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Communication Strategy to Increase Podcast Engagement by the Bogor City Communication and Information Office

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Abstract

Local governments in Indonesia increasingly use digital platforms to provide accessible and engaging public information. This study examines the strategic use of podcasts by the Bogor City Communication and Information Office (Diskominfo Kota Bogor), focusing on the Sipatahunan Podcast and Go Ship Go Internship Podcast. The study aims to identify communication strategies used to strengthen audience engagement and the communication barriers encountered in government podcast production. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected from August 25 to December 31, 2025, through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, involvement in the production process, and document analysis. Five informants representing content planning, production, hosting, and publication roles were selected through purposive sampling. Data were analyzed manually using thematic analysis through open and axial coding. The findings show that Diskominfo strengthens podcast engagement through structured educational content, conversational communication formats, and consistent technical production practices. However, effective two-way communication remains constrained by semantic and psychological barriers. Technical and bureaucratic terminology can reduce message clarity, while audiences may hesitate to participate because they lack confidence when communicating with government representatives. These barriers limit opportunities for meaningful public dialogue. The study concludes that government podcast communication requires clearer and more audience-centered language, stronger opportunities for public participation, and continuous content evaluation. These measures can improve message accessibility, audience engagement, inclusivity, and public trust in local government digital communication.

KEYWORDS

strategic communication; podcast engagement; government communication; communication barriers; bogor city.

Introduction

Digital communication has increasingly transformed how local governments interact with citizens, requiring public institutions to develop communication strategies that are structured, responsive, transparent, and oriented toward audience needs. The development of digital governance has encouraged governments worldwide to move beyond conventional one-way information dissemination toward more interactive and citizen-centered communication models (Mergel et al., 2021; Criado et al., 2023). Digital platforms are now considered strategic environments where governments can promote transparency, strengthen institutional credibility, and create opportunities for public participation. However, the effectiveness of these platforms depends not only on technological availability but also on how institutions design communication strategies, manage resources, and adapt messages to different audience characteristics. In this context, the Bogor City Communication and Information Office (Diskominfo Kota Bogor) utilizes its official podcasts, Sipatahunan Podcast and Go Ship Go Internship, as digital communication channels to disseminate governmental information while

attempting to strengthen civic engagement. This study examines how podcast-based communication strategies are designed and implemented to enhance listener engagement, as well as how communication barriers emerge and are addressed within daily government communication practices(Febriana & Selawaty, 2025).

As an evolving digital audio medium, the concept of "podcast" continues to expand across different technological, social, and institutional contexts. Bottomley, (2015) initially described podcasts as downloadable digital audio distributed through RSS feeds, archived radio segments, and episodic programs that allow audiences to access content beyond traditional broadcasting schedules. More recently, Rime et al. (2022) define podcasts as spoken-word audio content that is episodic, downloadable or streamable, accessible anytime and anywhere, and producible by individuals or organizations with appropriate technological resources. The flexibility of podcast consumption has positioned this medium as an important part of contemporary digital communication ecosystems, particularly because audiences increasingly prefer personalized and on-demand information sources (Berry, 2016; Macnamara, 2016). In Indonesia, these developments became more prominent during the COVID-19 pandemic, when podcast consumption increased significantly as audiences searched for flexible, accessible, and self-controlled forms of information and entertainment (Imarshan, 2021). Nielsen Indonesia's Audio Report (2021) also highlighted the growth of digital audio consumption, particularly among younger generations who increasingly integrate audio content into their everyday activities.

International scholarship highlights podcasting as a communication medium that combines technological accessibility with narrative-driven engagement. Rime et al. (2022) argue that podcasting represents an intersection between storytelling and technology, allowing communicators to create immersive experiences that encourage sustained listening behavior. Unlike many traditional institutional communication formats that rely on formal and standardized messages, podcasts provide opportunities for conversational delivery, personalization, and emotional connection with audiences. Recent studies on digital media engagement indicate that audio-based communication can increase perceptions of authenticity because listeners often experience podcasts as more intimate and human-centered forms of interaction (Spinelli & Dann, 2023). In government communication contexts, podcasts offer opportunities to translate complex policy information into more accessible narratives, strengthen public understanding, and reach audiences who may be less responsive to conventional government announcements (Mahdi & Ernungtyas, 2024; Zellatifanny, 2020). Therefore, podcasts represent not only a technological innovation but also a strategic communication instrument that can support more inclusive relationships between governments and citizens(Toun, 2024).

The relationship between digital government communication and public engagement has become an increasingly important topic in international digital governance research. Previous studies demonstrate that successful digital communication initiatives require more than the adoption of new technologies; they depend on institutional readiness, communication capacity, organizational coordination, and the ability to understand citizens' expectations (Medaglia & Damsgaard, 2023; Mergel et al., 2021). Digital government platforms are expected to facilitate dialogue rather than merely distribute official information, meaning that institutions must consider how messages are produced, interpreted, and responded to by different groups of citizens. Research on digital participation further suggests that meaningful engagement occurs when citizens perceive communication channels as accessible, trustworthy, and open to interaction (Bannister & Connolly, 2021; Porumbescu et al., 2022). These perspectives highlight the importance of examining not only the presence of digital communication channels but also the institutional strategies behind their implementation.

Despite these advantages, government podcasts face several communication challenges that distinguish them from commercial or independent podcast productions. Previous research identifies unclear messaging, limited opportunities for interaction, and excessive use of technical or bureaucratic terminology as recurring barriers that reduce public understanding (Mossberger et al., 2023; Newman et al., 2024). These challenges reflect a broader tension within government communication: institutions must maintain accuracy, accountability, and procedural compliance while simultaneously producing messages that are simple, engaging, and relevant to citizens. International studies on public sector communication emphasize that trust and participation are strongly influenced by message clarity, perceived openness, and citizens' confidence in communicating with government organizations (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2023). Therefore, successful government podcasting requires strategic decisions regarding communicator selection, narrative design, audience analysis, production management, platform selection, and continuous evaluation.

Although research on digital government communication has expanded significantly, existing studies have largely concentrated on social media governance, online participation platforms, and general digital transformation initiatives (Baskara et al., 2025; Criado et al., 2023; Sobaci, 2016). These studies have provided valuable insights into how governments adopt digital technologies; however, limited attention has been given to the internal processes through which government institutions create and manage podcast-based communication. Existing podcast research frequently examines audience preferences, listening behavior, or communication effectiveness but rarely explores institutional dimensions such as strategic planning, production workflows, division of responsibilities, technical decision-making, and organizational adaptation. Furthermore, the process of transforming formal bureaucratic information into accessible audio narratives remains insufficiently examined, particularly in local government contexts where communication must balance administrative requirements with public accessibility.

This research addresses this empirical gap by analyzing podcast-based communication strategies implemented by Diskominfo Bogor through two institutional podcast programs: Sipatahunan Podcast and Go Ship Go Internship. The study investigates how communication strategies are planned, how production processes are organized, how content is distributed, and how communication barriers influence audience engagement. Specifically, it examines challenges related to semantic misunderstandings, limitations in public digital literacy, and psychological hesitation among citizens when interacting with government representatives. By focusing on the institutional level of podcast governance, this research provides insight into how local governments operationalize digital audio communication as a tool for public engagement rather than merely as an information delivery mechanism.

Theoretically, this study contributes to digital public communication and government communication scholarship by expanding understanding of podcast-based communication models within institutional environments. It

complements existing research on digital governance by emphasizing the importance of organizational practices, message adaptation, and audience-centered communication strategies in achieving effective public engagement. The study also contributes to discussions regarding the evolving role of audio media ecosystems in supporting information dissemination, transparency, and citizen participation (Llinares et al., 2022; Maharani, 2024). Practically, the findings provide guidance for local government agencies seeking to develop podcast strategies that are more accessible, inclusive, and responsive to diverse audiences, particularly younger generations. Ultimately, this research supports the development of innovative digital communication practices that strengthen public trust and encourage more meaningful government–citizen relationships.

Methods

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine the communication strategies and challenges involved in podcast production at Diskominfo Bogor City. A qualitative approach was selected because the study focuses on understanding organizational processes, communication practices, and institutional experiences rather than measuring communication outcomes quantitatively. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore how meaning is constructed, how decisions are negotiated among organizational actors, and how communication practices develop within specific institutional contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

The descriptive qualitative approach was considered appropriate because this research aims to provide an in-depth understanding of podcast-based government communication strategies, including planning processes, production mechanisms, distribution practices, and communication barriers encountered during implementation. Rather than evaluating podcast performance through numerical indicators, this study investigates the underlying processes that shape government digital communication practices. Through direct engagement with the research setting, the study captures both formal procedures and informal interactions that influence how podcast communication is created and managed within a government institution.

Research Location and Duration

The research was conducted at the Office of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo) of Bogor City, located at Jl. Ir. H. Juanda No.10, Pabaton Subdistrict, Central Bogor District, West Java, Indonesia. Data collection was carried out over approximately four months, from August 25 to December 31, 2025.

Diskominfo Bogor City was selected as the research location because it functions as the primary institution responsible for managing digital public communication within the city government. The office also serves as the production center for the two podcast programs examined in this study: Sipatahunan Podcast and Go Ship Go Internship. Conducting fieldwork within the institution allowed the researcher to observe not only formal production procedures but also everyday coordination practices, internal discussions, and decision-making processes that are rarely documented in official materials. This direct observation provided important insights into how government podcast communication strategies are developed and implemented in practice.

Informants

The selection of informants was conducted using purposive sampling, a technique commonly applied in qualitative research when participants are selected based on their knowledge, experience, and direct involvement with the phenomenon being studied (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Five informants were selected because each represented a different role within the podcast production process.

The informants consisted of one content planner, one producer, two podcast hosts, and one publication team member. This role-based selection strategy was designed to capture perspectives from different stages of podcast management, including content development, production execution, communication delivery, and audience distribution. By involving participants from multiple functional areas, the study obtained a comprehensive understanding of how podcast strategies are planned, implemented, and evaluated within the institutional environment.

Research Instruments

Three research instruments were developed and utilized during the data collection process. The first instrument was a semi-structured interview guide designed to explore four main areas: (1) content planning and topic selection processes, (2) podcast production procedures and organizational coordination, (3) distribution strategies and platform management, and (4) communication challenges and audience response evaluation. The semi-structured format allowed the researcher to maintain alignment with the research objectives while providing flexibility for participants to explain their experiences and perspectives in detail.

The second instrument was an observation checklist used during field visits to systematically record institutional activities and production processes. The observation focused on organizational coordination, communication flows between team members, recording activities, editorial discussions, and scheduling practices. This instrument helped document how podcast production occurred in actual working conditions rather than relying solely on participants' descriptions.

The third instrument was a document analysis checklist used to examine institutional materials related to podcast production. Documents analyzed included episode scripts, content planning documents, publication schedules, and digital communication reports. The document analysis focused on identifying communication themes, narrative structures, information presentation strategies, and the clarity of public messages delivered through podcast episodes.

Data Collection Methods

Data collection involved four complementary methods: participant observation, production involvement, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. First, the researcher conducted direct observations during fieldwork by attending planning meetings, recording sessions, and content development activities. These observations enabled the researcher to identify how communication decisions were discussed, adjusted, and implemented during real production processes.

Second, the researcher participated in several podcast production activities during the field placement. This involvement provided deeper access to organizational practices because the researcher was able to observe internal coordination, informal communication patterns, and practical challenges experienced by the production team. Such participation allowed the researcher to understand aspects of institutional communication that may not emerge through interviews alone.

Third, semi-structured interviews were conducted individually with all five informants. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted either directly at the Diskominfo office or through online platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet. Before each interview,

participants received an explanation regarding the research objectives, interview procedures, confidentiality considerations, and their right to withdraw from participation. With participants' consent, interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for further analysis.

Fourth, document analysis was conducted to complement and validate information obtained from interviews and observations. Internal reports, podcast scripts, production schedules, and communication records were reviewed to compare documented practices with participants' experiences. The combination of multiple data sources allowed the researcher to develop a more comprehensive understanding of podcast communication management within Diskominfo Bogor City.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using manual thematic analysis following Braun & Clarke, (2006) six-phase framework: familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, development of themes, review of themes, definition and naming of themes, and production of the final analysis. This analytical approach was selected because it enables researchers to systematically identify recurring patterns and interpret meanings within qualitative data.

The analysis focused on two primary data sources: interview transcripts describing podcast communication practices and challenges, and podcast episodes analyzed as communication products. Interview transcripts were reviewed repeatedly to develop familiarity with the data before conducting open coding. Initial codes were generated to identify significant statements, recurring communication practices, and reported challenges. These codes were subsequently organized through axial coding to establish relationships between concepts and develop broader thematic categories.

Podcast episodes were analyzed using similar thematic categories, focusing on message structure, storytelling approaches, host communication styles, audience accessibility, and the clarity of public information delivery. The final themes were determined based on their relevance to the research objectives and their consistency across multiple data sources.

To ensure research credibility, several validation procedures were applied. Member checking was conducted by providing participants with interview transcripts and preliminary interpretations to confirm the accuracy of the findings. In addition, analytical triangulation was applied by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis. These procedures strengthened the reliability of the interpretation and ensured that conclusions were grounded in systematically collected empirical evidence.

Result and Discussion

Analysis of the five interview transcripts, field observation notes, institutional documents, and selected podcast episodes generated three interconnected themes. These themes illustrate both the strategic practices through which Diskominfo Bogor manages podcast-based public communication and the communication barriers that continue to constrain its effectiveness. The first theme concerns structured content planning and its responsiveness to civic issues; the second focuses on the deliberate adjustment of communication registers according to audience characteristics; and the third identifies semantic and psychological barriers that restrict message accessibility and meaningful audience participation. Manual open coding initially generated 38 discrete codes, which were subsequently consolidated through axial coding into 11 intermediate categories and, finally, three overarching themes. Taken together, the themes demonstrate that podcast communication within a local government institution involves not only content production but also continuous negotiation among institutional objectives, audience expectations, technical practices, and bureaucratic communication norms.

Theme 1: Structured Content Planning as Civic Responsiveness

The findings indicate that Diskominfo Bogor does not treat individual podcast episodes as isolated content decisions. Instead, topic selection is embedded within a structured editorial process in which emerging public issues, institutional priorities, and perceived audience interests are considered before production begins. Monthly editorial meetings involving the Section Head, producer, and creative team serve as the primary mechanism for identifying potential topics and evaluating their relevance to current discussions among Bogor residents. The production team also considers issues circulating through digital and social media channels, allowing public concerns to influence the early stages of content development.

The content planner described this process as follows:

> *"Kalau buat Sipatahunan, kita nggak bisa asal tunjuk tema. Biasanya ada rapat redaksi rutin tiap awal bulan atau sebelum naik produksi, dihadiri sama Kepala Seksi, Produser, sama tim kreatif. Kita mapping dulu isu lokal apa yang lagi anget di Kota Bogor, misalnya kemarin soal sistem satu arah (SSA) atau kartu Depok-Bogor. Kita framing supaya isinya edukatif tapi nggak ngebosenin."*

This account demonstrates that audience monitoring functions as part of the editorial process rather than merely as a promotional activity after content has been produced. Public issues are identified, discussed internally, and subsequently reframed into educational podcast material. In this sense, content planning incorporates an element of civic responsiveness because topic selection is influenced by issues already attracting public attention. Such a practice is consistent with Macnamara's (2016) argument that responsive institutional communication requires organizations to develop listening mechanisms rather than relying exclusively on one-way information dissemination.

This pattern was also visible in the selection of particular public-service topics. For example, the Sipatahunan episode discussing revised Biskita Trans Pakuan public transportation fares was developed when concerns regarding fare changes were circulating among residents through local digital channels. The episode was therefore positioned not simply as institutional promotion but as an explanatory communication product intended to reduce uncertainty surrounding a public issue. This indicates that the educational function of the podcast begins at the topic-selection stage, where institutional information is aligned with issues considered relevant to citizens.

The findings also reveal different planning structures between the two podcast programs. Sipatahunan follows a relatively structured bi-weekly publication schedule supported by formal editorial planning, whereas Go Ship Go Internship operates with a more situational publication pattern. Episodes of Go Ship Go are produced according to the availability and relevance of internship-related experiences rather than a fixed publication calendar. As the content planner explained, "the plotting is more relaxed, and the releases are situational, depending on the issues related to the internships of the kids."

This distinction should not necessarily be interpreted as inconsistency in institutional management. Instead, it reflects differentiated communication strategies based on the objectives and audiences of each program.

Table 1. Examples of Open Coding, Axial Categorization, and Emergent Themes in the Analysis of Government Podcast Communication Strategies

Open Code (Verbatim)	Axial Category	Emergent Theme
"Kita harus cari topik yang lagi ramai dibicarakan warga Bogor di medsos, biar mereka tertarik nonton."	Civic interest mapping and topic relevance calibration	Structured Content Planning
"Bahasa di naskah dinas itu kaku banget, kalau di-podcast-in langsung, pendengar pasti langsung skip karena pusing."	Bureaucratic register collision and semantic inaccessibility	Communication Barriers

Sipatahunan functions primarily as a channel for communicating broader governmental and civic issues, requiring greater scheduling consistency and coordination with institutional agendas. Go Ship Go Internship, in contrast, relies on experiential narratives produced for younger audiences and therefore permits greater flexibility in topic selection and publication timing. The findings consequently suggest that strategic consistency does not always require identical production procedures across channels; it may instead involve adapting organizational processes to the communicative purpose of each program.

The progression from interview material to the final themes was documented through open and axial coding. Examples of this analytical process are presented below. (See Table 1).

Across the five interview transcripts, open coding generated 38 initial codes. These codes were compared according to similarities, differences, and conceptual relationships and were subsequently consolidated into 11 axial categories. The categories were then organized into three overarching themes representing the most consistent patterns across interviews, observations, documents, and podcast materials.

2: Dialogic Register Calibration as Strategic Communication Design

Across the five informants, a consistent practice of adapting communication style to audience characteristics emerged from the analysis. The production team did not describe differences in language style merely as matters of presenter preference. Rather, register adjustment was treated as an intentional communication strategy designed to reduce distance between the institution and specific audience groups. Differences between Sipatahunan and Go Ship Go Internship were particularly visible in vocabulary, tone, forms of address, and the degree of institutional formality maintained by the hosts.

One host described the distinction between the two programs:

> *"Paling berasa itu pas nge-host di dua program ini. Di Sipatahunan, audiens kita kan luas ya, dari bapak-bapak PNS sampai warga umum umur 30-an ke atas. Jadi gaya bahasanya semi-formal, kita pakai analogi sehari-hari tapi tetep jaga wibawa instansi. Nah, pas megang Go Ship Go, wah itu rombak total. Kita lepas branding kaku pemerintah. Bahasanya pakai 'lu-gue' atau 'kamu-kita', nadanya ceria, karena targetnya emang anak kuliahan umur 18–22 tahun yang pengen tahu vibes magang di sini."*

The statement demonstrates deliberate code-switching between a semi-formal institutional register and a more informal peer-oriented register. Sipatahunan retains elements of governmental authority while incorporating everyday expressions and analogies intended to improve accessibility. Go Ship Go Internship adopts a substantially more informal communication style because its target audience consists primarily of university-age listeners. The contrast indicates that audience segmentation influences not only topic selection but also the linguistic construction and delivery of messages.

Within Sipatahunan, audience-oriented communication is also reflected in guest selection. Episodes feature speakers from different institutional and social backgrounds, including heads of municipal departments, Satpol PP representatives, and local public figures. Bringing these voices into the podcast creates opportunities for government information to be communicated through moderated conversation rather than solely through formal institutional statements. Consequently, the podcast format enables official information to be embedded within a more conversational communicative environment.

Go Ship Go Internship produces dialogic communication through a different mechanism. Rather than relying primarily on external guests or formal government representatives, the program emphasizes peer-to-peer conversations among interns. An episode such as "Suka Duka Anak Magang di Balik Kamera Diskominfo," for example, communicates internship experiences through participants who share similar social and educational backgrounds with the intended audience. This structure allows information about institutional experiences to be communicated through personal narratives rather than administrative explanations.

These findings suggest that dialogic communication in government podcasts can be constructed through multiple strategies. In one program, dialogue emerges through moderated interaction between government representatives and other public voices; in another, it emerges through peer-based storytelling. Both approaches attempt to reduce perceived social distance between the institution and its listeners. This finding corresponds with the principles of two-way communication proposed by Grunig and Hunt (1984), although the results presented in the following theme demonstrate that conversational delivery alone does not necessarily produce substantive audience participation.

Theme 3: Communication Barriers: Semantic Obstruction and Psychological Inhibition

Despite the strategic practices identified in the first two themes, the analysis revealed persistent communication barriers that have not been fully resolved through content planning or audience-register adaptation. These barriers emerged in two interconnected forms. The first occurs during message construction, particularly when formal bureaucratic terminology must be translated into language appropriate for public-facing audio communication. The second appears during audience response, where listeners have access to interaction channels but rarely use them for substantive dialogue.

The semantic dimension was articulated most clearly by the producer:

> "*Kendala paling berat itu nerjemahin bahasa regulasi atau singkatan birokrasi ke bahasa podcast. Istilah kayak 'SPBE', 'IKP', atau 'Raperda' itu kalau disebut mentah-mentah di depan mic bikin jarak sama penonton. Ada structural tension di sini; satu sisi kita harus formal sesuai aturan dinas, tapi di sisi lain format audio ini kan menuntut intimacy, harus akrab. Akhirnya pesennya sering jadi bias atau malah kerasa kaku banget.*"

The producer's account demonstrates a recurring tension between administrative precision and communicative accessibility. Terms such as SPBE (Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik), IKP (Indeks Kebebasan Pers), and Raperda (Rancangan Peraturan Daerah) carry specific meanings within governmental contexts.

However, when these terms are transferred directly into conversational audio without adequate explanation, listeners unfamiliar with bureaucratic terminology may experience difficulty interpreting the message. The challenge is therefore not simply whether information is transmitted, but whether institutional information can be translated into forms that remain accurate while also being understandable to non-specialist audiences.

A second barrier concerns limited substantive interaction. A member of the publication team explained:

> *"Interaksi dua arah kita masih minim banget. Di YouTube Sipatahunan atau Spotify Go Ship Go, feedback langsung dari audiens itu jarang. Rata-rata komentar per episode paling cuma 2 atau 3, itu pun isinya cuma absen atau ngasih emotikon doang, jarang ada diskusi substansial atau pertanyaan kritis soal kebijakan. Ada hambatan psikologis dari masyarakat; warga itu kayak ada keengganan atau segen kalau mau nanya langsung ke akun resmi pemerintah di kolom komentar."*

The reported pattern suggests that the existence of digital interaction features does not automatically produce meaningful participation. According to the publication team, responses generally consisted of brief acknowledgments or emojis rather than substantive questions or discussions. The informant interpreted this pattern as reflecting psychological hesitation among citizens when interacting directly with an official government account.

The finding therefore reveals a distinction between technical interactivity and substantive participation. YouTube and Spotify provide technical possibilities for audience response, but the presence of these features does not guarantee that listeners perceive institutional channels as comfortable spaces for dialogue. This distinction becomes important for understanding government digital communication because communication effectiveness cannot be evaluated solely by whether interactive features are available. It must also consider whether audiences are sufficiently confident and motivated to use those features for meaningful engagement.

Strategic Achievement and Its Inherent Limits

The findings portray Diskominfo Bogor's podcast communication as neither a straightforward success nor a failure. Instead, they demonstrate a strategically organized communication system that has achieved several operational strengths while continuing to face limitations in producing reciprocal public engagement. Editorial meetings enable the institution to connect podcast topics with contemporary civic issues, audience-register adaptation helps reduce the perceived formality of governmental communication, and differentiated production models allow Sipatahunan and Go Ship Go Internship to serve distinct audience segments. These practices indicate that podcast management within Diskominfo is based on deliberate institutional choices rather than spontaneous content production.

The findings support established perspectives on strategic public communication in which message effectiveness depends on audience identification, message construction, appropriate channel selection, and institutional responsiveness (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). However, the results also demonstrate that strategic planning at the production level does not automatically translate into successful communication outcomes. An institution may select relevant topics, use conversational language, and maintain consistent production standards while still encountering difficulties in message comprehension and audience participation.

The semantic challenge identified by the producer illustrates this distinction. Government communication must preserve administrative accuracy because policies, regulations, and institutional programs often contain terminology with specific legal or bureaucratic meanings. Podcast communication, by contrast, relies heavily on conversational accessibility and perceived intimacy. Translating information from one register to another therefore creates an ongoing communicative burden for producers and hosts. When such translation is unsuccessful, information may technically reach the audience while remaining difficult to interpret.

Carey, (1989) distinction between transmission and ritual perspectives on communication helps explain this tension. From a transmission perspective, successful communication may be understood as the delivery of information from government to citizens. From a ritual perspective, however, communication also requires shared meaning and a common interpretive framework. The findings suggest that Diskominfo's podcast producers operate between these two demands: they must fulfill an institutional responsibility to communicate accurate information while simultaneously creating language and narratives through which audiences can meaningfully interpret that information.

A similar tension emerges in relation to audience engagement. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) two-way symmetric communication model emphasizes reciprocal exchange between organizations and their publics (Jenkins et al., 2023) . However, the findings indicate that providing a digital channel capable of receiving comments does not by itself establish such reciprocity. Macnamara's (2016) concept of an "architecture of listening" is particularly relevant because it emphasizes that organizations must develop institutional mechanisms for receiving, recognizing, and responding to public voices rather than simply expanding opportunities for institutional speaking.

The limited substantive responses reported by the publication team therefore suggest that the challenge lies not only in increasing the number of comments but also in creating communicative conditions in which audiences perceive participation as meaningful. Mechanisms such as explicit questions at the end of episodes, audience-submitted topics, response segments, polls, or follow-up episodes addressing citizen concerns may help transform passive listening into more visible forms of interaction. Such mechanisms would also enable the podcast to move closer to its potential as a platform for reciprocal public communication.

Technical Production as a Dimension of Communication Effectiveness

Another important finding concerns the role of technical production in shaping the accessibility and consistency of government podcast communication. Observations of the Sipatahunan production process showed that Diskominfo uses vMix to manage real-time switching between three studio cameras. A dedicated technical operator also manages visual components such as lower-third identification graphics, text elements, and institutional branding. This division of technical responsibilities allows the production team to maintain visual consistency throughout episodes that may last between 15 and 40 minutes.

Technical production should not be understood solely as an aesthetic concern. In audiovisual government communication, production elements can support message comprehension by helping viewers identify speakers, follow transitions, and distinguish different segments of an episode. Lower-third graphics, for example, provide immediate contextual information about speakers and their institutional roles. Such elements can reduce uncertainty for viewers who enter an episode after it has begun or who are unfamiliar with the individuals appearing on screen.

This finding extends previous work emphasizing the importance of consistency and professionalism in institutional podcast production (Hutabarat, 2022). Rather than treating production quality as a general attribute, the present study

identifies specific organizational and technical practices through which consistency is produced. The findings therefore suggest that technical workflow should be considered part of strategic communication design rather than a separate operational activity.

This perspective is also relevant to the broader study of digital government communication. Institutional credibility in digital environments may be communicated not only through message content but also through the reliability and coherence of its presentation. Technical production decisions consequently participate in meaning-making by shaping how institutional messages are visually and aurally encountered. In this sense, podcast production infrastructure forms part of the communication process itself.

The Institutional Intimacy Gap: Toward a Conceptual Contribution

Existing research on government podcast communication has frequently identified barriers related to content selection, message design, promotion, and audience reach (Radika, 2020). The present findings suggest that these barriers can also be understood at a deeper institutional level. The semantic problems identified by participants did not necessarily result from inadequate topic selection. Instead, they emerged from the collision between two communication logics: the formal register required by bureaucratic accountability and the conversational register expected within podcast communication.

Government institutions are required to communicate information accurately, preserve official terminology where necessary, and maintain institutional credibility. Podcasts, however, derive much of their communicative appeal from conversational language, perceived authenticity, and interpersonal closeness. When these two expectations operate simultaneously, communication teams must continually negotiate how far official messages can be simplified without altering their substantive meaning. This tension suggests that government podcasting involves more than transferring institutional information onto a new technological platform; it requires the institutional translation of bureaucratic communication into an audience-oriented register.

The psychological barrier identified in audience participation represents a related but distinct process. Even when government communication adopts informal language, citizens may continue to perceive the communicator as an authoritative institution rather than an ordinary conversational partner. The conversational qualities of podcasting may therefore reduce social distance without completely removing the institutional hierarchy associated with government communication. This helps explain why an episode can sound informal and accessible while still generating limited substantive public responses.

Taken together, these semantic and psychological barriers are conceptualized in this study as the institutional intimacy gap. The term refers to the distance between an institution's attempt to communicate in an accessible and conversational manner and the extent to which audiences actually experience that communication as understandable, approachable, and open to reciprocal participation. The gap operates on both sides of the communication process: institutions encounter difficulty translating formal information into conversational language, while audiences may remain hesitant to respond because the institutional identity of the communicator remains socially salient.

The institutional intimacy gap cannot therefore be addressed solely by increasing publication frequency or improving technical quality. It requires institutional mechanisms that support plain-language translation, active audience listening, and visible opportunities for participation. In practical terms, this could include pre-production terminology reviews, audience-oriented explanations of bureaucratic concepts, explicit invitations for questions, recurring audience-response segments, and procedures for incorporating citizen feedback into future episodes. Such measures would shift podcast governance from simply producing accessible institutional messages toward creating an environment in which audiences can participate more confidently.

Situating the Findings Within Prior Literature

The findings support previous scholarship emphasizing the value of educational content and conversational communication styles within digital and podcast communication (Rime et al., 2022; Twizeyimana & Andersson, 2019; van Dijck et al., 2022). At the same time, this study extends that literature by shifting analytical attention from podcast content and audience reception toward the institutional processes through which government podcasts are planned, produced, and distributed. This internal organizational perspective reveals communication practices that may remain invisible when analysis is limited to published episodes or audience metrics.

The first contribution concerns institutional content planning. The findings demonstrate that editorial meetings, civic issue monitoring, and differentiated scheduling arrangements form part of the communication strategy before an episode enters production. This indicates that responsiveness is embedded within organizational routines rather than occurring only after publication. Consequently, government podcasting can be understood as a governance process involving decisions about which public issues receive communicative attention and how those issues are framed for different audiences.

The second contribution concerns the relationship between bureaucratic communication and podcast intimacy. Rather than treating semantic barriers as isolated wording problems, the study identifies an institutional tension between administrative precision and conversational accessibility. This perspective provides a more structural explanation for why bureaucratic terminology can persist even when communication teams intentionally seek to produce accessible content.

Third, the findings bring technical workflow into the analysis of public communication. The use of multi-camera production, dedicated technical roles, graphics, and standardized visual elements demonstrates that production infrastructure can influence how government information is contextualized and understood. In this respect, the study complements research examining broader podcast ecosystems and institutional digital communication while providing a closer account of how communication quality is operationalized within everyday government production practices.

The conceptual contribution of the study lies in connecting these dimensions through the institutional intimacy gap. Government podcasts may adopt the technological and stylistic characteristics of conversational media without automatically eliminating the communicative distance associated with public institutions. The findings therefore suggest that successful government podcasting requires alignment among content strategy, institutional language, production practices, listening mechanisms, and opportunities for meaningful citizen response.

Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. First, the research focuses on a single local government institution and was conducted over approximately four months. The findings therefore represent the organizational practices of Diskominfo Bogor within a

specific institutional and temporal context and should not automatically be generalized to all local government podcast initiatives in Indonesia or other national settings. Comparative research involving multiple municipalities would be valuable for determining whether similar communication patterns occur across different institutional environments.

Second, much of the analysis relies on the perspectives of staff members directly involved in podcast planning, production, hosting, and publication. These perspectives are essential for understanding internal organizational processes, but they may also reflect institutional interpretations of communication effectiveness. Future studies could incorporate audience interviews, focus groups, or surveys to compare institutional assumptions with citizens' actual experiences of message clarity, trust, accessibility, and willingness to participate.

Third, the study did not employ longitudinal audience analytics capable of systematically measuring listening behavior, retention, satisfaction, or changes in engagement over time. Consequently, claims concerning audience engagement should be interpreted primarily in relation to observed communication practices, participant accounts, and available interaction indicators rather than as direct measurements of audience effects. Future research could combine qualitative institutional analysis with platform analytics and audience-level data to examine whether specific podcast strategies produce measurable changes in public understanding, participation, and trust.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that podcast communication at Diskominfo Bogor represents a strategic effort by local government to develop more responsive and audience-oriented public communication. Through Sipatahunan Podcast and Go Ship Go Internship, the institution applies structured content planning, audience-based communication adaptation, and professional production practices to improve the accessibility and relevance of governmental messages. However, these achievements remain constrained by communication barriers, particularly the difficulty of translating bureaucratic language into accessible narratives and the limited confidence of citizens to engage directly with government communication channels.

The study contributes theoretically by introducing the concept of the institutional intimacy gap, which explains the distance between an institution's intention to communicate in an approachable manner and the extent to which audiences actually experience that communication as accessible and participatory. This gap highlights that improving government podcast communication requires more than enhancing content quality or production capacity; it also requires institutional mechanisms that support plain-language practices, active listening, and meaningful opportunities for citizen interaction. Practically, local governments can strengthen podcast effectiveness by developing audience-centered communication guidelines, creating structured feedback mechanisms, and maintaining consistent publishing strategies to support long-term audience engagement.

Future research should examine government podcast practices across different institutional contexts, regions, and levels of government to determine whether the institutional intimacy gap represents a broader challenge in digital public communication. Studies incorporating audience perspectives, longitudinal engagement data, and comparative approaches would further clarify how government podcasts can evolve from information delivery platforms into more participatory spaces for public dialogue and digital governance.

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