



## **OPTIMIZATION OF THE UTILIZATION OF PASURUAN REGENCY GOVERNMENT SOCIAL MEDIA IN POLICY COMMUNICATION AND REGIONAL PROMOTION**

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**Received: 02/03/2026 | Revised: 11/03/2026 | Accepted: 01/04/2026 | Published: 02/06/2026**

### **Abstract**

The quick growth of information and communication technology has equally brought about changes in the process of communication within the governance system. In this case, the utilization of social media becomes very important because it can be used to disseminate information and boost the region. Nevertheless, the application of social media in the local government is mostly done during ceremonies rather than for communicating policies. This research focuses on identifying the utilization of social media in policy communication and regional promotion of the Pasuruan Government, as well as the necessity to implement a social media governance policy. This study used a qualitative policy analysis method, including such techniques as document analysis, social media monitoring, and secondary data analysis. Information was assessed using descriptive analytical approach to uncover communication tendencies, institutional problems, social media governance needs, and policy recommendations concerning the management of social media by the local government. Furthermore, this research utilized the USG (Urgency, Seriousness, Growth) technique to define priorities and the Dunn policy analysis framework to assess alternative policies. According to the findings, although government social media accounts show relatively high levels of audience reach, engagement and effectiveness of policy communication remain low. Existing content is still primarily related to the documentation of ceremonial events. Interaction between government institutions and the general population remains insufficient and inconsistent. Also, the lack of an integrated governance approach, communication guidelines, key performance indicators, and coordination mechanisms has led to social media management by local government to be fragmented and ineffective. This study concluded that optimization of social media activities by governmental organization requires an implementation of integrated social media governance policy, which would regulate communication guidelines, public interaction, coordination and assessment of performance. As a result, this study recommended adopting an integrated social media governance policy in the Government of Pasuruan Regency.

**Keywords: *Social Media Governance, Digital Governance, Public Communication, Policy Communication, Public Participation, Local Government.***

### **INTRODUCTION**

The quick progress of information and communication technology has drastically changed governance practices, especially in terms of public communication. Currently, governments are no longer viewed merely as one-way information providers but instead need to create interactive, transparent, participatory, and responsive communication processes. This change is consistent with the digital governance concept, which involves the integration of digital technologies in governance practices to ensure transparency, accountability, and participation (Hansson & Depaula, 2025; Liu et al., 2025). Of all the digital platforms, it is social media that has come to be one of the most effective means for the exchange of information between the citizens and the government, with citizens discussing different matters with the government officials. Thus, the advent of social media platforms has drastically changed the dynamics of communication between the government and its citizens. While in contrast with other media channels, the use of social media helps governments to share information fast and reach out to a wide audience (Noviani & Hasnawati, 2025). Social media has become a powerful tool to not only share information, but foster

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confidence, increase participation, and ensure governmental transparency (Bajouk & Ferré-Pavia, 2024). Moreover, social media gives governments an opportunity to forge relationships with citizens through communication (Zumofen et al., 2025b). The increased rates of the spread of Internet connectivity and social media among Indonesians made the governments consider incorporating digital platforms into their communication activities with citizens. The increasing popularity of various social media websites has affected the ways the governments reach out to people and deliver messages. The local government representatives should be able to deliver information quickly and interactively to win their audience. At the same time, governmental communication through social media channels can be efficient only when it goes along with certain conditions like quality of communication, good governance infrastructure, organizational readiness, and policies. Social media platforms cannot just serve as means for communication, they also provide an opportunity for governments to promote their regions and foster brand awareness. Social media has become a powerful channel for marketing purposes (Tri et al., 2024).

In this regard, the government in Pasuruan Regency has incorporated social media platforms into their public communication strategy. Social media accounts created by the official government body have shown high levels of audience reach and dissemination performance. In some cases, the audience reach exceeds the population of the whole region, suggesting that not only does the use of social media help deliver information to the citizens, but it may also serve as an instrument of regional promotion. Hence, this finding highlights the significance of using social media as an instrument for policy communication, government exposure, and regional identity construction in the modern digital world. However, although there are numerous followers on government social media pages, the use of such media for effective policy communication and active engagement is still inadequate. At the moment, the communication process relies heavily on recording and describing ceremonial events rather than policy communication. As a result, the use of social media for explaining government policies, discussing matters with citizens, and encouraging public participation has been limited. In addition, the lack of public participation and response indicates that social media communication is mostly one-sided (Tarore et al., 2025).

Another problem is the lack of a proper social media governance policy in local government offices. In case there is no adequate policy regulating social media usage, management processes will not be coordinated (Tukunang, 2026). Such a situation will negatively impact social media's effectiveness in promoting policy communication and encouraging participatory governance. For this reason, it is important to optimize the social media governance policy in local governments to maximize the efficiency of communication strategies, citizen participation, and regional promotion. It is necessary to have an integrated policy of social media governance that would control the standards of communication and interaction, coordinate social media activity, and assess performance (DePaula & Hansson, 2025). Although social media communication through government-controlled social media pages has enabled local governments to reach out to the wider public, present government communication strategies have failed to capitalize on the power of social media for effective public engagement. Presently, local government communication efforts are mostly geared towards producing documents that describe government activities such as meetings, visits by officials, and other governmental ceremonies rather than informing the public about public policies, development projects, and their social implications (Contri et al., 2024; Hussin et al., 2025). For these reasons, government social media posts mainly constitute reporting of government activities but not informing people about the objectives, implementation process, and implications of public policies and development projects (DePaula et al., 2018; Wukich, 2025).

The level of interaction between citizens and government institutions on social media remains low. The responses to the queries made by citizens are often arbitrary, which significantly decreases the role of social media as a platform that ensures two-way communication (Landi et al., 2022). As a result, interactions remain one-sided, with government institutions serving as providers and citizens receiving information passively. Such a situation severely hinders the opportunities for citizen participation, communication, and engagement in governance (Contri et al., 2025). However, in the context of digital governance, effective communication means more than simple information sharing; it requires public participation, responsiveness, and collaboration (Lin & Yaakop, 2024). All these aspects clearly indicate significant gaps between social media's potential and its actual role in local government communication. Despite social media having significant potential for increasing transparency, public engagement, and regional promotion, its application has not been facilitated by proper governance policies (Alenzi & Miskon, 2024).

The primary reason for this problem is the lack of a full-fledged governance policy that can facilitate proper management of social media by the regional government authorities. Due to the absence of such governance tools as communication standards, performance metrics, coordination system, etc., social media management becomes inconsistent and lacks the strategic nature (Maheshwari et al., 2025). In light of this discussion, it is necessary to

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suggest developing an integrated policy of social media management to be used by the Government of Pasuruan Regency. An integrated policy will allow ensuring the efficiency of policy communication, encouraging public participation, maintaining consistency in governmental communications, and utilizing the strategic value of social media for regional promotion and governance purposes. Within an integrated approach to social media management, it will play an important role in facilitating transparent, accountable, participatory, and effective communication in the modern age (Zhang et al., 2022).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Public governance communication is designed to increase transparency, accountability, and public participation in government. Following public administration theories, one should regard communication not only as a channel for conveying information but also as a method of establishing trust and credibility (Rodriguez-Saavedra et al., 2025). Communication is critical in helping government convey policy objectives, implementation measures, and outcomes to citizens clearly. Furthermore, communication in public governance acts as a connection between government institutions and societies in democratic governance. Through effective communication, the government is able to involve people in policy-making processes. In democratic governance, public communication facilitates the inclusion of citizens in decision-making processes, including providing feedback and consultation (Bahadur C et al., 2024). Communication plays a central role in determining how citizens view government policies.

The emergence of new technologies has enabled public communication to adopt interactive and participative forms. Digital governance involves the adoption of information communication technologies in the governance and management of public services (Al-Ansi et al., 2024). Digital governance allows the use of digital platforms in order to facilitate more citizen participation and transparent communication with the public (Nair et al., 2025). Social media platforms have emerged as very powerful instruments in digital governance. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, and Twitter allow governments to communicate with citizens using social media platforms (Nair et al., 2025). Social media enables quicker and broader dissemination of information as well as interactions between the governments and citizens. Previous studies revealed that social media can enhance government responsiveness, improve citizen involvement in governance processes, and increase citizen trust (Villodre, 2025).

Nonetheless, the efficiency of using social media in governance relies on various elements, including content management, communication strategy, institutional capability, and policy support (Li & Liu, 2025). Policy communication refers to the process of communicating policy objectives, implementation measures, and implications to the public (Zeng et al., 2024). The importance of policy communication cannot be overemphasized because public acceptance of policies is linked to how policies are communicated. According to the theory of policy communication, governments should not only inform public about policies, but also explain why certain policies were made and their impact on citizens (Kondolele et al., 2025). In cases where policy communication is inadequate, misunderstandings and even resistance to the policy may be expected among citizens (Weigl et al., 2024). For the effective communication of policy in the age of social media, there is a need for providing clear and interesting messages that will attract citizens. It becomes essential for governments to change their approaches toward policy communication to fit the digital era, which requires visual and concise policy messages that can engage citizens (Hansson & Depaula, 2025).

Digital technology has provided opportunities for more citizen participation in policy processes. Citizens are able to give their opinions, provide feedback, and engage with the government institutions via digital communication platforms (Oludu et al., 2025). The situation creates an environment that facilitates participative governance, in which citizens play the role not only of receivers of information but also participants in the policy discussion (Gonçalves et al., 2024). Public participation through digital platforms contributes to better governance due to increased transparency, accountability, and responsiveness. Governments will benefit from the public feedback obtained through social media by evaluating policies and identifying concerns of the citizens in order to improve public services (Helbing et al., 2024). However, in order for meaningful participation to take place, there should be effective communication management.

Social media governance relates to the regulations that govern social media within public institutions (DePaula & Hansson, 2025). Governance entails content standards, communication procedure, institutional coordination, performance evaluation and monitoring, and staff capacity (Jumroh et al., 2024). Several studies reveal that many government institutions face problems in managing social media effectively. Problems include fragmented communication, domination of ceremonial contents, absence of strategies of interaction with citizens, and lack of performance management systems (Atnan & Sembada, 2025).

Thus, it is important to establish an integrated social media governance system to help the governments optimize social media for communication purposes. The development of integrated social media governance will assist governments to enhance communication consistency, foster public interaction, and utilize social media effectively in policy communication and regional promotion (Gusman, 2024). Despite various studies on digital governance and government communication through social media, very few works focus on the topic of integrated social media governance for local governments. There are limited numbers of studies examining digital governance, citizens' participation, and social media in particular for local governments. The lack of discussions on the issue of integrated social media governance for local governments, especially in Indonesia, is also noted. Therefore, the present study adds value to existing literature by discussing the importance of having formal policies for social media governance within local government institutions. In other words, this study is aimed to emphasize the need to develop integrated social media governance policy within local government institutions, specifically the Government of Pasuruan Regency.

## **METHOD**

This study utilized qualitative policy analysis as an approach to analyze the use of social media by the Government of Pasuruan Regency in conducting policy communication and regional promotions. Qualitative policy analysis was chosen since this research intended to investigate the practice of communication, institutional issues, mechanisms of governance, and policy requirements concerning government social media governance within the realm of digital governance. Descriptive and analytical methods were conducted in the research in order to describe the current condition, conduct policy gap analysis, and generate policy recommendations for better social media governance in local government organizations. Data were collected through document analysis, social media analysis, and literature analysis. First, document analysis was performed on documents related to the regulation, policies, and government report regarding public information disclosure, electronic-based government system, and public communication policies. The analysis on the regulation includes Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure and SPBE (Presidential Regulation on Electronic-Based Government System). Meanwhile, observations were done on the official social media accounts of the Government of Pasuruan Regency in relation to the pattern of communication, characteristic content, public interaction, and management. Moreover, data collected through literature analysis consist of data from national reports, studies about digital communication, and internet usage statistics in Indonesia. The data collected were analyzed using qualitative descriptive analysis. The analysis was conducted by identifying communication problems; analyzing the causes of problems in the aspects of institution and governance; examining the gap of regulation and implementation; and developing the policy alternatives. In this case, the primary policy issue identified with the problem through the application of USG (Urgency, Seriousness, Growth) method. Then, alternative policies were evaluated by employing Dunn policy analysis framework consisting of four dimensions, namely effectiveness, efficiency, responsiveness, and feasibility.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **1. Social Media Reach and Utilization**

According to the results obtained during the current study, social media have been actively incorporated into the Government of Pasuruan Regency public communication process. The official social media accounts created by the Government show relatively good levels of audience reach and content dissemination, implying the successful establishment of the digital communication channel which enables the government to connect with multiple individuals online. Interestingly, there were a few occasions when the audience reach level for some pieces of published content was higher than the total number of people in the region, indicating that the social media managed by the government do not only work as a means of communication within the region but can also be viewed as a promotion mechanism which has an extensive impact on audiences outside the regency borders (Reveilhac, 2025). There is empirical proof that this practice is common in the sense that the adoption of social media by local governments makes the organization more visible and attracts attention outside their regions (Raimo et al., 2024).

The implication of such an observation regarding the use of social media is important to note, given the ability to connect to many people from different areas. It shows that social media plays a pivotal part in the implementation of digital governance practices, considering its ability to foster transparency and communication within the government (Mabillard et al., 2024). At the same time, the utilization of social media is not exclusively connected with the communication with the region residents because social media can also serve as tools to achieve institutional promotional goals. Thus, the potential of local government social media for digital governance purposes

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goes far beyond mere communication. In order to realize the aforementioned potential, however, it is crucial to implement a carefully elaborated content strategy, institutional management, and digital governance framework.

## 2. Dominance of Ceremonial Content

The analysis of the content posted to government social media also showed that the vast majority of all published material remains centered around the coverage of ceremonies, visits, ribbon-cuttings, and other events associated with the activities of governmental organizations. At the same time, the content that can be described as substantive, namely, explanation of governmental policies, description of policy objectives, implementation strategies, and the impacts of policies on citizen's daily routine, is severely underrepresented (Mabillard & Zumofen, 2025). The domination of ceremonial content in local government social media has already been confirmed in a number of studies. According to scholars, local governments mainly focus on self-representation and reporting rather than policy communication (Zumofen et al., 2025a).

In essence, this means that social media remain just tools for documenting activities of governmental organizations and managing their images rather than means for explaining their policies and providing citizens with relevant information. As a result, the real communicative potential of social media for policy communication remains underexploited. From the perspective of policy communication theory, the governments should not only report what they are doing but also provide explanations of their actions, policy objectives, and expected outcomes. This, in turn, should be supplemented with the information regarding the impacts of these policies on citizens' lives, which would help enhance public awareness about government programs (Karlsen et al., 2025).

## 3. Low Public Engagement

Despite relatively high audience reach observed in the course of analyzing the content posted to government social media accounts, the levels of audience engagement are quite low. In terms of quantitative engagement metrics, such as number of comments, shares, likes, etc., the levels observed in this study were quite modest compared to the potential of the social media used by the government of Pasuruan Regency. These findings are also supported by empirical research, confirming that reach and engagement metrics require different approaches, so high visibility on its own does not necessarily translate into user engagement (Mabillard et al., 2025).

Low audience engagement shows that the communication process facilitated through social media still maintains strong one-sidedness because the main role of citizens remains passive consumption of content rather than active involvement in the communication process and the policymaking process. However, from the perspective of modern governance theory, this approach to social media use by governmental organizations contradicts the concept of citizen participation and interactive forms of communication (Contri et al., 2025). Therefore, according to the theoretical framework, the main objective should be to build a communicative environment in which citizens feel encouraged to participate actively and discuss issues important for them (Atnan & Imran, 2025).

## 4. Inconsistent Public Response Management

Inconsistency in the Handling of Comments, Questions, and Other Feedback Provided by Citizens Another aspect of social media utilization by local governments discussed in this study relates to the handling of citizens' comments and questions. The analysis revealed inconsistencies and poor quality of the interaction between citizens and local government officials via social media. The responses provided by the government remain relatively few in number and often do not address citizens' concerns properly. As this study found out, the inconsistency and inaccuracy of citizens' comments handling imply that government lacks the proper organizational structure for managing social media communication (Atnan & Imran, 2025).

It is important to stress that the lack of an appropriate response to the comments and questions from citizens poses serious problems in terms of building public trust in the government. When citizens notice that their concerns are ignored by the government, their interest in participating in the governance process declines significantly. Furthermore, the government ceases to serve as a communication partner because communication through social media remains one-directional. The absence of communication standards, human resource capacity, and proper accountability mechanisms prevents the transformation of social media into an instrument for citizen participation in the governance process.

## 5. Absence of Integrated Social Media Governance

Policy One of the most structurally important issues related to the use of social media in governmental organizations discussed in this study is the lack of an integrated policy governing social media management processes. Because of the absence of appropriate regulations, the use of social media in local government is uncoordinated and unstructured. Each agency manages its own social media account and posts different types of content, leading to inconsistencies in terms of communication and audience engagement (Tukunang, 2026). These aspects prevent the government from establishing effective communication with the citizens and developing positive relationships

The lack of integrated social media governance policy leads to the emergence of numerous governance deficits. Namely, it is difficult to introduce unified communication standards across agencies or assess the performance of government agencies in terms of managing their social media accounts because no standards or performance metrics exist in this context (Langer et al., 2025). Therefore, the creation of the integrated social media governance policy should be regarded as the primary priority in order to enhance local government's communication capacity and ensure that social media are used strategically to achieve policy communication, citizen participation, and regional promotion objectives (Villodre, 2025).

## CONCLUSION

As concluded from this study, the utilization of social media for public communication and regional promotion by the Government of Pasuruan Regency shows huge potentials owing to its large audience reach and information distribution ability. Digital social media has emerged as an important channel that facilitates government communication with citizens more efficiently and effectively. Nevertheless, this study also reveals that the utilization of social media has yet to be optimized as a tool for policy communication and public participation. Currently, the government social media is mostly filled with the documentation of ceremonial activities, while policy communication has not been much developed. Meanwhile, public interaction remains insignificant and is not systematically responded to. Consequently, communication activities carried out in social media channels have been done mainly unidirectionally.

One of the main reasons behind such circumstances is that there is no comprehensive policy regulating government social media management yet. Without governance structure, communication standard, coordination, performance indicator, among others, the management of government social media will continue to be done inconsistently. Hence, this study highlights the need for creating a social media governance policy for the Government of Pasuruan Regency. This social media governance policy should provide guidelines for the regulation of governance structure, communication standard, public interaction procedure, performance indicator, and human resource capacity building, among others. Through governance integration, social media can then be fully utilized as an instrument of policy communication, public participation, and region promotion in digital governance.

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