

Effectiveness of Government Communication in Delivering Public Policy on Social Media

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of government communication in conveying public policies through social media. The method used is a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques in the form of content analysis of official social media accounts of government agencies, in-depth interviews with key informants, and online observation of public involvement. The results of the study indicate that the effectiveness of government communication on social media still varies between agencies, influenced by communication strategies, language styles, and forms of content presentation. Policy messages are often delivered formally and less communicatively, so they are not fully understood by the public. Two-way interaction is also still limited, resulting in low responsiveness to public comments and questions. Supporting factors for communication effectiveness include the professionalism of the management team, consistency of uploads, and the use of attractive visual content. Meanwhile, the obstacles faced include low digital literacy of the apparatus, limited communication budget, and the absence of standard digital communication guidelines. This study recommends the need for a more humanistic and participatory communication approach so that the delivery of public policies can be more effective and impactful.

Keywords: government communication; social media; public policy; message effectiveness; public participation.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation in public communication has fundamentally changed the way governments deliver information and policies to the public. Social media is now used as a strategic means to reach the public more quickly, widely, and interactively compared to conventional media (Adeola et al., 2020). Through platforms such as Twitter/X, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, the government can deliver policy messages in real time, respond to current issues, and build direct dialogue with the public. The presence of social media allows for two-way communication that was previously difficult to achieve, while also opening up space for public participation in the governance process (Chami,



2025). By leveraging the power of visuals, short narratives, and content distribution algorithms, social media has become a potential tool in increasing transparency, accountability, and government closeness to its citizens. However, the success of utilizing social media is highly dependent on the right communication strategy, content management capabilities, and sensitivity to the dynamics of digital public opinion.

Changes in people's information consumption patterns in the digital era are very significant, marked by a shift in preferences from conventional media such as television, radio and newspapers towards digital platforms, especially social media (Alzubi, 2023). People now tend to access information instantly through mobile devices and digital applications that allow them to connect with various news sources anytime and anywhere. Social media such as Instagram, Twitter/X, Facebook, and TikTok are not only alternative sources of information, but have become the main media in receiving, disseminating, and responding to public information, including government policies. This phenomenon shows the decentralization of information, where people no longer rely on official channels, but are active in selecting, assessing, and even producing content. Therefore, social media has a strategic role in shaping public opinion and becoming the main field of communication between the government and its citizens. Governments that are unable to adapt to these changes risk losing public trust due to delays in information or communication styles that are not relevant to the digital characteristics of today's society (Liu et al., 2022).

Challenges in the effectiveness of message delivery via social media are an important concern in government public communications (Lovari & Valentini, 2020). Although various information and policies have been published through digital channels, not all messages can be fully understood by the public. This is due to various factors, such as the use of language that is too technical and bureaucratic, the lack of content adjustment to the characteristics of the digital audience, and the lack of narratives that are down to earth and relevant to people's daily lives. As a result, policy messages that are intended to provide understanding and build public support often lead to confusion, misperception, and even rejection. In some cases, this ineffective delivery of information also opens up space for the emergence of disinformation and wild speculation that worsens the public's perception of a policy (Starbird et al., 2019). Therefore, the effectiveness of a message is not only determined by the content of the information, but also by how it is delivered including the style of language, visual media, and consistency and responsiveness in responding to public reactions. Ineffective communication is not only detrimental to the government's image, but also has the potential to hinder policy implementation in the field.

The high flow of disinformation and hoaxes on social media is a serious challenge for government public communication (Pérez-Curiel & Velasco Molpeceres, 2020). Amidst the openness of information and the speed of distribution of digital content, social media often becomes fertile ground for the

spread of false, manipulative, and misleading information that is often packaged convincingly. This phenomenon not only damages public trust in the government, but also disrupts the effectiveness of delivering official messages, especially those related to sensitive or controversial public policies. When false information spreads faster and wider than official clarification from the government, the public becomes vulnerable to misunderstanding, social unrest, and even rejection of policies. This condition is exacerbated by social media algorithms that tend to amplify sensational content, as well as the low digital literacy of some people (Sun et al., 2023). In this context, the effectiveness of government communication is not only determined by how well information is conveyed, but also by the government's ability to respond to disinformation quickly, accurately, and convincingly (Kim & Kreps, 2020). Therefore, public communication through social media must be accompanied by hoax mitigation strategies, strengthening official narratives, and collaboration with third parties such as independent media, academics, and digital communities to maintain the integrity of public information.

The lack of evaluation of government digital communication is one of the important gaps in the study of modern public communication. Until now, there has not been much research that systematically and comprehensively evaluates the effectiveness of government communication on social media, especially in terms of message clarity, public response levels, and its impact on understanding and acceptance of policies (Reynolds et al., 2020). In fact, in the fast-paced and dynamic digital era, communication evaluation is not only a measure of the success of information delivery, but also a basis for formulating more adaptive and participatory communication strategies. The lack of research means that the government often does not have clear data or indicators to assess the extent to which policy messages delivered through social media actually reach, are understood, and are accepted by the public. As a result, the communication strategies used tend to be repetitive, not evidence-based, and less sensitive to changes in public digital behavior. The absence of evaluation also makes it difficult to identify weaknesses in content, narrative approaches, and the effectiveness of two-way interactions (Belkahla Driss et al., 2019). Therefore, in-depth scientific studies are needed to assess the effectiveness of government digital communication as a basis for making more appropriate and responsive decisions to the needs of public communication in the digital era.

The urgency of building public trust is one of the main reasons why effective communication on social media is essential in the context of modern governance (Mansoor, 2021). Amidst the unstoppable flow of information and increasing public expectations for government transparency and accountability, public trust can no longer be built only through administrative actions or substantive policies, but also through the way the government communicates. Social media, as a direct and real-time communication channel, plays a central role in shaping public perceptions of government integrity, competence, and responsiveness (Ologunebi & Taiwo, 2025). When policy messages are delivered clearly, openly, and accompanied by healthy dialogue, the public

tends to be more accepting and supportive of the policy, even in controversial situations. Conversely, communication that is not transparent, slow to respond, or one-way will actually trigger distrust, negative speculation, and resistance to the policy. In this context, building public trust through social media is not just about spreading information, but about creating a participatory space that allows the public to feel heard, involved, and valued in the public decision-making process.

Although social media has become the main channel of public communication used by the government, most previous studies have focused more on the technical aspects of social media use or on public perceptions of policies, rather than on the effectiveness of communication strategies implemented by the government specifically. Several existing studies also tend to examine government communication in the context of a crisis, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, but not many have discussed in depth how the government builds the effectiveness of policy communication in normal situations through social media (Lerouge et al., 2023). In addition, previous studies generally have not comprehensively examined the factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of government digital communication, such as public engagement, message quality, and two-way interactions on digital platforms. Therefore, this study is here to fill this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the effectiveness of government communication in conveying public policies through social media, including exploring the communication strategies used, public responses, and challenges faced in practice (Lai et al., 2020).

In the digital era, social media has become the main communication tool used by the government to convey public policies to the public. However, in practice, it is often found that the policy messages conveyed are not effectively absorbed by the public. This can be seen from the low participation, the emergence of misperceptions, to the increase in criticism in the comments column against the policies conveyed (Sahn, 2025). In addition, the flood of information, disinformation, and hoaxes also worsen the effectiveness of government communication, especially when conveying urgent policies such as emergency policies, social assistance, or regulatory changes. On the other hand, not all government agencies have a structured digital communication strategy, both in terms of narrative, message visualization, and interaction with the audience (Piotrowski et al., 2019). This phenomenon raises questions about how effective government communication is in conveying policies through social media, and what factors support or hinder its success.

This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of government communication in conveying public policies through social media. Specifically, this study aims to examine the communication strategies used, public responses and involvement in policy messages, and identify factors that influence the success or failure of such communication. This study is also expected to provide recommendations for digital communication strategies that are more effective and responsive to community needs.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach, which aims to deeply understand the effectiveness of government communication in conveying public policy through social media (Lovari & Bowen, 2020). This method was chosen because it is able to capture the dynamics of communication, message context, and public response that cannot be measured quantitatively alone. Data collection techniques were carried out through content analysis of official government social media accounts (such as Instagram, Twitter/X, or Facebook) that convey certain public policies, as well as in-depth interviews with key informants, such as government communication practitioners, digital communication experts, and active social media users. In addition, online observations were also conducted on public engagement through comments, likes, and shares as indicators of audience responsiveness and connectedness to the messages conveyed. The data obtained were analyzed thematically to identify communication patterns, delivery strategies, and message effectiveness in terms of clarity, public participation, and its influence on public understanding and acceptance of the policies conveyed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the study indicate that the effectiveness of government communication in conveying public policies through social media is still not optimal. Based on an analysis of the official social media accounts of several government agencies and interviews with related sources, it was found that the communication strategy used was not fully structured and in accordance with the characteristics of social media which requires speed, interactivity, and a personal approach. Many policy messages are conveyed in formal language that is difficult for the general public to understand, and there is minimal use of visual media or interesting narratives. In addition, public engagement in the form of comments, likes, and shares tends to fluctuate and is highly dependent on the type of policy, content design, and publication time. Two-way interaction between the government and the public is also still weak, as seen from the minimal response of agencies to questions or criticisms submitted by the public through comments. However, there are several good practices, such as the use of infographics and short videos that have been proven to increase audience engagement. Factors supporting communication effectiveness include the professionalism of the social media team, consistency of uploads, and the use of communicative language. The main obstacles identified include the low digital literacy of government officials, limited digital communication budgets, and the absence of standardized public communication guidelines in the realm of social media.

Unstandardized Digital Communication Strategy

The government's digital communication strategy, which is not yet standardized, reflects the weak coordination and integrated policies in

managing public communication in the digital era (Liaw et al., 2021). Each government agency, both at the central and regional levels, tends to develop its own style, format, and frequency of social media communication without uniform normative guidelines. Some agencies show progressive performance with a communicative approach, attractive visuals, and active engagement with the public through comments and direct message features. However, there are also quite a few agencies that still carry out passive communication, limited to one-way posts with minimal interaction and are not responsive to public questions or criticism. This inconsistency not only causes inequality in the quality of information received by the public, but also has an impact on public perception of the government's professionalism, transparency, and openness. In the long term, these differences in approach can create confusion, erode trust, and hinder efforts to integrate national communication, especially when conveying cross-sector policies. Therefore, a standardized, flexible but structured digital communication policy is needed so that all government agencies are able to convey information in a harmonious, credible, and effective manner to the public (Suzuki & Demircioglu, 2021).

Dominance of Formal Messages and Minimal Humanist Narratives

The dominance of formal messages and the lack of humanistic narratives are one of the main weaknesses in the government's digital communication strategy. Much of the policy content delivered through social media still uses bureaucratic, rigid, and technical language, making it irrelevant to the characteristics of the majority of social media users who prefer a light, direct, and easy-to-understand communication style. The use of formal terminology that is not accompanied by down-to-earth explanations often makes it difficult for the general public to understand the substance of the policies conveyed. In fact, the effectiveness of communication on social media is greatly influenced by the government's ability to adapt the message style to the developing digital culture, where short narratives, attractive visuals, and relatable storytelling are key to attracting attention and building emotional closeness with the audience (Arshad & Khurram, 2020). The lack of a humanist approach causes government policies to seem far from people's daily lives, and ultimately reduces the level of public understanding, involvement, and even trust. Therefore, the government needs to adapt its communication style with a more communicative, empathetic, and narrative-based approach that touches on the personal aspects of society without reducing the substance of the policy itself (Estevez, 2022).

Fluctuating Levels of Public Engagement

The level of public engagement with government communications on social media shows a fluctuating pattern and is influenced by various technical and substantive factors (Hügel & Davies, 2020). Based on the results of observations of digital interactions such as comments, likes, and shares, it is known that content format has

a major influence on public appeal and participation. Content in the form of short videos, infographics, or visual animations has proven to be more effective in attracting user attention than uploading long text or static images. In addition, upload time is also an important factor; uploads made during people's active hours, such as in the morning before work hours or at night after work hours, tend to generate higher interactions. Policy topics also affect engagement; policies that directly touch the interests of the community, such as social assistance, energy subsidies, or emergency information, tend to get a greater public response than technical or regulatory topics that are not felt to have a direct impact. This fluctuation shows that the effectiveness of communication depends not only on the substance of the information, but also on the delivery strategy and sensitivity to people's digital behavior. Therefore, choosing the right format, time, and narrative composition are key to increasing public participation and strengthening acceptance of government policies (Marson et al., 2023).

Agency Response to Public Comments Still Passive

The response of government agencies to public comments and participation on social media is still relatively passive, reflecting the low optimization of two-way communication. Although social media provides an open space for the public to convey questions, criticisms, and aspirations, in reality many comments are ignored or do not receive adequate responses (Wukich, 2021). Even in cases of serious questions directly related to policy implementation or complaints about public services, the response from agencies is often slow, normative, or nonexistent. and does not make the public voice an integral part of the policy process. As a result, the public feels unheard and is positioned only as a recipient of information, not as a dialogue partner in governance. This condition directly impacts the level of public trust, where unequal interactions reinforce the perception of distance between the government and citizens (Palmisano & Sacchi, 2024). Therefore, a stronger commitment is needed from government agencies to build participatory, responsive communication and respect digital interactions as part of a democratic and inclusive public service.

Supporting Factors for Communication Effectiveness

The effectiveness of government communication on social media cannot be separated from a number of supporting factors that play an important role in building a strong, interesting, and easily accepted message by the public. One of the main factors is the presence of a professional social media team, who not only understand the technical aspects of managing digital platforms, but also have sensitivity to social issues and public communication skills (Australian, 2023). Consistency in the upload schedule is also a crucial element because it creates

expectations and audience engagement with government content. In addition, the use of attractive, informative graphic designs that are in accordance with the visual identity of the institution can increase the readability and appeal of policy messages. The use of public figures, influencers, or figures who have credibility in the eyes of the public has been proven to be able to expand the reach of messages and build emotional connections with audiences, especially in massive policy campaigns that require broad public support (Chung et al., 2023).

Major Obstacles to Communication Effectiveness

However, behind these potentials, there are still a number of obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of government digital communication. One of the main obstacles is the low digital literacy among government officials, which causes a lack of understanding of the characteristics of communication on social media and how to build effective interactions (Sibuea, 2025). Limited budget specifically for digital communication management is also a challenge, especially in terms of producing quality content, managing professional teams, and developing public engagement analysis tools. In addition, the low awareness of the importance of two-way communication in the digital democracy ecosystem has caused many agencies to not prioritize public engagement as part of their communication strategy. As a result, the potential of social media as a space for dialogue, transparency, and participation has not been utilized optimally in conveying public policy (Erbaugh et al., 2024).

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of government communication on social media shows significant variation between agencies, which is generally influenced by the communication strategy and capacity of the management team. In many cases, an overly formal and rigid communication style and minimal two-way interaction make policy messages difficult to understand and less interesting to the public. In addition, the effectiveness of message delivery is also greatly influenced by the content format used, the suitability of the issue to the needs or interests of the community, and the strategic timing of the upload. Supporting factors such as the professionalism of the social media team, sensitivity to social dynamics, and the ability to adapt to digital trends are the main determinants in reaching a wider audience. However, there are still fundamental obstacles that need to be overcome, such as the low digital literacy of government officials and the lack of standardized and standardized public communication guidelines across agencies. Therefore, a more humanistic, inclusive, and participatory communication approach is needed, so that policy messages are not only conveyed in one direction, but are also able to build active dialogue and increase public involvement constructively in the digital space.

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