

Public Relations Communication Strategy Of Bappeda Seluma Regency In Socializing Development Programs

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the communication strategy of the Public Relations Division of the Regional Development Planning Agency (BAPPEDA) of Seluma Regency in socializing development programs to the community. The background of this research is based on the fact that socialization activities are still dominated by face-to-face meetings, the use of technical terms that are difficult for the public to understand, and the limited utilization of digital media. This research uses a qualitative descriptive approach. The research informants consist of internal parties of BAPPEDA Seluma Regency and members of the community who have participated in development program socialization activities. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews, observation, documentation, and literature study. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The analytical framework refers to Everett M. Rogers' Development Communication Theory which includes five stages: situation and community needs analysis, message planning and communication strategy, communication implementation, community participation, and evaluation and feedback. The results show that the communication strategy of the Public Relations Division of BAPPEDA Seluma Regency is implemented through development planning forums (Musrenbang), village meetings, and direct socialization activities. Message planning has attempted to simplify language to make it easier for the public to understand; however, the use of technical planning terms still becomes an obstacle to public understanding. Community participation has been facilitated through discussion forums, although the level of public involvement varies. Evaluation of communication activities is carried out through activity reports and internal discussions, but it has not systematically involved the community. The study concludes that the communication strategy of the Public Relations Division of BAPPEDA Seluma Regency has followed the stages of development communication, but it still needs improvement in simplifying messages, optimizing dialogue, and developing a more participatory and transparent evaluation system.

Keywords: *Communication Strategy, Government Public Relations, Development Communication, BAPPEDA, Program Socialization.*

INTRODUCTION

Communication is an essential element in the development process as it functions as a medium for delivering information, aligning perceptions, and fostering community participation in development programs implemented by the government. In the context of local governance, public communication becomes a strategic instrument to bridge the relationship between the government and the community so that development programs can be widely understood and accepted. According to Jan Servaes (2020), development communication not only functions to disseminate information regarding government policies or programs but also encourages active community participation in the development process. Therefore, the success of regional

development is strongly influenced by the effectiveness of communication carried out by government institutions toward the community.

The Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) is a regional government institution that plays a strategic role in formulating and coordinating regional development planning. In addition to performing its technical planning functions, BAPPEDA is also responsible for conveying information regarding development programs to the community so that development objectives can be mutually understood. Communication conducted by government institutions needs to be strategically designed so that development messages can be clearly received and do not create misunderstandings among the public. Fauzi and Lestari (2024) explain that local government communication strategies play an important role in improving public understanding of development policies while strengthening public participation in the development process.

In practice, the socialization of development programs carried out by local governments still faces various communication challenges. One of the most common challenges is the use of technical language in delivering development information, which is often difficult for the public to understand. In addition, communication patterns that remain largely one-way can limit community involvement. Damanik (2022) states that development communication that lacks a dialogic approach may hinder the process of information dissemination and reduce the level of community participation in development programs. Therefore, communication strategies are required that are able to adapt development messages to the social characteristics of the community.

Seluma Regency is one of the regions in Bengkulu Province that routinely implements various regional development programs planned by the local government through BAPPEDA. These development programs include infrastructure development, improvement of public services, and community empowerment initiatives. The success of these programs is highly influenced by the extent to which the community understands the objectives and benefits of the development programs disseminated by the local government. In this context, the role of the BAPPEDA Public Relations unit becomes crucial as the party responsible for delivering development information to the community in a clear and communicative manner.

Based on preliminary observations, the dissemination of development programs conducted by BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency is still dominated by face-to-face communication methods through forums such as the Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang), village meetings, and meetings with village officials and community leaders. Development information is often delivered using technical presentation materials, making it difficult for all members of the community to fully understand the content of the message. In addition, the limited time allocated for socialization activities often restricts opportunities for dialogue between the government and the community. These conditions indicate that the communication strategies currently applied still require strengthening so that development messages can be more evenly understood by the community.

Research on local government communication strategies in development is therefore important to understand how governments convey development information to the community and how the community responds to such communication. Ardianto (2023) explains that effective communication strategies can enhance public understanding of government policies while simultaneously encouraging community participation in regional development. By understanding the communication strategies implemented by local governments, it becomes possible to identify the factors that support or hinder the process of disseminating development programs to the community.

Based on the above explanation, the research problem of this study is formulated as follows: how does the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency implement communication strategies in disseminating development programs to the community? This

study aims to analyze the communication strategies employed by the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency in conveying information about development programs to the community, including message planning, communication implementation, community participation, and the evaluation of development communication.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Communication strategy refers to the systematic planning of communication activities aimed at achieving specific objectives through the effective delivery of messages to target audiences. A communication strategy involves determining the communicator, the message, the communication media, and the target audience used in the process of disseminating information to the public. According to Onong Uchjana Effendy (2003), communication strategy represents a combination of communication planning and communication management designed to achieve predetermined goals. Communication strategies do not merely focus on message delivery but also consider how the message can be understood and accepted by the intended audience.

In the context of governance, communication strategies play an important role in conveying government policies and development programs to the public. Strategically designed communication can enhance public understanding of government programs while encouraging community participation in development. Ardianto et al. (2023) explain that local government communication strategies function as a means of building relationships between the government and the public through the delivery of clear, transparent, and easily understood information. In general, communication strategies involve several key elements, namely the message source, the message being conveyed, the communication channel, the message recipient, and the expected effects of the communication process.

Public relations (PR) is a management function aimed at building positive relationships between organizations and their publics through planned communication. PR plays a role in conveying information to the public, building organizational image, and creating two-way communication between organizations and their stakeholders. According to Dan Lattimore et al. (2020), public relations is a management function that helps organizations build mutually beneficial relationships with their publics through effective communication. In practice, PR does not only disseminate information but also listens to public aspirations and fosters mutual understanding between the organization and its stakeholders.

Development communication refers to a communication process aimed at supporting social change through the dissemination of information about development programs to the public. It functions as a means of increasing public understanding of development initiatives while encouraging community participation in development activities. According to Jan Servaes (2020), development communication is a communication process used to support planned social change through information dissemination, dialogue, and community participation. Development communication does not merely focus on delivering information but also emphasizes interaction between the government and the community within the development process.

Development communication plays an important role in enhancing the effectiveness of development programs because communities that understand development objectives tend to be more supportive and actively involved in implementing such programs. Widiyowati et al. (2021) explain that dialogic development communication can increase community involvement in the development process while strengthening relationships between the government and society. In the context of local governance, development communication is carried out through various development program dissemination activities, such as deliberation forums, community meetings, and the distribution of information through communication media.

The first stage is situation and needs analysis, which involves understanding the social conditions of the community as well as its informational needs before development messages are delivered. The second stage involves planning messages and communication strategies aimed at formulating development messages that align with the characteristics of the community.

The third stage is the implementation of communication or the dissemination of development programs to the public through various communication channels. The fourth stage is community participation, referring to the involvement of the community in the development process, either through the expression of aspirations or participation in the implementation of development programs. The final stage is evaluation and feedback, which aims to assess the effectiveness of development communication and improve the communication strategies employed by the government.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a descriptive method to analyze the communication strategies of the Public Relations unit of the Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community. A qualitative approach was chosen because this study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the communication processes occurring between the local government and the community in the dissemination of development programs. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore information more deeply through direct interaction with informants and to understand communication phenomena based on the experiences and perspectives of the individuals involved. According to John W. Creswell and Cheryl N. Poth (2024), qualitative research is used to understand social phenomena through the interpretation of experiences, perspectives, and interactions that occur within a particular context.

Informants in this study were selected using purposive sampling, a technique in which informants are chosen based on specific considerations aligned with the research objectives. The informants were selected because they were considered to possess knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the dissemination of development programs carried out by BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency. The research informants consisted of internal personnel from BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency who are involved in the planning and implementation of development communication, as well as members of the community who have participated in development program dissemination activities. Selecting informants from these two groups was intended to obtain balanced data from both the government's perspective as the disseminator of development information and the community's perspective as the recipient of such information.

Data collection in this study was conducted through several techniques, namely interviews, observation, documentation, and literature review. In-depth interviews were conducted with research informants to obtain information regarding the process of planning communication strategies, the implementation of development program dissemination, and the challenges encountered in development communication activities. Observations were carried out by directly observing the dissemination activities conducted by BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency in order to understand the communication processes that occur between the government and the community. Documentation was conducted by collecting various documents related to the dissemination of development programs, such as activity reports, dissemination materials, and regional development planning documents. In addition, a literature review was conducted by examining various academic sources, including books, scholarly journals, and previous studies related to government communication strategies, public relations, and development communication.

The data analysis technique used in this study follows the data analysis model proposed by Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, which consists of three main stages: data

reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting and simplifying the data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation so that the data could be more focused on the research problem. Data display was conducted by organizing the reduced data into descriptive narratives, enabling the researcher to more easily understand the patterns of communication that occur. The final stage involved drawing conclusions based on the results of the data analysis to answer the research problem regarding the communication strategies of the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community. To ensure the validity of the data, this study also applied triangulation techniques by comparing data obtained from various sources and data collection methods.

RESULTS

The findings of this study describe the communication strategies implemented by the Public Relations unit of the Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community. The research findings were obtained through interviews with internal informants from BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency as well as community informants who had participated in development program dissemination activities. In addition, data were collected through observations of dissemination activities and document analysis related to regional development programs.

The results indicate that the analysis of community situations and needs is conducted through various participatory mechanisms, such as the Development Planning Deliberation forum (Musrenbang), public consultation forums, and coordination with village officials and community leaders. Through these forums, community members are provided with opportunities to convey proposals and development needs in their respective areas. This process assists the local government in obtaining an overview of community needs related to regional development. However, the findings reveal that the process of identifying community needs tends to remain administrative in nature, as community members generally submit lists of development needs without providing in-depth explanations regarding the underlying issues.

The findings also show that communication message planning is conducted by simplifying technical development information so that it can be more easily understood by the public. Dissemination materials are typically prepared based on regional development planning documents, such as the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD), and are delivered in the form of presentations and verbal explanations. Nevertheless, several technical terms related to development planning are still frequently used, causing some community members to experience difficulties in understanding the information provided. This indicates that the process of simplifying communication messages still requires improvement to ensure that development information can be understood by all segments of society.

The implementation of communication in the dissemination of development programs is generally carried out through face-to-face activities such as Musrenbang forums, village meetings, and dissemination events organized by the local government. These activities typically involve representatives from BAPPEDA, village officials, and community members as participants. Development information is conveyed through presentations and direct explanations to the community. The findings show that these dissemination activities have provided opportunities for interaction between the government and the community through discussion and question-and-answer sessions. However, time limitations during these activities often prevent all community questions or proposals from being discussed in depth.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that community participation in development program dissemination activities varies. Some community members actively express their proposals and opinions during Musrenbang forums or village meetings, while others tend to remain passive and simply follow the course of the activities without providing responses. The level of

community participation is influenced by several factors, including the level of public understanding of development programs, the level of trust in the local government, and the relevance of development programs to community needs. Communities tend to be more active when they clearly understand the benefits of the development programs being presented.

In addition, the results show that communication evaluation is conducted by BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency through dissemination activity reports, documentation of activities, and internal discussions among departments. These evaluations are used to assess the effectiveness of dissemination activities as well as community responses to the development programs being communicated. Feedback from the community is generally obtained through discussion notes from dissemination forums or through village officials who convey community aspirations to the local government. However, the findings indicate that the evaluation process remains largely internal and has not fully involved community members directly in assessing the effectiveness of development communication conducted by the local government.

Overall, the findings indicate that the communication strategies implemented by the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community have been carried out through various communication forums, such as Musrenbang and village meetings. These communication activities have provided opportunities for interaction between the government and the community. Nevertheless, several challenges remain, including the use of technical terminology in delivering information, limited time for dialogue during dissemination activities, and varying levels of community participation. These findings suggest that strengthening communication strategies is still necessary to ensure that development information can be more evenly understood by the community..

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study on the communication strategies of the Public Relations unit of the Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community indicate that the development communication process has been implemented through several stages that are consistent with the concept of development communication proposed by Everett M. Rogers (1976). Development communication theory emphasizes that communication is a crucial process in supporting social change through the dissemination of development information, dialogue with the community, and public participation in the development process. Based on the research findings, the communication strategies implemented by the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency can be analyzed through several stages, namely the analysis of community needs, communication message planning, implementation of program dissemination, community participation, and the evaluation of development communication.

At the stage of analyzing community situations and needs, BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency has attempted to understand community needs through Development Planning Deliberation forums (Musrenbang), public consultation forums, and coordination with village officials. Through these forums, community members are provided with opportunities to convey development needs in their respective areas. This indicates that the local government has attempted to apply a participatory approach in the development planning process. According to Jan Servaes (2020), effective development communication must involve communities from the early stages of planning so that development programs can be formulated based on the actual needs of society. Nevertheless, the findings show that the process of identifying community needs still tends to be administrative in nature, as community members mainly present lists of development proposals without deeper exploration of the underlying issues.

At the stage of planning communication messages and strategies, the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency has attempted to simplify technical development information so that it can be more easily understood by the public. Dissemination materials are

generally prepared based on regional development planning documents, such as the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD), and are delivered through presentations and direct explanations to the community. Efforts to simplify the language used in message delivery demonstrate an awareness that communities possess diverse levels of understanding regarding development information. Onong Uchjana Effendy (2003) explains that the success of communication is strongly influenced by the communicator's ability to adapt the message to the characteristics of the message recipients. However, the findings indicate that technical terminology related to development planning is still frequently used, which causes some community members to experience difficulties in understanding the information presented.

At the stage of communication implementation, the dissemination of development programs by BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency is generally carried out through face-to-face meetings such as Musrenbang forums, village meetings, and dissemination activities involving village officials and community members. Face-to-face communication patterns are chosen because they are considered more effective in reaching communities that are accustomed to direct interpersonal interaction. The findings show that dissemination activities have provided opportunities for community members to ask questions and express their opinions through discussion sessions. This indicates that communication conducted by the local government has begun to move toward a two-way communication model. Everett M. Rogers (1976) explains that effective development communication should encourage interaction between the government and the community so that development messages are not delivered solely in a one-way manner. Nevertheless, time limitations during dissemination activities mean that opportunities for dialogue between the government and the community have not yet been fully optimized.

Community participation in the dissemination of development programs is also a key aspect of development communication. The findings indicate that the level of community participation varies. Some community members actively express proposals and opinions during dissemination forums, while others tend to remain passive. These variations in participation levels are influenced by the community's level of understanding of development programs as well as their level of trust in the local government. Widiyowati et al. (2021) state that dialogic development communication can increase community participation in the development process. Therefore, improving the quality of development communication becomes essential to encourage more active community involvement.

At the stage of evaluation and feedback, BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency has conducted evaluations of development program dissemination activities through activity reports, documentation, and internal discussions. These evaluations aim to assess community responses to the development programs being communicated. However, the findings indicate that the evaluation process is still largely conducted internally by the local government and does not yet fully involve community members directly. Yunita (2023) explains that the evaluation of development communication should not only be carried out by the government but should also involve the community as message recipients in order to assess the extent to which development messages are understood and accepted by the public.

Based on the above discussion, it can be concluded that the communication strategies implemented by the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community have generally followed the stages of development communication as described in the theory of Everett M. Rogers (1976). However, several aspects still require strengthening, including the simplification of language in delivering development information, the expansion of opportunities for dialogue during dissemination activities, and the development of more participatory communication evaluation mechanisms. Strengthening these communication strategies is expected to improve public understanding of development programs while encouraging greater community participation in regional development..

CONCLUSION

Based on the results and discussion of this study on the communication strategies of the Public Relations unit of the Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community, it can be concluded that the communication strategies implemented have followed the stages of development communication, which include the analysis of community situations and needs, the planning of communication messages and strategies, the implementation of program dissemination, community participation, and evaluation and feedback. These stages indicate that the local government has attempted to establish communication with the community in the process of delivering development information.

The analysis of community situations and needs is conducted through various participatory forums, such as Development Planning Deliberation forums (Musrenbang), public consultation forums, and coordination with village officials and community leaders. Through these forums, community members are provided with opportunities to convey their proposals and development needs. However, the process of identifying community needs still tends to be administrative in nature, which means that the understanding of community information needs has not yet been fully explored in depth.

The planning of communication messages is carried out by simplifying technical development information so that it can be more easily understood by the public. Nevertheless, the use of technical terminology in development planning remains a challenge for some community members in understanding the information presented. The implementation of communication in the dissemination of development programs is generally conducted through face-to-face meetings such as Musrenbang forums and village meetings, which provide opportunities for interaction between the government and the community through discussion and question-and-answer sessions.

Community participation in the dissemination of development programs still demonstrates varying levels of involvement. Some community members actively express proposals and opinions, while others remain relatively passive. This variation is influenced by the community's level of understanding of development programs as well as the relevance of these programs to community needs. In addition, the communication evaluation conducted by BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency remains largely internal, carried out through activity reports and internal discussions, which limits community involvement in the evaluation process of development communication.

Therefore, the communication strategies implemented by the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community have generally been carried out in accordance with the principles of development communication. However, several aspects still require strengthening, particularly in simplifying communication messages, optimizing dialogue between the government and the community, and developing a more participatory and transparent communication evaluation system. Strengthening these communication strategies is expected to enhance public understanding of development programs and encourage greater community participation in regional development..

LIMITATION

Based on the findings of this study on the communication strategies of the Public Relations unit of the Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan Daerah (BAPPEDA) of Seluma Regency in disseminating development programs to the community, several recommendations can be proposed to improve the effectiveness of development communication.

First, for the Public Relations unit of BAPPEDA of Seluma Regency, it is recommended to strengthen communication strategies by simplifying the language used in development program

dissemination activities. Development information should be conveyed using more communicative language and accompanied by examples related to people's daily lives so that development messages can be more easily understood by communities with diverse educational backgrounds. In addition, the use of communication media should be enhanced, both through face-to-face interactions and digital media such as official local government websites and social media platforms, in order to ensure that development information can reach a broader audience.

Second, development program dissemination activities should provide greater opportunities for dialogue between the government and the community. The local government can improve the quality of two-way communication by allocating more time for discussions and encouraging community members to express their opinions, questions, and aspirations regarding development programs. Through more dialogic communication, communities are expected to better understand development objectives and feel more involved in the regional development process.

Third, the community of Seluma Regency is encouraged to increase its participation in development program dissemination activities organized by the local government, such as Development Planning Deliberation forums (Musrenbang) and village meeting forums. Active community participation is essential to ensure that planned development programs align with community needs and provide tangible benefits to society.

Fourth, for future researchers, it is recommended to further develop studies on development communication strategies by expanding the research scope or increasing the number of informants in order to obtain more comprehensive data. Future research may also examine the utilization of digital media in development communication and its influence on the level of community participation in regional development programs.

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