

THE MEDAN COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATICS AGENCY'S COMMUNICATION STRATEGY USING INSTAGRAM TO INCREASE MEDIA LITERACY IN MEDAN

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Abstract

The rapid development of social media has made it easier for the public to access and distribute information, but it has also increased the risks of hoaxes and inaccurate assessments of digital information. This study aims to analyze the communication strategy implemented by the Medan City Communication and Information Agency through the Instagram account @diskominfomedan to improve media literacy among the people of Medan City. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation of account activities and content, and documentation. Informants were selected purposefully based on their involvement in account management and information reception, while credibility data was examined through source and technique triangulation. The findings show that the communication strategy was implemented by appointing credible communicators, identifying diverse target groups, developing informative, educational, and persuasive messages, and using the visual and interactive features of Instagram. Content concerning hoax prevention, responsible social media use, public information, and positive content production encouraged informants to become more critical, selective, cautious, and responsible in receiving and sharing digital information. The study concludes that alignment among communicators, audience characteristics, message quality, media selection, and effect evaluation makes Instagram an effective government communication channel for supporting public media literacy in Medan City.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Instagram, Media Literacy, Government Communication, Digital Information.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology in the digital era has changed the way people access, process, produce, and disseminate information (Simamora, 2025). Social media has become an inseparable part of modern society because it allows the exchange of information to take place quickly, widely, and without limitations of space and time. Platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and WhatsApp are used not only for entertainment and social interaction, but also as a medium for obtaining information, knowledge, public services, and public education (Damayanti et al., 2023). Social media is an internet-based medium that allows its users to create, share, and interact with various forms of content through digital networks (Rahmanda & Simamora, 2024). The position of digital media is increasingly strategic because the number of internet users in Indonesia in 2024 reached around 221.56 million people with a penetration rate of 79.5 percent (APJII, 2024). This condition shows that social media has become an important public communication space, including for government institutions in conveying policies, programs, and education to the public.

However, the ease of obtaining and disseminating information through social media also presents increasingly complex social problems. The uncontrolled flow of information can increase the spread of hoaxes, disinformation, hate speech, information manipulation, and unverified content (Azzahra et al., 2026). This problem becomes more serious when the public's ability to understand, verify, and evaluate the credibility of information has not developed evenly. The public is not only required to be able to access media but also needs to have the ability to assess sources, understand context, distinguish fact from opinion, and use information critically and responsibly (Saniah & Farhan, 2023). Therefore, media literacy is a crucial competency in dealing with the flow of digital information, especially in urban areas with relatively high levels of internet and social media usage (Rani Hartati Tarigan & Elfi Yanti Ritonga, 2024). UNESCO (2024) also places critical thinking and information integrity as essential parts of addressing misinformation, disinformation, hate speech, and various risks from digital platforms. In line with this,

Guess et al (2020) showed that digital media literacy interventions can improve individuals' ability to distinguish reliable news from false information.

In the context of government communication, social media can be utilized not only to disseminate information but also to build openness, interaction, education, and public participation. Instagram is one of the most widely used platforms because it combines the power of visual, audiovisual, narrative, and interactive communication (Zulhafiz & Bahri, 2024) . Various features such as photos, videos, infographics, stories, short videos, live broadcasts, comments, and direct messages enable the government to present information in a more engaging and easily understood form for the public (Rahmanda & Simamora, 2024) . These characteristics make Instagram effective as a medium for conveying public information and communication between government institutions and the public (Wulur & Mulyanti, 2023) . Perea et al. (2021) showed that the type of media and content character used by local governments on Instagram can influence citizen reactions, while Dhanesh et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of visual characters in increasing user engagement with organizational content. Thus, the success of government communication via Instagram is not only determined by the intensity of uploads, but also by the accuracy of message design, information relevance, visual quality, and its suitability to audience needs.

One government agency that utilizes social media as a means of public communication is the Medan City Communication and Informatics Office. As a regional government agency responsible for managing public information and government communications, the Medan City Communication and Informatics Office strives to build information transparency and strengthen communication relationships with the public through digital media (Komunikasi et al., 2023) . One of the media used is the Instagram account @diskominfomedan, which provides information on government activities, regional development, public services, and education on the wise use of digital media. The use of Instagram is not only intended to convey information but also as part of an effort to increase public media literacy. Through informative, educational, and persuasive content, the government strives to build the public's ability to be more selective, critical, and responsible when receiving and disseminating information. The success of these efforts can be seen in the public's ability to access, understand, analyze, evaluate, and use digital information wisely, including verifying the accuracy of information, avoiding the spread of hoaxes, and utilizing media for positive purposes.

Several previous studies have discussed the use of Instagram and social media as communication channels for government agencies. Rizky Nurrohman (2021) found that Instagram can be used effectively as a means of public communication and government-public interaction. Damayanti et al. (2023) demonstrated that Instagram can be utilized as an information and publication medium, while Rahmanda & Simamora (2024) emphasized the function of Instagram management in enhancing the positive image of institutions. Anggadwita (2021) examined the communication priorities of local government leaders through Instagram post captions in publicizing smart city programs. Regarding public behavior, Atnan et al. (2024) showed that social media literacy, trust, and information quality are related to public communication behavior on local government social media. Atnan et al. (2024) further found that local government social media management is not always effective in generating quality public engagement. Meanwhile, Wukich (2022) emphasized the need to link the structure of communication flows, message objectives, and forms of engagement in understanding government communication through social media. More recent research also emphasizes the importance of information consistency, responsiveness, and citizen-oriented communication in building an image of open government.

Although previous research has provided a foundation for the effectiveness of social media, information publication, image building, content quality, trust, and public engagement, several research gaps remain. First, most studies position Instagram as a medium for publication or institutional image building, while its specific use to improve public media literacy has not been widely studied. Second, the success of government communication is often assessed based on the number of followers, posts, likes, comments, or engagement levels, while changes in public knowledge, attitudes, caution, and responsibility in receiving and disseminating information have not been a primary focus. Third, previous research tends to examine communicators, messages, media, audiences, or effects separately and has not integrated all these elements within a single communication strategy framework. Fourth, studies specifically examining the management of the Medan City Communication and Information Office's Instagram account in the context of media literacy are still limited. This gap is important to examine because differences in community characteristics, communication culture, information needs, and digital capabilities can influence the form of communication strategy implemented in each region.

In communication studies, this study uses John Middleton's communication strategy framework as cited in Hafied Cangara (2013) . Communication strategy is understood as the best combination of all communication

elements, namely the communicator, message, media or channel, audience or recipient, and influence or *effect*, designed to achieve communication objectives optimally. These five elements are interrelated and must be planned appropriately so that the message can be received, understood, and produce an impact in accordance with the communication objectives. This framework was chosen because it is relevant to analyze how the Medan City Communications and Information Service determines communicators, develops media literacy messages, utilizes Instagram as a communication channel, determines target audiences, and identifies the effects felt by informants. Within this framework, communication strategy is not only related to media selection, but also includes determining communicators, identifying and analyzing target audiences, developing messages, selecting media or channels, and evaluating communication effects. Communicators need to have credibility, competence, and mastery of the information conveyed. Audiences must be understood based on their needs, social characteristics, level of knowledge, and media usage habits. Messages must be structured correctly, clearly, informatively, educationally, persuasively, attractively, and relevant to the recipient's needs. Media are selected based on reach, accessibility, message characteristics, and audience habits. Evaluation is conducted to determine changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior after the message is received. Cangara's book specifically addresses audience needs, message development, media selection, information dissemination, and approaches to communication targets.

The Cangara framework is relevant because managing the @diskominfomedan account involves more than just uploading information, but also involves a series of communication planning and management activities. The communicator element is used to analyze the manager's credibility, task allocation, team coordination, and information verification process. Audience analysis is used to understand how the manager recognizes the needs of the general public, students, young people, and parents. Message development is used to assess the informative, educational, persuasive, and visual nature of content regarding hoax prevention, wise social media use, and positive content production. Media selection is used to analyze the reasons for Instagram use and the utilization of upload features, infographics, short videos, stories, comments, and direct messages. Effect evaluation is used to understand changes in informants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in checking, receiving, and disseminating digital information. Thus, Cangara's theory provides a systematic analytical framework for linking the government communication management process with improving public media literacy.

Based on the social context, literature review, research gaps, and theoretical foundation, this study aims to analyze the communication strategy of the Medan City Communication and Informatics Office through the Instagram account @diskominfomedan in improving media literacy among the Medan City community. Specifically, this study discusses the determination of communicators, identification and determination of target audiences, the development of media literacy messages, the selection and utilization of Instagram as a communication channel, and the evaluation of the message's effects on informants' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. The novelty of this study lies in the use of the Cangara communication strategy framework in an integrated manner to examine government Instagram as a media literacy education medium in the local context of Medan City. Different from previous studies that have focused more on platform effectiveness, information publication, image formation, or user engagement, this study examines the relationship between communicator credibility, audience characteristics, message quality, media feature usage, and changes in message recipients. Academically, this study contributes to the development of digital government communication strategies and media literacy. Practically, this research can be used as evaluation material for developing government communications that are more planned, credible, inclusive, interactive, and in accordance with the needs of the Medan City community.

METHOD

The unit of analysis in this study focuses on an organization, namely the Medan City Communication and Informatics Office, with particular attention to the practice of managing digital communications through the Instagram account @diskominfomedan. The focus of the study is directed at the communication strategies used by the organization to improve media literacy in Medan City. The analysis not only views the Instagram account as a digital artifact, but also examines the relationship between communication managers, the messages produced, the media used, the intended audience, and the effects that arise after the message is received. In the communicator element, the study examines credibility, division of tasks, and the information verification process (Hafied Cangara, 2013). In the message element, the study examines the form, theme, language, and educational value of the content. In the media element, the study observes the use of Instagram features. In the audience and effects element, the study examines communication targets and changes in public knowledge, attitudes, and behavior in receiving and disseminating digital information.

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. A qualitative orientation was chosen because the study aims to understand the processes, considerations, experiences, and meanings behind the Medan City

Communications and Information Agency's communication strategy, rather than measuring relationships between variables statistically. This approach allows researchers to interpret communication practices based on the organizational context, the experience of social media managers, and the responses of the public as message recipients. A descriptive design is used to provide a systematic overview of how issues are identified, content is planned, messages are produced and verified, Instagram is utilized, target audiences are determined, and communication effects are understood. Cresswell & John Poth (2017) explain that qualitative research is used to explore and understand the meanings given by individuals or groups to a social issue. The study was conducted at the Medan City Communications and Information Agency and on the Instagram account @diskominfomedan from February to March 2025. The researcher acted as the primary instrument determining the focus, selecting informants, collecting data, interpreting, and drawing conclusions. This design was chosen because it is appropriate for producing a contextual and in-depth description of the government's communication strategy in improving public media literacy.

The research data sources consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained from seven informants purposively selected based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in managing or receiving content on the @diskominfomedan account. Internal informants included the head of the public information systems division, the social media manager of the Medan City Communications and Information Agency, and a former student intern in the media division. External informants included an account follower, a university student, a schoolchild, and representatives of parents or the general public. Purposive selection was conducted to align the informants' characteristics with the research objectives so that the data obtained had sufficient depth and relevance (Campbell et al., 2020). Primary data included explanations regarding content planning, audience determination, message production and verification, utilization of Instagram features, and public responses. Secondary data were obtained from institutional archives, activity photos, supporting documents, upload screenshots, account profiles, infographics, reels, videos, relevant public comments, and literature on communication strategies and media literacy. A combination of verbal, textual, visual, and audiovisual data was used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the digital communication practices studied.

Data collection was carried out as a step-by-step process through non-participatory observation, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and documentation. First, researchers observed the @diskominfomedan Instagram account to identify content themes, visual formats, language use, features utilized, interaction patterns, and posts related to media literacy, hoax prevention, and wise social media use. Second, researchers conducted in-depth interviews using an interview guide structured around the elements of communicator, message, media, audience, and effect. Questions to internal informants addressed issue identification, content calendar development, production, verification, publication, and evaluation. Questions to external informants addressed experiences accessing the account, message comprehension, content relevance, and changes in attitudes toward receiving and disseminating information. Third, researchers collected documentation in the form of screenshots, interview recordings, field notes, content archives, and institutional documents. All informants received an explanation of the research objectives, data use, identity confidentiality, and the right to discontinue participation before providing consent. Social media observations also took into account context, privacy, and the risks of digital data use as recommended.

Data analysis was conducted in stages, from data collection to conclusion drawing. The first stage involved organizing the data by transcribing interview recordings, tidying up field notes, and grouping documentation based on source, date, content type, and relevance to the research focus. The second stage involved data condensation, which involved selecting, focusing, simplifying, and coding data related to communication strategies and media literacy. The third stage involved thematic analysis, which involved familiarizing with the data, developing initial codes, grouping codes into themes, reviewing themes, naming themes, and writing up the results (Braun & Clarke, 2022). The analysis was conducted deductively using five initial categories: communicator, message, media, audience, and effects, and inductively to identify new subthemes from the field data. The combination of deductive and inductive coding helped produce a systematic, transparent analysis that remained open to empirical findings (Bingham, 2023). The fourth stage involved presenting the data in narrative form, interview quotations, a thematic matrix, and visual documentation. The final stage is drawing and verifying conclusions by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Data validity is strengthened through triangulation of sources and techniques, re-examining transcripts, and matching interpretations with data evidence (Miles, 2015).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Communicator Governance and Message Production

The first finding indicates a change in the communication governance of the Medan City Communications and Informatics Office, moving from routine information delivery to a more planned content production process. Rizka Firdahlia, Head of the Public Information Systems Division, explained, "The content planning and management process is structured, starting with identifying issues and public information needs, developing a content plan or calendar, and continuing through the production process, which includes script writing, visual design, and editing. The created content then undergoes a review and verification process before publication, followed by monitoring and evaluation based on public response." This statement demonstrates that each post is prepared through a series of interrelated tasks, rather than being created spontaneously. Data heard from informants also indicates a division of roles, from determining issues and compiling material, visual processing, content review, and monitoring responses. Thus, the changes that have occurred lie in strengthening internal editorial mechanisms as a way to maintain the accuracy, regularity, and accountability of government information. This process also clarifies who is responsible for each stage of digital communication.

An interview with Faiz Ahmad Zidan, a former student intern in the media division, reinforced the findings regarding the orderliness of the work. He stated, "When I was at the Kominfo office and I was assigned to the media division, I observed that the employees' performance in creating content, both on social media and in print, was highly structured so that the content could be delivered to the public broadly and accurately. Usually, the media division team held meetings to discuss whether information was suitable for publication and could be used as content." Based on observations, meetings and feasibility checks functioned as filters before information entered the digital public space. Dai Ritonga, the Instagram manager, also explained that the material was determined by considering community needs, government policies, audience segmentation, and developing information trends. The statements of the three informants emphasized that the communicators on the @diskominfomedan account worked as an organizational team. Message credibility was built through coordination, information selection, and shared responsibility, so the risk of conveying inaccurate information could be reduced from the production stage.

A recap of the data reveals four key trends. First, communication management is collective, involving public information officials, social media managers, scriptwriters, designers, and verification parties. Second, information credibility is built through issue identification, feasibility meetings, content review, and approval before publication. Third, message production is responsive, as public information needs, government policies, and emerging issues inform content selection. Fourth, evaluation is conducted by observing comments, responses, and user engagement after posts are published. This pattern suggests that organizational solutions lie not solely in the use of Instagram, but in the professionalization of communicators and control of message production flows. However, available data indicates that evaluations still focus on digital responses and do not fully utilize indicators that differentiate reach, understanding, attitude change, and behavior change. Therefore, while internal mechanisms are relatively systematic, measuring the impact of media literacy still needs to be strengthened. These findings provide a basis for assessing the consistency of the strategy in the next phase.

2. Target Audience Adjustment and Media Literacy Content Adaptation

The second finding indicates that audience and content adjustments are made based on Instagram user characteristics. Amanda Nabila, a follower of the @diskominfomedan account, stated, "I follow the @diskominfomedan Instagram account because I want to get the latest information on government activities and other important information related to the public. I find the content quite interesting and informative because it is packaged with good visuals and easy-to-understand language." Suaidah Saragih, a student, also found the content presented to be quite varied and interesting, and helped her understand how to recognize correct information and avoid hoaxes. She explained that the content encouraged her to be wiser in using social media and to be more critical in responding to circulating information. This data shows that the general public and students benefit primarily from the clarity of language, variety of formats, and the topic's proximity to everyday needs. The content "Beware of Hoaxes, Strengthen Digital Literacy" provides visual evidence that educational messages are packaged through a combination of warnings, calls to action, and easily recognizable displays. Both responses also demonstrate that visual appeal needs to be accompanied by relevant and easily applicable content.



Picture 1. Screenshot content education literacy digital Which uploaded through Instagram account @diskominfo medan

Source: Instagram @diskominfo medan

Sofia Nazwa Humairah, a student, said, "I've seen the Instagram account @diskominfo medan. I usually remember the content in the form of infographics, short videos, and interesting content like 'Let's Do Content', which encourages young people to be more creative in creating positive content on social media. I think the information presented is quite easy to understand because it uses simple language and an attractive display." Meanwhile, Sri Wahyuni, a parent representative, explained, "I think the information presented is quite good and easy to understand, although sometimes I have to read it repeatedly to understand it better. The information helps me understand the use of social media, especially to be more careful in receiving and sharing information, even though I still have limitations in using technology." Both quotes show differences in acceptance between groups. Students find it easier to remember short videos and creative invitations, while the parent group requires slower and more repeated explanations. The "Information Room" and "Let's Do Content" content demonstrate a variety of delivery styles to meet these needs.



Picture 2. Content education literacy digital Which uploaded through account Instagram @diskominfo medan.

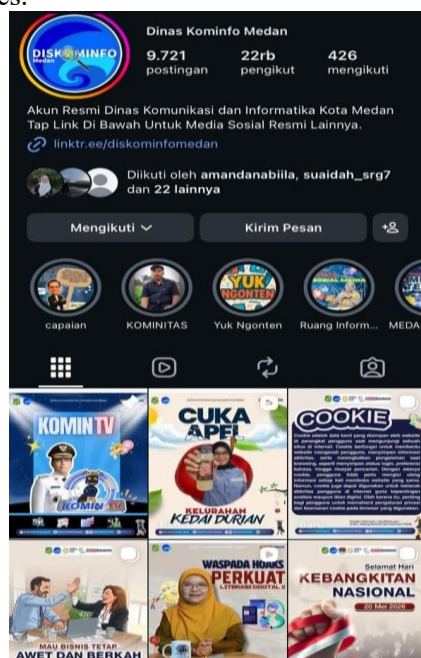


Source: Instagram @diskominfomedan

Picture 3. Content creative "Come on Content" on account Instagram @diskominfomedan.

Source: Instagram @diskominfomedan

Based on observations of posts and account profiles, messaging is tailored to diverse themes, language, and visual formats. During the observation period, the @diskominfomedan account displayed 9,721 posts, approximately 22,000 followers, and 426 accounts followed. This data is not used as a measure of media literacy success, but rather indicates intensive communication activity and a fairly broad audience base. Four patterns were identified from the overall data. First, messages are packaged more educationally and persuasively rather than using patronizing prohibitions. Second, infographics, photos, short videos, and reels are used to simplify government information. Third, a relaxed style of language and creative appeals are more prominent in content aimed at the younger generation. Fourth, parents' needs have not been fully met because some information still requires repeated reading. Thus, segmentation has been realized through content variation, but it has not yet fully resulted in equal understanding. Access to Instagram does not automatically mean that each group has the same ability to understand and apply media literacy messages.



Picture 4. Profile account Instagram @diskominfomedan Which used as a means of disseminating information to the public.

Source: Instagram @diskominfomedan

3. Changes in Informants' Media Literacy Knowledge, Attitudes, and Behavior

The third finding shows changes in knowledge, attitudes, and media practices experienced by informants after accessing @diskominfomedan content. Amanda Nabila explained that media literacy content influenced her daily

social media use. After seeing educational messages, she became more cautious in receiving and sharing information and more selective in distinguishing between reliable information and information that needed to be reconsidered. Suaidah Saragih also stated that the content she received encouraged wiser social media use and fostered a critical attitude towards circulating information. The data shows initial effects at two levels. At the knowledge level, informants understood the risks of hoaxes and the importance of clear sources of information. At the attitude level, informants demonstrated healthier skepticism and did not immediately believe every digital message. These changes are experiences expressed by informants, so the results reflect the effects felt within the research context, not a measure of change across the entire Medan community. These experiences indicate that educational messages are beginning to enter their considerations when interacting in digital spaces.

Similar changes were found in Sofia Nazwa Humairah and Sri Wahyuni. Sofia said that after seeing the Instagram content of @diskominfomedan, she became more cautious about circulating information and tried to verify its veracity before believing it. Sri Wahyuni explained that information from the account helped her better understand social media usage and made her more vigilant when receiving digital information, even though technological limitations remained a barrier. The relationship between content and informant responses can be interpreted through three levels of effect. Knowledge is seen as an understanding of the dangers of hoaxes; attitude is seen as caution and a willingness to question information; and behavior is seen as efforts to read more carefully, seek out comparative sources, and refrain from immediately sharing messages. The content "Waspada Hoaks" relates to the practice of checking information, while "Yuk Ngonten" expands media literacy from the ability to protect oneself to the ability to produce positive content. These data demonstrate micro-changes in daily digital habits, although their intensity and sustainability have not been measured. These changes are important because delaying sharing is an early part of information verification behavior.

A restatement of the overall data on effects yielded four trends. First, the most consistent change was increased caution when informants received information from social media. Second, a critical attitude began to emerge through the habit of checking truth, comparing sources, and not immediately sharing messages. Third, the rate of change varied due to age, media experience, digital skills, and intensity of content exposure. Fourth, government accounts served as triggers for awareness and reminders, not the sole source of media literacy development. These findings suggest that the number of posts, followers, likes, or comments cannot be directly equated with increased literacy. The claim that communication strategies through Instagram supported changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors perceived by informants. The study did not measure the duration of change, the frequency of verification, or the influence of other factors such as education, family, and media experience. Therefore, these effects need to be understood as a gradual, contextual process, and not uniform across all community groups. These limitations need to be stated to ensure that the interpretation of the results remains proportionate and in line with the nature of qualitative research.

Discussion

1. Summary of Findings

This study found that the Medan City Communication and Informatics Office's communication strategy through its Instagram account @diskominfomedan occurred through three interconnected processes. First, the organization built the communicator's credibility through planning, task allocation, meetings, verification, and response monitoring. Second, media literacy messages were tailored to audience groups through variations in themes, language, infographics, short videos, reels, and creative invitations. Third, informants experienced changes in the form of increased knowledge about hoaxes, increased caution, the emergence of a critical attitude, and the habit of checking information before sharing it. These findings demonstrate that Instagram is not simply a technical channel, but part of the organization's communication management that connects message sources, content, media, recipients, and effects. However, the results of this study cannot be used to state that the literacy of all Medan residents has increased. A more appropriate conclusion is that the strategy supports the media literacy process among informants and demonstrates the potential of government communication as a digital education that needs to be measured more systematically. The findings also emphasize the need to distinguish content visibility from actual literacy changes.

2. Summary of Research Findings Based on Cangara (2013)

The relationship between findings can be explained through John Middleton's communication strategy framework as cited in Hafied Cangara (2013), namely the combination of communicator, message, channel or media, recipient or audience, and influence or effect to achieve communication goals optimally. In this study, these five elements do not work separately. The communicator's credibility is strengthened through coordination and

verification; messages are simplified as needed; Instagram is chosen for its visual and interactive character; audiences are mapped based on age and media habits; and effects are observed through changes expressed by informants. The communicator's practices are in line with the principle of qaulan balighan in Surah An-Nisa verse 63, which emphasizes appropriate words that leave an impression on the recipient. This verse implies that government communication is not enough just to be fast, but must be clear, correct, directed, and understandable. Therefore, the review mechanism before publication is the main explanation why the @diskominformedan message can be accepted as relatively reliable information by informants. The compatibility between these elements explains why the strategy can produce different responses in audience groups.

أَنفُسِهِمْ قَوْلًا بَلِيغًا God bless you love

Meaning: These are the people whom Allah knows what is in their hearts. Therefore, turn away from them, admonish them, and speak to them words that will be imprinted on their souls.

3. Comparison with Previous Research

The research findings are similar to those of Rizky Nurrohman (2021) , who demonstrated that Instagram can be used as a means of government public communication, and Damayanti et al. (2023) , who found Instagram functions as an information and publication medium. These findings are also in line with DePaula et al. (2018) , who stated that government social media serves the functions of information, service, participation, and institutional representation. The difference is that previous research has emphasized the effectiveness of channels and information dissemination, while this study demonstrates the relationship between communicator management, message verification, audience segmentation, format adaptation, and the media literacy effects perceived by informants. Differences in reception between university students, school children, and parents indicate that a single message is not always understood uniformly. This aligns with Surah Ibrahim verse 4 regarding the importance of conveying messages in the language of one's people so that they can be explained clearly. The novelty of this research lies in the assertion that government literacy communication requires differentiation in language, visuals, and levels of complexity based on the digital capabilities of the audience, not simply increasing the frequency of uploads. Thus, this study expands the discussion from media use to the quality of communication planning.

وَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ رَّسُولٍ إِلَّا بِلِسَانٍ قَوْمِهِ لِيُبَيِّنَ لَهُمْ فَيُضِلُّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَهْدِي مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الْحَكِيمُ

Meaning: We did not send any messenger, except in the language of his people, so that he could explain to them. So, Allah leads astray whom He wills and guides whom He wills. He is the Most Mighty, the Most Wise.

4. Meaning of Research Findings

The social significance of the research findings lies in the shift in the function of government social media from a showcase for institutional activities to a digital educational tool. The "Hoax Alert" content demonstrates a protective function, helping the public exercise restraint and verify the veracity of information, while "Let's Ngonten" demonstrates a productive function by encouraging the younger generation to produce positive content. This interpretation aligns with Cho et al. (2024) , who view social media literacy as a skill related to message selection, user values, social networks, and platform characteristics. In this context, content accuracy is crucial because attractive visuals without truth can reinforce misunderstandings. Surah Al-Ahzab, verse 70, through the principle of qaulan sadidan, emphasizes the obligation to convey truthful speech. Therefore, the verification process by the Communication and Information Department (Diskominfo) has not only technical but also ethical implications. The government gains authority as an official source of information, so misinformation can have a broader impact. These findings emphasize that media literacy must be built through a combination of accuracy, ease of understanding, social relevance, and responsible calls to action.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَقُولُوا قَوْلًا سَدِيدًا

Meaning: O you who believe! Fear Allah and speak the right words.

5. Function and Dysfunction Analysis

Instagram's strategy has both functions and potential drawbacks. Its functions include expanding access to official information, reducing the distance between the government and citizens, providing anti-hoax education, and encouraging users to be more critical. These findings align with Guess et al. (2020) , who demonstrated that digital literacy interventions can improve the ability to distinguish between true and false news, and Moore & Hancock (2022) , who found that materials specifically for older adults can strengthen resilience to fake news. However, the strategy can be detrimental if success is measured solely by the number of followers, posts, likes, or comments. Groups with limited internet access, visual literacy differences, or low digital skills may be left behind. Surah An-

بِإِذْنِ اللَّهِ God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing, God willing. God willing
 إِنَّ رَبَّكَ بِالْمُفْتَدِينَ

This study has several limitations that require attention. First, the number of informants was limited to seven people, so the findings only reflect the experiences and responses of informants, not the overall condition of the Medan City community. Second, the study was conducted between February and March 2025, so it cannot capture long-term changes in communication strategies and audience behavior. Third, the analysis of effects is still based on informant statements and does not include measurements of actual behavior, such as frequency of fact-checking, ability to recognize hoaxes, or information-sharing habits. Fourth, the study focused on Instagram and did not compare it with other channels, such as TikTok, Facebook, YouTube, official government websites, or direct literacy activities. Future research should involve a more diverse range of informants, use longitudinal or mixed-methods designs, and develop instruments to more objectively measure changes in knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Further studies should also assess the influence of content characteristics, platform algorithms, exposure intensity, and trust in institutions to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of government communication strategies in supporting public media literacy.

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