

Government Communication Strategy for Public Policy Dissemination in Central Sulawesi

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
Keyword: Government communication; Public policy; Policy dissemination; Digital communication; Public engagement	This study aims to analyze the government's communication strategy for disseminating public policies in Central Sulawesi. The study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using documentation and observation of official government websites, policy documents, and digital communication materials, which are analyzed thematically and validated through source and methodological triangulation. The findings indicate that the government of Central Sulawesi has utilized official websites and social media, particularly Instagram, to expand information outreach and enhance policy visibility; however, communication remains predominantly one-way and has not yet fully optimized opportunities for dialogue, public feedback, and participation. The study contributes to the development of <i>government communication</i> scholarship by emphasizing the integration of informative, educational, transparent, persuasive, and participatory functions to shift local-level policy communication from mere <i>government publicity</i> toward public-oriented and engagement-based policy communication.

INTRODUCTION

Government communication is a critical instrument for ensuring that public policies are not merely established administratively but are also understood, accepted, and implemented by society (Dogbe et al., 2026; Wang, 2026; Yu et al., 2026). In Indonesia, policy dissemination faces challenges arising from diverse social characteristics, varying levels of information literacy, limited access to public information, and the growing use of digital media as a primary source of information (Isabella et al., 2024, 2025; Ubaidillah et al., 2026). These conditions may create gaps between the policy messages communicated by government and public understanding of their substance, objectives, benefits, and implementation mechanisms. One-way and overly administrative communication may position citizens merely as recipients of information without enabling them to understand the relevance of policies to their needs (Kwakye, 2025; Sawir et al., 2024; Taufiqurokhman et al., 2025). Therefore, governments require communication strategies that are more participatory, adaptive, and responsive to the characteristics of target groups in order to strengthen public understanding, trust, and support for policy implementation in Central Sulawesi.

The literature on government communication demonstrates that public communication should not be viewed merely as an activity of transmitting information but as a strategic process for building relationships between government and society (Baharuddin, 2020; Fisdian Adni et

al., 2024; Ibrahim et al., 2023). From the perspective of *government communication*, communication effectiveness depends on the government's ability to identify target audiences, formulate clear and accessible messages, select appropriate communication channels, and provide opportunities for public feedback (Ho & Kim, 2025; Indra et al., 2025; Karlina et al., 2025). Effective policy communication enables citizens to understand why a policy has been formulated, the problems it seeks to address, and its potential benefits and implications for their everyday lives (Kim & Shim, 2020; Zhang & Lu, 2025). Accordingly, the success of policy dissemination should not be assessed solely by the volume of information disseminated, but also by the extent to which such information is understood by citizens and generates constructive public responses.

Research on policy communication further emphasizes the importance of dialogic and participatory communication approaches. Citizens should not be regarded merely as passive recipients of government messages, but as actors possessing diverse experiences, local knowledge, interests, and information needs (Baharuddin, Qodir, et al., 2022; Baharuddin, Sairin, et al., 2022). Governments therefore need to adapt policy messages and communication channels to the characteristics of different target groups, including through face-to-face communication, public forums, mass media, social media, and local communication networks (Park et al., 2016). This approach has become increasingly important within the digital communication environment, where citizens have access to multiple alternative sources of information and can actively provide responses, criticisms, and interpretations of government policies. Under these conditions, government is not merely an information provider but also a manager of public communication who must respond to changing information dynamics and foster meaningful interaction with citizens (Bizberge et al., 2026; Sun & Zhao, 2026).

Previous studies demonstrate a strong relationship between government communication strategies, public understanding, and trust in public policies. When policy information is communicated transparently, consistently, clearly, and through channels trusted by citizens, the likelihood of public acceptance and policy legitimacy increases. Conversely, inconsistent, overly technical, delayed, or poorly targeted information may generate confusion, misinterpretation, and even resistance to policies (DePaula & Hansson, 2025; Faisal et al., 2026; Ferré-Pavia & Bajouk, 2026; Rifaid et al., 2023). However, existing research on government communication for policy dissemination has largely focused on the effectiveness of digital media or communication channels in general, while the integration of message substance, audience characteristics, channel selection, government–citizen interaction, and local context remains insufficiently examined. This gap is particularly relevant in Central Sulawesi, where diverse social characteristics and communication environments require government communication strategies that are context-sensitive and responsive to different public needs.

Building on this background and the existing literature, this study focuses on how the government designs and implements communication strategies for disseminating public policies in Central Sulawesi. The research addresses two main questions: (1) how does the government communicate public policies to citizens in Central Sulawesi, and (2) how do message selection, communication channels, and patterns of government–citizen interaction influence the effectiveness of policy dissemination? Accordingly, the study aims to analyze government communication strategies by examining policy messages, target-group characteristics, communication media, and interaction patterns, while also identifying the supporting and constraining factors that shape communication effectiveness and developing a more adaptive, participatory, and context-sensitive approach to strengthen public understanding and acceptance of public policies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze government communication strategies in disseminating public policies in Central Sulawesi. The qualitative design was selected to examine the nature of policy messages, information dissemination strategies, communication patterns, and the ways in which government institutions seek to foster

public understanding of policies, with particular attention to the use of digital communication channels.

Data were collected through documentation and observation, focusing primarily on official government websites and government agencies responsible for public policy communication. The documentation included government news, press releases, program information, policy documents, activity reports, infographics, and other policy dissemination materials published on official websites. Observation focused on patterns of information presentation, publication frequency, message structure, language use, accessibility, and the extent to which the information communicated reflected the substance and objectives of public policies.

The data were analyzed thematically through four stages: identification, categorization, interpretation, and theme development. Information obtained from government websites was categorized into key communication themes, including policy message clarity, information transparency, information accessibility, digital media utilization, communication responsiveness, and public engagement. Each theme was subsequently interpreted to examine how government communication strategies translate technical or administrative policies into information that can be understood by citizens.

Data credibility was strengthened through source and methodological triangulation by comparing information across different official government websites and cross-checking it against policy documents and observations of digital communication practices. The analysis was used to identify strengths, weaknesses, and communication gaps in the dissemination of public policies in Central Sulawesi. Accordingly, the study examined not merely the availability of policy information on government websites, but also the extent to which government communication supports public understanding, policy transparency, information accessibility, and meaningful government–citizen communication.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Government Communication Strategy in Public Policy Dissemination in Central Sulawesi

The official website of the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government serves as a strategic instrument of government communication for disseminating policies, programs, and development agendas to the public. Based on the documentation examined, publications on non-cash transaction innovations, stunting prevention, corruption prevention, and the strengthening of public service governance indicate that the government uses its website not only to communicate institutional activities but also to foster public understanding of policy priorities and government commitments. This communication pattern demonstrates a predominance of informative and publicity-oriented functions, while also highlighting opportunities to develop the website into a more educational, interactive, transparent, and citizen-oriented communication channel that better accommodates public needs and participation.



Figure 1. The appearance of the Central Sulawesi government's official website

Source: Edited by the researcher from sultengprov.go.id, 2026

The official website of the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government demonstrates that government communication has been strategically directed toward disseminating various programs, policies, and governmental activities to the public. Based on documentation available on the government website, information is presented through news articles and visual publications featuring government agendas, public service programs, and development activities. The three observed publications demonstrate that the website is used to communicate diverse issues, ranging from digital transaction transformation and public health to government governance. This pattern indicates that government communication serves not merely as a means of publicizing governmental activities, but also as a mechanism for framing government programs as integral components of broader development and public service agendas. This finding is consistent with practices observed on other local government communication channels, where information concerning transaction digitalization, public service improvement, and transparency is presented as part of broader government communication strategies.

First, the website functions as an informative communication channel for government policies and programs. The three publications demonstrate a communication pattern in which the government acts as the primary source of information, while citizens are positioned predominantly as recipients of information concerning programs that are being implemented or have already been carried out. The headlines directly emphasize policy or programmatic issues, including cashless transactions, stunting prevention, and corruption prevention. Accordingly, the communication strategy can primarily be categorized as informative government communication, through which the government provides information about its agendas, actions, and institutional commitments to the public.

Second, the use of visual materials and public-oriented headlines constitutes part of the government's strategy for attracting public attention. The documentation does not rely exclusively on textual information but also incorporates photographs of government officials, participants, and institutional activities. Such visual strategies enhance government visibility while providing symbolic evidence that particular programs have been implemented. From a government communication perspective, these publications contribute to constructing a narrative of government presence in addressing public concerns, including digitalization, maternal and child health, corruption prevention, and improvements in public services.

Third, the communication strategy demonstrates a pattern of agenda-setting in the dissemination of policy information. The selection of issues presented on the website indicates an effort to position particular concerns as important public agendas that deserve citizens' attention. Information on cashless transactions communicates an agenda of digital transformation and innovation; stunting prevention communicates an agenda of public health and protection of vulnerable groups; while corruption prevention and land governance communicate an agenda of institutional governance. Thus, the website not only communicates *what government does* but also indirectly shapes perceptions of what government considers important.

Fourth, website-based communication reflects an orientation toward transparency and accountability, although it remains predominantly one-way. The government provides publicly accessible information concerning its activities and programs, while official publications also function as digital records of governmental actions. However, based on the observed materials, communication remains more strongly oriented toward transmitting information from government to citizens than toward facilitating direct dialogue with them. This is significant because effective policy communication should not end with publication but should also provide opportunities for questions, responses, complaints, and public feedback. The Central Sulawesi Provincial Government's broader agenda of strengthening public information disclosure and complaint management further indicates that transparency and responsiveness are important dimensions in the development of government communication.

Overall, the findings from the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government website indicate that the government has utilized digital media to enhance policy visibility, communicate development agendas, and construct an image of an institution actively engaged in public service delivery. Nevertheless, this strategy could be strengthened by shifting from publication-oriented communication toward public engagement-oriented communication. Such communication should not merely report what the government has done but should also explain the substance of policies, their benefits for citizens, mechanisms for accessing relevant services, and opportunities for

interaction and feedback. Through this shift, the government website could evolve from a government publication medium into a policy communication instrument that is more transparent, educational, participatory, and responsive.

Critically, these findings indicate that the communication strategy of the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government remains stronger in the dimension of dissemination than engagement. Viewed through the concept of *government communication*, the website performs the functions of information provision, agenda formation, and enhancement of government visibility, but it does not yet fully demonstrate two-way communication that enables citizens to respond to or influence policy processes. From the perspective of *public communication*, this condition reflects a tendency toward government-centered communication, in which the dominant narrative concerns what the government does, while citizens' information needs, experiences, and voices remain less prominent in the construction of policy messages. Thus, the mere availability of digital information cannot automatically be interpreted as effective policy communication, because effectiveness also depends on the capacity of messages to generate public understanding, response, and engagement.

These findings further reinforce the importance of developing two-way symmetrical communication and citizen-centered communication within government communication practices. Government websites should not function merely as *information outlets*, but also as interactive spaces through which governments can explain policies in accessible language, provide feedback mechanisms, respond to public questions, and incorporate citizens' aspirations into the communication process. The theoretical contribution of these findings therefore lies in emphasizing that digital transformation in government communication is not simply a shift from conventional communication channels to websites, but represents a potential paradigm shift from publication toward dialogue and participation. In the context of Central Sulawesi, strengthening interactivity, responsiveness, and citizen-oriented communication is essential if digital communication is to function effectively as an instrument for building policy understanding, public trust, and governmental legitimacy.

In addition to its official website, the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government also utilizes social media as a faster, more interactive, and more accessible communication channel for disseminating information about government policies and programs.



Figure 2. Instagram social media page of the Central Sulawesi government

Source: Edited by Researchers from @sulteng.prov, 2026

Instagram is one of the social media platforms used by the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government as a communication channel for disseminating information on public policies, government programs, administrative activities, and development agendas to the public. Its use complements the government's official website by providing a communication format that is more

visual, concise, immediate, and accessible to social media users. First, the use of Instagram demonstrates an informative and visual communication strategy for disseminating public policy. Information concerning government activities is presented through photographs, videos, captions, and visual designs, enabling policy messages to be communicated in a more accessible and simplified manner than through conventional website publications. This pattern reflects the government's adaptation to the characteristics of digital communication, which increasingly require messages to be concise, engaging, and easy for citizens to understand.

Second, Instagram functions as an instrument of agenda-setting and government visibility. The selection of content concerning public services, health, development, innovation, and the activities of regional government leaders enables the government to determine which issues are positioned as important and worthy of public attention. Social media therefore serves not merely as a space for documenting governmental activities, but also as a strategic channel for constructing narratives about government priorities and strengthening institutional visibility within the digital public sphere. Through the continuous presentation of selected policy issues and governmental activities, Instagram contributes to shaping how citizens perceive the government's presence, priorities, and performance

Third, the characteristics of Instagram create greater opportunities for interaction than those typically available through government websites. Features such as comments, likes, shares, stories, and direct messages provide citizens with opportunities to respond to government information. However, conceptually, the availability of interactive features does not automatically produce participatory communication. Its effectiveness depends on the extent to which government institutions respond to citizens' comments, questions, criticisms, and aspirations. Consequently, the principal challenge is not merely to increase the volume or frequency of publications, but to transform social media from an information-distribution channel into a space for policy dialogue and meaningful public interaction.

Fourth, the use of Instagram reflects a potential shift from predominantly one-way government communication toward more engagement-oriented digital communication. Social media enables government institutions to establish closer relationships with citizens, expand the reach of public information, enhance transparency, strengthen public trust, and obtain feedback more rapidly. From the perspective of government communication, social media can strengthen public engagement, responsiveness, and relationship building because citizens are no longer positioned exclusively as passive recipients of information but are provided with opportunities to respond and interact with government institutions. Instagram therefore offers strategic benefits for expanding policy dissemination, improving information accessibility, strengthening government image and credibility, and developing closer communication relationships between government and citizens.

Overall, the communication strategy of the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government demonstrates an integrated use of its official website and Instagram to expand policy dissemination, enhance government visibility, and bring public information closer to citizens. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of this communication strategy needs to move beyond a predominantly dissemination-oriented approach toward engagement-oriented communication by strengthening interactivity, responsiveness, feedback mechanisms, and public participation. Such a transformation would enable digital media to function not merely as instruments for publicizing government activities, but also as spaces for policy dialogue capable of strengthening public understanding, trust, and governmental legitimacy.

Effectiveness and Challenges of Government Communication in Public Policy Dissemination

The effectiveness of government communication in disseminating public policies in Central Sulawesi can be observed through the increasingly extensive use of digital channels, particularly the official government website and Instagram, as instruments for delivering information to the public. The official website functions as an institutional channel providing information on government programs, policies, administrative activities, and development agendas, while Instagram complements this function by presenting messages in a more visual, concise, immediate, and accessible format. The analyzed documentation indicates that issues such as cashless transactions, stunting prevention, corruption prevention, public services, and regional

development are actively constructed as components of the government's communication agenda. Accordingly, the initial effectiveness of government communication is reflected in its capacity to enhance *government visibility*, broaden public access to policy information, and construct narratives concerning the government's presence in addressing various public issues.

Within the context of policy dissemination, a major strength of this strategy lies in the government's ability to adapt message formats to the characteristics of different communication media. The website enables policy information to be documented formally and maintained as a digital archive that can be accessed and referenced by citizens, whereas Instagram allows messages to be presented through photographs, videos, captions, and simplified visual designs that are more engaging and accessible. These differences demonstrate a cross-platform communication strategy in which policy substance is disseminated through channels with distinct but complementary functions. The selection of issues also reflects a process of *agenda-setting*, as the government not only communicates what it has done but also determines which issues receive attention within the digital public sphere. In this sense, government communication contributes to shaping public perceptions of development priorities and highlighting the areas considered important by the government.

Nevertheless, communication effectiveness cannot be assessed solely in terms of the volume of information published or the visibility achieved by government institutions. The findings indicate that communication through the official website remains predominantly one-way, with the government positioned as the primary source of information and citizens as recipients of messages. This condition reflects a tendency toward government-centered communication, as communication narratives are more strongly oriented toward government activities, programs, and achievements than toward citizens' information needs, experiences, and responses. In the context of policy communication, such an approach has limitations because citizens require more than information about government activities; they also need explanations concerning the substance of policies, the reasons for their formulation, expected benefits, access mechanisms, and implications for everyday life. Thus, government communication may be considered effective at the informational level, but it has not yet achieved the same level of effectiveness in terms of dialogue and public participation.

This challenge becomes increasingly significant as government communication expands to social media platforms such as Instagram. Conceptually, social media provides greater opportunities for two-way communication, as citizens can comment, like, share, and send direct messages to government institutions. These features have the potential to accelerate information dissemination while enabling governments to obtain feedback regarding citizens' perceptions and information needs. However, the existence of interactive features does not automatically produce participatory communication. The effectiveness of Instagram as a policy communication instrument depends substantially on the government's capacity to respond consistently to public comments, questions, criticisms, and aspirations. Therefore, the challenge is not simply to increase publication frequency, but to transform social media into an interactive space that enables more responsive communication relationships between government and citizens.

Another challenge concerns the tendency of government communication to emphasize *government visibility* through the documentation of activities and government officials. Photographs of events, officials, and institutional activities can provide visual evidence of government presence and performance; however, when such content becomes dominant, government communication may shift toward institutional image-building rather than substantive policy communication. From a public communication perspective, this issue requires attention because communication effectiveness should not be limited to the government's ability to demonstrate its activities, but should also be assessed by the extent to which citizens understand the substance and relevance of policies. In other words, there is an important distinction between *communicating government activities* and *communicating public policy*. Government institutions need to ensure that messages do not merely explain who conducted an activity and when it took place, but also address why the policy matters, who benefits from it, how citizens can access it, and how citizens can provide feedback or evaluate its implementation. The finding that publication functions remain dominant therefore indicates considerable room for strengthening these substantive dimensions of policy communication.

In the context of Central Sulawesi, communication challenges are also associated with the need to integrate transparency, accountability, and responsiveness into policy dissemination strategies. The official website provides an important function as a source of authoritative information and an archive of government activities, while social media offers greater reach and opportunities for closer communication with citizens. However, both channels can produce more effective policy communication when published information is complemented by clear mechanisms for complaints, questions, clarification, and feedback. Accordingly, integrating the website as an information repository and social media as an engagement channel can create a more comprehensive government communication ecosystem. This model would allow government institutions to use social media to attract public attention and subsequently direct citizens toward more comprehensive policy information available on the official website. Conversely, interactions occurring through social media can provide valuable signals regarding public concerns and communication needs that require further clarification through official government channels.

Overall, the effectiveness of the Central Sulawesi Provincial Government's communication in disseminating public policies demonstrates significant progress through the use of digital media to improve information access, government visibility, and the dissemination of development agendas, while still facing challenges in establishing genuinely public-oriented communication. These findings emphasize that digital transformation should not be understood merely as a shift in communication media from conventional channels to websites and social media, but rather as a potential paradigm shift from publication-oriented communication toward public engagement-oriented communication. The website and Instagram have established an important foundation for more open and interactive government communication; however, substantive effectiveness can only be achieved when citizens are positioned not merely as recipients of messages, but as actors who can ask questions, provide feedback, express aspirations, and receive meaningful responses. Therefore, strengthening government communication in Central Sulawesi should focus on integrating message quality, information accessibility, transparency, interactivity, responsiveness, and public participation, enabling policy dissemination not only to inform citizens about government policies but also to foster their understanding, trust, and meaningful engagement in the policy process.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that government communication in public policy dissemination in Central Sulawesi has increasingly evolved toward the use of a digital communication ecosystem, particularly through the official government website and social media, especially Instagram, to expand information reach, enhance policy visibility, and communicate government agendas more rapidly to the public. However, communication effectiveness remains predominantly oriented toward one-way information dissemination and has not yet fully optimized public communication as a dialogic process through which citizens can understand policy substance, provide feedback, and participate in implementation. The main challenges concern message consistency, information depth, accessibility for diverse social groups, and the government's capacity to transform digital publication into more interactive and responsive communication.

The theoretical contribution of this study lies in advancing the understanding of government communication as a policy dissemination strategy that extends beyond the formal transmission of information and incorporates the integration of multiple digital channels to foster public understanding, trust, and engagement. The study enriches the literature on government communication by demonstrating that the effectiveness of policy dissemination at the local level depends on the government's ability to integrate informative, educational, transparent, persuasive, and participatory functions across websites and social media. In this respect, the findings highlight a shift from conventional *government publicity* toward public-oriented and engagement-based policy communication, in which digital platforms serve not only to communicate government activities but also to facilitate meaningful relationships and interaction between government institutions and citizens.

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