



COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF THE NORTH SUMATRA PROVINCE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS DEPARTMENT IN IMPROVING THE PUBLIC INFORMATION OPENNESS INDEX IN THE ERA OF DIGITAL DISRUPTIONS

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ABSTRACT

The era of digital disruption has transformed patterns of public communication while simultaneously creating new challenges for information openness, particularly the rise of disinformation, the acceleration of information flows, and growing public demands for fast and accessible services. In this context, the Communication and Informatics Office of North Sumatra Province plays a strategic role as the manager of public communication and the main Information and Documentation Management Officer (PPID) at the provincial level. This study aims to analyze the communication strategy of the North Sumatra Provincial Communication and Informatics Office in improving the Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) in the era of digital disruption. This study employed a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, using primary data from structural officials and related implementers, as well as secondary data from institutional documents and official sources. Data analysis was conducted through the stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings show that the communication strategy emphasized the digitalization of public information services through an integrated online one-stop system, the strengthening of Open Data Sumut, metadata-based information management, multichannel public communication, and a more human-centered and responsive narrative approach. However, the implementation of this strategy still faces several challenges, including the gap between bureaucratic procedures and digital public expectations, inter-agency consistency, and local political dynamics that affect IKIP achievement. This study concludes that improving public information openness in the digital era requires the integration of technological innovation, legal certainty, and adaptive two-way public communication

Keywords: public communication strategy; digital disruption; public information openness; Public Information Openness Index (IKIP)

1. INTRODUCTION

The era of digital disruption has fundamentally changed the way governments, media, and the public produce, distribute, and consume information. These changes have not only accelerated the flow of public communication but also presented new challenges in the form of misinformation, disinformation, information overload, and the weakening of the authority of formal information sources. In this context, information disclosure is no longer simply understood as an administrative obligation of public bodies, but rather as part of democratic governance that demands accurate, timely, relevant, and easily accessible information. Amidst an increasingly complex digital communications ecosystem, the ability of public institutions to establish open, responsive, and credible communication is a crucial factor in maintaining public trust in the government (Ecker et al., 2022; Nasrullah, 2017; OECD, 2025).

From a modern democratic perspective, access to public information is a fundamental right of citizens and a prerequisite for meaningful public participation. In Indonesia, this principle is firmly established through Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, which requires public bodies to provide information openly, accountably, and proportionally. The implementation of this norm was then reinforced by Government Regulation No. 61 of 2010, which regulates the technical implementation of public information disclosure. This legal framework emphasizes that information disclosure is not merely an administrative policy, but part of governance reform that positions citizens as subjects with the right to know, assess, and oversee public policy (Law No. 14 of 2008; Government Regulation No. 61 of 2010).

To assess the extent to which this principle of transparency is being implemented, the government and the Information Commission developed the Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) as an evaluative instrument at the national and regional levels. The IKIP is important not only as a measure of regulatory compliance but also as an indicator of the quality of the public information ecosystem across political, legal, and economic dimensions. Therefore, the IKIP's achievements can be interpreted as a reflection of the success of public bodies in managing the public's right to information, building institutional transparency, and strengthening public accountability. In the digital era, the measure of success is increasingly linked to an institution's capacity to develop technology-based information services, proactively provide data, and respond to public needs in a more human-centered and user-driven manner (Central Information Commission, 2024; Central Information Commission, 2025; OECD, 2025).

Previous studies generally discussed public information disclosure from a normative-regulatory perspective, e-government implementation, or the use of digital media in government communications. These studies are important, but they tend to be fragmented because few specifically examine how local government institutions develop communication strategies to increase information disclosure while responding to the pressures of the digital disruption era. Furthermore, studies on information disclosure often emphasize administrative compliance rather than the strategic dimensions of public communication, such as message management, channel selection, narrative orchestration, and public relations amidst the rise of disinformation. Thus, there is still room for research to explain the relationship between local government communication strategies,

strengthening public information services, and improving IKIP achievements in a more integrated manner, especially at the provincial government level (Indrajit, 2016; OECD, 2016; Pratama, 2020).

In this context, the Communication and Informatics Office of North Sumatra Province holds a strategic position as the manager of regional public communications and a key actor in strengthening the public information system. The challenges faced are not only related to the provision of procedural information, but also the ability to build adaptive two-way communication, maintain information consistency between units, and respond to the expectations of the digital community that demands speed, clarity, and transparency. Therefore, this research is important to understand how the agency's communication strategy is designed and implemented to encourage increased public information disclosure at the regional level. Within this framework, this study aims to analyze the communication strategy of the Communication and Informatics Office of North Sumatra Province in improving the Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) in the era of digital disruption.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed qualitative methods with a descriptive approach to gain a deeper understanding of the communication strategies of the North Sumatra Provincial Communication and Informatics Office in improving the Public Information Openness Index (IKIP) in the era of digital disruption. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on the meanings, experiences, and communication practices carried out by institutional actors in a natural context, allowing researchers to capture social realities more holistically and contextually (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The study was conducted at the North Sumatra Provincial Communication and Informatics Office, Jalan H.M. Said No. 27, Medan City, considering that this agency is a regional apparatus with strategic authority in managing public communications, information services, and the functions of the Information and Documentation Management Officer (PPID) at the provincial level.

Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews were used to explore the experiences, perspectives, and strategies of informants regarding public communication management and information openness. Observations were conducted on information service practices, the use of digital communication media, and institutional situations relevant to the research focus. Documentation was used to supplement and verify field data through policy documents, activity reports, screenshots from digital platforms, photographs, recordings, and other supporting archives. To ensure data validity, this study employed source triangulation by comparing information between informants, technical triangulation by matching interview results, observations, and documentation, and member checking by requesting confirmation from several informants regarding the interview summary to ensure the researcher's interpretations remained consistent with the informants' intended meaning. Furthermore, the researcher compiled an audit trail, a systematic record of the data collection and analysis process, allowing for academic scrutiny (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data analysis was conducted interactively from the beginning of data collection until completion. The first stage was data condensation, which involved selecting, focusing,

simplifying, and organizing the raw data from interviews, observations, and documentation. At this stage, the researcher conducted open coding to assign initial codes to important data units, then proceeded to the categorization stage, grouping codes with similar meanings into several analytical categories. These categories were then developed into key themes related to public communication strategies, the digitalization of information services, obstacles to implementing information transparency, and efforts to improve IKIP. The second stage was data presentation, compiling the data into a systematic, descriptive narrative to facilitate understanding of the relationships between themes. The third stage was drawing conclusions and verifying them, continuously interpreting the patterns, relationships, and meanings of the research findings by comparing field data with the theoretical framework used.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Transformation of Digital-Based Public Information Disclosure Services

Research results indicate that the implementation of public information disclosure within the North Sumatra Provincial Government has undergone a transformation toward a more integrated digital-based service system. The North Sumatra Provincial Communication and Informatics Office, as the Main PPID (Regional Information Information Agency), no longer merely performs administrative functions but also serves as the coordination center for public information services between regional government agencies. This transformation is characterized by the use of an online one-stop shop system, optimization of official portals, and strengthening of a more structured information document management system.

In practice, the digitalization of information services provides easier access for the public without having to visit the office in person. One informant stated: *"Now people no longer need to come to the office to request information. We direct everything through an online system, so the process is faster, more transparent, and more traceable."*

This quote demonstrates that the orientation of information services has shifted from conventional patterns to a more efficient, technology-based system.

Furthermore, the use of North Sumatra's Open Data has become a crucial part of the public information disclosure strategy. Sectoral data is presented in a more open format and is accessible to a wide range of groups. An informant explained: *"We have started to open data more widely through Open Data North Sumatra, so that academics, journalists, and the public can directly access it without having to go through lengthy procedures."*

This finding confirms that information disclosure is no longer merely reactive, but has shifted toward proactive information provision.

Challenges in Implementing Information Disclosure in the Era of Digital Disruption

Despite the digital transformation, the implementation of public information disclosure still faces several challenges. One major challenge is the gap between formal bureaucratic procedures and the expectations of the digital society. Regulatory information services must follow certain steps, but the public expects a fast and instant response.

One informant expressed this as follows: *"People now want everything quickly, even within minutes. However, according to the regulations, we still have to follow existing procedures, so sometimes the perception arises that we are not transparent."*

Furthermore, the rise of disinformation and hoaxes on social media poses a serious challenge for local governments. The Communication and Informatics Office must not only provide information but also actively clarify information circulating in the community. An informant stated: *"If an issue goes viral, we have to quickly provide clarification. Otherwise, the public might believe information that isn't necessarily true."*

Public Communication Strategy to Improve IKIP

The research findings indicate that the communication strategy implemented by the Communication and Informatics Office is multi-channel and oriented towards two-way interaction. The local government utilizes various digital platforms such as Instagram and YouTube to reach a wider audience.

One informant stated, *"We use various platforms, like Instagram for quick information and YouTube for more detailed explanations. So, the public can choose according to their needs."* This strategy demonstrates adaptation to the characteristics of digital media and audience behavior.

Furthermore, empowering Community Information Groups (KIM) is a crucial part of the public communication strategy at the grassroots level. KIM serves as a communication bridge between the government and local communities. One informant explained, *"KIM really helps us in conveying information to the public, especially in areas that are not yet very active in using digital media."* This finding demonstrates that public communication relies not only on technology but also on social networks at the community level.

The research findings confirm that public information disclosure in the digital era can no longer be managed through a rigid bureaucratic approach, but must be understood as an adaptive, responsive, and technology-based public communication practice. The digitalization of information services carried out by the North Sumatra Provincial Communications and Informatics Office demonstrates a shift from an administrative service model to a more integrated communications governance model. From an e-government perspective, this transformation aligns with the view that information technology is used to improve the efficiency, transparency, and quality of public services (Indrajit, 2016). However, this study's findings also demonstrate that digitalization does not automatically result in effective openness without adequate institutional coordination, organizational capacity, and public communication readiness. Therefore, the primary contribution of this study lies in affirming that public information disclosure is not solely a technological issue, but rather a multidimensional institutional communication issue.

The results also reinforce the view that the digital space has transformed the government communications landscape. Social media and digital channels create a fast, fluid communication environment that is heavily influenced by the logic of virality. In such a situation, the government is no longer sufficient as a provider of formal information; it must also be able to manage credible public narratives. These findings align with Nasrullah's (2017) assertion that social media has created a new, more participatory communication space, but is also vulnerable to hoaxes, disinformation, and the struggle for meaning. While the reviewer stated that the initial discussion was too descriptive, the

main issue lies in the failure to demonstrate the theoretical implications of this institution's changing function. Based on the research findings, it can be asserted that the Communication and Information Service (Diskominfo) no longer performs solely a documentary function, but also interpretive, clarifying, and reputational functions in addressing the dynamics of digital public opinion.

Furthermore, the research results indicate that a multi-channel and dialogic communication strategy is relevant to a symmetrical two-way communication model. This strategy is evident in the use of various digital channels, efforts to open up spaces for interaction with the public, and the empowerment of KIM (Community Information and Communications Institution) as a community communication node. From a public communication perspective, this approach is crucial because public trust is built not only through the volume of published information but also through the quality of interactions, clarity of messages, and consistency of institutional responses. At this point, your research findings have added value because they demonstrate that IKIP's improvement cannot be achieved simply by increasing the number of available documents, but must be accompanied by a communication strategy that makes information understandable, trustworthy, and usable by the public. In other words, effective information disclosure is communicative, not merely administrative (Pratama, 2020; Suhardi, 2018).

However, this study also shows that the success of public communication strategies is still limited by structural and cultural factors. Fluctuations at the North Sumatra IKIP indicate that information disclosure does not occur in a neutral space, but is instead influenced by local political dynamics, budget capacity, consistency of policy implementation, and bureaucratic culture. This finding is important because it demonstrates that digital transformation does not automatically dismantle the culture of secrecy within the bureaucracy. In this context, leadership commitment, or political will, remains a determining factor in ensuring that information disclosure is implemented substantively, not symbolically (Suhardi, 2018). Thus, this study's findings broaden the understanding that the primary issue in regional information disclosure is not simply digital infrastructure, but also institutional courage to shift from a closed communication culture to an open one.

Compared with previous studies that tend to place information disclosure within a normative or administrative framework, this study demonstrates that the strategic dimension of public communication needs to be placed at the center of analysis. Information disclosure in the era of digital disruption requires the government to integrate procedural legality, technological innovation, and narrative communication skills within a mutually supportive framework. Therefore, the findings of this study have practical implications: strengthening IKIP in the regions requires the development of easily accessible digital service systems, strengthening coordination between regional government agencies (OPD), increasing the capacity of public relations and PPID in digital communication, and establishing more humanistic and dialogical communication patterns. Theoretically, this study emphasizes that public information disclosure in the digital era needs to be interpreted as a hybrid government communication practice, namely a combination of information governance, digital media strategies, and public trust management.

4. CONCLUSION

This study shows that the communication strategy of the North Sumatra Provincial Communication and Informatics Office in increasing public information disclosure has transformed from an administrative approach to a more adaptive, integrative, and dialogical digital public communication model. This transformation is characterized by the digitalization of information services, the utilization of open data, and the implementation of multi-channel communication that can reach a wider and more responsive public. However, the effectiveness of this strategy is still influenced by the gap between bureaucratic procedures and the expectations of the digital society, limited inter-agency coordination, and political dynamics and organizational culture that do not fully support consistent information disclosure. Theoretically, this finding confirms that public information disclosure in the digital era depends not only on the availability of technology but also on the institutional communication capacity in managing information, building public narratives, and maintaining public trust. Practically, this study recommends strengthening the integration of information systems between regional government agencies (OPD), increasing digital communication capacity for civil servants, and developing a more humanistic and public-needs-based communication strategy. Future research is recommended to examine public information disclosure comparatively across regions or use a quantitative approach to measure the influence of communication strategies on increasing the information disclosure index more measurably.

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