

**UTILIZATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PROVIDING PUBLIC INFORMATION BY THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE OF JOMBANG REGENCY, INDONESIA**Maheswari Jelita Adristi<sup>1)\*</sup><sup>1</sup>Program Studi Sosiologi, Universitas Negeri Surabaya\*Corresponding Author: [maheswari.23397@mhs.unesa.ac.id](mailto:maheswari.23397@mhs.unesa.ac.id)**ABSTRACT**

This study examines the use of social media by the Public Relations of the Jombang Regency Education and Culture Office in disseminating public information. The research problem stems from the tendency of government public relations communication to remain one-way, despite utilizing digital media such as Instagram and the official website. This study uses a descriptive qualitative method with data collection techniques such as observation of Instagram and website content over the past six months, digital archive documentation, and in-depth interviews with public relations staff. The analytical tools used are Max Weber's legitimacy theory and Jürgen Habermas's public sphere theory. Data analysis was carried out through reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions using triangulation of sources and techniques. The results show that Instagram is actively used as a medium for publishing activities and announcements, while the website functions as the institution's official archive. However, public relations communication practices are still dominated by a one-way pattern with a low level of public interaction. From the perspective of Weber's legitimacy theory, digital media functions as a means of maintaining bureaucratic legitimacy. Meanwhile, based on Habermas's public sphere theory, digital media has not fully functioned as a dialogue space between the state and society. This study emphasizes that the digital transformation of government public relations requires a change in communication paradigm to be more participatory and responsive.

**Keywords:** Social Media, Government Public Relations, Public Information, Legitimacy, Digital Public Space

**ABSTRAK**

*Penelitian ini mengkaji pemanfaatan media sosial oleh Humas Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency dalam penyebaran informasi publik. Permasalahan penelitian berangkat dari kecenderungan komunikasi humas pemerintahan yang masih bersifat satu arah, meskipun telah memanfaatkan media digital seperti Instagram dan website resmi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif dengan teknik pengumpulan data berupa observasi konten Instagram dan website selama enam bulan terakhir, dokumentasi arsip digital, serta wawancara mendalam dengan staf humas. Pisau analisis yang digunakan adalah teori legitimasi Max Weber dan teori ruang publik Jürgen Habermas. Analisis data dilakukan melalui reduksi, penyajian, dan penarikan kesimpulan dengan triangulasi sumber dan teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Instagram dimanfaatkan secara aktif sebagai media publikasi kegiatan dan pengumuman, sedangkan website berfungsi sebagai arsip resmi institusi. Namun, praktik komunikasi humas masih didominasi oleh pola satu arah dengan tingkat interaksi publik yang rendah. Dalam perspektif teori legitimasi Weber, media digital berfungsi sebagai sarana mempertahankan legitimasi birokrasi. Sementara itu, berdasarkan teori ruang publik Habermas, media digital belum sepenuhnya berfungsi sebagai ruang dialog antara negara dan masyarakat. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa transformasi digital humas pemerintahan memerlukan perubahan paradigma komunikasi yang lebih partisipatif dan responsif.*

**Kata Kunci:** Media Sosial, Humas Pemerintah, Informasi Publik, Legitimasi, Ruang Publik Digital

## INTRODUCTION

Access to public information is a crucial requirement and criterion for the functioning of a democratic state and the functioning of checks and balances within a country (Szustakiewicz, 2025; Bondar, 2025). Furthermore, realizing the right of access to public information is crucial for preventing and detecting corruption, a crucial prerequisite for transparency. It has been established that the right of access to public information is a component of the human right to information and a fundamental constitutional human right. Practices in nearly all democratic and human rights-respecting countries emphasize the importance of protecting the right of access to public information. This demonstrates to countries that compliance with this right is mandatory and the importance of implementing effective control systems to implement the right under study (Shevchuk, 2023).

The dissemination of public information is an important part of the responsibility of government institutions to society. In the context of government bureaucracy, information delivery activities are not only administrative in nature, but also a means of building trust, legitimacy, and relations between the state and citizens. Public relations as a device for government organizations has a strategic role in ensuring that policy information, programs, and public services can be accessed, understood, and accepted by the public at large (Ernungtyas & Boer, 2023). Especially in rural areas / communities with access and low digital literacy. This shows that the "presence of the state in the digital space" can have real contextual limitations (Haryanti & Rusfian, 2018).

In practice, public relations of government agencies are now widely utilizing social media and official websites as the main channel of public communication. Instagram and website social Media not only serve as a medium for delivering announcements, but also become a container for the appearance of the image of institutions and representations of the presence of the state in the digital space (Abdilah & Purnamasari, 2024). However, the use of digital media by Government Public Relations often faces problems, such as the tendency of one-way communication, the dominance of bureaucratic language, and limited interaction with the community. Several studies have shown that although government social media is open, its management is still more emphasis on the publication of information than dialogue and public participation (Aji, et. al., 2023)

This problem is becoming increasingly relevant to Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency, because the education sector is directly related to the broad public interest, ranging from students, parents, educators, to the general public. Information about

education policies, administrative services, and educational programs demands clarity, timeliness, and affordability. When such information is conveyed through social media and websites without a mature communication strategy, the goals of transparency and public service are potentially not optimally achieved (Teguh et al., 2024). Therefore, it is important to examine how public relations Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency utilize social media and official websites in the dissemination of public information, not only from a technical point of view, but also in terms of social relations between institutions and the community (Khan et al., 2021).

This study departs from the need to understand the communication practices of the Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency empirically. The focus of the study is directed to the utilization of Instagram accounts and official websites as a medium for disseminating public information. Through a descriptive qualitative approach, this study seeks to describe how the type of content, message delivery patterns, and interactions built by public relations in the digital space. The methods used include observation of content over the past six months, documentation in the form of archives and uploaded screenshots, as well as interviews with 2 public relations staff directly involved in the management of the media.

The purpose of this study was to describe the use of social media Instagram and the official website by the Public Relations Department of education in the dissemination of public information, as well as identify how communication strategies are applied in the practice of digital public relations. In addition, this study aims to see the extent to which digital media serves as a means of public communication that is informative and responsive to the needs of the community.

In the digital era, the use of social media by government institutions has become increasingly important in ensuring transparency, accountability, and public engagement. Social media platforms are no longer merely tools for disseminating information, but also serve as interactive spaces that enable communication between the government and citizens (Lovari & Bowen, 2020). However, the effectiveness of social media in fostering two-way communication remains a critical issue, particularly at the local government level, where communication practices often still tend to be one-way.

Previous studies have extensively examined the role of social media in public sector communication, especially in developed countries and at the national level (Mergel, 2020). Nevertheless, there is still limited research focusing on how local government institutions in developing regions utilize social media as a medium for public information dissemination,

particularly when analyzed from a sociological perspective related to legitimacy and the digital public sphere.

Theoretically, this study uses two main perspectives. First, Max Weber's rational-legal theory of legitimacy and authority views government bureaucracies as formal organizations that gain legitimacy through legal rules, structures, and authority. In this context, communication carried out by the Public Relations Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency through social media and websites can be understood as a form of official bureaucratic practice aimed at maintaining the legitimacy of the state in the eyes. Jürgen Habermas' theory of public space emphasizes the importance of dialogical communication between the state and society. Social Media and official websites can be understood as digital public spaces that have the potential to open up public participation, although in practice they are often still dominated by one-way communication from institutions to citizens.

Using this theoretical framework, this study does not only look at social media and websites as technical means of delivering information, but as social practices that reflect the relationship of power, legitimacy, and communication patterns between the education office and the community. The results of this study are expected to provide academic contributions in the study of sociology of public communication, as well as providing practical benefits for the management of Government Public Relations to be more effective, open, and responsive to the needs of the community.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim to understand in depth the use of social media Instagram and the official website by Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency in the dissemination of public information. This approach was chosen because the study did not aim to measure quantitative relationships, but rather describe the practice of Public Relations Communication as a social process that takes place in the context of government organizations (Rijali, 2018). The research was conducted in the field of Public Relations Department of Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency during the internship period of the researcher.

In this study, researchers act as the main instrument as well as participants, because they are directly involved in daily public relations activities. The position of the researcher as part of the organization allows obtaining a fuller understanding of the process of managing social media, the preparation of information content, as well as the consideration of communication

carried out by public relations. This approach is known as participatory observation, where the involvement of researchers is precisely the source of rich and contextual data. The subjects of this study were public relations staff directly involved in the management of Instagram accounts and the official website of the agency, with the number of informants interviewed as many as two people. Instagram and the official website of the agency published over the past six months, considering that in that period the Instagram account of the agency was identified as active and routinely producing public information content.

Data collection techniques are carried out through content observation, documentation, and in-depth interviews. Content observation is done by observing Instagram uploads and website articles, including the type of information, language style, visuals, upload frequency, and message delivery patterns. Documentation is done by collecting digital archives in the form of uploaded screenshots, captions, and website pages as written data that can be analyzed. In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to public relations staff to explore the considerations, objectives, and communication strategies used in digital media management. The combination of these techniques allows researchers to obtain data that complement each other and enrich the analysis (Akhmad, 2015). Data analysis was carried out qualitatively with the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion, as stated by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014). Data from observations, documentation, and interviews were sorted according to the focus of the study, then compiled in the form of descriptive narratives to see the patterns of Public Relations Communication in the dissemination of public information. To maintain the validity of the data, the researchers applied triangulation of sources and techniques, namely by comparing the findings of content observation, interview results, and documentation data (Nurfajriani et al., 2024). In addition, researchers maintain reflexivity by being aware of the position as a participant in order to maintain an analytical distance in the process of data interpretation.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

### **The Urgency of Using Social Media in Providing Public Information**

Various previous studies have shown that the use of digital media by Government Public Relations in Indonesia is still more dominant as a means of disseminating information than as a space for dialogue and public participation. Research Abdilah & Purnamasari, (2024) found that the use of Instagram by the Karawang Regency Communications and Information Office has been running quite actively in producing and distributing public service information. However, the level of interaction and community involvement is still relatively low so that the

communication that is built tends to be one-way. Social Media serves more as a means of publication and transparency of information than as a medium of dialogical communication between the government and the community.

The findings are in line with the study Maulvi et al., (2023) that emphasizes that social media has become an important instrument for Government Public Relations in conveying information, building an image, and supporting public services and crisis management. Although social media has great potential for two-way communication, this study shows that in practice Government Public Relations still faces structural and bureaucratic obstacles, so the use of social media is often not optimal in accommodating public aspirations and building active community involvement. As a result, public relations communication tends to stop at an informative, rather than participatory, function.

In addition to social media, research Ernungtyas & Boer, (2023) examines the role of social media and official government websites on transparency, public trust, and citizen involvement in Indonesia. The results of the quantitative study showed that exposure to information through official government websites and social media had a significant effect on the perception of transparency. The perception of transparency then contributes strongly to increased public confidence, which in turn encourages citizen engagement. However, this study focuses more on the relationship between variables and has not examined in depth the practice of public relations work in the bureaucratic structure of government

Although these studies are relevant and enrich the understanding of the use of digital media by the government, there are gaps that have not been widely discussed. Previous research has generally focused on the effectiveness of social media, the role of digital media, or the relationship between transparency, trust, and public engagement quantitatively and conceptually. Meanwhile, studies that place PR communication practices as part of bureaucratic structures and view social media and websites as digital public spaces influenced by the logic of power and legitimacy are still relatively limited.

This study takes a different position by specifically examining the PR communication practices of the Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency through social media and official websites. This study uses Sociological Perspectives, namely Max Weber's theory of legitimacy and rational-legal authority and Jürgen Habermas ' theory of public space. Through this approach, the study not only identifies one-way communication patterns in public relations practice, but also explains why they arise as a consequence of bureaucratic culture,

formal procedures, institutional prudence, as well as the legitimacy demands of government organizations.

In addition, this study provides new empirical contributions by combining social media content analysis, website analysis, and in-depth interviews with public relations staff directly involved in digital media management. The involvement of researchers in the context of internships allows a deeper understanding of the internal dynamics of Public Relations, bureaucratic pressures, and limited resources, aspects that have not been widely disclosed in previous studies.

Thus, this study not only confirms the findings of previous research on the tendency of one-way communication in government public relations, but also expands the study by placing social media and websites as social practices that are closely related to bureaucratic legitimacy and the limitations of digital public space. This contribution enriches the study of sociology of public communication, especially in the context of Public Relations of educational institutions at the regional level.

### **Overview of The Use of Social Media And Websites By the Department of Education and Culture of Jombang**

Social media has become a crucial communication tool in the context of modern governance. Social media serves not only as a one-way means of conveying information but also as a medium for participation, transparency, and strengthening the relationship between government and citizens. Governments that actively manage social media will strengthen public legitimacy and build public trust through information transparency. Digital public communication refers to the use of digital technology to convey messages and information to the wider public in an open and transparent manner. According to Criado and Villodre (2021), effective digital communication must meet three main principles: accessibility, content relevance, and interactivity. Local governments that consistently utilize social media can create stronger connections with the public, especially during crises or when critical information is disseminated rapidly. In the context of Instagram, the use of visual elements such as images, infographics, and short videos can increase public attention and understanding of public service information (Tea Said & Ardiensyah, 2025).

Based on the results of observations during the period August-December 2025, the Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency actively utilize two main digital media, namely Instagram (@disdikbudjombang) and official website (dikbud.jombangkab.go.id), as a means of disseminating public information. The Instagram

account has more than 900 uploads with a follower count of more than 5,000 accounts, which shows that social media has become a fairly established communication channel and is routinely used by this agency. The data findings show that Instagram is used consistently almost every day, especially for publicizing official activities, policy socialization, education, announcements, and Big Day greetings. Meanwhile, the official website is more focused as a medium of documentation and archives of official activities, with a total of more than 50 contents during five months of observation, all in the form of activity news.

The difference in the functioning of these two media was also confirmed through interviews with public relations staff, who stated that the website is positioned as an official Medium with an audience that needs detailed and formal information, while Instagram is aimed at reaching the wider public with more concise and visual information. Thus, in general, public relations has segmented the media based on audience character and communication function.

However, this finding also indicates that the use of social media by the institution still tends to reflect a one-way communication pattern, where information dissemination is more dominant than interactive engagement. This condition is in line with previous studies which argue that government social media is often utilized primarily as an information broadcasting tool rather than as a space for dialogue and public participation (Criado et al., 2021). Furthermore, research by Mergel (2020) highlights that although digital platforms provide opportunities for two-way communication, many public sector institutions have not fully optimized their interactive potential.

Therefore, the main trend of the ongoing digital transformation is the rapid socialization of the internet. Social media plays a crucial role in this process. Media imagery indicates the emergence of a kind of "digital effect" accompanied by the phenomenon of the relationship between audience size, value, and awareness of information (Kuzmin et al., 2022). Furthermore, the use of social and digital media in public services has its own main attraction, namely the emotional and normative satisfaction that users can obtain here. This can lead to increased offline emotional and normative agency for users or the general public, as this will increase the satisfaction of emotional needs outside of social media. This was evident when restrictions on digital or offline social interactions were implemented during the Covid-19 pandemic (Graf & Muslimin, 2022). During the pandemic, all groups, including government, companies, educational institutions, and the public as users of public services, have become aware of the importance of digital-based public service systems or models that have various advantages compared to manual and classic models.

In the author’s view, the segmentation between Instagram and the official website demonstrates a strategic awareness in managing digital communication; however, it also suggests that the transformation toward participatory digital governance is still limited. Social media, which ideally functions as a digital public sphere, has not been maximized to facilitate feedback, dialogue, and active citizen engagement. This indicates that the role of public relations remains largely informational rather than communicative in a deliberative sense

**Characteristics of Content and Patterns of Information Delivery On Instagram and The Website**

The results of observing Instagram content show that most of the uploads use formal language styles and display institutional symbols, such as official officials, agency logos, and state attributes. The content is dominated by video documentation of activities and digital posters with visuals that highlight the presence of institutions, not community figures or service recipients.

**Table 1:** Classification of Instagram Content Types of Public Relations of Disdikbud Kabupaten Jombang

<b>Content Type</b>	<b>Content Form</b>	<b>Language Style</b>	<b>Visual Dominance</b>	<b>Description</b>
Office activities	Video	Formal	Office symbols	The most important content
Policy socialization	Video	Formal	Institutions	Minimal call for interaction
Education	Video/Infographic	Formal	Institutions	One-way information
Announcement	Infographic	Semi-formal	Services	Not routine
Speech	Digital Poster	Formal	Pejabat/instansi	Symbolic

**Sources:**

(Instagram content observation Data @disdikbudjombang, August-December 2025)

Public interaction in the form of likes and comments does exist, but is relatively low when compared to the number of followers. The average comments that appear are mostly in the form of support, questions, or complaints, but most do not get a reply from the public relations. Comment Data shows that only a small percentage of comments are replied to, and even then they are generally of a short normative or informative nature.

Meanwhile, website content has a more rigid and bureaucratic character. All website content is in the form of official activity news with a formal writing structure, using standard

language style, minimal invitation for interaction, and serves as an official archive. No specific content related to policy announcements or public service information was found during the observation period. This suggests that the website is positioned more as a tool of administrative legitimacy than a medium of dialogical communication.

Therefore, the use of Instagram social media in providing public information services. Instagram, as a popular social media platform, has great potential to increase access and transparency of information to the public. Although Instagram is used effectively to disseminate information about government policies, programs, and public services, public interaction is still relatively low. However, when compared to human or classic public services, public services using social media are better. This shows that although the information presented is quite informative, it is less able to attract attention and encourage public participation. However, to increase the effectiveness of Instagram as a means of public information services, improvements are needed in terms of content strategies that are more attractive, interactive, and encourage active public involvement. Thus, Instagram can be more optimal in increasing transparency and communication between the government and the public (Diasicha and Khotimah, 2025).

Thus, the use of Instagram as an instrument to strengthen transparency and accountability in the provision of public services can serve as a medium for disseminating service information, a means of interaction between village governments and the public, and a platform for open documentation of government activities. Key supporting factors for the success of this strategy include human resource readiness, technical training from sub-district governments, and progressive local leadership. Therefore, comprehensively improving digital literacy and establishing a professional social media management team are strategic steps to optimize the use of Instagram as an instrument for transparent and participatory public services (Sharil & Putra, 2025).

### **The Use of Digital Media As A Bureaucratic Practice and An Attempt To Maintain Legitimacy**

If analyzed using the theory of legitimacy and rational-legal authority of Max Weber, the practice of communication conducted by the Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency reflects the character of government bureaucracy that is oriented to rules, procedures, and formal authority. The content published, both on Instagram and websites,

mostly represents official activities, official attendance, and official programs that have gained structural legitimacy.

The content production process that involves the approval of the leadership, the limitation of information that can and cannot be published, and the tendency to use formal language indicate that public relations communication is still strongly influenced by bureaucratic logic. This was also confirmed by respondents who stated that although there is not always direct approval, the publicist has understood the institutional "limitations" in the publication of information.

In the Weberian perspective, this practice serves to maintain the legitimacy of the state in the eyes of the public. Social Media and websites are tools to show that the Education Office is actively working, carrying out its duties, and is officially present in the digital public space. In other words, digital communication is utilized as an extension of the formal bureaucracy, not as an experimental space for open dialogue. However, the consequence is that communication tends to be one-way and symbolic. The main focus is not on the public response, but rather on the delivery of information and the image of the institution as an orderly, active and administratively legitimate organization.

This finding is consistent with recent studies which suggest that digital government communication often reproduces traditional bureaucratic structures in online environments, where control, formality, and institutional image remain dominant over interactive engagement (Hofmann et al., 2020). Furthermore, research by Zavattaro & Brainard (2022), indicates that public sector social media is frequently used to construct and maintain institutional legitimacy, rather than to facilitate deliberative communication with citizens.

Accordingly, the use of information and communication technology in government is essential to transform government services to make them more accessible, effective, and accountable. This is particularly relevant to achieving the SDGs, which specifically address institutional strengthening. This goal, outlined in point 16 of the SDGs, is "Develop effective, accountable, and transparent institutions at all levels" and "Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory, and representative decision-making at all levels." This can be seen and realized through open e-government. Furthermore, since the issuance of Presidential Instruction No. 3 of 2003 concerning the National Policy and Strategy for E-Government Development, many regions have implemented e-government in public services, as evidenced by the growing number of government institutions leveraging advances in information technology as a medium for facilitating the delivery of public information and providing easier public services (Zahara and Aryansah, 2023).

The use of social media as an information medium is a form of application of Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, which states that the state guarantees the right of citizens to know the plans for making public policies, public policy programs, and public decision-making processes, as well as the reasons for making a public decision (Hafidhah, et al., 2020). There are various types of social media applications used by the Indonesian public. Instagram is one application that is quite popular among people from both the upper and lower middle classes. In this context, it can be emphasized that the use of digital media in public services is a demand and development of the times as well as a mandate from legal regulations that have a legitimate basis (Zahara and Aryansah, 2023).

In the author's view, although the use of digital media reflects an adaptive effort by the bureaucracy to remain relevant in the digital era, the communication approach remains largely symbolic and administrative. Social media has not yet been fully utilized as a space for dialogical interaction or public deliberation, as envisioned in contemporary communication theories. As a result, communication tends to be one-way, with a primary focus on information delivery and image construction, rather than on fostering meaningful public engagement. This suggests that the transformation toward a more participatory and responsive model of digital governance is still limited within the institution.

### **Social Media and Websites as Digital Public Spaces and Their Implications in Society**

In the digital era, social media has become a strategic tool in strengthening communication between the government and the public to disseminate public service information more quickly, widely, and efficiently. Referring to the New Public Service, which emphasizes the importance of citizen participation and information transparency in governance, digital and social media such as websites and Instagram have proven effective for conveying announcements, service schedules, documenting activities, and interacting directly with citizens. However, limited digital literacy and internet access pose challenges in optimizing these channels. Nevertheless, the government's use of digital media contributes to increasing transparency and accessibility of public service information, although additional strategies are needed to reach all levels of society evenly (Tea Said & Ardiensyah, 2025).

In the perspective of Jürgen Habermas' public space theory, social media and official government websites have the potential to become arenas for dialogue between the state and society. The ideal public space allows the rational exchange of ideas, criticisms and aspirations without the domination of power. However, the results showed that the potential has not been

optimally utilized by the Public Relations Department of Education and Culture of Jombang. Although Instagram's social media is open and allows interaction through comments, its management practices are still dominated by one-way communication. Most public comments, including questions, criticisms, and complaints, do not get a response from the publicist.

**Table 2:** Public Interaction Patterns And Public Relations Response On Instagram Account @Disdikbudjombang

Types Of Comments	Frequency Response	Public Relations	General Patterns
Support	Height	Not reciprocated	Symbolic
Inquiry	Medium	Rarely answered	One Direction
Criticism	Low	Almost unrequited	Avoid
Complaints	Medium	Inconsistent	Bureaucratic

**Source:**

Documentation of Instagram comments @disdikbudjombang, August-December 2025)

This shows that the digital public space created is still pseudo. Social Media has opened access to information, but it has not fully opened the space for dialogue. The state is present as a transmitter of the message, while the public acts more as a passive receiver. Within the framework of Habermas, this condition indicates that communicative rationality has not yet been fully realized, since communication is still dominated by institutional interests, not two-way argumentative exchanges. The official Website is even further from the concept of a dialogical public space, since its functions are more archival and verification of information. The absence of discussion columns or public response mechanisms reinforces the website's position as an authoritative medium, not a deliberative space.

The findings of this study indicate that Public Relations Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency has been quite optimal in terms of consistency of publication and utilization of digital media as a means of dissemination of public information. However, the optimization is still focused on the aspects of delivering information, not on strengthening public interaction and participation. Limited human resources, time pressure, and bureaucratic demands are factors that affect communication patterns that tend to be one-way. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the content has also not been carried out systematically, as recognized by the respondents, so that the indicator of the success of communication is still measured from the delivery of information, not from the quality of interaction.

In the context of the sociology of public communication, this condition shows the tension between bureaucratic logic (Weber) and the ideal of democratic public space (Habermas). Digital Media is becoming an arena where countries are trying to maintain

legitimacy while being faced with demands for transparency and dialogue. This study confirms that digital transformation in Government Public Relations is not enough just to be present on social media, but also requires a change in the paradigm of communication that is more participatory and responsive.

## CONCLUSION

The use of Instagram social media and the official website by the Department of Education and Culture of Jombang Regency has served as the main means of disseminating public information, especially in conveying official activities, policy socialization, and education to the public. Digital Media is utilized consistently and routinely, thus demonstrating the institution's commitment to presenting educational information openly in the digital space. However, communication practices are still strongly influenced by the logic of government bureaucracy. Based on the perspective of Max Weber's theory of legitimacy and rational-legal authority, Public Relations Communication through Instagram and websites emphasizes aspects of formality, compliance with rules, and representation of institutions and officials as symbols of the legitimacy and authority of the state. Digital Media serves as an extension of the bureaucracy to show the performance, presence, and legitimacy of institutions in public, so that the communication orientation is more informative and symbolic than dialogical. From the point of view of Jürgen Habermas' public space theory, social media and the official website of the Jombang Regency education and Culture Office have not yet fully functioned as a dialogic digital public space. Although social media provides interaction features, its management practices are still dominated by one-way communication from institutions to society. Responses to comments, questions, criticisms, and public complaints are still very limited, so that public participation in the public communication process has not been optimally facilitated. The official Website serves even more as an archive and administrative reference than as a two-way communication medium. This study shows the tension between the demands of bureaucratic legitimacy and the ideal of participatory public communication. Digital transformation in Government Public Relations has not been fully followed by a change in communication paradigm, from simply delivering information to responsive and dialogical communication. Thus, the presence of social media and websites has not automatically created a democratic public space, but rather still reproduces bureaucratic communication patterns in digital format. Based on these findings, this study suggests that the Public Relations Department of Education and culture of Jombang Regency should not only focus on the consistency of

publications and the accuracy of information, but also begin to develop more interactive and participatory communication strategies. Strengthening the capacity of human resources in the field of Public Relations, the preparation of content effectiveness evaluation indicators, and the more active use of social media interaction features can be strategic steps to improve the quality of public communication. Thus, digital media not only serves as a tool of institutional legitimacy, but also as a space for dialogue that strengthens the relationship between the Department of education and the community.

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