



COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT OF THE GENERAL ELECTION COMMISSION (KPU) OF TANAH BUMBU IN THE CANDIDATE SELECTION STAGE FOR THE 2024 REGIONAL HEAD SELECTION

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ABSTRACT

The regional head election (Pilkada) is a competitive electoral contest that requires proper management. One of the most crucial aspects is the communication management of the General Election Commission (KPU), which is the organizing body of the election. The KPU Tanah Bumbu, responsible for conducting the Pilkada in Tanah Bumbu Regency, South Kalimantan, has implemented communication management strategies tailored to various challenges and the local political dynamics. This study aims to assess the strategy, effectiveness, and challenges of the communication management of the General Election Commission (KPU) of Tanah Bumbu Regency during the candidate nomination stage of the 2024 Pilkada. This research was conducted in Tanah Bumbu Regency during the nomination phase of the 2024 Pilkada candidates. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach. Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation analysis. The theoretical framework applied in this study is George J. Terry's (2019) communication management theory, which includes four key components: planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. The findings reveal that the communication management strategy of KPU Tanah Bumbu relies on highly competent communicators, adequate technological support, strong collaboration with relevant stakeholders, and sufficient funding. Additionally, the study found that KPU Tanah Bumbu has implemented effective communication management during the nomination stage of the 2024 Pilkada, covering all phases—planning, organizing, execution, mobilization, and evaluation. Furthermore, the research identified the main challenges in KPU Tanah Bumbu's communication management, including low public literacy levels, infrastructure barriers, and unpredictable socio-political dynamics.

Keywords: communication management, KPU Tanah Bumbu, media channel

INTRODUCTION

The General Election Commission (KPU) is an institution that organizes General Elections (Elections) in Indonesia. Law No. 22 of 2007 is the legal basis for the KPU, Provincial KPU, and Regency/City KPU in their work (Muhazir et al., 2023). The district/city KPU organizes the Regional Head Election (PILKADA) at the district/city level.

One of the crucial stages in the Regional Elections is the candidacy stage. This stage is an important first step in determining who is eligible to participate in the Regional Election contest. The Regional KPU, as an organizer in the Regency/City area, has an important and not easy task in various activities related to the implementation of the regional elections. The technical regulations for the implementation of the 2024 Regional Elections related to the nomination of the Governor and his deputy, the Mayor and his Deputy, and the Regent

and Deputy Regent are regulated in KPU Regulation number 8 of 2024 concerning the nomination of the Governor and Deputy Governor, Regent and Deputy Regent, as well as the Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

In communicating with Pilkada participants, especially regional head candidates and their supporting political parties, proper communication management is needed so that Pilkada participants become aware and are expected to have an impact on decreasing the level of lawsuits over the results of the determination of Pilkada Candidate pairs. This condition is a special concern, especially for the KPU of Tanah Bumbu Regency, South Kalimantan, which has a heavy task in holding the Regional Elections in its area. The communication process that is not accompanied by proper management usually gives rise to many lawsuits against the KPUD as the organizer of the election, especially in terms of determining the results of the verification of regional head candidates. So, this needs to be studied more deeply, as well as how the communication management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU is for the participants of the 2024 regional elections in the candidacy stage.

Communication management in the context of the regional elections is not only about conveying information but also includes strategies for conveying messages that can be received clearly and understood correctly, and building public trust in implementing elections. Effective communication management involves planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating information delivery (Agustian et al., 2023; Borchers & Enke, 2021; Musheke & Phiri, 2021; Rahmadoni et al., 2022; Tijjani T., 2023).

The Tanah Bumbu Regency KPU, as the organizer of the 2024 Regional Elections, faces a situation that is not ideal in managing communication during the candidacy stage. Some of these situations can be explained as follows: (1) Uneven distribution of information, especially in areas with limited access to information. (2) Lack of political literacy in the community, which has the potential to cause misunderstandings about candidacy regulations. (3) The high potential for hoaxes and disinformation can affect public opinion and create distrust in the election process. (4) The readiness of human resources and technology, especially in utilizing digital media as a wider and faster means of communication.

From the perspective of communication management, effective communication plays a role in building trust and credibility of an organization (Huda, 2024; Huda et al., 2023; Kim, 2021; Pološki Vokić et al., 2021; Srimulyani & Hermanto, 2022). The KPU, as an institution in charge of organizing the Regional Elections, must manage communication properly as business entities manage their relationships with customers and other stakeholders. The principles of efficiency, transparency, and effectiveness in information delivery must be part of the KPU's communication strategy to increase voter participation and ensure compliance with election regulations.

In fact, in Tanah Bumbu Regency, many candidates and political parties do not get clear information about the candidacy procedure. Many candidates do not understand the regulations of the candidacy stages, causing confusion and potential violations. The use of less-than-optimal media causes uneven dissemination of information. Socialization is often

one-way; information is conveyed without any room for discussion or question-and-answer. Some people have a negative view of the political process, which can hinder their participation in the regional elections.

Although research on communication in the context of elections has been widely conducted, previous studies have generally focused more on the role of media in influencing voter behavior (Greenwood, 2015) or on political campaign strategies to mobilize public support (Esser & Pfetsch, 2020). Research by Norris (2015) emphasizes the importance of electoral communication transparency to prevent distrust, but does not specifically dissect internal communication management within election organizers at the candidacy stage. Meanwhile, Chadwick & Stromer-Galley (2016) discussed digital media strategies in political campaigns, but their focus was more on candidate communication rather than institutional communication. This shows a significant research gap where few studies specifically and deeply examine how regional election commissions manage communication at the candidacy stage to reduce procedural disputes. The urgency of this research lies in the context of the 2024 simultaneous regional elections, which are increasingly complex, massive, and vulnerable to disputes if communication is not managed properly. This research's novelty is offering a specific communication management model at the candidacy stage, particularly within the KPU of Tanah Bumbu Regency, which integrates aspects of communication planning, dissemination media, stakeholder engagement, and public feedback in a systematic framework. Thus, this study not only contributes theoretically to electoral communication management but also offers practical recommendations to improve the quality of candidacy management in future regional elections.

These problems are the basis for the importance of this research, so that it can be explained academically, and the commissioners of the KPU of Tanah Bumbu Regency can improve their communication management in areas that are still considered weak in the future.

This research focuses on communication management implemented by the General Election Commission (KPU) of Tanah Bumbu Regency during the candidacy stage of the 2024 Regional Elections. The aspects studied include KPU communication management strategies, communication effectiveness in increasing public understanding and participation and prospective candidates, and challenges faced in delivering information. This study aims to analyze the KPU's communication strategy, assess the effectiveness of communication in reaching out to stakeholders, and identify obstacles that may arise during the candidacy process.

Through this research, it is hoped that it can make a theoretical contribution to the development of communication management science, especially in election organizing institutions in other regions. In addition, the practical benefit of this research is that it can be a reference for the Tanah Bumbu KPU, political parties, and communication practitioners to carry out more effective communication management in socialization to Pilkada participants. This research is expected to improve the quality of communication in the

general election process, so that public understanding and participation can be more optimal.

METHOD

This research focuses on the communication management implemented by the General Election Commission (KPU) of Tanah Bumbu Regency during the candidacy stage of the 2024 Regional Elections. The research was conducted at the Tanah Bumbu KPU from July to August 2024, using a qualitative approach with a case study method. This research aims to explore information about KPU communication strategies, communication effectiveness, and the challenges faced during the candidacy stage. Data collection techniques include in-depth semi-structured interviews with key informants, direct observations of communication activities, and documentation analysis of official communications, circular letters, socialization materials, and minutes of meetings.

The data analysis process follows the interactive model of Miles et al. (2014), which consists of three main activities: (1) Data Reduction—selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming raw data from field notes and interview transcripts; (2) Data Display—organizing the reduced data into a matrix, chart, or narrative text to facilitate pattern recognition; and (3) Conclusion Drawing and Verification—developing interpretations and confirming them by constantly referring back to the data. Furthermore, thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring codes, patterns, and themes related to the planning, implementation, and challenges of KPU communication management. Coding was performed manually, beginning with open coding to identify initial concepts, followed by axial coding to connect categories, and finally, selective coding to determine the core themes of communication management practices.

Interviews and documentation were analyzed systematically by comparing verbal accounts from informants with written records and field observations. Key quotations were extracted to support thematic findings, and triangulation was used to ensure data credibility. Triangulation in this study was conducted through (1) Source Triangulation—comparing information from different informants (e.g., KPU Chairman, socialization division members, and other stakeholders), (2) Methodological Triangulation—cross-checking data obtained from interviews, observation, and documentation, and (3) Investigator Triangulation—involving peer discussion among researchers to cross-validate findings.

The validity of the findings is strengthened through credibility checks such as member checking, where key informants were invited to review the researcher's interpretations to confirm their accuracy. Reliability is maintained by systematically documenting the research process in an audit trail, ensuring that the steps taken in data collection and analysis can be transparently traced and replicated. The findings are expected to provide deep insight into how the Tanah Bumbu KPU manages communication during the candidacy stage and to offer practical recommendations to improve communication strategies in future regional elections

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From the results of interviews, observations, and documentation related to the communication management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU in the candidacy stage for the 2024 regional elections, in general, the functions of planning, organizing, implementing, and supervising have been implemented. However, there are still things that are obstacles to communication. In the 2024 Regional Elections, the Tanah Bumbu KPU launched a jingle entitled Achieving Victory which means that whoever is elected as Regent and Deputy Regent is a victory for the entire people of Tanah Bumbu. Meanwhile, the mascot is named Si Mata Bulat or the Voice of the Conscience of the People of Tanah Bumbu Bersolat. This mascot is inspired by the marine natural wealth of Tanah Bumbu Regency and the fishermen's products, namely mackerel.

If we examine more deeply the communication management carried out by the Tanah Bumbu KPU at the stage of candidacy for the 2024 Regional Elections, then we use the theory of the communication management function according to George R Terry, as follows.

Planning

In George R. Terry's theory, the planning process is the initial stage carried out by every organization in achieving its goals. Each goal must have a careful plan to achieve it. In this process, organizations must formulate in detail what they will achieve and the steps they will take. In this case, the resource person has the opinion that the Tanah Bumbu KPU has done quite a good and mature planning.

KPU member and Coordinator of the Socialization, Voter Education, Human Resources, and Community Participation Division, Yayan Hidayat argued that the process of preparing a communication management plan by the Tanah Bumbu KPU in the candidacy stage of the Regional Elections was carried out by paying attention to communication elements, namely communicators, messages, media, audiences, and influence plans. Yayan also explained that the Tanah Bumbu KPU ensures that the communicators chosen are credible, the messages conveyed must be clear, straightforward, unambiguous, and easy to understand by various parties, including prospective candidates, successful teams, and the general public. In addition, it uses media from various platforms. Communication should be designed according to the characteristics of each group, such as education level, geographical location, and media preferences. The Tanah Bumbu KPU ensures that the candidacy process runs transparently, efficiently, and inclusively.

In line with Yayan Hidayat, Head of the Subdivision of Socialization, Voter Education, Human Resources, and Community Participation of the Tanah Bumbu KPU, April Yenni Naibaho has the view that the Tanah Bumbu KPU is trying to plan communication in the candidacy stage of the Pilkada participants, as well as help prevent potential conflicts and increase the active participation of all parties. The selection of the right media, the clarity of the content of the message, the selection of communicators, and also the approach to the audience who are the target of communication are the keys in planning the communication of the candidacy stage of the Pilkada members.

Organizing

In George R Terry's theory, organizing functions as a tool to integrate and regulate all activities related to personnel, financial, material, and procedures for achieving organizational goals that have been set. This means that the organization is seen as a forum for cooperation among a group of people in the organization. Regarding organizing, almost all speakers argued that, in general, the Tanah Bumbu KPU had organized and communicated the stages of candidacy for the regional elections quite well. Yayan Hidayat argues that the key to organizing this is selecting the right communication team. The principle of The Right man in the right place concerns Yayan, who also emphasizes selecting the right communicator so that the message he wants to convey can be well received by all parties who are the audience of the Tanah Bumbu KPU.

Meanwhile, April Yeni Naibaho explained that the Tanah Bumbu KPU formed a communication management team with clear organizational tasks. In addition, the Tanah Bumbu KPU organized a communication calendar that included schedules for publications and socialization activities in the 2024 regional election candidacy stage.

Actuating

George R. Terry revealed that implementation is the action or implementation of a plan, of a plan that has been prepared carefully and in detail. It is carried out after the planning is considered ready. The management function that drives all human resources is determined in the organizing function to achieve the goals formulated in the planning function. From the interview results, each interviewee had a slightly different view. Yayan Hidayat argued that the Tanah Bumbu KPU is trying to execute the plan by involving an organized team so that communication runs smoothly and the audience can well receive the message.

Meanwhile, April Yeni Naibaho emphasized the role of empowerment in communicating the stages of candidacy for the 2024 regional elections. the role of communicators is in accordance with expertise, such as the Chairman of the KPU for official statements and main communication strategies, Members or exceptional staff for technical explanations or public education, and Social Media Administrators for managing digital interactions. In addition, the Tanah Bumbu KPU also holds regular internal coordination meetings to equalize perceptions and ensure consistency in the delivery of messages. The KPU also collaborates with local media by not ruling out national media. The use of digital media and conducting a face-to-face approach is also a way for the Tanah Bumbu KPU to participate in the process of communicating the stages of candidacy for the 2024 regional elections.

Supervision (Controlling)

In George R Terry's theory, the supervisory function is closely related to the other three management functions, especially the planning function. In the planning function, all forms of goals to be achieved are outlined, while in the supervision function, the extent of

the development of a plan that has been formulated will be seen. Has it gone as expected or vice versa?

Yayan Hidayat stated that the KPU Tanah Bumbu seeks to control communication by compiling communication guidelines containing important points that must be conveyed by communicators, so that the messages conveyed are consistent. In addition, periodic evaluations of communicators are carried out, such as through internal meetings, to ensure that information is delivered according to standards. Before the message is published, it must be checked by the communications steering team to ensure accuracy and relevance.

April Yeni Naibaho also emphasized the importance of information standardization, team performance monitoring and message verification in communicating the stages of candidacy for the 2024 regional elections. April stated that the message to be conveyed is always controlled so that the message conveyed remains clear, easy to understand, and does not cause ambiguity. In addition, the Tanah Bumbu KPU also involves election supervisors, community leaders, and the media in providing feedback on KPU communication.

From the results of interviews about the supporting factors of communication management carried out by the Tanah Bumbu KPU in the candidacy stage of the regional elections, Yayan Hidayat conveyed crucial points, namely the competence of communicators and special communication teams, the existence of technological support and cooperation with election stakeholders, and the readiness of the budget needed in communication activities at the candidacy stage of the 2024 regional elections.

This was also agreed by April Yeni Naibaho who also added that almost all activities such as paying for media, printing design materials and face-to-face socialization require a ready-to-use budget.

In addition to supporting factors, some factors are obstacles faced in the communication management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU during the candidacy stage for the 2024 regional elections. All speakers agreed on 3 points that are inhibiting factors, namely the low level of community literacy, infrastructure obstacles, and also uncertain socio-political dynamics.

Yayan Hidayat highlighted the low level of public literacy and political awareness, which means that public interest or participation in understanding the stages of the Regional Elections is also low. Meanwhile, April Yeni Naibaho highlighted that internet access can be enjoyed by all levels of the people of Tanah Bumbu, especially in rural areas that have not yet access to the internet. This is certainly an obstacle, considering that the Tanah Bumbu KPU uses more digital platforms in communication.

Data Triangulation

Triangulation resource person, Andi Rudi Latif (Regent of Tanah Bumbu, candidate for the 2024 Tanah Bumbu Regional Elections)

The communication management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU is considered to have fulfilled the communication management method, starting with careful communication planning.

The 2024 Regional Election is a fairly complex regional election. The Tanah Bumbu KPU has tried to plan communication well with prospective participants and the community. This is evidenced by the active KPU Tanah Bumbu appealing to the community." (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

The Prospective Pilkada Participant, Andi Rudi Latif, is concerned about the availability of a discussion forum in terms of communication effectiveness.

"The Tanah Bumbu KPU needs to provide a forum for discussion or consultation for candidates, political parties, and the public to overcome potential misunderstandings. The communication carried out tends to be 1-way, and feedback from the community is less channeled because the forum is less available. " (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

On the other hand, Andi Arif appreciated the Tanah Bumbu KPU for having quite reliable communicators.

"The Tanah Bumbu KPU has an advantage as a supporting factor, namely the presence of competent communicators. Almost all commissioners of the Tanah Bumbu KPU have good public communication skills, making it easier for them to convey their message well to the audience." (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

According to Andi Arif, Tanah Bumbu faces several communication management barriers, especially when using formal communication with the community.

"The Tanah Bumbu KPU, as an election organizing institution, needs to pay attention to various levels of society. Some segments of society may have difficulty understanding information related to candidacy, especially if it is submitted in a format that is too technical." (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

Another obstacle in terms of limited access can be an obstacle to communication for the 2024 regional election stages.

"Many levels of society do not have internet access in the Tanah Bumbu area, so the information conveyed by the Tanah Bumbu KPU through digital platforms does not reach all levels of society." (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

In addition, according to Andi Rudi Latif, the schedule of the stages is quite congested. Andi revealed that the 2024 Regional Elections schedule is quite congested. If you look at the political dynamics that are quite fluid, everything can change very quickly. The Tanah Bumbu KPU needs to improve its organization, especially in the scheduling of each candidacy stage. However, this should have been taken into account by the Tanah Bumbu KPU since planning, and if it is noted that the schedule of each stage has been set by the KPU nationally, then the Tanah Bumbu KPU cannot be free to change the schedule of each stage.

"The 2024 Regional Elections have a fairly tight schedule. If you look at the political dynamics that are quite fluid, everything can change very quickly. The Tanah Bumbu KPU

needs improvements in the organizing process, especially the scheduling of each stage of candidacy" (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

Obstacles in handling hoaxes, Andi appreciated the efforts of the Tanah Bumbu KPU in controlling issues that allegedly could hinder the implementation of the Regional Elections in Tanah Bumbu.

"The Tanah Bumbu KPU in controlling and supervising it has been satisfactory because it can control issues that can be detrimental and hinder the stages of the regional elections submitted by various irresponsible parties." (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

Andi also emphasized the importance of combining conventional and digital communication in the Tanah Bumbu KPU's communication during the candidacy stage for the 2024 Regional Elections.

"The Tanah Bumbu KPU uses more digital platforms to communicate with the audience. This is understandable considering that millennials dominate the current voter profile. However, this condition should not be forgotten in a conventional way that is still quite effective, namely by involving influential community leaders." (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

Andi Rudi Latif also revealed another condition regarding conflicts of interest that can hinder the communication of the Tanah Bumbu KPU to the community.

"In every election activity, there must always be the potential for intervention or political pressure from certain parties that can disrupt the neutrality of communication. This hinders the communication process itself." (Interview with Andi Rudi Latif, November 2024)

In general, for Andi Arif, the Communication Management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU has worked optimally.

"The 2024 Regional Elections are quite complex. The Tanah Bumbu KPU has tried to plan communication well with prospective participants and the community. This is evidenced by the active KPU Tanah Bumbu making an appeal to the community."

Documentation of KPU Tanah Bumbu News

Other data triangulation is carried out by checking the Communication Management documentation carried out by the Tanah Bumbu KPU digitally and conventionally, and visiting the field, schools, and novice voters directly. Some documentation of the communication management activities of the Tanah Bumbu KPU can be seen in the following news sources.

KPU Tanah Bumbu jaring pemilih pemula melalui "Goes To School"

© Jumat, 16 Agustus 2024 20:00 WIB



Figure 1. KPU Tanah Bumbu Sociali in Schools

<https://kalsel.antaraneews.com/berita/425583/kpu-tanah-bumbu-jaring-pemilih-pemula-melalui-goes-to-school>

Sukseskan Pemilu, Puryadi: Kirap di Tanbu Akan Keliling Disetiap Kecamatan Selama 7 Hari

BY ADMIN · AGUSTUS 26, 2023

Kabarbanua.com Tanah Bumbu- Komisi Pemilihan Umum KPU Kabupaten Tanah Bumbu menggelar Kirap pemilu 2024 dengan menganagkat Tema Pemilu Sarana Intergritas Bangsa.

Dalam acara tersebut bertempat di halaman kantor KPU Tanah Bumbu.Sabtu 26/8/23.

SHARE



Figure 2. KPU Tanah Bumbu Conducts Kirap

<https://kabarbanua.com/2023/08/26/sukseskan-pemilu-puryadi-kirap-di-tanbu-akan-keliling-disetiap-kecamatan-selama-7-hari/>

Tingkatkan Partisipasi Pemilih, KPU Gelar Tanahbumbu Bersalawat, Begini Harapan Bupati

Tayang: Senin, 21 Oktober 2024 09:48 WITA

Penulis: Muhammad Fikri | Editor: Hari Widodo



Figure 3. KPU Tanah Bumbu

<https://banjarmasin.tribunnews.com/2024/10/21/tingkatkan-partisipasi-pemilih-kpu-gelar-tanahbumbu-bersalawat-begini-harapan-bupati>

Some news information about the activities of the Tanah Bumbu KPU is connected to the management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU Communication, namely, by socialization, part of the activating activity on Terry's theory.

The findings of this research on the communication management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU during the candidacy stage show a strong effort in implementing proactive and direct socialization strategies, such as "Goes to School" programs for novice voters, public Kirab (parades) across districts, and religious-based community engagement activities like "Tanah Bumbu Bersalawat." These activities emphasize Actuating in Terry's Management Theory, aiming to mobilize communities actively. When compared to research conducted by Hasanah & Supriatna (2021) on the KPU of Bandung City during the voter registration stage, it appears that while both regions emphasize public engagement, the Bandung KPU relied more heavily on digital campaigns through social media without sufficient direct interaction with novice voters. Furthermore, research by Fauziah (2022) regarding the communication strategy of KPU in Sleman during the general election stage highlighted the use of "Dialog Voter" forums that prioritize two-way communication to address misinformation. This technique is still limited in Tanah Bumbu, where socialization tends to be more one-way and didactic. The novelty of this research lies in combining direct field socialization, religious and cultural approaches, and physical parades, a model that has not been much documented in previous studies on KPU communication strategies. These findings uniquely contribute to understanding how a hybrid model of traditional, cultural, and direct engagement strategies can be optimized to enhance voter participation and reduce misunderstanding, especially at the critical candidacy stage.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the communication management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU at the candidacy stage of the 2024 Regional Elections has applied the principles of Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling. Effective communication management is supported by the availability of competent human resources, communication expert teams, adequate technological infrastructure, good collaboration with stakeholders, and sufficient budget allocation. However, several factual challenges were encountered, including low public literacy rates, infrastructure limitations, and the dynamic socio-political environment, all of which influenced the communication process during the candidacy stage.

Based on the results, several recommendations are proposed. Future research should evaluate the communication management of the Tanah Bumbu KPU comprehensively across all stages of the electoral process, from candidacy to the determination of elected candidates. In addition, the KPU must understand communication barriers in the district, particularly related to public literacy, limited technology access, media reach, and the risks of hoaxes and political propaganda. It is suggested that the Tanah Bumbu KPU design a more adaptive and evidence-based communication management strategy, which must be periodically evaluated to ensure improvements in the implementation of future legislative and regional elections.

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