacity and the strengthening of dialogic communication to achieve excellent governance in terms of public information transparency.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Government Public Relations, Digital Media, Pandeglang Regency.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has fundamentally altered the landscape of interaction between the government and the public. This transformation requires public institutions to move away from conventional communication patterns—which tend to be one-way, rigid, and slow (Lase et al., 2025). Modern society now holds high expectations regarding the speed, transparency, and ease of access to information concerning government governance programs. Consequently, the adoption of digital technology is no longer merely an optional secondary measure; it has become an absolute necessity for government agencies to remain relevant and accountable in the eyes of the public (Hafel, 2023).

Within the structure of local government, the Public Relations (PR) division plays a central role, serving as a bridge for information and a builder of the institution's positive image. Government PR bears a significant responsibility for disseminating public policies and promoting work programs, while also neutralizing potential communication crises or instances

of disinformation among the public (Lani & Handayani, 2021). The success of development at the local level is heavily influenced by the ability of the PR division to translate complex information into easily understood narratives, thereby fostering active participation and support from citizens (Afnan, 2019).

The emergence of digital media particularly social media and official websites presents both new opportunities and challenges for government PR practitioners. On one hand, digital platforms enable the dissemination of information in real-time, at a low cost, and with an extensive reach that transcends geographical boundaries (Habibie & Santoso, 2025). On the other hand, the interactive and dynamic nature of digital media demands that PR practitioners remain adaptive, responsive, and creative in content production, ensuring they stay competitive against the flow of informal information circulating widely across the digital landscape (et al., 2022). In reality, however, the use of digital media by government bureaucracies is often suboptimal, serving merely as a formality to establish a digital presence. Many public communication channels operated by local governments remain passive, lack interaction, and tend to be monotonous, featuring content that is overly formal (Budhirianto, 2020). The absence of a well-developed communication strategy prevents digital media from fulfilling its purpose educating the public and fostering constructive, two-way dialogue thereby perpetuating an information gap between the government and the citizenry (Ainunsari, 2025).

This phenomenon underscores that simply possessing social media accounts or a website is insufficient without a comprehensive public communication strategy. An effective public communication strategy must encompass structured message planning (Nazmudin & Yusup, 2026), the selection of appropriate digital channels, and the management of public feedback. Without a strategy grounded in an analysis of public needs, the use of digital media risks triggering negative sentiment, as the government may appear slow to respond to citizens' complaints or inquiries (Supriadi et al., 2026).

The importance of optimizing digital media is also recognized by the Pandeglang Regency Government, which is committed to improving the quality of public services and ensuring information transparency. As a developing region, the Public Relations office of Pandeglang Regency faces the challenge of engaging an increasingly digitally literate public by providing transparent, credible, and educational information. Consequently, an in-depth examination of the strategic measures taken by local government public relations units in managing digital platforms has become essential.

This research aims to thoroughly analyze how content is formulated, which media channels are selected, and what patterns of interaction are established by the relevant institutions in response to the dynamics of public information within the region. Through this

exploration, it is hoped that an applicable and adaptive public communication strategy can be developed. The findings of this study are expected to make a tangible contribution both theoretically, by advancing the field of government communication, and practically, by serving as a basis for evaluation to promote public transparency and strengthen the management of public relations in Pandeglang Regency.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to provide an in-depth and systematic overview of the phenomenon under investigation. Data collection was carried out using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis (Yulianah, 2022). In-depth interviews were conducted with informants selected through purposive sampling specifically, civil servants (ASN) or staff members directly involved in policy formulation and the management of digital media within the Public Relations (Humas) division of the Pandeglang Regency Government. Meanwhile, observation focused on content posting activities and interaction patterns on the institution's official social media accounts, supplemented by document analysis, including regulatory archives, performance reports, and portfolios of digital publications.

All collected field data were analyzed using an interactive qualitative data analysis model, which encompasses data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing or verification. To ensure the authenticity and validity of the data, the researcher applied both source triangulation and method triangulation. Source triangulation was achieved by comparing interview data across informants holding different hierarchical positions, while method triangulation was carried out by cross-referencing interview findings with empirical facts gathered through the observation of digital media and official documents (Rukin, 2019). This process ensures that the interpretation of the public communication strategies implemented is scientifically sound and objective.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Message Strategy and Digital Media Optimization

The Public Relations (PR) division of the Pandeglang Regency Government has taken a revolutionary step in transforming its public communication model. Recognizing the importance of information transparency, the institution has adopted digital media as its primary instrument for reaching the broader public. This shift moving away from rigid, conventional communication patterns toward a dynamic, digital-based approach marks a new era in information governance for the local government.

A crucial initial step in this transformation has been the reconstruction of the "bureaucratic language" style, which was previously perceived as overly formal and distant

from the public. The Pandeglang Regency PR team has gradually adjusted sentence structures, word choices, and the tone of delivery to be more casual, while still upholding the dignity of a government institution. This more accessible and human-centric linguistic approach has effectively bridged the psychological gap between government officials and local internet users.

In managing its publication activities, the Pandeglang Regency PR team employs a structured planning system through the use of a content calendar. This system helps regulate the rhythm of publications, ensuring that information is disseminated consistently and evenly, rather than being clustered all at once. The content calendar categorizes publication materials into several key clusters, ranging from regional strategic programs and development achievements to daily public service information.

The strategy for crafting messages focuses on three core pillars: informative, educational, and persuasive. The informative element ensures that the public receives accurate and timely data regarding the latest local government policies. The educational element is integrated to help the public understand their rights and obligations, as well as the procedures for accessing public services. Meanwhile, the persuasive element is designed to foster public awareness and encourage active participation in the success of ongoing development programs. The Public Relations office of Pandeglang Regency recognizes that long, wordy texts are no longer effective for capturing audience attention in the fast-paced digital landscape. Consequently, they have adopted a strategy of visualizing messages through the use of infographics and short-form videos. By employing engaging visual design techniques, complex statistical data and intricate local regulations are simplified into formats that the general public can easily digest in a matter of seconds.

Regarding the selection of information distribution channels, Instagram has been established as the primary pillar of the external digital communication strategy. This decision is based on demographic analysis, which indicates that the majority of the tech-savvy, working-age population in Pandeglang Regency are active Instagram users. The visual-centric nature of the platform aligns perfectly with the infographics and short videos consistently produced by the Public Relations creative team.

In addition to social media, the official website of the Pandeglang Regency Government continues to be optimized as a repository for formal, in-depth information. While Instagram serves to initially capture attention through concise visual content, the website functions as the primary reference point for those seeking complete regulatory documents or official press releases. This integration between social media and the website creates a digital information ecosystem where the two platforms complement one another.

The optimization of digital media by the Pandeglang Regency Public Relations office goes beyond a mere focus on the quantity of posts; it emphasizes the enhancement of aesthetics and visual quality. The use of a consistent color palette, clean graphic layouts, and clear typography reflects a professional approach to managing the government's social media presence. A well-organized visual presentation indirectly bolsters the institution's credibility and fosters an image of the region as modern and tech-savvy.

To expand the reach of information ensuring it extends well beyond the existing circle of followers on official accounts the Public Relations office employs a digital media relations strategy. Strong relationships with journalists from local online media outlets are cultivated by providing ready-to-publish digital press releases, complete with high-quality visual assets. This collaborative effort ensures that vital information from the local government is promptly amplified by prominent online news portals across the Banten region.

Beyond engaging with conventional mass media, the Pandeglang Regency Public Relations office has also broadened its communication network by connecting with independent, community-run social media accounts. These community-based accounts often enjoy a high level of engagement with the grassroots population. This digital synergy proves highly effective when the local government needs to disseminate urgent information, such as early warnings for natural disasters or details regarding social assistance programs.

Through the combination of these strategies, the Pandeglang Regency Public Relations office has successfully established a public information dissemination model that is extensive, targeted, and sustainable. Information ranging from the region's tourism potential and the Regent's work agenda to the transparency of budget utilization is now openly accessible to anyone, at any time. These digital channels also serve to limit the space for the spread of hoaxes or disinformation, which could otherwise damage the local government's reputation. Theoretically, the implementation of the public communication strategy has successfully fulfilled the role of digital media as a modern conduit for information. The ability to craft compelling visual messages, combined with the precise selection of digital channels, has served as a key asset for the Pandeglang Regency Public Relations office in educating its citizens. This optimization effort demonstrates a strong commitment from the local government to ensure public information transparency that is adaptive to the demands of the digital age.

Operational Obstacles and Challenges in Two-Way Communication

Although the Public Relations division of the Pandeglang Regency Government has shown progress in producing visual content for the digital sphere, the effectiveness of its public communication strategy has yet to reach an ideal level. Several structural limitations and operational constraints continue to hinder the management of the institution's digital media.

These obstacles directly affect the quality of message delivery and the depth of the relationship fostered between the local government and the broader public in the digital space.

The most fundamental constraint stems from limitations in both the number and capacity of the human resources assigned to the digital media management team (Yulianah, 2024). Most of the staff involved remain burdened by time-consuming, conventional bureaucratic administrative tasks. Consequently, their attention is divided between fulfilling daily official duties and developing dynamic, creative public communication initiatives that require regular updates.

Beyond the issue of staffing levels, a "skill gap" presents an equally serious challenge. Managing digital media in the modern era requires specialized expertise, including digital copywriting, professional videography, advanced graphic design, and social media analytics (Samosir et al., 2026). The absence of dedicated staff with relevant educational backgrounds or proven expertise in these areas has prevented the full exploration and utilization of advanced features available on digital platforms.

This limitation in human resources directly impacts the consistency of digital content maintenance. At times—particularly during major local government events the flow of information on social media becomes highly dense and intensive. However, at other times when official activities are less intense these official digital channels often experience long periods of inactivity, which can ultimately diminish follower retention and engagement.

Operational hurdles faced by the Pandeglang Regency Public Relations office also extend to supporting infrastructure, such as the hardware and software required for creative content production. A lack of high-specification devices, professional-grade cameras, and licenses for video-editing software frequently slows down the team's workflow. These technical limitations force the creative team to work with inadequate tools, meaning the final visual presentations of public information often fall short of the standards seen in the commercial creative industry.

Beyond internal managerial issues, the most significant challenge and a major weak point—in the Pandeglang Regency Public Relations office's digital public communication is a strong tendency toward one-way communication. Current information-dissemination practices position the government institution solely as an active broadcaster, while the public is relegated to the role of passive consumers of information. This conventional approach is poorly aligned with the philosophy of digital media, which prioritizes interactivity and an equitable communication space.

This weakness in interactive communication is reflected in slow response times or, at times, a complete lack of response—to feedback provided by the public in comment sections

or via direct messages. Numerous inquiries from citizens regarding public service procedures, complaints about local infrastructure, and requests for important information are often left unanswered by the administrators. This low level of responsiveness gradually fosters the impression that the institution is indifferent to the voices of its citizens on social media.

These delays in responding are generally caused by complex bureaucratic processes governing the internal approval workflow for information. Social media managers lack the full authority to provide immediate answers to technical questions from the public without first coordinating with their superiors or the relevant departments. This time-consuming confirmation process often renders the eventual responses obsolete or causes them to lose their timely relevance by the time they are finally shared with the public.

Another challenge that must be addressed is the prevalence of negative sentiment, hate speech, and irrelevant comments (spam) on the official social media accounts of local governments. The inability of an agency to mitigate small-scale communication crises within the comment sections can negatively impact public perception of the local government's overall image. The absence of a standardized operating procedure (SOP) for handling negative comments often leads the management team to adopt a passive approach either by ignoring such comments or deleting them entirely.

Furthermore, the lack of periodic evaluations based on media analytics poses a strategic obstacle to the sustainability of this digital optimization program. The public relations (PR) team has yet to fully utilize digital performance metrics such as engagement rates, content reach, and audience demographic growth to inform the development of future content strategies. Consequently, decisions regarding content themes are frequently based solely on intuition or the preferences of leadership, rather than on the actual needs and preferences of the public.

Equally significant is the limited budget allocated specifically for the development of a digital media ecosystem. A large portion of the PR budget continues to be directed toward conventional mass media—both print and electronic—through paid advertisements or contractual partnerships. As a result, the budget allocated for social media optimization—including paid promotions, digital skills training for staff, and the procurement of modern creative tools—remains disproportionately small.

From a cultural perspective, these challenges are compounded by an uneven level of "digital awareness" among senior bureaucrats within local government. A traditional mindset—which measures PR success primarily by the volume of physical newspaper clippings—often results in a lack of appreciation and structural support for innovations in the digital space. This cultural resistance to evolving work patterns acts as an invisible barrier, slowing the transition toward a more modern approach to public relations governance.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the implementation of the public communication strategy by the Public Relations Division of the Pandeglang Regency Government has shown significant progress in information dissemination. This has been achieved by transforming bureaucratic messages into visual content that is more informative, educational, and persuasive. The utilization of key digital platforms such as Instagram and the official website bolstered by partnerships with digital media journalists and local community accounts, has successfully expanded the reach of information regarding work programs, development achievements, and the transparency of regional policies. The creation of digital content, including infographics and short videographics, has proven effective in bridging the psychological gap with the online community and simplifying complex regulatory data, making it more accessible to the general public.

Nevertheless, the optimization of these digital media channels has not yet reached an ideal state, hindered by internal operational obstacles and structural challenges in fostering interactive, two-way communication. Key limitations include a shortage of creative human resources with specialized expertise in digital management, insufficient supporting infrastructure, and a cumbersome bureaucratic approval process for information. This results in delayed responses to public feedback in comment sections and direct messages. Consequently, the digital media channels often function merely as one-way communication tools—essentially acting as electronic bulletin boards. Therefore, the Pandeglang Regency Public Relations division must urgently streamline workflows, enhance the technical capacity of its staff, and shift toward a paradigm of dialogic communication to achieve excellent public information transparency in the digital era.

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