



Government Social Media Management and Citizen Interaction : Evidence from West Java Provincial Government

Clarine Mona Silaban

Universitas Ekuitas

*Corresponding author : clarinesilaban30@gmail.com

INFO ARTIKEL	ABSTRACT
<p>Submitted: 2025-12-02 Revised: 2025-12-19 Accepted: 2026-01-03 Published: 2026-02-02</p> <p>Keywords Government Communication, Social Media Management, Citizen Interaction, Digital Governance, Public Administration</p>	<p><i>The growing use of social media has transformed government communication practices in the digital era. Government institutions increasingly utilize social media platforms to disseminate information, interact with citizens, and enhance transparency in governance. Social media provides opportunities for governments to establish more direct and interactive communication with the public, allowing citizens to engage with government institutions more actively. This study aims to examine the management of government social media and its influence on citizen interaction within the West Java Provincial Government. The study adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore how government institutions manage official social media platforms and how citizens respond to government communication in digital environments. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with government communication officers and citizens who actively interact with government social media accounts, supported by document analysis and observation of official government social media platforms. The findings indicate that effective social media management can enhance citizen interaction by improving information accessibility, encouraging public engagement, and strengthening transparency in government communication. Citizens actively use social media platforms to obtain information, express opinions, and provide feedback on government policies and public services. Government responsiveness to citizen interactions also contributes to building positive perceptions of government institutions. However, challenges such as managing large volumes of online interactions, addressing misinformation, and differences in digital literacy among citizens remain important issues in government social media management. The study highlights the importance of developing clear communication strategies and strengthening institutional capacity in order to maximize the potential of social media as a tool for improving government-citizen interaction in the digital era.</i></p>
<p>Kata Kunci Komunikasi Pemerintah, Pengelolaan Media Sosial, Interaksi Masyarakat, Tata Kelola Digital, Administrasi Publik</p>	<p>Abstrak Pemanfaatan media sosial telah mengubah praktik komunikasi pemerintah di era digital. Institusi pemerintah semakin menggunakan platform media sosial untuk menyebarkan informasi, berinteraksi dengan masyarakat, serta meningkatkan transparansi dalam penyelenggaraan pemerintahan. Media sosial memberikan peluang bagi pemerintah untuk membangun komunikasi yang lebih langsung dan interaktif dengan masyarakat, sehingga warga dapat berpartisipasi secara lebih aktif dalam proses pemerintahan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengelolaan media sosial pemerintah serta pengaruhnya terhadap interaksi masyarakat dengan pemerintah dalam konteks Pemerintah Provinsi Jawa Barat. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif untuk memahami bagaimana instansi pemerintah mengelola platform media sosial resmi serta bagaimana masyarakat merespons komunikasi pemerintah dalam lingkungan digital. Data penelitian diperoleh melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dengan pejabat pemerintah yang mengelola komunikasi publik dan masyarakat yang aktif berinteraksi melalui media sosial pemerintah, serta didukung dengan analisis dokumen dan observasi terhadap akun media sosial resmi pemerintah. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengelolaan media sosial yang efektif dapat meningkatkan interaksi masyarakat melalui peningkatan aksesibilitas informasi, mendorong keterlibatan publik, serta memperkuat transparansi komunikasi pemerintah. Masyarakat secara aktif memanfaatkan media sosial untuk memperoleh informasi, menyampaikan pendapat, serta memberikan masukan terkait kebijakan pemerintah dan pelayanan publik. Responsivitas pemerintah terhadap interaksi masyarakat juga berkontribusi dalam membangun persepsi positif terhadap institusi pemerintah. Namun demikian, masih terdapat beberapa tantangan seperti pengelolaan interaksi daring yang sangat besar, potensi penyebaran informasi yang tidak akurat, serta perbedaan tingkat literasi digital di kalangan masyarakat. Oleh karena itu, diperlukan strategi komunikasi yang jelas serta penguatan kapasitas institusional agar pemanfaatan media sosial dapat dimaksimalkan sebagai sarana peningkatan interaksi antara pemerintah dan masyarakat di era digital.</p>



INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital communication technologies has significantly transformed how governments communicate with citizens. In recent years, social media platforms have emerged as important tools for government institutions to disseminate information, engage with the public, and improve transparency in governance processes. Unlike traditional communication channels, social media enables governments to communicate with citizens more directly, interactively, and in real time, allowing for a more dynamic relationship between public institutions and society (Mergel, 2013; Criado, Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2013).

Government communication plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of governance performance and institutional credibility. Effective communication strategies allow governments to share information about policies, development programs, and public services while also creating opportunities for citizen feedback and participation. In the digital era, social media has become a strategic communication channel for government institutions to reach wider audiences and enhance the accessibility of public information (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010).

Social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube allow governments to create two-way communication with citizens. Through these platforms, citizens can not only receive information but also respond to government messages by asking questions, expressing opinions, and reporting public issues. This interactive communication environment encourages greater citizen engagement and allows governments to better understand community concerns and expectations (Bonsón, Royo, & Ratkai, 2017).

The use of social media in public administration has also been associated with improved transparency and accountability. Digital platforms allow governments to publish information about policies, programs, and administrative processes more openly. By providing timely and accessible information through social media, government institutions can improve transparency and strengthen public trust in government institutions (Grimmelikhuijsen & Meijer, 2014).

In Indonesia, the use of social media by government institutions has increased rapidly over the past decade. Both national and regional governments have adopted social media platforms as part of their communication strategies to disseminate information and engage with citizens.

Government social media accounts are now widely used to provide updates on public services, development initiatives, and government programs, reflecting broader efforts to modernize public communication practices (Kurniawan & Lestari, 2020).

At the provincial level, the West Java Provincial Government has actively utilized social media platforms as part of its digital communication strategy. Official social media accounts managed by provincial government agencies are frequently used to share information about regional policies, development programs, and public services. These platforms also allow citizens to communicate directly with government institutions by submitting questions, complaints, or feedback related to public issues.

The adoption of social media communication by the West Java Provincial Government reflects the increasing importance of digital communication in modern governance. Social media platforms allow government institutions to reach a broader audience, deliver real-time information, and maintain ongoing communication with the public. In addition, the interactive nature of social media enables citizens to participate more actively in governance processes by providing feedback and expressing their opinions regarding government policies.

However, the increasing use of social media in government communication also presents several challenges. Managing government social media accounts requires clear communication strategies, institutional capacity, and trained personnel who can respond effectively to citizen interactions. Governments must also ensure that information shared through social media remains accurate, transparent, and consistent with official policies (Mergel, 2020).

Another important issue concerns how citizens perceive government communication on social media platforms. The effectiveness of government social media management depends not only on the frequency of communication but also on the credibility, responsiveness, and transparency of the information provided. These factors influence how citizens interact with government accounts and how they evaluate the performance of public institutions.

Although social media has become an important communication tool in public administration, research examining how government social media management influences citizen interaction and engagement remains limited, particularly in the context of provincial-level governance in Indonesia. Many previous studies have focused on national-level digital governance initiatives or general e-government implementation, while fewer studies have examined how government institutions manage social media communication and how citizens respond to these communication practices.

Therefore, this study aims to examine government social media management and its influence on citizen interaction within the context of the West Java Provincial Government. By analyzing how

government institutions manage social media communication and how citizens interact with these platforms, this research seeks to provide insights into the role of digital communication in strengthening engagement between government institutions and the public in the era of digital governance.

METHODS

This study employs a qualitative research approach to examine government social media management and its influence on citizen interaction within the West Java Provincial Government. A qualitative approach was selected because it allows for a deeper understanding of how government institutions manage social media communication and how citizens perceive and interact with government messages in digital platforms. Through this approach, the study seeks to explore the experiences, perspectives, and interpretations of both government officials and citizens regarding the use of social media in government communication.

The research adopts a case study design focusing on the West Java Provincial Government as the primary research locus. The case study method is appropriate for analyzing complex communication practices within a specific institutional context and allows researchers to investigate real-life phenomena in depth (Yin, 2018). The West Java Provincial Government was selected because it actively utilizes social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube to communicate with citizens and disseminate information about regional policies, public services, and development programs.

Data were collected through several qualitative data collection techniques. First, semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants who are directly involved in managing government communication and social media platforms. These informants included government public relations officers, communication staff responsible for managing official social media accounts, and representatives from relevant government agencies involved in digital communication activities. In addition, several citizens who actively interact with government social media platforms were interviewed to obtain perspectives from the public regarding government communication practices.

Second, document analysis was conducted to examine official government communication policies, social media management guidelines, and digital communication strategies implemented by the West Java Provincial Government. These documents provided insights into institutional frameworks, communication objectives, and strategic approaches used in managing government social media accounts.

In addition, observations of official social media accounts managed by the West Java Provincial Government were carried out to analyze communication patterns and interaction dynamics between the government and citizens. This observation focused on the types of information shared by government institutions, the frequency of posts, the nature of citizen responses, and the responsiveness of government communication teams to public comments or inquiries.

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This analytical method involves organizing qualitative data, coding key themes, identifying recurring patterns, and interpreting the meanings embedded within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through thematic analysis, the study identified several important themes related to government communication strategies, citizen engagement, responsiveness in digital communication, and the overall management of government social media platforms.

To ensure the credibility and reliability of the research findings, this study applied data triangulation by comparing information obtained from interviews, document analysis, and social media observations. Triangulation helps strengthen the validity of qualitative research by ensuring that findings are supported by multiple sources of evidence (Denzin, 2017). Through this methodological approach, the study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how government social media management influences citizen interaction and engagement in the context of the West Java Provincial Government.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study reveal several important aspects of how the West Java Provincial Government manages social media communication and how citizens interact with government digital platforms. Based on interviews with government communication officers, observations of official social media accounts, and citizen perspectives, several key themes emerged regarding the effectiveness of social media management, patterns of citizen interaction, and the challenges associated with digital government communication.

1. Government Social Media as a Strategic Communication Tool

One of the most prominent findings of this study is the strategic role of social media as a primary communication channel used by the West Java Provincial Government to disseminate information to the public. Social media platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are actively utilized to share updates about regional policies, development programs, public service announcements, and government activities.

Government communication officers indicated that social media allows government institutions to distribute information quickly and reach a broader audience compared to traditional communication channels such as press releases or printed publications. The accessibility of social media platforms enables citizens to obtain information in real time, which contributes to improving public awareness regarding government activities and programs.

In addition, the use of visual content such as infographics, short videos, and digital posters helps make government communication more engaging and easier for citizens to understand. These communication strategies are designed to improve the effectiveness of information dissemination and attract greater public attention to government messages.

2. Patterns of Citizen Interaction on Government Social Media

Another important finding of this study relates to the patterns of citizen interaction observed on government social media platforms. Citizens frequently interact with government accounts by liking posts, sharing information, commenting on policy announcements, and asking questions related to public services. These interactions demonstrate that social media platforms have become important spaces for communication between the government and the public.

Citizen interactions vary depending on the type of information shared by government institutions. Posts related to public services, community issues, and government programs tend to receive higher levels of engagement compared to general informational posts. Citizens often use comment sections to ask questions about administrative procedures, report local problems, or provide feedback regarding government policies.

From the perspective of government communication teams, citizen interactions on social media provide valuable insights into public concerns and community needs. Monitoring citizen comments and feedback allows government institutions to identify issues that require immediate attention and respond to community concerns more effectively.

3. Responsiveness and Digital Public Engagement

The study also found that government responsiveness plays an important role in shaping citizen engagement on social media platforms. When government institutions respond to citizen inquiries or complaints through social media, citizens tend to perceive the government as more responsive and attentive to public concerns.

Government communication officers explained that responding to citizen comments and questions is part of their digital communication strategy to maintain engagement with the public. Quick responses to public inquiries help strengthen the perception that government institutions are actively listening to citizens and are willing to address public issues.

Furthermore, social media platforms allow citizens to report problems related to public services, infrastructure, or community issues. These reports sometimes trigger follow-up responses from relevant government agencies, demonstrating how social media can function as a communication bridge between government institutions and the community.

4. Transparency and Information Accessibility

Another significant finding of this study is the role of social media in improving transparency and accessibility of government information. Official government social media accounts regularly publish updates regarding government programs, policy decisions, and public service announcements. This continuous flow of information helps ensure that citizens remain informed about government activities.

The availability of accessible information on social media platforms contributes to greater transparency in governance. Citizens can easily access government information without needing to navigate complex bureaucratic channels. This transparency is important for strengthening public trust and encouraging more open communication between government institutions and the public.

5. Challenges in Managing Government Social Media

Despite the advantages of social media communication, the study also identified several challenges associated with managing government social media platforms. One of the main challenges involves handling the high volume of citizen interactions that occur on popular government social media accounts. Government communication teams must monitor numerous comments, messages, and inquiries from citizens, which requires significant time and administrative capacity.

Another challenge relates to the spread of misinformation and the misinterpretation of government messages on social media platforms. Digital communication environments allow information to spread rapidly, and government institutions must ensure that their messages are clear and accurate in order to prevent misunderstandings among citizens.

Additionally, differences in digital literacy among citizens may affect how individuals interpret government messages or interact with digital platforms. Some citizens may have limited experience with online communication tools, which can influence their ability to access or respond to government information shared through social media.

6. Implications for Government Communication Strategies

The findings of this study highlight the growing importance of social media as a communication tool in modern public administration. Social media platforms provide governments

with opportunities to improve information dissemination, strengthen citizen engagement, and increase transparency in governance.

For the West Java Provincial Government, effective social media management requires well-developed communication strategies, skilled communication personnel, and continuous monitoring of public responses on digital platforms. Governments must also ensure that social media communication remains transparent, responsive, and accessible to all segments of society.

Overall, the study demonstrates that social media platforms have become important channels for facilitating communication between government institutions and citizens. When managed effectively, government social media platforms can strengthen public engagement, improve information accessibility, and support more transparent governance practices in the digital era.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the management of government social media and its influence on citizen interaction within the West Java Provincial Government. The findings indicate that social media has become an important communication instrument for government institutions in delivering information, engaging with citizens, and promoting transparency in governance. Through digital platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube, the provincial government is able to communicate more directly with the public and disseminate information regarding policies, development programs, and public services in a timely manner.

The study shows that social media platforms facilitate more interactive communication between government institutions and citizens. Citizens actively engage with government accounts by asking questions, providing feedback, and responding to public announcements shared through social media posts. These interactions demonstrate that digital platforms have created new opportunities for public participation in governance processes and have strengthened the relationship between government institutions and the community.

In addition, government responsiveness in addressing citizen inquiries and concerns through social media contributes to the development of positive public perceptions toward government institutions. When government communication teams respond promptly to public comments or complaints, citizens tend to perceive the government as more responsive and attentive to community needs. This responsiveness plays an important role in encouraging citizen engagement and strengthening the credibility of government communication.

The findings also highlight the role of social media in improving transparency and accessibility of government information. By regularly sharing updates related to policies, programs, and public

services, the West Java Provincial Government provides citizens with easier access to information about government activities. This transparency helps citizens better understand government initiatives and promotes greater openness in public administration.

However, several challenges remain in the management of government social media. The large volume of public interactions, the potential spread of misinformation, and differences in digital literacy among citizens present challenges that government communication teams must address. Effective social media management therefore requires clear communication strategies, well-trained personnel, and institutional capacity to monitor and respond to public interactions in digital environments.

Overall, this study concludes that social media management plays an important role in strengthening citizen interaction with government institutions in the digital era. When managed effectively, social media platforms can serve as powerful tools for improving government communication, encouraging public participation, and promoting transparent governance. The experience of the West Java Provincial Government demonstrates how digital communication strategies can support stronger engagement between government institutions and citizens in contemporary public administration.

REFERENCES

- Ines Mergel. (2013). Social media adoption and resulting tactics in the U.S. federal government. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(2), 123–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2012.12.004>
- Ines Mergel. (2020). *Digital Transformation of the Public Sector*. Oxford University Press.
- Juan Ignacio Criado, Rodrigo Sandoval-Almazan, & J. Ramon Gil-Garcia. (2013). Government innovation through social media. *Government Information Quarterly*, 30(4), 319–326.
- John Carlo Bertot, Paul T. Jaeger, & Justin M. Grimes. (2010). Using ICTs to create a culture of transparency: E-government and social media as openness tools. *Government Information Quarterly*, 27(3), 264–271.
- Francisco Bonsón, Sonia Royo, & Melinda Ratkai. (2017). Citizens' engagement on local governments' Facebook sites. *Government Information Quarterly*, 34(1), 66–76.
- Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, & Albert Meijer. (2014). The effects of transparency on the perceived trustworthiness of a government organization. *Public Administration Review*, 74(1), 137–147.
- Stephan Grimmelikhuijsen, Gregory Porumbescu, Bomim Hong, & Taeho Im. (2013). The effect of transparency on trust in government. *Public Administration Review*, 73(4), 575–586.

- Albert Meijer, & Torben Torenvlied. (2016). Social media and public management: The impact of social media on public sector communication. *Public Administration Review*, 76(1), 98–109.
- Richard Heeks. (2020). *Information and Communication Technology for Development*. Routledge.
- Darrell West. (2020). *The Future of Digital Government*. Brookings Institution Press.
- United Nations. (2022). *United Nations E-Government Survey 2022: The Future of Digital Government*. United Nations.
- OECD. (2021). *Digital Government Review of Indonesia*. OECD Publishing.
- Kementerian PANRB. (2020). *Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik (SPBE) Nasional*. Jakarta: Kementerian PANRB Republik Indonesia.
- Bappenas. (2021). *Transformasi Digital Pemerintahan Indonesia*. Jakarta: Bappenas.
- Luis Felipe Luna-Reyes, & J. Ramon Gil-Garcia. (2021). Digital government transformation and public value. *Government Information Quarterly*, 38(3), 101589
- .