



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE VILLAGE HEAD IN BUILDING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NAGORI TANJUNG PASIR, TANAH JAWA SUB-DISTRICT, SIMALUNGUN REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the communication strategies implemented by the Village Head of Nagori Tanjung Pasisir, Tanah Jawa District, Simalungun Regency in building good governance at the village level. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation involving the village head and local residents. The findings indicate that the village head applies open, participatory, and responsive communication strategies by utilizing both formal and informal media such as local leaders (gamot), village information boards, and personal social media platforms. The implementation of good governance principles is reflected in active public participation, transparent information dissemination, accountable aid distribution based on objective data, and effective public service delivery. The communication strategies employed have strengthened public trust and accelerated the realization of fair, transparent, and community-oriented governance in the village.

Keywords: communication strategy, village head, good governance, public participation, transparency

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia adopts the principle of decentralization in its governmental system, which grants authority to regional governments to manage and administer their own affairs. This provides regions with the opportunity and flexibility to exercise autonomy independently. The Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is divided into provincial regions, as stipulated in Article 18, paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which states that provinces are subdivided into regencies and municipalities. Each province, regency, and municipality has its own regional government, regulated by law (Hasriani, 2024).

Regional autonomy refers to the rights and authority of regional governments to regulate and develop all potential and resources they possess. The success of regional autonomy implementation largely depends on the quality of governance.

Good governance is defined as a system of administration that can create prosperity, welfare, and provide optimal public services. The outcome of effective and proper governance is what is referred to as a government system based on good governance (Putra, 2017).

Good governance is a concept that refers to the process of exercising political, economic, and administrative authority in managing a nation's affairs at various levels. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines good governance as the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs effectively and efficiently. This definition emphasizes the importance of governance that ensures the state operates in alignment with national development goals. A government that successfully implements the principles of good governance reflects effectiveness and public trust, while failure in its implementation signifies weaknesses in the governance system (Hidayat, 2022).

To achieve good governance, the fundamental principles of governmental management must be upheld across all institutions within the structure of governance. These principles include public participation, the enforcement of the rule of law, transparency, responsiveness to stakeholder interests, consensus orientation, equality for all citizens, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability, and strategic vision (Putra, 2017). These principles are not only applicable to governmental institutions but also extend to non-governmental organizations, as good governance is a collective responsibility of all societal components (Ipan Nurhidayat, 2018).

A good government is characterized as a collective form of governance, involving the actions and behaviors of the public in preventing the abuse of power. This encompasses efforts to guide, control, or positively influence public affairs to realize values of goodness in daily life. The concept of good governance is not limited to protection from threats but also includes the provision of ample opportunities for the community to attain a decent quality of life in this world, as part of the broader process of achieving happiness in the hereafter (Darmi, 2016).

In this context, leadership plays a central role in realizing good governance. A leader bears responsibility for the entire process and outcomes of the governance they oversee. The ideal leadership style is one that can mentor subordinates, enhance performance quality, serve with empathy and compassion, and demonstrate concern for the expectations, needs, and interests of the people they lead. Leadership, in essence, is the process of influencing the organized activities of a group of individuals to achieve common goals within an organization (Maimunah, 2017).

One of the key elements in the success of village leadership is the ability to implement an effective communication strategy. A communication strategy refers to a systematic approach to delivering messages, building relationships, and establishing effective channels of communication between the leader and the

community. In the context of village governance, communication strategies encompass not only the technical aspects of information delivery but also involve interpersonal, cultural, and social dimensions in fostering community participation and trust.

The proper implementation of communication strategies enables the village head to create spaces for dialogue, convey information transparently, and cultivate a sense of community ownership over governmental programs. These strategies may involve direct communication (face-to-face), the use of local media, symbolic approaches, and persuasive messaging tailored to local cultural values. Therefore, analyzing communication strategies is essential to understand how communication functions as a primary tool in achieving good governance.

The initial condition of the government in Tanjung Pasir Village, Tanah Jawa Sub-district, Simalungun Regency, prior to the appointment of the new village head, was marked by weak community involvement in decision-making processes, low transparency of information, and inaccurate data systems in the distribution of social assistance. These issues led to public dissatisfaction and a decline in trust toward the village administration. A clear example of this mismanagement was the improper allocation of social assistance: eligible residents did not receive aid, while ineligible individuals did. This situation reflects a governance system that did not align with the principles of good governance.

To achieve good governance at the village level, the village head and all officials are required to deliver quality and transparent public services. The village administration must function as an institution that serves the community according to its needs, including in administrative matters, distribution of aid, and community empowerment. In this regard, an effective communication strategy is essential for the village head to foster transparency, trust, and active citizen participation in village development (Kawwami, Islamia, 2023).

Literature Review

Fzrch and Kasper define communication strategy from a psycholinguistic perspective as a deliberately planned approach formulated to overcome obstacles or problems encountered by individuals in achieving specific communication goals. They emphasize that such strategies involve the individual's awareness in devising necessary steps to address communicative challenges that may arise during the interaction process. In this context, communication strategy serves as a tool for resolving issues related to message delivery and reception, thus enabling individuals to attain their intended communication objectives more effectively.

A communication strategy constitutes a comprehensive arrangement of communication planning. In designing an effective communication strategy, it is necessary to consider various supporting and inhibiting factors to ensure the message is conveyed efficiently. According to Effendy (2002), several components and supporting factors in communication include:

1. Identifying the communication target
2. Situational and conditional factors
3. Selection of communication media
4. Analysis of communication message objectives
5. The role of the communicator in the communication process
6. Source appeal
7. Source credibility

By taking the above factors into account, communication strategies can be effectively designed and implemented to achieve the intended communication objectives (Giantika, 2016).

Village Head

The village head is a part of the village government and bears the duty and responsibility of ensuring the continuity and success of governance at the village level. Therefore, the village head is expected to work diligently and optimize their capabilities to accelerate the implementation of development and the management of village administration. The success of development across various sectors, including in rural areas, is a major concern of the government. This is due to the role of the village as a crucial link in the governance system, which operates under the coordination of the sub-district government. As such, the effectiveness of village head leadership significantly influences the sustainability of development and the well-being of the local community.

Good Governance

Febriyanto et al. (2014) state that the realization of good governance in Indonesia has been supported by the political will of the government through the implementation of regional autonomy policies, which provide opportunities for regional governments, the private sector, and the public to become more empowered. Good governance carries two meanings. First, it refers to values that uphold the aspirations of the people and enhance their ability to achieve national goals such as independence, sustainable development, and social justice. Second, it refers to the functional aspects of government that operate effectively and efficiently in carrying out their duties to achieve these objectives.

According to Tamim (as cited in Istianto, 2011:88), there are six main principles in the application of good governance that serve as indicators of whether a government has met the criteria for good governance. These principles are:

1. Competence
2. Transparency
3. Accountability
4. Participation
5. Rule of Law

6. Social Justice

Communication Goal Theory

Communication Goal Theory emphasizes that most of our communication with others is goal-directed. This theory explains that each individual possesses specific objectives they aim to achieve through the communication process. These goals refer to desired states or outcomes. An individual's intentions become the focus of interaction during communication and coordination, all of which are directed toward achieving particular objectives (Stephen W. Littlejohn & Karen A. Foss, 2009:129).

Communication Goal Theory underlines that communication is carried out with specific purposes, rather than being merely random or directionless message exchange. The theory posits that every individual engaged in communication has certain intentions, whether to inform, influence, or build relationships. These objectives form the foundation for the development of a systematic and targeted communication strategy.

In the context of village governance, this theory is highly relevant because the village head, as the communicator, has specific goals in interactions with the community. For instance, to promote transparency, enhance public participation, and build public trust in the village administration. Therefore, communication is not conducted arbitrarily; instead, it is carefully designed—starting from the formulation of messages, the selection of appropriate communication channels, to the identification of the target audience.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative approach with the aim of gaining an in-depth understanding of the communication practices implemented by the village head within village governance, as well as their impact on transparency, community participation, and accountability in fostering good governance. The qualitative approach was selected as it allows the researcher to explore social phenomena in their natural settings without manipulation, with the researcher acting as the primary instrument in both data collection and analysis processes.

The study was conducted in Tanjung Pasir Village, Tanah Jawa Subdistrict, Simalungun Regency, over a period of approximately two weeks. This location was chosen due to its relevance as a case study on the communication strategies of a village head in establishing good governance. Research subjects were selected using purposive sampling, which involves choosing informants deemed most knowledgeable and actively involved in communication practices within village governance. The primary subjects consisted of the village head, as the main actor in communication strategies, and village residents, as participants directly engaged in the governance process.

Data sources in this study comprised two types: primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct interviews with the village head and residents to gather authentic and contextual information related to communication practices. Secondary data were collected through literature reviews of books, journals, official documents, and other written sources that support and enrich the understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

Data collection was carried out using three main techniques. First, systematic observation was conducted to examine real conditions in the field and the dynamics of ongoing communication. The purpose of this observation was to obtain a comprehensive depiction of village government activities and the interaction between the village head and the community. Second, semi-structured face-to-face interviews were used to explore in-depth information about the communication strategies employed, the challenges faced, and the community's perception of good governance. Third, documentation techniques were utilized to access various relevant written documents to supplement field data and strengthen the analysis.

Data analysis was conducted using the model developed by Miles and Huberman, which comprises three primary stages. The first stage is data display, where the collected data are systematically organized and presented in a way that allows the communication patterns applied to be clearly identified. The second stage is data reduction, which involves selecting and filtering information relevant to the research focus, while eliminating non-essential data to facilitate a more focused analysis. The final stage is conclusion drawing and verification, where conclusions are derived based on emerging patterns and subsequently verified against other data to ensure the validity and consistency of the research findings.

To ensure the credibility of the data, this study employed source triangulation, which involves comparing and verifying information from multiple sources. This triangulation approach enhances data validity by evaluating the coherence and consistency of information obtained through interviews, observations, and documentation. As a result, the analyzed data can be considered a reliable representation of the village head's communication practices in fostering good governance in Tanjung Pasir Village.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Village Head's Communication Strategy In Establishing Good Governance In Nagori Tanjung Pasir

A communication strategy refers to the approach utilized by the village head to disseminate information, mobilize support, and foster collaborative relationships with the community. Within the context of village governance, communication strategy is not merely about delivering messages in a one-way manner, but about creating a participatory space where the community can actively engage in the

development process. The Village Head of Nagori Tanjung Pasir, Safrizal Butar-Butar, has implemented a communication strategy that emphasizes direct engagement with residents, openness to criticism and suggestions, as well as the use of media that aligns with the local context. This strategy plays a crucial role in building public trust in village governance and encouraging active participation in the implementation of village programs.

Findings from observations and interviews indicate that effective communication serves as a bridge between the aspirations of the community and the policies of the village government. Through structured and consistent communication, the village head has been able to steer development policies that align with the needs and expectations of the local population. The research reveals that the communication strategy employed by the Village Head of Nagori Tanjung Pasir is open, participatory, and oriented toward public service. This strategy serves as the foundation for realizing the principles of good governance, namely participation, transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of village administration.

In an interview, Village Head Safrizal Butar-Butar stated, "We always strive to be present directly among the community. Communication is not just about delivering messages, but also about listening and building mutual trust." The village head applies a two-way communication model by opening space for dialogue with the community, both directly through village deliberations and indirectly through village apparatus such as *gamot* (community leaders). Communication is carried out intensively and addresses various aspects of residents' daily lives.

The media utilized are both formal and informal. Formally, information is delivered through bulletin boards, village meetings, and coordination with village officials. Informally, communication takes place through community gatherings, social activities, and the use of social media such as the village head's personal Facebook account. This approach reflects the village government's adaptive capacity in responding to the development of information technology.

Implementation of Good Governance Principles

Participation

Community participation is one of the key indicators in the practice of good governance at the village level. The notion of participation here is not limited to the physical presence of citizens in formal forums, but extends to active involvement in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of village development programs. The Village Head of Nagori Tanjung Pasir has demonstrated a strong commitment to fostering participation by consistently attending community activities, promoting the culture of *gotong royong* (mutual cooperation), and regularly facilitating public deliberation forums. This approach

positions the community as subjects of development rather than mere recipients of policy.

As reinforcement, one resident expressed, "When the village head joins the gotong royong or village events, we become more enthusiastic to participate. It makes us feel valued." Community participation is encouraged through active engagement in activities such as gotong royong, maternal and child health services (posyandu), and village deliberation forums. The village head is present and contributes to every activity, fostering an equitable relationship between the government and the community. This strengthens trust and a sense of ownership over village programs.

Transparency

Transparency is a crucial principle in establishing an open and trustworthy government. In the context of Nagori Tanjung Pasir, the village head utilizes various communication media to disseminate information to the public in a clear and accessible manner. Information regarding village programs, budget utilization, and social aid recipients is conveyed openly through village officials and social media platforms. This transparency not only prevents misunderstandings but also enhances the community's sense of fairness and trust in the village administration. The village head stated, "I always remind the officials and gamot (community leaders) that all information must reach the residents. No one should feel left in the dark." Transparency is realized through the open and accessible delivery of information. The village head regularly communicates programs and policies to the community through various channels, both directly and via intermediaries. The involvement of community leaders in disseminating information adds credibility and broadens the reach of communication.

Accountability

Accountability refers to the responsibility of the village government to implement policies and carry out duties in a transparent and answerable manner to the community. In Nagori Tanjung Pasir, this principle is applied in the distribution of social assistance, where the village head utilizes accurate and objective data to determine eligibility. This data-driven approach reduces the potential for social conflict and strengthens fairness in distribution. Furthermore, residents are provided the opportunity to raise objections or seek clarification in cases of discrepancies, which are then addressed openly by the village administration.

A resident remarked, "When there is aid, we know why we did or didn't receive it. So we're not confused and have more trust in the village government." Every village policy, especially regarding social aid distribution, is based on objective data such as land ownership and residents' economic conditions. Decisions are made transparently and remain open to correction should there be any objections

from the community. The village head demonstrates responsiveness to public feedback, thereby establishing a system that is both administratively and socially accountable.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness in the context of communication strategy refers to the extent to which the information conveyed by the village head is received, understood, and acted upon by the community. In Nagori Tanjung Pasir, the success of the village head's communication is evident in the improved outcomes of the village's priority programs. The community displays awareness and enthusiasm in participating in initiatives organized by the village government, ranging from health, agriculture, and infrastructure to youth and cultural activities. This effectiveness is supported by the village head's prompt responsiveness to residents' aspirations and his consistency in addressing emerging community issues.

The effectiveness of the village head's communication is reflected in the tangible impact felt by the residents, such as the success of the Rumah Desa Sehat (Healthy Village Home) program, increased agricultural yields through synchronized planting, infrastructure development, and youth empowerment through socio-cultural activities. Residents report significant improvements in public services and quality of life, indicating that the communication has successfully fulfilled its intended goals.

The Effect of The Village Head's Communication Strategy on Village And Community Development

The results of interviews with Village Head Safrizal Butar-Butar reinforce these findings, as he stated, "We want to build this village with the involvement of all parties. If the residents feel included, they will care and be willing to move forward together with the village government." This highlights the importance of communication strategy as a foundation for strengthening collaboration between the government and the community. A resident also mentioned, "Now we better understand the village programs, and we feel more appreciated because the village head often comes directly to the hamlets, not just sending information through the village apparatus."

The communication strategy implemented by the Village Head of Nagori Tanjung Pasir has had a significant impact on village development dynamics and the welfare of its residents. The communication carried out is not limited to the delivery of information, but also serves as an instrument to stimulate participation, reinforce social cohesion, and accelerate various village development programs.

Encouraging Active Community Participation

Through an open and dialogic communication pattern, the community feels involved in the village decision-making process. The village head consistently attends community activities such as mutual cooperation events (gotong royong), hamlet meetings, as well as traditional and religious events. This direct presence fosters emotional closeness and enhances the sense of ownership among residents regarding development programs. A direct effect of this participation is the increased public concern for cleanliness, security, and environmental development in the village. Active involvement in village forums also enables the community to identify local issues and propose contextual solutions.

Enhancing Access to Information and Transparency

The communication strategy, which utilizes various channels—both formal, such as notice boards and village apparatus, and informal, such as social media—has expanded public access to information. Residents now find it easier to understand village programs, budgets, and policies implemented by the local government. This has fostered a culture of transparency and accountability. Another positive effect is the growing trust of the community in the village leadership. Openness in the distribution of aid, budget allocation, and activity reporting has led the public to feel they are being served fairly and without discrimination.

Accelerating Physical and Social Development

The village head's communication strategy plays a crucial role in facilitating cross-sector coordination, involving farmers, youth groups, and traditional institutions. This has expedited the implementation of programs such as road construction, agricultural irrigation, provision of village ambulances, and the revitalization of sports and cultural facilities. On the social front, community-based activities such as gotong royong (mutual cooperation) and village religious gatherings have served as platforms for social integration, strengthening residents' solidarity. The community has shown increased concern for their environment and mutual support in productive activities.

Improving the Quality of Public Services

The effectiveness of the village head's communication strategy is also evident in the improved quality of public services, especially in health and agriculture. For instance, information on Posyandu (integrated health service posts), supplementary feeding programs (PMT), and synchronized rice planting has been disseminated evenly and in a timely manner across the village. As a result, the community is more prepared and responsive to these programs, leading to more optimal outcomes. The village head also stated, "Communication is the key to how

we build this village together with the community. It cannot be just about programs; it must also involve approach and example."

The communication strategy implemented by the village head aligns with the framework of Communication Goal Theory, in which communication is designed to achieve specific outcomes—in this case, good governance. The success of this strategy is supported by the village head's understanding of the community's social context, interpersonal skills, and ability to utilize relevant communication media. Overall, this communication strategy not only conveys government messages to the public but also opens constructive feedback channels. This accelerates the achievement of village development goals and strengthens the practice of good governance at the local level.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research on the communication strategy of the Village Head in fostering good governance in Nagori Tanjung Pasir, Tanah Jawa Subdistrict, Simalungun Regency, it can be concluded that the communication strategy implemented by the village head reflects a participatory, open, and responsive approach to the needs of the community. The communication employed is not unidirectional but involves active dialogue between the village government and the community through deliberative forums, village apparatus, and informal communication media. The implementation of good governance principles is evident in the execution of various priority village programs. The aspect of transparency is demonstrated in the data-driven and accountable process of distributing social assistance. Community participation is manifested in activities such as gotong royong (communal work), flower planting, and involvement in village deliberations. Meanwhile, accountability is realized through the village government's openness in conveying program information, policies, and budget usage in a clear and structured manner.

The programs implemented by the village government—such as synchronized rice planting, road and irrigation development, street lighting, provision of free ambulance services, Posyandu activities, community economic training, and the development of sports facilities—illustrate the integration of communication strategies with development planning focused on community welfare. Therefore, the communication strategy of the Village Head of Nagori Tanjung Pasir plays a significant role in realizing good village governance, marked by transparency, accountability, effectiveness, and active community participation in the village development process.

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