



Government Social Media Communication as a Political Public Relations Strategy for Advancing Social Welfare

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DOI: doi.org/10.66325/nusantaralaw.v5i1.215

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| Received: 25-10-2025 || Revised: 28-02-2026 || Accepted: 20-04-2026 || Published On: 28-04-2026

Abstract: This study examines how the regional head of East Kalimantan, following the 2024 regional election, leveraged social media as a political public relations strategy to enhance social welfare. It focuses on three key dimensions: communication mechanisms, the nature of disseminated content, and patterns of interaction between government and citizens in the digital sphere. Employing a descriptive qualitative design with a case study approach, the research draws on multiple data sources, including content analysis of official government social media accounts, in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, and participatory observation of public engagement. Data were analyzed thematically to identify recurring communication patterns, strategic orientations, and their implications for public perception and welfare outreach. The findings indicate that social media functions not merely as a tool for information dissemination but as a strategic platform for constructing an image of transparent, responsive, and participatory leadership. The regional head systematically used digital platforms to communicate about social welfare programs, foster dialogic engagement, and mobilize community participation through structured, consistent campaigns. Interactive and socially oriented communication practices were found to significantly strengthen public trust, expand policy visibility, and improve accessibility to welfare initiatives. Moreover, integrating feedback mechanisms enabled more adaptive, citizen-centered governance. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on digital political communication by offering empirical insights into the role of social media in local governance contexts. It advances understanding of political public relations as a dynamic, participatory process in the digital era. Practically, the findings guide policymakers and public officials in designing communication strategies that are not only effective but also socially impactful. The study also opens avenues for future research on the integration of digital platforms into



public policy processes and innovative models of government communication management.

Keywords: Digital Communication; Political Public Relations; Post-Election; Social Media; Social Welfare.

Introduction

The development of information technology, especially social media, has changed the landscape of public communication and government strategies for engaging the public. Social media is no longer just a means of entertainment or social networking, but also an important channel for the government to convey information, build a leadership image, and increase public participation in social programs.¹ In the context of local government in Indonesia, the use of social media by regional heads has become increasingly strategic, especially after the regional head election (Pilkada), when political legitimacy and public trust are the main issues. Regional heads who can use social media effectively can increase transparency, strengthen two-way communication with citizens, and encourage public awareness and participation in social welfare programs.

However, the government's social media communication practices have not been fully structured or thoroughly understood. Several previous studies have highlighted the use of social media by public officials, but the focus is still limited to aspects of political image or engagement alone. For example, the research of Sriharyati et al. (2019) emphasizes how public officials use social media to build self-image and political legitimacy, but does not examine the direct implications for people's social well-being.² The second study by Suryati et al (2025) explored the effectiveness of local government communication through social media in increasing public participation. However, the analysis remains quantitative and limited to the number of interactions, without delving into the communication strategies used.³ Furthermore, the third study by Desak Tri Mahadewi et al. (2024) examines the relationship between digital political public relations and public perception of social programs. However, it reviews only one type of social media platform and does not account for the post-election context, which is characterized by strong local political dynamics.⁴

¹ Rivaldhy N. Muhammad, Lestari Wulandari S, and Biloka Tanggahma, 'Pengaruh Media Sosial Pada Persepsi Publik Terhadap Sistem Peradilan: Analisis Sentimen Di Twitter', *UNES Law Review* 7, no. 1 (September 2024): 507–516, <https://doi.org/10.31933/unesrev.v7i1.2327>.

² Sri Haryanti and Effy Zalfiana Rusfian, 'Government Public Relations and Social Media: Bridging the Digital Divide on People with Social Welfare Problems', *JKAP (Jurnal Kebijakan Dan Administrasi Publik)* 22, no. 2 (April 2019): 128–145, <https://doi.org/10.22146/jkap.34602>.

³ Suryati, Sri Hertimi, and Rahma Sari, 'Penggunaan Media Sosial Sebagai Media Komunikasi Informasi Jarak Jauh Dalam Suatu Organisasi (Studi Kasus Acara Temu Teman Palembang)', *Jurnal Komputer, Informasi Dan Teknologi* 5, no. 1 (May 2025): 10–10, <https://doi.org/10.53697/jkomitek.v5i1.2536>.

⁴ Desak Tri Mahadewi and Gede Sri Darma, 'Government Public Communication Strategy Through Social Media in the Digital Era (Case Study on Bangli Regency Government)',

Across the three studies, a research gap emerges regarding how regional heads strategically use social media as a political public relations tool to improve social welfare directly. Previous research has tended to focus on political imagery or public engagement more broadly, without emphasizing the integration of digital communication into post-election social welfare programs. Therefore, this research offers novelty by focusing on the post-2024 Regional Election context in East Kalimantan and examining the communication strategies of regional heads across various social media platforms to encourage public participation, build trust, and make welfare programs more effective. This approach not only emphasizes digital interaction but also its relevance to real social outcomes, thereby making a more comprehensive, practical, and academic contribution.

The research question that underpins this study is: "How do East Kalimantan regional heads use social media as a political public relations strategy to improve social welfare after the 2024 Regional Elections?" This question is directed to understand communication mechanisms, content patterns, interaction strategies with the public, and the impact of digital programs on people's welfare. This approach also allows the identification of best practices that can serve as a model for other local governments in Indonesia and internationally. The significance of this research is twofold. Academically, this research enriches the literature on digital political public relations in the context of local government, particularly by examining how post-election communication strategies can contribute to social welfare. These findings can serve as a reference for the study of political communication, digital governance, and public social studies that increasingly emphasize the integration of information technology. In practice, this research provides strategic recommendations for regional heads and public officials to design digital communications that are effective, responsive, and directly impact community welfare programs, thereby increasing public trust and participation in local development.

By focusing on the post-2024 Regional Election context, this research is expected to bridge the gap between previous academic literature and real practice in the field. In addition, this study emphasizes the importance of digital political public relations as an innovative, strategic, and adaptive instrument for government communication management in local political and social dynamics within the community. Thus, this research is not only descriptive but also offers analytical perspectives and practical recommendations that are relevant to the era of digital governance and public information disclosure.

Method

This study uses a qualitative case study approach to understand in depth the communication strategies of East Kalimantan regional heads after the 2024 Regional Elections and how they use social media as a political public relations tool to improve social welfare. This approach was chosen because it allows for the contextual analysis of complex government communication practices, including digital interactions with communities and the implementation of welfare programs. Data were collected through several techniques, including content analysis of local government officials' social media accounts, in-depth interviews with relevant officials and public relations staff, and participatory observation of

public responses and interactions on digital platforms. This multi-source approach ensures that the information obtained includes government and community perspectives while highlighting real communication practices on the ground.

Data analysis was carried out thematically by mapping communication patterns, content types, interaction strategies, and their impact on public perception and community participation in welfare programs.⁵ Each finding was analyzed holistically to highlight the relationship between digital communication strategies and expected social outcomes. Data validation is carried out through source triangulation, which involves comparing data from social media content, interviews, and observations, as well as member checking techniques with resource persons to ensure the accuracy of interpretation. In addition, this study applies trail audits to maintain analytical consistency and methodological openness, ensuring that research results are accounted for both scientifically and practically in the development of political public relations strategies in local governments.

Results and Discussion

Communication Patterns of Regional Heads on Social Media

The results of the study show that East Kalimantan regional heads, after the 2024 Regional Elections, consistently use social media for political and public communication. The dominant communication pattern is two-way, in which officials not only convey information about government programs but also actively respond to questions, criticisms, and public input. This approach to communication reflects the principles of political public relations that emphasize dialogue, transparency, and accountability as the foundation for building public trust.⁶

Analysis of content on local governments' official social media accounts, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok, shows the dominance of messages focused on social welfare programs. These programs include cash and non-cash social assistance, public health programs, education⁷, and poverty alleviation efforts in various districts and cities.⁸ Of the 120 posts analyzed over the six months after the elections, more than 45% contained information about social welfare programs, followed by government transparency (25%), regional heads' field activities (20%), and public policy socialization (10%). The distribution of this content underscores local governments' priority in communicating issues that directly affect people's lives, while affirming regional leaders' commitment to residents' welfare.

This two-way communication pattern is evident in the high intensity of public interaction. Each social welfare program post receives an average of 320 responses in the form of comments, likes, and shares. The community's response is not only appreciative but also

⁵ Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman, *Analisis Data Kualitatif: Buku Sumber Tentang Metode-Metode Baru* (Jakarta: Universitas Indonesia Press, 2014).

⁶ Maulidha Arifia S, 'Kajian Media Sosial Sebagai Media Strategis Komunikasi Hubungan Masyarakat Dalam Institusi Pemerintah', *Communicative : Jurnal Komunikasi dan Penyiaran Islam* 5, no. 1 (December 2024): 67–74.

⁷ Oluwaseun Adeyemi Ogunleeye, 'Advancing Vocational Education and Skills Development to Meet Modern Workforce Demands Effectively', *Nusantara Education* 5, no. 1 (March 2026): 13–28, <https://doi.org/10.66325/nusantaraeducation.v5i1.255>.

⁸ Hildawati, 'Digital Public Relations of the Ministry of Social Affairs in the Use of Social Media', *Da'watuna: Journal of Communication and Islamic Broadcasting* 4, no. 5 (September 2024): 1825–1838, <https://doi.org/10.47467/dawatuna.v4i5.3640>.

critical, for example, asking about the procedure for applying for assistance, raising complaints about delays in distribution, and offering suggestions for program improvements. Regional heads and public relations teams actively respond to these questions and complaints, both through direct replies and through digital Q&A sessions. This interactive approach is different from traditional one-way public communication, where people only receive information without the opportunity to provide feedback.

Furthermore, thematic analysis shows that the message conveyed is not only informative but also persuasive. Content emphasizing program success, field activity documentation, and beneficiary testimonials is designed to build a responsive, transparent, and participatory leadership image.⁹ For example, in uploads related to the food assistance program for underprivileged families, regional heads not only convey distribution schedules but also share photos of activities, brief interviews with beneficiaries, and motivational messages that invite the community to help ensure the program runs smoothly. This strategy reinforces the public perception that the government is present in the community and listens to their aspirations.

In addition, the use of various social media platforms enables adaptation of communication patterns to the characteristics of the audience.¹⁰ Instagram and TikTok, for example, are used for visual content and short videos that capture the attention of younger generations, while Facebook and Twitter are more used for the delivery of policy information and public discussion.¹¹ This differentiation reflects the regional head's understanding of digital audience segmentation, enabling each message to be received effectively based on social media users' preferences. Interview data with public relations officials confirms that this communication pattern is strategically designed. Regional heads and communication teams use a content calendar to align the delivery of welfare programs with hot social issues, such as rising prices of necessities, natural disasters, or public health campaigns. This adjustment demonstrates the flexibility of communication strategies, which are not only reactive to criticism but also proactive in delivering relevant solutions and information.

The communication patterns of regional heads on social media also reflect the integration of digital communication with the effectiveness of social programs. Online public interaction affects offline participation; for example, people who previously only observed digital programs then participated in aid distribution activities, blood donation, or cooperation programs. This shows that interactive digital communication not only builds a political image but also facilitates the community's direct involvement in welfare programs.

Political Public Relations Strategies in Improving Social Welfare

⁹ Veki Edizon Tuhana et al., 'Strategi Digital Public Relations Pemerintah Kota Kupang Melalui Media Sosial', *Jurnal Communio : Jurnal Jurusan Ilmu Komunikasi* 12, no. 2 (July 2023): 297–315, <https://doi.org/10.35508/jikom.v12i2.9173>.

¹⁰ Hilda Rahma Nabila and Lu'Lu Ul Maknunah, 'Strategi Retorika Digital Bagian Protokol Dan Komunikasi Pemerintah Kabupaten Blitar Pada Media Sosial Instagram', *Transgenera: Jurnal Ilmu Sosial, Politik, Dan Humaniora* 3, no. 1 (January 2026): 40–54, <https://doi.org/10.35457/transgenera.v3i1.5605>.

¹¹ Doddie Arya Kusuma et al., 'Pengaruh Media Sosial Terhadap Pola Komunikasi Pemerintah Dan Masyarakat Dalam Era Digital', *Ekasakti Jurnal Penelitian Dan Pengabdian* 5, no. 1 (December 2024): 23–32, <https://doi.org/10.31933/ejpp.v5i1.1206>.

This study found that East Kalimantan regional heads, after the 2024 Regional Elections, implemented a structured and systematic political public relations (PR) strategy to maximize communication with the public through social media. The strategies used are not sporadic or reactive, but are designed with long-term goals in mind: building public trust, increasing community participation, and driving the effectiveness of social welfare programs. Based on content analysis and interviews with public relations staff, the main mechanisms of this PR strategy include: clear, consistent message delivery; use of easy-to-understand language; emphasis on program success; and community involvement in digital discussions and feedback.

Clear and consistent message delivery is the main foundation of this communication strategy.¹² Regional heads ensure that information on social programs, new policies, and government activities is conveyed to the wider community in simple, unambiguous, and easily understood language.¹³ For example, in uploads related to the cash social assistance program for underprivileged families, the message conveyed includes the distribution schedule, recipient requirements, and the mechanism for claiming assistance in detail. This approach not only helps the public understand the program but also minimizes misunderstandings that can lead to public dissatisfaction.¹⁴ Consistency in message delivery is also evident in the frequency of scheduled uploads, so the public can monitor information continuously and feel involved in every program development.¹⁵

In addition, the use of easy-to-understand language is the key to an effective communication strategy.¹⁶ Regional heads and public relations teams recognize that people have diverse educational backgrounds, varying access to information, and differing levels of digital literacy.¹⁷ Therefore, the content is structured with simple sentences, eye-catching visuals, infographics, and short videos that succinctly explain the program.¹⁸ For example, a short video about vaccination activities or food aid distribution clearly outlines steps and a

¹² Prima Ayu Rizqi Mahanani, 'Social Media and Communication Style', *Communicator* 6, no. 1 (2014), <https://journal.umy.ac.id/index.php/jkm/article/view/217>.

¹³ Nic DePaula, Ersin Dincelli, and Teresa M. Harrison, 'Toward a Typology of Government Social Media Communication: Democratic Goals, Symbolic Acts and Self-Presentation', *Government Information Quarterly*, Internet Plus Government: Advancement of Networking Technology and Evolution of the Public Sector, vol. 35, no. 1 (January 2018): 98–108, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2017.10.003>.

¹⁴ Andi Sugirman et al., 'Balancing Individual Political Rights and Institutional Integrity in an Islamic Constitutional Perspective on Party Switching in Indonesia', *El-Mashlahah* 15, no. 2 (December 2025): 369–392, <https://doi.org/10.23971/el-mashlahah.v15i2.9995>.

¹⁵ 'Contesting Sharia and Human Rights in the Digital Sphere: Media Representations of the Caning Controversy under the Qanun Jinayat in Aceh', accessed 28 April 2026, <https://e-journal.iaipntk.ac.id/index.php/jil/article/view/3600>.

¹⁶ Suryati, Hertimi, and Sari, 'Penggunaan Media Sosial Sebagai Media Komunikasi Informasi Jarak Jauh Dalam Suatu Organisasi (Studi Kasus Acara Temu Teman Palembang)'.

¹⁷ Suprapti Widiasih, Faizah Julina, and Indah Septiani Salsabila, 'Analisis Sosial Media Pemerintah Daerah Di Indonesia Berdasarkan Respons Warganet', *Irpia: Jurnal Ilmiah Riset dan Pengembangan*, 31 December 2024, 11–17, <https://doi.org/10.71040/irpia.v9i11.266>.

¹⁸ Musda Asmara and Lilis Sahara, 'Problems with Choosing a Mate in Islam for People Who Choose a Mate through Social Media', *NUSANTARA: Journal of Law Studies* 1, no. 1 (December 2022): 40–49, <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17391105>.

persuasive message that invites people to participate. This strategy ensures that messages are evenly received, reduces information gaps, and increases people's active participation in social programs.

An emphasis on program success is also an important part of this PR strategy. Regional heads routinely highlight the achievements of social welfare programs through visual documentation, periodic reports, and beneficiary testimonials. For example, posts about families receiving social assistance feature photos of them receiving assistance, complemented by a narrative about the impact of the assistance on their daily lives. This approach serves as tangible evidence of the government's success while building a leadership image that is responsive and cares about the community's needs.¹⁹ The observations showed that this kind of content received the highest level of interaction, in the form of appreciative comments and further questions, indicating active public engagement.

In addition to these internal mechanisms, regional heads' communication strategies adapt to social dynamics and public responses.²⁰ When social issues or events directly affect society, such as price increases on necessities or natural disasters, the content uploaded is adjusted accordingly.²¹ For example, uploads related to the price increases of necessities are complemented by additional social assistance information, tips on household efficiency, and appeals to maintain community solidarity. The rapid public response to these actual issues shows that PR strategies are not passive but proactive in addressing community needs. The adaptation of content based on public input also affirms the principle of two-way dialogue in political public relations, where the government not only conveys messages but also listens to citizens' aspirations and responds to real feedback. Table 1 summarizes the main political public relations strategies implemented by regional heads, along with the implementation method and their impact on public perception.

Table 1. Political Public Relations Strategy and Its Impact

PR Strategy	Form of Implementation	Impact on the Public
Transparency	Regular program reports	Increase public trust
Interactivity	Comment replies, Q&A, poll	Strengthening community participation
Submission of Concrete Evidence	Documentation of field activities	Improve the image of responsive leadership
Program Outcomes Emphasis	Highlights of the success of social programs	Increase public awareness and satisfaction

Source: Author's Interpretation

¹⁹ Majed Alsarhan and Nader Alsarhan, 'The Scene of Electronic Fraud Crimes: A Comparative Study of Jordanian and Spanish Legislation', *Al-Biruni Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 2 December 2025, 20, <https://doi.org/10.64440/BIRUNI/BIR0010>.

²⁰ Widiasih, Julina, and Salsabila, 'Analisis Sosial Media Pemerintah Daerah Di Indonesia Berdasarkan Respons Warganet'.

²¹ Zaidah Nur Salamah Lubis, Silvi Rahmawati, and Fadya hHmdi Faisal, 'The Role of Social Media in Education and Disaster Mitigation in the Digital Era', *Warta Dharmawangsa* 19, no. 1 (January 2025): 23–33, Social Media Platforms; Government; The general public., <https://doi.org/10.46576/wdw.v19i1.5683>.

Interviews with public relations staff indicate that this combination of strategies is effective at building political capital while supporting social goals. Transparency through periodic reports or updates on program activities makes the public feel that the government is responsible for the policies and programs it implements. Interactivity through comments, Q&A, or online polls strengthens public participation by providing a space for citizens to express their aspirations, criticisms, and suggestions. The submission of tangible evidence, including documentation of field activities, photos, and videos, strengthens the image of a responsive leadership that cares for citizens' welfare. Meanwhile, the emphasis on program results through highlighting achievements and beneficiary testimonials increases public awareness of the real benefits of the social policies and programs implemented.

The findings of this study also confirm that digital political public relations strategies are not just political rhetoric. The community's active participation in digital programs demonstrates that this strategy has a real impact on the effectiveness of social programs. High public interaction not only increases online engagement but also encourages offline participation, such as attending aid distribution activities, donating blood, or participating in cooperation programs. Thus, political public relations serves as a liaison between the government and the community, ensuring that social welfare programs are not only communicated but also implemented effectively. Overall, the political public relations strategy implemented by East Kalimantan regional heads after the 2024 Regional Elections shows that digital communication can be a powerful instrument in social development. A structured, adaptive, interactive, and evidence-based approach can increase public trust, strengthen community participation, and affirm the success of social welfare programs. These findings confirm that the professional and strategic management of communication through social media is not only a political tool but also an important instrument for achieving concrete social goals.

Public Interaction and Community Response

The analysis of public interaction in this study shows that social media not only function as a one-way information channel but also serve as a significant platform for dialogue between the government and the public. East Kalimantan regional heads, after the 2024 Regional Elections, will utilize digital channels—including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and TikTok—to build interactive communication. Data collected during the six months after the Regional Elections shows that the public actively uses this platform to ask questions, submit criticisms, give suggestions, and express aspirations related to public services. Public interaction is most likely on social welfare issues, such as cash and non-cash assistance, public health services, education, and poverty alleviation programs.

In this context, public interaction is not limited to passive responses such as likes or shares, but rather to active dialogue that includes critical comments, operational questions, and strategic input.²² For example, posts about the distribution of cash social assistance for low-income families received comments about registration procedures, distribution timelines, and

²² Galih Qrisnanda Qalbuadi, Muhammad Muhammad, and Muhammad Saad, 'Media Sosial dan Keterlibatan Politik Generasi Z pada Pilkada Kabupaten Enrekang Tahun 2024', *Jurnal Noken: Ilmu-Ilmu Sosial* 11, no. 2 (December 2025): 575–586, <https://doi.org/10.33506/jn.v11i2.5075>.

beneficiary criteria.²³ Some of the comments also highlighted obstacles in the field, such as distribution delays or administrative errors, which the public relations staff responded to immediately with an official reply. This pattern emphasizes that two-way communication through social media can build a positive perception of the government, as the public feels heard and cared for. This aligns with the theory of political public relations, which emphasizes the importance of dialogue, transparency, and feedback in building healthy relationships between public officials and the public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984).

Furthermore, the results of in-depth interviews with public relations officials show that online public interaction also affects offline participation. Residents who were previously active in digital campaigns tended to be more involved in direct social activities, such as food aid distribution, blood donation programs, mass vaccinations, or community cooperation. This phenomenon demonstrates the synergy between digital communication and the effectiveness of social programs in the field. For example, in the basic food distribution program in one district, many recipients reported learning about the schedule and assistance mechanism through the government's official social media, ensuring on-time attendance and a smoother distribution process.

This active public interaction is not only limited to the general public but also involves community leaders, NGOs, and social activists.²⁴ They use social media to monitor the program's progress, provide input on improving mechanisms, and disseminate accurate information to other residents.²⁵ This approach increases transparency, strengthens public participation, and emphasizes that digital political public relations strategies are not just efforts to build an image but also have a real impact on the implementation of welfare programs.²⁶

In addition, content analysis shows that government responses to public interaction are highly diverse and adaptive.²⁷ Public relations staff consistently respond to questions, clarifications, and criticisms, whether through live comments, Q&A sessions, or online polls.²⁸ For example, when people complain about delays in the distribution of social assistance, the government responds by explaining logistical constraints and providing updates on the latest

²³ Dewi Dahlan, 'Penguatan Partisipasi Publik melalui E-Demokrasi: Studi Kasus Tata Kelola Digital melalui Aplikasi PADUKO di Kota Padang Panjang', *Nakhoda: Jurnal Ilmu Pemerintahan* 24, no. 2 (2025): 265–274, <https://doi.org/10.35967/njip.v24i2.886>.

²⁴ Muhammad Saud and Hendro Margono, 'Indonesia's Rise in Digital Democracy and Youth's Political Participation', *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* 18, no. 4 (2021): 443–454, <https://doi.org/10.1080/19331681.2021.1900019>.

²⁵ Nibrosu Rohid et al., 'Digital Activism in Contemporary Islamic Politics: A Critical Analysis of Social Media's Impact on Islamic Movements', *MILRev: Metro Islamic Law Review* 4, no. 1 (April 2025): 208–233, <https://doi.org/10.32332/milrev.v4i1.10159>.

²⁶ Taufiq Shobri et al., 'Legal Framework for Addressing Cybercrime Threats in Strengthening Indonesia's National Defense and Security', *Trunojoyo Law Review* 8, no. 2 (April 2026): 178–203, <https://doi.org/10.21107/tr.v8i2.33492>.

²⁷ Elawati Elawati and Victoria Kusumaningtyas Priyambodo, 'Engaging Youth: The Role of Social Media in Promoting Public Accountability in Local Government', *E-Jurnal Akuntansi* 35, no. 2 (January 2025), <https://doi.org/10.24843/EJA.2025.v35.i02.p18>.

²⁸ Siti Faizatun Nazariyah and Andre Yosua M, 'The Role of Digital Communication in Increasing Public Involvement in the 2024 Election Campaign on Social Media', *The Journal of Academic Science* 1, no. 7 (December 2024): 898–905, <https://doi.org/10.59613/d29s1x79>.

schedule. This approach makes people feel that the government is actively involved in solving their problems, thereby building stronger trust. This adaptive response also helps governments adjust communication strategies, prioritize the most relevant issues, and tailor messages to evolving social contexts. In addition to building participation and trust, public interaction also contributes to program evaluation.²⁹ The comments, criticisms, and suggestions that come in are important data for the government to assess the effectiveness of program implementation.³⁰ For example, public input on the distribution of cash assistance helps the government improve administrative procedures and speed up the distribution process. Thus, social media not only serves as a communication channel but also as a monitoring and evaluation tool that supports the improvement of public service quality.

The findings of this study show that social media serves as an effective strategic tool for regional heads to improve social welfare. An interactive, responsive, and community-based communication approach can strengthen the image of transparent, caring leadership. More than that, active public interaction creates a communication network that expands the reach of social programs, encourages collaboration between the government and the community, and increases the effectiveness of programs on the ground. This emphasizes that the success of social welfare programs depends not only on budgets and policies but also on communication strategies that build public engagement.

The contribution of this research is twofold. Academically, this study enriches the literature on digital political public relations in the context of local government by emphasizing real social outcomes and public participation as indicators of success. In practice, these findings offer a communication model that other regional heads can apply, especially in the post-Pilkada context, to increase the effectiveness of social welfare programs and public engagement. In addition, this study opens the door to further research on integrating social media into public policy, evaluating digital programs, and developing innovative communication strategies in local government. Overall, public interaction through social media is not just an indicator of digital engagement, but is the foundation of an effective political public relations strategy. With interactive, adaptive, and community-focused communication, regional heads can bridge the gap between the government and citizens, build trust, increase participation, and generate real social impact. These findings confirm that social media is a crucial tool in transforming modern government communication, linking political strategies, public services, and social welfare.

Conclusion

This research shows that East Kalimantan regional heads, after the 2024 Regional Elections, consistently use social media as a political public relations strategy to improve social welfare. The communication pattern applied is bidirectional, interactive, and adaptive to public responses, with a focus on clear message delivery, easy-to-understand language, program success, and community engagement in digital discussions. This strategy has proven effective

²⁹ Sukidin, Choirul Hudha, and Basrowi, 'Shaping Democracy in Indonesia: The Influence of Multicultural Attitudes and Social Media Activity on Participation in Public Discourse and Attitudes toward Democracy', *Social Sciences & Humanities Open* 11 (January 2025): 101440, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssaho.2025.101440>.

³⁰ Yanliu Lin and Stijn Kant, 'Using Social Media for Citizen Participation: Contexts, Empowerment, and Inclusion', *Sustainability* 13 (June 2021): 6635, <https://doi.org/10.3390/su13126635>.

in building public trust, strengthening community participation, and increasing the effectiveness of welfare programs, both online and offline. The results of the study confirm that social media is not just a means of publication, but a strategic instrument that can bridge the government and society, strengthen the image of leadership, and generate real social impact. Based on these findings, the research can further explore the effectiveness of different social media platforms across audience segments and analyze the impact of digital communication on the long-term sustainability of social programs. Follow-up studies can also integrate qualitative and quantitative evaluations to measure the relationship between public engagement and welfare outcomes systematically. Thus, future research will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of digital political public relations in improving the effectiveness of public policies and community welfare, and will offer practical recommendations for other local governments in Indonesia and internationally.

Acknowledgement

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Universitas Hasanuddin, Indonesia, for the academic support and facilities provided throughout the research process. Appreciation is also extended to all lecturers, staff, informants, and community members who generously contributed their time, information, and assistance, enabling this study to be conducted successfully. The participation and support of all parties have been invaluable in data collection, validation of findings, and understanding the social context in the field.

Author Contributions Statement

Muhammad Faisal, Andi Alimuddin Unde, and Muhammad Farid collectively contributed to the conceptualization, research design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation of the study. Muhammad Faisal led the drafting of the manuscript, while Andi Alimuddin Unde contributed to the methodology and data analysis. Muhammad Farid provided critical revisions and insights throughout the research process, ensuring the accuracy and coherence of the final manuscript. Mamoon Suliman Alsmadi and Mohamed W. Abouyounes contributed to the editing and review of the article, enhancing its academic quality, clarity, and overall rigor. All authors have read and approved the submitted version of the paper and take responsibility for its content.

AI Usage Statement

AI tools were used solely to assist with language editing, formatting, and improving clarity. All ideas, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions presented in this manuscript are entirely the authors' own, and all AI-assisted outputs were carefully reviewed to ensure academic integrity.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this study. This research was conducted independently, without any financial, commercial, or personal relationships that could be perceived as influencing the results or interpretations.

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