


Evaluation of the Semarang City Government's Social Media Performance in Increasing Public Engagement

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Article Info	ABSTRACT
Submitted: 17-04-2025 Final Revised: 25-04-2025 Accepted: 28-04-2025 Published: 29-04-2025	<p>This study aims to analyze the implementation of principles and ethics in social media management based on PERMENPANRB No. 83 of 2012 on the Instagram accounts of Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) in the Semarang City Government. It also evaluates content strategies to enhance public engagement and build trust. This qualitative study observed 32 official Instagram accounts of OPD, utilizing content analysis, interviews, and engagement rate (ER) measurements with HypeAuditor tools. The results show that most OPD accounts have low ER, although some accounts achieved better performance through interactive and relevant content. Key challenges include limited human resources, lack of training for social media administrators, and a dominance of routine activity reporting without participatory communication strategies. Additionally, overlapping roles between content administrators and Public Information and Documentation Officers (PPID), coupled with a paternalistic leadership style within OPD, further contribute to the low level of public engagement. This study recommends optimizing social media management strategies through capacity building for account administrators, implementing two-way communication approaches based on data analytics, and establishing digital communication policies that promote flexibility and innovation. These strategies can enable government social media to function more effectively as a platform for transparency, interaction, and collaboration with the public, while sustainably building public trust.</p> <p>Keywords: engagement rate; government social media; content strategy; governance; two-way communication.</p> <p>Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)</p>



Introduction

In today's digital era, social media is indeed the main platform for communication and interaction between individuals, institutions and the wider community of social media users (Gelfgren et al., 2022; Khanom, 2023). The increase in internet penetration, according to the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), in 2024 is driven by the increasing

public need for internet access, ranging from communication, education, entertainment and business (Kasih & Sugiyanto, 2024; Zubadi, 2024). The increase in internet users in Indonesia shows that there is a strong power in social media to determine the direction of policy, and it is not uncommon to be able to direct a community movement to urge a supreme power (Jakpat, 2022; Populix, 2022).

The use of social media is in line with the provisions in bureaucratic reform, including the use of information technology (e-Government), communication strategies, change management, change management, knowledge management, and business process arrangement (Razak et al., 2021; Soga, 2022).

Social media functions as a tool that can trigger social, economic, and political change through three main elements, namely Content, word of mouth (wM) and community (Cheng et al., 2021; Jan et al., 2023). (1) Content, which is an idea or idea of change arising from social, economic, or political conditions that can no longer be ignored. Content appears as a reaction to a situation that is considered critical or needs to be changed. (2) wM (Word of Mouth) refers to the dissemination of stories or information about social problems and ideas of change on a massive scale. This information spreads so quickly that it forms collective awareness about the need for change through various platforms, such as mobile phones, blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. (3) C2 (Community) or the formation of a community, which occurs after a collective consciousness is formed from the information that is disseminated. Social media has the advantage of forming communities quickly and on a large scale, something that conventional media such as television, radio, or print media can't do. This collective consciousness is the main impetus that mobilizes the masses to unite in a community that demands change. Community members on social media, called netizens or netizens, have the power to influence public opinion through social media (Chen et al., 2024; Shen et al., 2023).

Social media used by government agencies has become part of daily activities and operations, including the realm of law enforcement, handling emergency situations and public services. That's where social media can be a means of participation and involvement, namely the delivery of information through social media which is directed to encourage public participation and involvement through comments, responses and inputs to government agencies. Social media plays a role in providing opportunities for the government to meet the basic goals of democracy, namely transparency, citizen participation, and involvement (Arman and Sidik 2019).

Director of Information Empowerment, Bonifasius Wahyu Pudjianto, conveyed President Joko Widodo's direction, as a government institution in the digital era, social media owned by government agencies should increase creative content through various social media platforms to convey information that educates and increases public productivity. Government agencies are also required to be able to understand and respond quickly to digitalization communication to improve the quality of public sector services, because digital cannot be separated from the duties and functions of state civil servants (Aptika 2022). By utilizing two-way interaction and communication through social media platforms, government agencies are expected to increase the

dissemination of information to the public, be responsive to feedback from the public and increase the transparency of their bureaucracy (Mergel, 2014).

According to Febriyanta (2020), the use of social media by government agencies is one of the innovations to maximize technology that can provide benefits, among others, encouraging government efficiency, maintaining public trust, facing the development of the times and means of communication in times of crisis. However, Arman and Sidik (2019) revealed that the government has not been able to utilize social media optimally for community participation. This is evident from the results of measuring engagement rate (ER) to 31 accounts from 61 Instagram accounts of Ministries and Institutions, showing that the quality of ER results is low, meaning that 50.8% of the Instagram accounts of the Ministry and the institution have not optimized their Instagram accounts to get engagement from their followers. Engagement rate is one of the important benchmarks to find out Instagram optimization, especially the influence of the account on followers, the higher the engagement rate value means the better the performance and quality of the Instagram account, and vice versa.

Government accounts are also often dominated by ghost followers, which is the unnatural nature of government accounts that have high followers but engagement on each post is very low, not proportional to the number of followers they have. However, research from Nainggolan (2024) revealed the results of a survey of more than 96 random respondents showing a positive relationship between online experience and public trust in the government.

In particular, experience with information services has an impact on increasing trust in the government through government-owned social media accounts. Research using the quantitative content analysis method in analyzing the content content on Instagram accounts owned by BPS (Central Statistics Agency) conducted by Widya (2021) also obtained results that upload time and topics have a partial influence on social media interactivity as part of efforts to create public engagement.

Previous research on government agencies' Instagram social media accounts has highlighted various approaches to increasing transparency, building public trust, and encouraging citizen participation in the digital age. Olivia and Rusdi (2022) evaluated the effectiveness of @Kemendagri Instagram accounts in meeting public information needs through surveys, which showed that social media is effective in increasing access to information. Rahman, Munajat, and Novianti (2022) analyzed the content and engagement rate of Instagram accounts @torajatripadventure, finding that despite the interesting and informative content of products and events, the engagement rate remained low (below 1%) due to the lack of persuasive elements.

From these various previous studies, it has led to an understanding that it is time for Government Agencies to manage their social media in a planned and measurable manner. With the facilities that exist on social media platforms, it is hoped that it can be a representation of the state and agencies in providing services to the community to be better.

This study aims to analyze the implementation of principles and ethics in social media management based on PERMENPANRB No. 83 of 2012 on the Instagram accounts of Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) in the Semarang City Government.

Research Methods

This study uses a qualitative approach that allows in-depth exploration of phenomena through engagement measurement with descriptive data, resulting in a more comprehensive understanding. Qualitative research methods are carried out under natural conditions (*natural setting*), based on philosophy *Postpositivism* to examine the natural conditions of objects and the results of qualitative research emphasizes meaning rather than generalizations (Scott, 2015).

The sampling techniques used are *purposive sampling*. The technique of sampling data sources with certain considerations, for example, the person is considered to know the most about what we expect or maybe he is the ruler so that it will make it easier for the researcher to explore the object or social situation being researched (Mouwn Erland, 2020). Because this study is a qualitative research, the researcher uses informants in determining the research subject. Informants are people who are used to provide information about the situation and conditions of the research background (Scott, 2015). The object of this study is the official Instagram account of the Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) in the Semarang City Government. These accounts are the object of research because they serve as public communication channels that the government uses to convey information, promote policies, and engage the public in government programs.

The technique used in this study is an interview to get a complete and in-depth picture of communication management through social media as an information medium to the public with supporting data in the form of searching for *the engagement rate* of the Semarang City Government Office's Instagram account using *the HypeAuditor* tool. Using *HypeAuditor's Instagram engagement calculator*, it is possible to check Instagram accounts online and instantly gain insights into how well an Instagram profile is performing. This calculation ensures accurate results thanks to the smart formula applied and available on the official website of HypeAuditor. Secondary data is obtained from supporting sources, among others, Official Guidelines such as Guidelines for the Utilization of Social Media of Government Agencies (KemenPAN-RB No. 83 of 2012).

Results and Discussion

Governments use social media to share information about public events, policies, and issues, although it often focuses more on informative communication than participatory communication. Social media also helps build closer relationships between governments and citizens, supports e-democracy, and strengthens accountability and transparency. However, the government's use of social media still faces challenges, such as a lack of effective two-way interaction and internal pressures that affect communication strategies according to Graham and Avery (2013). There are 3 informants for this research, namely

1. Head of the Semarang City Personnel, Education and Training Agency (BKPP), Joko Hartono, S.Stp., M.Si. The selection of Joko Hartono as an informant is based on his strategic role in human resource management policies, including policies related to social media management within the Semarang City government. As the Head of BKPP, he has in-depth insight related

to the regulation of the use of outsourced personnel and competency training for ASN and non-ASN who are responsible for the management of OPD social media.

2. The Head of Public Communication Development, Suchyo Kuswirantomo, SH, S.Sos, MH was chosen because of his role focusing on the public communication strategy of the Semarang City government. As Head of Field, he is responsible for formulating communication policies, developing publication content strategies, and ensuring public engagement through government social media. He also understands the technical and strategic challenges in the implementation of digital communication.
3. The Social Media Account Manager of the Semarang City Kesbangpol OPD, Rafif Aqilla Rafif who was chosen because of his direct experience in managing OPD social media accounts. As a content manager, Rafif has a practical perspective on how content is designed, the challenges faced in increasing public engagement, and coordination between fields in OPD for effective publication.

Social media has become one of the strategic communication tools in supporting transparency and interaction between the government and the public. As a digital platform that enables two-way interaction, social media, such as Instagram, offers opportunities for government agencies to expand the reach of information, strengthen the image of institutions, and increase public participation in policy-making (Kaplan M., 2010). The data can be processed into a series of research findings based on the following discussions:

Scope of Strategy

The data used in this study includes 32 official Instagram accounts of the Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) of the Semarang City Government which act as the main channel in conveying information on policies, programs, and services to the public. The performance of social media is assessed through several main indicators, such as the number of content uploaded, the number of followers, and the level of engagement (ER). In the context of the Semarang City OPD Instagram account, the data shows that there is a significant variation between these accounts. Some OPDs such as the Semarang City Government (@pemerintahkotasemarang) have the highest number of followers (180 thousand) with an ER of 0.26%, while other accounts such as the Investment Office and One-Stop Integrated Services (@dpmptsp_kotasemarang) have the highest ER of 1.80% even though the number of followers is relatively small (2,952).

This suggests that audience size (number of followers) is not necessarily directly correlated with engagement rates. As explained by Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), high engagement is more influenced by the relevance and quality of content, not just the quantity of followers or the frequency of uploads. Another study by Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) added that organizations that use social media effectively not only focus on informing but also invite engaging and creating dialogue.

In this data, several accounts with a high amount of content such as the Health Office (@dkksemarang) which has 3,901 uploads and 89.5 thousand followers, show a very low ER

(0.12%). On the other hand, the Industry Office (@disperin_semarang) with only 1,224 uploads and 4,255 followers managed to achieve the highest ER (1.22%). This difference indicates the importance of content-oriented strategies, such as the use of engaging visuals, relevant narratives, and the use of interactive features such as polls, Q&A, or live sessions.

Low engagement rates on most accounts can also be linked to audience consumption patterns on social media, where audiences tend to interact more actively with content that is informative, relevant, or entertaining than content that is only formal or routine (Criado R. and Gil-Garcia, J. R., 2013). Therefore, to improve social media performance, a more strategic approach is needed, such as the use of analytics data to understand audience preferences and optimal upload times. Overall, this analysis shows that although many OPDs have actively used Instagram as a public communication platform, there is still a great opportunity to optimize their account management strategies to achieve higher engagement rates. In fact, the findings of the research of Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), emphasized the importance of an interactive approach between social media management to increase the effectiveness of organizational communication.

The results of the analysis showed significant variation in performance among OPDs, indicating differences in strategies and success rates in utilizing social media as a means of public communication. This comparison shows that some OPDs can learn from others with high ER. Strategies such as improving content quality, leveraging interactive features, and understanding audience preferences can be implemented by accounts with low ER.

a. Number of Content

The OPD with the highest number of uploads is the Semarang City Government (@pemerintahkotasemarang) with 10,136 contents, followed by the Transportation Department (@dishubkotasmg) with 4,774 contents. Meanwhile, the account with the lowest amount of content was the Education Office (@disdiksmgkota) with 763 uploads. The number of uploads reflects the level of account activity, but it is not always in line with its effectiveness, as seen from the ER of some accounts that remain low despite having a lot of content.

b. Number of Followers

In terms of popularity, the Semarang City Government (@pemerintahkotasemarang) account has the most followers (180 thousand), while the account of the One-Stop Investment and Integrated Services Office (@dpmtsp_kotasemarang) has the least number of followers (2,952). This shows that the popularity of government accounts is greatly influenced by the scale of OPD's operations and the scope of its target audience. For example, accounts that deal with wide-ranging public issues tend to attract more followers.

c. Engagement Rate (ER)

The highest ER was achieved by the One-Stop Investment and Service Service (@dpmtsp_kotasemarang) at 1.80%, while the account with the lowest ER was the Fire Department (@damkarsemarang) at 0.02%. This difference shows that the number of followers does not necessarily guarantee a high level of engagement. A high ER is likely to be owned by accounts with relevant, interactive, and engaging content strategies. One relevant example is the content analysis of the Instagram account of the Semarang City Industry Office

(@disperin_semarang), which uses an interactive strategy through a post themed "Guess the Word." In this upload, the city government is trying to increase community involvement by presenting game content that invites the audience to answer puzzles related to superior local products, namely spring roll skin. This format shows an effort to create active engagement through comment-based interactions. This upload managed to attract attention, as seen from the large number of comments from the public. However, the main obstacle that is seen is the lack of response from admins to the comments, so it reflects communication that is still one-way. So even though content like "Guess the Word" has shown positive steps in creating interaction, further optimization is needed. This includes managing comments more responsively, utilizing dialogue elements to build meaningful conversations, and implementing communication ethics in accordance with the guidelines of the Ministry of PAN-RB. This strategy not only supports more effective two-way communication, but also strengthens the government's image of professionalism in the eyes of the public.

d. Correlation Between Indicators

In general, the results of the analysis show that accounts with a high amount of content and followers do not always have a high ER. For example, although the Semarang City Government (@pemerintahkotasemarang) has the largest number of followers, the engagement rate is only 0.26%, lower than accounts with a small number of followers such as the Investment Office and One-Stop Integrated Services (@dpmptsp_kotasemarang).

Like one of the content uploaded by the @pemerintahkotasemarang account related to the paving of Jalan Pemuda, showing the government's efforts in conveying development information to the community. This content was uploaded on November 16, 2024, with 541 likes and had the highest response of 143.

However, interaction analysis showed a low engagement rate (ER), which can be identified from the lack of response to public comments. Incoming comments, whether in the form of appreciation, criticism, or suggestions, often do not get a direct reply from the government account.

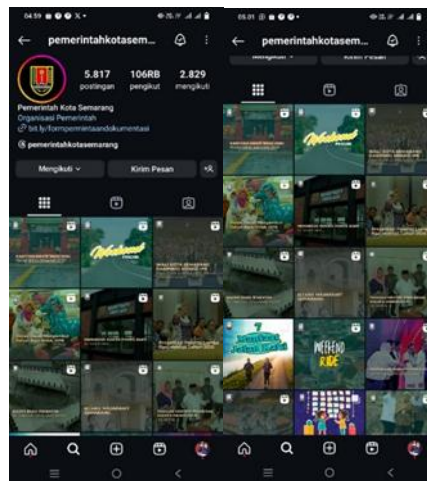


Figure 1. Semarang @pemerintahkota Account (2024)

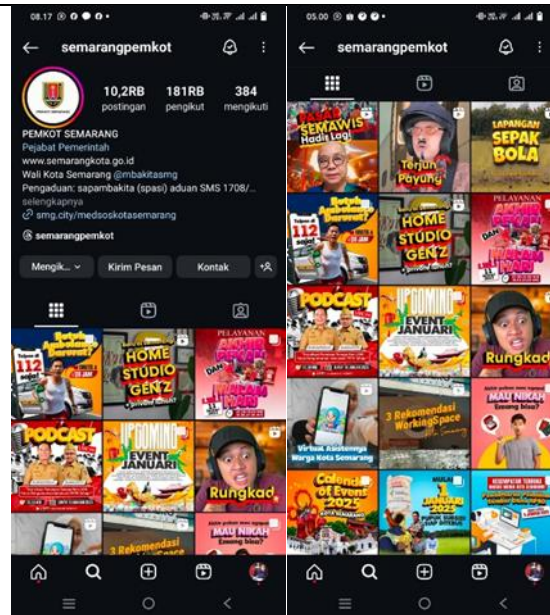


Figure 2. Semarang City Government account content

a. Categories of accounts by performance

1. High-Performance Accounts: Have a high ER even if the number of followers is not large, such as @dpmptsp_kotasemarang and @disperin_semarang.
2. Accounts with High Popularity: Have a large following but relatively low ER, such as @pemerintahkotasemarang and @dishubkotasmg.
3. Low-Performance Accounts: Have a low ER even though the number of uploads is quite large, such as @damkarsemarang.

Capabilities

Challenges related to limited human resources are the responsibility of each OPD in the Semarang City Government. Most content management admins are outsourced workers because the Mayor Regulation (PERWAL) prohibits the addition of ASN. The Head of BKPP said that efforts to use agency services were hit by budget limitations, so content management still depended on internal outsourcing personnel.

"Content management admins, indeed not ASN, this is because PERWAL does not allow the addition of ASN, similarly we have tried to use agencies to improve content, but the budget does not allow us to get a representative agency" (Head of BKPP, 2024)

Content creator admins explain that they manage content based on direct commands from individual field heads in OPDs:

"I am an outsourced worker, having worked as a social media admin here for approximately 16 months, to create OPD content in general. In my office, there are four fields, yes, we do it, according to the orders of each head of field" (admin, 2025)

Furthermore, it was added that the strength of existing human resources depends on the budget and policies of each boss of the OPD.

"At first, I only managed one office myself. It is a bit of a hassle, so each field sends photos and image captions. So that's it, which may be the impression only. .. The content is like an announcement board for this activity... ? heheh.. It's almost pie meeh (what else can you do.)".. But now I've got someone to help me out, yes sometimes it's an apprentice (that apprentice's apprentice).. but now there are settlers (note: there has been an addition of a content admin team, the same as outsourced employees in the office) Not bad.." (admin, 2025)

Related to account management, it is managed by each agency.

"The responsible official account is the leader of the OPD, even though the content that makes anyone, who uploads anyone, the head of the OPD is responsible for the content of the content" (Head of BKPP, 2024)

Similarly, in the process of deciding what content to upload

"The stages for posting, waiting for instructions from superiors, especially from the head of the field according to the activities at that time ... does not use content planning, usually those that follow the calendar of activities from the Service, what is the activity of the Service that we upload after the activity takes place (admin, 2025).

In increasing the capacity of account managers through periodic training and performance evaluation based on indicators such as engagement levels and public response, it is also a burden on each OPD. Diskominfo only occasionally increases capacity related to information from the Leadership (Mayor) related to the dissemination of information that needs to be conveyed.

"Yes, there is actually a desire to formulate the planning of the content to be uploaded first, but this rarely happens... yes because Mr. Kabid has a lot of work, and I don't think about the content of the pie (how do you want to do it), then the account is what you want to do, it's up to me, the important thing is that the information is conveyed" (admin, 2025).

Similarly, training for upscaling, increasing admin capacity in each OPD by Diskominfo as the central coordinator related to the mechanism for disseminating public information, is not available.

"there has never been any training from Diskominfo, we are only given content sharing if there is centralized content that needs to be uploaded in each OPD content admin" (admin, 2025)

Informant3 from Diskominfo also explained about increasing the capacity of social media accounts in the budget dependency of each agency

"You know, it is indeed the responsibility of each Dinas buk.. we only direct if there is the same content that is directed by the Guardian Mother.. Such as information on Semarangngress activities, Semarang City achievements, or activities that are indeed directed to be uploaded by the admin team in each agency.. " (Head of Diskominfo, 2024)

The social media management capabilities of OPD in the Semarang City Government still face major challenges, especially related to limited human resources, budget, and lack of training and strategic content planning. Although Diskominfo plays the role of a centralized information coordinator, efforts to increase the capacity of social media management still depend on the initiatives and budgets of each OPD. To create more effective and professional social media management, more coordinated policies and more adequate training and resource management support are needed.

Governance

Social media management in government agencies is an integral part of digital communication strategies to build community engagement and increase public transparency. In this context, social media performance is measured not only by how often content is uploaded, but also by the extent to which it is relevant, engaging, and able to create interaction with the audience (Kaplan M., 2010). In the government environment, the management of social media accounts is also influenced by organizational policies that include aspects of discipline in content handling, the development of account management skills, and efforts to align public communication with the vision and mission of local governments (Criado R. and Gil-Garcia, J. R., 2013).

The process of managing social media accounts in each OPD is also different, depending on the leadership of each OPD. This is also emphasized by informants, that even if different leaders are different, different regulations can be applied. So that the admin must understand the habits of the OPD leader where he is assigned. This condition causes the majority of the content uploaded to be only a report of an activity that is already running.

"In the past, when the Secretary of the Agency was Mr. Joko, he was a person who was quite concerned with the content, so I was often invited to coordinate for the content to be uploaded. Grandma is the current secretary of the service, loss.. I immediately coordinated with the Head of Field.. yes, delicious or efficient which .. Yes, we are talking ma'am, we adjust the conditions, do what can be done.. his name also executes commands" (admin, 2025)

This shows that the leadership style depends on the content management in each agency. Leadership style is a leader's behavior pattern in directing, influencing, encouraging and controlling as well as giving others or subordinates motivation towards certain goals, both in the short and long term. This means that the leadership style has the power to influence work motivation (Danim, 2004: 30). The leadership style in government institutions is generally *paternalistic*.

"Generally, in government institutions, paternalistic is applied. This is common, in the management of the service, and it has been passed down from generation to generation.. It's become a habit maybe.. " (Head of BKPP, 2024).

The lack of paternalistic leadership style that influences employee work motivation is caused by the negative things of paternalistic leadership such as rigidity in the work process and rarely providing opportunities to channel ideas that can facilitate the implementation of tasks so that employee motivation in work is low, then rarely provides opportunities to think innovatively and creatively at work so that motivation to work is low. And only leaders know the ins and outs of organizationality, so decisions are made by leaders and subordinates just to carry it out, the consequence is that subordinates are not used as a source of information, ideas, and suggestions that make employees' motivation in work low. (Erlangga et al., 2014). This is what causes the interaction in each Government-owned account to be low (on average below 1%) as justified by the following informants:

"Indeed, talking about social media is still a new thing for us, government agencies, especially not all personnel have social media accounts for themselves, so it's still commonplace. But the central government has determined this as a media that needs to be handled seriously, so yes we are still adapting.. So if there is content that is uploaded continuously and then not answered, yes it could be because the leadership personnel in the service do not have innovative thinking.. Or what? There is also a risk that you will respond incorrectly.. because this is public policy" (Head of BKPP, 2024)

"Actually, for further information or to respond to the public, there is a PPID section that is tasked with conveying information, that may be the thinking of the Head of the Service, let alone the account admin in responding to the community" (Head of BKPP, 2024)

PPID is the party responsible for the storage, documentation, provision and/or service of information within the Semarang City Government. Information services by PPID are carried out face-to-face during working hours, and online through WhatsApp and the PPID website. In accordance with the Regulation of the Mayor of Semarang Number 35 of 2017 concerning Guidelines for the Management of Public Information and Documentation within the Semarang City Government where the task of the Information and Documentation Management Officer (PPID) is to provide fast, precise and simple public information services based on the Public

Information Disclosure Law of 2009 which also regulates the classification of public information, namely in article 9, 10, 11, and 17. Based on its classification, public information is divided into, 1) Information that must be announced periodically. Information included in this category is information related to public bodies, information about the performance of related public bodies, information about financial statements, and/or other information regulated in laws and regulations. 2) Information that must be announced immediately. Information that falls into this category is information related to the urgent needs of the people's lives and public order.

Meanwhile, for people who need further information, it must be in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Information Services, Complaints and Emergency Calls within the Semarang City Government which is stated in the Decree of the Mayor of Semarang No. 488/792 of 2023 which is manifested in the Information Service Guidebook: <https://smg.city/ppidadmin>. The book explains the guide, among others: Information Service Guidebook: <https://smg.city/ppidadmin> which is also called SILINTAS (Semarang City Information Service System) with a brief guide as follows:



Figure 3. Information Flow

Source: <https://ppid.semarangkota.go.id/tata-cara-permohonan-informasi> (n.d.)

The Semarang City Government's social media governance still faces significant challenges in terms of policies, the involvement of OPD leaders, and content strategies. The paternalistic leadership style limits the flexibility and creativity of social media account managers, which has an impact on the low level of interaction with the community. To address this problem, there needs to be more innovative and flexible policies, ongoing training for content managers, and strategic planning in managing government digital communications. The low content engagement rate of government Instagram accounts is caused by a paternalistic leadership style that limits the initiative and innovation of social media admins. Employees tend to only run commands with no room for creativity, resulting in content being purely activity reporting. The overlapping government governance between the roles of content admins and PPID as public information services further

complicates the coordination of digital communication. Based on the governance review, this situation shows the need to restructure roles, implement more targeted strategic communication policies, and increase the capacity of managers to create more relevant and interactive content according to the needs of the community.

Discussion

Social media has become one of the most effective communication tools in conveying information to the public, including for the government. The government's official social media accounts play an important role as a bridge between public policy and public aspirations. However, the success of this digital communication is not only determined by the ability to convey information, but also by two-way interactions that are able to create mutually beneficial relationships.

In this context, the government's social media management needs to pay attention to several important aspects, such as interactivity, professionalism, and communication ethics. Without an adequate response to the public, the potential of social media as a means of transparent and accountable public communication can be hampered. The Instagram account of the Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) of the Semarang City Government is based on PERMENPAN No. 83 of 2012 that all activities on social media are directed to create effective, two-way, and profitable communication, while still upholding professionalism and ethics proven to be incapable of carrying it out.

According to the literature, the symmetrical two-way communication model Gruning (1984) and the social media engagement framework (Kietzmann et al., 2011) emphasize the importance of active and mutually beneficial dialogue between governments and communities. In this context, the admin's response to public comments is not only an indicator of professionalism, but can also improve the reputation of the institution and build closer relationships. Without a response, the engagement expected through this interactive content only functions at the surface level and fails to harness the full potential of social media as a means of communication

In accordance with the purpose of this study, the performance of these accounts was analyzed based on indicators of the number of content, number of followers, and engagement level as a measure of the effectiveness of digital communication. According to Lovejoy and Saxton (2012), the success of communication on social media is not only measured by how often the organization uploads content, but also the extent to which the content is able to provoke audience interaction, including likes, comments, and shares. Therefore, this analysis not only assesses quantitative aspects such as the number of followers, but also delves into the quality of the relationship built between the OPD account and the community. For example, accounts with a high amount of content don't always have significant engagement, as seen in some OPDs that despite having thousands of uploads, their engagement rates remain below average. In contrast, some OPDs with a lower amount of content exhibit higher ER, indicating the presence of other contributing factors, such as content relevance, use of eye-catching visual elements, or optimal upload times. These patterns indicate that the effectiveness of social media is not only determined by the volume of

activity, but also by the quality of the digital communication approach. Therefore, this data is the basis for a more in-depth analysis to identify the most effective strategies in managing local government social media.

Meanwhile, optimizing OPD's social media accounts not only aims to increase digital presence but also to ensure that the government's message is effectively conveyed to the public. Based on data, the effectiveness of public information cannot be measured only by the number of content or followers, but also by the quality of the interaction that occurs, which is reflected in the Engagement Rate (ER). A campaign optimization and effectiveness strategy should consider various aspects, including content relevance, platform feature utilization, and audience behavior analysis.

According to digital communication theory, the relevance of content can affect the audience's attention level and encourage greater engagement (Kaplan M., 2010). In this data, accounts such as the Department of Industry (@disperin_semarang) and the Office of Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services (@dpmptsp_kotasemarang) that have high ER show that content approaches that focus on specific issues (e.g. business opportunities and licensing services) are more successful than general content that is less targeted.

Account optimization can also be done through the use of interactive features on Instagram, such as Stories, Reels, polls, and live streaming. These features allow for more dynamic and engaging two-way communication. Lovejoy and Saxton (2012) stated that successful organizations on social media are those that are able to invite the active participation of the audience, not just convey information in one direction. Accounts with low ER, such as the Health Service (@dkksemarang) and the Fire Service (@damkarsemarang), have the potential to increase engagement if they leverage these features to provide health information or simulated emergency management interactively.

Campaign effectiveness cannot be achieved without understanding audience behavior and preferences. Data analysis, such as the optimal time for uploads or the most in-demand content types, can provide important insights for account managers. Studies by Criado, Sandoval-Almazan, and Gil-Garcia (2013) emphasize the importance of a data-driven approach to designing digital communication strategies. In this context, OPDs can leverage Instagram analytics data to find out their audience engagement trends.

In addition to the technical aspect, the campaign narrative also affects the success of the government's social media. A narrative that is strong, inclusive, and encourages public participation has a greater chance of being well received by audiences. For example, the Tourism Office (@disbudparkotasemarang) account has managed to attract audiences through creative and relevant tourism promotion narratives, as seen from the higher ER than other OPDs.

Social media optimization is often challenging, especially in ensuring effective engagement through responsive, professional, and ethical communication. This condition shows one of the reasons why OPD content has not been worked on properly, in addition to the high workload, and the lack of a deep understanding from OPD leaders or leaders in the Semarang City Government about audience preferences is often an obstacle in achieving optimal performance. For this reason,

an effective social media performance management strategy needs to include the involvement of analytics technology, strengthening collaboration between OPDs, and policies that support the flexibility and creativity of account managers. Thus, government social media cannot function as a form of two-way communication, but only one-way. The government's social media also cannot be expected as a means of building trust and public participation in a sustainable manner considering the majority of engagement rates are low, but only function as a tool for disseminating information.

In the context of social media management of Semarang City government offices, this study shows that the use of social media platforms such as Instagram is still dominated by a one-way communication approach. Much of the content uploaded is routine activity reporting without an interactive and participatory content strategy. This condition hinders the creation of public involvement which should be one of the indicators of the success of government digital communication.

Scope of Strategy. Most OPDs rely on uploading content that is informative but less interesting to the audience. Although accounts such as the Department of Industry and the Office of Investment show better results in engagement, this approach is not yet comprehensive. The use of interactive features such as polls, Q&A, or creative visual content is rarely used optimally, but it can be an effective tool to increase public participation.

Social Media Manager Capabilities (Capabilities). Limited human resources are the main challenge. Most content admins are outsourced workers who do not have adequate training or strategic guidance in managing digital communications. The absence of training from Diskominfo and the lack of content planning in each OPD show the need to increase the capacity of social media account managers.

Governance. Social media governance still experiences overlapping roles between content admins and PPID. This leads to a lack of response to public comments or questions on social media. In addition, the paternalistic leadership style in OPD limits initiative and creativity in content management, which has an impact on low levels of public engagement.

Implications and Improvement Strategies. To achieve more effective social media management, the Semarang City government needs to develop a more strategic communication policy, improve account manager training, and integrate the roles of content admins and PPID in a clear and functional manner. The use of analytics data to understand audience behavior and content preferences can also be a strategic step that supports the government's social media optimization. The transformation of government social media from an information tool to a participatory communication platform requires strategic collaboration, content innovation, and policies that support the flexibility and creativity of account managers. With this step, social media can become an effective bridge between the government and the community.

Conclusion

This study identifies several challenges faced by government offices in Semarang City in managing their social media accounts, particularly in terms of public engagement. While some

accounts show good engagement, most others still struggle with low participation rates. Key obstacles include limited human resources, a dominance of routine activity reporting, and inadequate training for social media administrators. Additionally, overlapping roles between content admins and PPIDs hinder effective coordination in digital communication efforts, while a paternalistic leadership style in certain OPDs restricts creativity and initiative among social media admins.

To address these issues, the research suggests the need for a more strategic digital communication policy, regular training for account managers, and clearer role differentiation between content admins and PPIDs. These steps are essential to enhance the effectiveness of government social media, ensuring better responsiveness to public needs and fostering greater transparency. By implementing these measures, government social media platforms can become more interactive, engaging, and a vital tool for building stronger relationships with the public.

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