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## Functions of Government Communication in Building Credibility: Local Government of Banten Province

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### ABSTRACT

Government communication plays a crucial role in enhancing the government's credibility. These two aspects are inseparable; if the government's credibility is to increase, it is essential to realize the communication function effectively. Banten Province is one of the regions in Indonesia that once had a powerful oligarchic structure. This research aims to determine the role of government communication in establishing the credibility of local governments in Banten Province. The approach used in this study is the postpositivist paradigm, known as Quasi-Qualitative Design (QQD), which utilizes theory as a basis for thinking and analysis in the field. Therefore, during the data collection phase, the researcher will conduct qualitative research thoroughly. The research data was gathered through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Once collected, the data is analyzed both manually and with the NVivo application. The study results indicate that the government's communication function in enhancing credibility has not been optimally implemented. This is evidenced by the two dimensions of the government's communication function that have not been maximized: the functions of influencing and conveying information. While the other two functions are operational, they need to be optimized. The aspect of local government credibility has been effectively implemented; of the four dimensions analyzed, all four have operated in harmony and balance, leaving no prominent dimension, including power, competence, integrity, and attractiveness

## INTRODUCTION

Increasing the credibility of local governments can be well realized through effective, transparent, and accountable communication skills. However, realizing this is not an easy job because the current development of digitalization makes it easy for citizens to access all the information. This certainly has an impact on public perception, attitudes, and behaviors when assessing the activities carried out by the government. This reality is increasingly complex with the development of the digitalization era 5.0, which requires the ability of the government to package government communication that is transparent, effective, and accountable, and able to explain to the public, as owners, as well as stakeholders at the state and government levels. The success of local government is highly determined by the communication skills between leaders and the communities they lead.

Government communication is the delivery of various government policies to guide a country's everyday life and achieve the greatest happiness in this world and the hereafter without harming any party illegally (Hasan, 2008). Government communication is likened to the flow of blood in the human body, then in the administration of government, when the flow of communication is not smooth in the administration of government, it will result in a blockage in the implementation of the wheels of government. Related to this concept, government communication can be harmonized as a process of delivering various policies, work programs, strategies, ideas, and government ideas in guiding a country's coexistence to realize the greatest happiness in this world and the hereafter without harming any party illegally (Hasan, 2010).

Departing from this definition, if there are mistakes, errors, and inconsistencies in communicating various government policies, it will cause miscommunication, when not resolved promptly, can lead to misperceptions; if those misperceptions remain uncorrected, it results in the emergence of misunderstanding, which can have an impact on the occurrence of misbehavior. The condition of errors and mistakes in the meaning of

communication in the delivery of various government policies can result in errors in the implementation of work to hinder the quality of achieving government goals, for this reason the arrangement of government communication is urgent to improve the quality and intensity of communication, which is predicted to minimize miscommunication, misperception, misunderstanding and even to minimize misbehavior in activities Government activities to realize strategies, work programs, missions and visions can even interfere with the achievement of the goals of the existence of government functions.

The importance of the government's communication function in realizing a credible local government, both at the central and regional levels, is predicted to be able to build public trust in the government itself. Speaking in the context of credibility, there are two conditions for building the credibility of local governments. **First**, the government must 'understand' what is being done. Understanding what is being done means having a clear plan of what he wants to do in the future to advance the region. **Second**, the government must be trusted by its people. In a broader sense, it is trusted by the public because public trust is an important thing that must be achieved (Nofi, 2017).

Based on the results of Posner and Kouzes' research, it was stated that the most important thing, as well as the foundation of implementing local government, is **credibility**. Credibility is one of the qualities that makes the government respected, admired, appreciated, and sincerely obeyed by its people. Posner and Kouzes state, "If you do not believe in the messenger, you will not believe the message". Hamilton later added this statement in Posner and Kouzes: "You cannot follow someone who is not credible, who does not truly believe in what they are doing and how they are doing it." (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). Therefore, it can be concluded that credibility is the main thing that the central and regional governments need to build and maintain to educate and influence the community to become obedient citizens.

From the empirical reality in the field, the government's communication function has not been running as it should. For example, with the emergence of a policy as a form of written communication between the government and the community, it is manifested in the form of binding rules with various consequences that are considered unpopular in the eyes of the public and tend to prioritize the interests of certain groups. In addition, various negative narratives, incomplete news, and information about corruption cases in Indonesia are obtained through the mass media. The mass media as a government communication agent should also be able to package this information as best as possible because the information and messages conveyed by the mass media can shape public opinion on implementing the government.

The decline in public trust in the government and state institutions also indirectly affects public trust in implementing local government, especially with the rampant corruption cases committed by regional heads. Data on corruption cases of regional heads obtained since the establishment of the Commission eradication corruption, namely 2004-2019, data was obtained that there were 114 regional heads consisting of 17 governors, 74 regents and 23 mayors who were entangled in corruption cases with the majority of cases being bribery/gratuity cases as many as 81 cases and after that followed by cases of budget abuse as many as 27 cases and followed by cases of procurement of goods and services as many as 13 cases (Pusparisa, 2019).

The most interesting corruption case in Indonesia in recent years has been in the Banten

Province area, caused by the practice of oligarchy in power in the form of political dynasties. Even a news page stated that the Commission's eradication of corruption released 10 regions with indicators very prone to corruption crimes in Indonesia. Of the 10 regions, Banten occupies the ninth position of the most corrupt regions in Indonesia, with a total of 24 corruption cases. This figure is greater than South Sumatra Province's, with 22 corruption cases. The data is based on findings from 2014 – 2019 (Difa, 2020).

Judging from several aspects of democracy, namely civil liberties, Banten Province has an index value of 80.41 or ranks 26th out of 33 provinces. Regarding political rights, Banten Province has an index of 44.57, or ranks 24th. Furthermore, from the institutional aspect of democracy, Banten Province has an index of 87.18, ranked 4th out of 33 provinces. In addition, based on the results of the Regional Government Integrity survey conducted by the Corruption Eradication Commission, Banten Province has low local government integrity with a score of around 5.66.

The same is true with the results of Transparency International Indonesia, which has a score of around 4.87. This shows that the Banten Province is an area with high levels of corruption. In addition, a survey conducted by the Ministry of Home Affairs assessed that Banten Province's performance was considered poor, with a score of 44.57, and it was in the sixth position out of seven provinces due to the expansion. (Ats-Tsauri, 2016). The data can be seen in the table below:

Table 1. Analysis of the Communication Function of the Banten Provincial Government

No.	Aspects	% Index	Ranked 1st out of 33 Provinces
1.	Civil Liberties	80.41	26
2.	Political Rights	44.57	24
3.	Institutions of Democracy	87.18	4
4.	Local Government Integrity	5.66	-
5.	Transparency	4.87	-
6.	Provincial Performance	44.57	-

Source: Compiled from Various Independent Surveys, 2020

The table above explains the six aspects in general. Three aspects, including the index of democracy of Banten Province, explain that Banten Province is ranked lower compared to other provinces in Indonesia, such as low civil liberties and political rights in Banten Province. In addition to the democracy index, it was followed by a survey on the integrity of local government, transparency, and provincial performance, which also has a low index compared to other provinces, even though an overall survey of provinces in Indonesia has not been held.

This research is important and interesting to carry out in the Banten Provincial Government, to rebuild the credibility of local governments, conditioned by corruption cases, by maximizing the government's communication function. Previous studies have discussed a lot about public communication and political communication as done by (Aisyah, 2022; Alfiyani, 2018; Triwicaksono & Nugroho, 2021; Umari & Indra Dewi, 2020). In addition, this research continues previous research that focused on discussing government communication models about leadership credibility (Eviany & Athahirah, 2023). In contrast to the previous research, in this study, the researcher is more interested in raising the function of government

communication with the title "The Function of Government Communication in Building the Credibility of the Regional Government of Banten Province".

#### METHODOLOGY

The research design used was Quasi-Qualitative Design (QQD). In addition, this design was initially known as qualitative descriptive research (Bungin, 2020). Data collection was carried out through interviews, observations, and documentation. Meanwhile, the data analysis technique used by the researcher in this study is Data Analysis Procedure by Application (DAPA), which uses NVivo. In this case, the researcher regularly collects data in the field, makes daily notes, codes the data, and makes themes and categorizations to give birth to memos through NVivo. These steps are made individually to obtain the phenomenon that the researcher wants. The stages in DAPA are referred to by Straus & Glaser (1967) as theoretical sampling (Bungin, 2020).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Government communication is human communication in the context of government organizations and is also part of organizational communication (Silalahi, 2004). Communication and interaction with the community can positively impact the government's existence in Indonesia (Kamil, 2018). The function of government

communication can be seen in several aspects, including conveying information/policy (*menyampaikan berbagai kebijakan/informasi*), educating (*mendidik*), entertaining (*menghibur*), and influencing (*memengaruhi*) (Onong, 2013). Based on the results of data processing in the field using the NVivo application, it was obtained that the government communication function in Banten Province can be seen below.

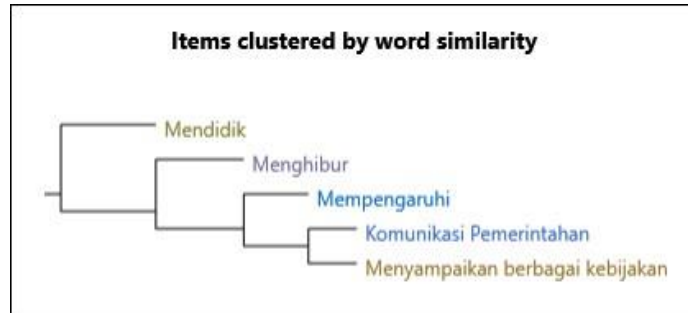


Figure 1. Government Communication Function  
Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

Figure 1 explains that the most influential dimension in government communication in Banten Province is the educational dimension. Education here means coaching and directing the community, which Banten Province carries out through

socialization (*sosialisasi*). The chart below shows that the first factors that affect government communication, in this case, the educational dimension, are socialization, counseling, and training, as shown in Figure 2 below.



Figure 2. Word Frequency Educational Aspect  
Source: Results by NVivo data, 2023

The latest information, notifications, and regulations are always conveyed to the public through direct socialization (*sosialisasi*), as well as social and electronic media, and districts and cities

are always monitored to disseminate regional regulations, and so on. The public is receiving training and counseling for business actors to increase creativity and skills related to decent

livelihoods and reduce unemployment in Banten Province. For regulations for the state Civil Apparatus, coordination and socialization were immediately held by visiting offices in Banten

Province. The results of the analysis of the implementation of the communication function of the entertainment aspect can be seen below.



Figure 3. Word Frequency to Entertain Aspect  
Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

As seen in the picture above, the second factor that affects government communication is the entertainment (*hiburan*) factor, which can be characterized by how to create a pleasant atmosphere, one of which is service activities. Service is closely related to the community satisfaction survey. The service is good at the Banten Province Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services Office. The point that supports the realization of services in Banten Province is the open licensing service system (SIPEKA), which is one of the applications that makes it easier for the public to carry out licensing. This website has existed since 2018. The public can easily log in to the web by creating a username on the [sipeka.bantenprov.go.id](http://sipeka.bantenprov.go.id) link, and then the public can easily access the website. On the web, there are standard operating procedures listed on each permit. The process can be carried out quickly because electronic signatures are used.

In addition, the entertainment dimension is closely related to public peace and order. One form of problem in this aspect is the problem of

congestion. Banten Province has great potential and is geographically advantageous in accessibility out of the region because the Jakarta-Merak toll road passes through it, the main access to Sumatra through the Merak crossing port, and serves as a buffer area for the state capital. So that there is an increase in investors investing from year to year. Local governments also carry out traffic management and engineering to reduce traffic congestion due to the impact of industrial activities (Mutharuddin & Muharnmadun, 2013). Control efforts are also regularly carried out to improve services and safety of freight transportation and public passenger traffic on provincial roads. To support the implementation of these activities, a joint operation has been carried out involving the Transportation Service, TNI Members, and Members of the National Police using 6 (six) units of 4-wheeled vehicles and 2 (two) units of 2-wheeled vehicles (Dishub, 2019).

The next function of government communication is to influence. The results of the analysis of this function are:



Figure 4. Word Frequency Aspects Affect  
 Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

Figure 4 above explains that this influencing function can be done by motivating and empowering the community through rewards and punishments. For example, the government gives fines for not wearing masks, and shops and supermarkets that operate during operational hours during the COVID-19 pandemic immediately get punished.

In conveying various policies to the community, the Banten Provincial Government pays close attention to the local cultural conditions and customs. The government in conveying information always understands the situation and conditions of the community, to give birth to public trust,

especially in the delivery of information, the government has launched several websites, namely the Provincial Government website, the communication and information service website, the Information and Documentation Management Official website and the Banten government's flagship application such as the leadership dashboard and the Jawaara dashboard. The existence of the above website can make it easier for the public to access information and submit complaints and suggestions to the Government. The results of data processing can be seen in the image below.



Figure 5. Word Frequency Aspects of Conveying Various Government Policies  
 Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

Figure 5 explains that the words that often appear when the government conveys information and policies are culture (*budaya*), conditions (*kondisi*), and customs (*adat istiadat*). By understanding this, the information conveyed by the local government can be well received by the

community.

**Credibility of Local Government**

In the concept of local government credibility, the author will discuss the dimensions of credibility effects that affect audience opinion. The credibility effect is discussed through 4 (four) sub-dimensions:

power (*power/kekuasaan*), integrity (*integritas*), *tarik*). The subdimensions can be seen in the image competence (*kompetensi*), and attractiveness (*daya tarik*) below:

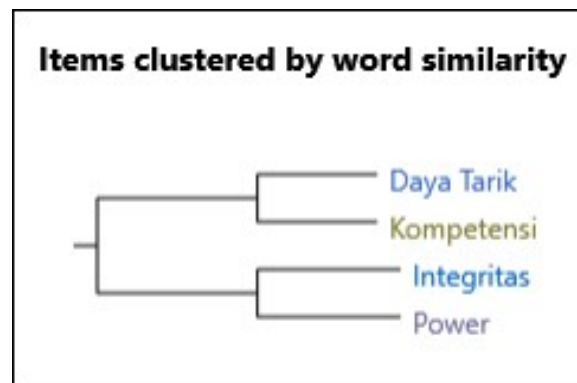


Figure 6. Credibility Subdimension Item Cluster  
Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

The four sub-dimensions will provide an overview of the credibility of local governments in Banten Province through the results of research in the field. The description is as follows:

**Power**

In government administration, power is one of the main factors in the order of life of the nation and state. Power will form a system of government administration. When a system of government is run by a group of reasonable and not arbitrary rulers, it will automatically create a credible government administration. Moreover, vice versa, when the administration of power is carried out by a group of rulers who act arbitrarily and do not think about the community's interests, it will cause distrust. So it can be said that the administration of his government is not credible.

In creating a credible government, power must be held by honest, trustworthy, competent, and expert people with a good, dynamic, and inspiring vision so that it can minimize the potential for conflict with the community it leads. In reality, many government administrators do not hold these principles, so they cannot align their actions with the community's expectations and needs (Kouzes & Posner, 2011). This will have an impact on the decline of the credibility of government administration. In the discussion of the aspect of power, based on the results of the research that the author has conducted, the results of NVivo are as follows:



Figure 7. Word Frequency Power Aspect  
Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

Banten Province is one of Indonesia's provinces with a strong and unique local power structure. In this case, individuals play a role in and behind the scenes of the government network (Boogers, 2014, p. 339). In contrast to Boogers' (2014) research, the structure of local power in the form of the practice of power oligarchy known as political dynasties in Banten Province has been running very long until now, even though part of the local power is dealing with cases of law violations.

The local power structure in Banten Province takes an essential role in various aspects in the scope of the executive, legislature, Business Association of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (*Kadin*), Political Parties (*Golkar*), religious organizations, youth organizations, sports organizations, fighter organizations (champions) and even socio-cultural organizations (Sutisna, 2018, p. 189). Even though it deals with cases of law violations, this local power still gains legitimacy from the community. The high electability of the power can prove this until the 2019 regional elections. After the arrest of the Governor of Banten, Ratu Atut Chosiyah, and his biological brother, Tubagus Chaeri Wardana alias Wawan, by the Corruption Eradication Commission, it did not affect the electability of this political dynasty clan.

The public still entrusts their political rights to be channeled to members of the political dynasty's family. So it can be known that the existence of this local power already has political stability in the eyes of the people of Banten; this local power has turned out to be a system that can improve itself, even though some of its elements have problems. This political dynasty had a good regeneration system, and other family members could continue the political clan in Banten (Fuad & Nugroho, 2014). This political dynasty clan is an octopus dynasty that uses a power network built by Tubagus Chasan Sohib, Atut's father (Sutisna, 2018). This political strategy is the cause of the survival of political dynasties in Banten until now.

This local power in the form of an *octopussy dynasty* still gains trust from the community, because the community mostly considers the ruling group to be highly concerned for the community and small

people. This result is what causes the political dynasty to remain in Banten Province. However, behind this, there are still people who want a change in the administration of government in Banten Province, towards a democratic direction in order to create a more credible government.

### **Competence**

Competency is essential in building government credibility at the central and regional levels. Competence indicates the practical ability of government organizations to carry out specific tasks (Hood & Lodge, 2004). The competence of the implementation of local government in general is divided into four parts, namely:

- a. Technical competence is administering the government and technically implementing each task.
- b. Managerial competence is the ability to handle organizational tasks, apply planning concepts and techniques, and organize, control, and evaluate performance.
- c. Social competence is communication needed by the organization in the implementation of its core functions, and motivating human resources or community participation in order to increase labor productivity, or related to the external environment such as the implementation of partnerships, cooperation and work networks, development with various agencies to improve the image and performance of the organization, including how to show sensitivity to human rights, socio-cultural values and aspirations and responsive to community dynamics.
- d. Intellectual/strategic competence is thinking strategically with a far-ahead vision. Intellectual competencies include the ability to formulate visions, missions, and strategies to achieve organizational goals as an integral part of national development, formulate and provide some logical and systematic inputs for problem solving and decision-making, and also in terms of the ability to understand relevant development paradigms in achieving

good governance and nation-building goals as well as the ability to explain positions, duties, organizational functions of institutions concerning the Government System of the Republic of Indonesia (Shubhan, 2013, p. 47).

In general, the public's assessment of the competencies possessed by government administrators under the current Governor is competent, as can be seen from the results of data processing through NVivo as follows:



Figure 8. Word Frequency Competency Aspect  
Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

The competency aspects used by the researcher in looking at the competence of government in Banten Province are based on technical, managerial, social, and intellectual competence. The technical competency aspect possessed by government administrators in Banten Province is generally considered quite good, especially related to implementing duties in the government sector. Most office holders have been placed according to their expertise and knowledge. This is because the Governor, who serves, understands government comprehensively because his educational background is from the field of government, starting from bachelor, Magister, to Doctor. The governor who serves has carried out his government career path from the bottom, from becoming a village head, sub-district head, mayor, and governor. So, scientifically and experientially, he is a figure who has been in the field of government for a long time.

Based on his knowledge and experience in the field of government, the current government is considered credible by the public, and he is likewise considered credible in placing certain structural and functional positions for his subordinates. In placing certain positions, he tends to place government science alumni in various structural positions because of the understanding that government science alumni are people with more qualified abilities in carrying out governance, and are better than other graduates. So, the main priority for filling structural positions is those of government science alumni. In addition, the government administration in Banten Province is supported by the state civil apparatus of human resources, which has specific technical competencies.

The aspect of managerial competence possessed by government administrators in the province. Banten is considered quite good, as can be seen from the government administrators' ability to carry out each of their main tasks and functions. The

implementation of managerial competence in the Banten Provincial Government is regulated in the Governor's Regulation No. 54 of 2016 concerning Guidelines for the Preparation of Managerial Competency Standards in the Banten Provincial Government to provide understanding and technical instructions in the preparation of Managerial Competency Standards to produce the objective and quality of the appointment of Civil Servants in positions within the Banten Provincial Government. This regulation is still valid today and is used as an indicator in the assessment of the competence of government administrators in Banten Province.

Social competence is one of the competencies that must be possessed in government administration. This competence indicates the sensitivity of leaders to various social problems in the community. The community considers the government in Banten Province that can build closeness with the community. The current governor is considered more humanistic, spontaneous, and able to establish informal communication with the community through psychological and cultural approaches. So it can be said that government administrators in Banten Province have received a positive response from the community, so it can be concluded that through their current way of communicating, they can build public trust, which impacts the credibility of the regional government of Banten Province.

The intellectual competence possessed by government administrators in Banten Province is quite good. This can be seen from the positions held by officials under their expertise. Judging from the inauguration of 316 people, consisting of 89 echelon III officials and 227 echelon IV officials, carried out in January 2021, the majority of 80% have a master's degree for echelon III officials. However, not all

positions are held according to their expertise, but they are still in the social science cluster. The technical abilities seen from this education also impact the intellectual ability of government administrators in solving various strategic problems. Meanwhile, from the strategic competence possessed by the local government, it can realize Prov. Banten has achieved several achievements over the past few years, including placing Banten Province as the fourth best investment destination area nationally with a workforce placement of 37 thousand people in the 1st semester of 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic, Banten Province won the top 5 rankings in the Innovative Government Award and ranked 6th in the regional competitiveness index and first place in the 2021 National Level Superior Appropriate Technology Innovation competition, the title of informative province in public information disclosure, awards for the achievement of Reasonable Opinion Without Exception (WTP) for five consecutive times from the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia and other achievements in the fields of agriculture, development, education, health and others (Suhaedi, 2021).

### **Integrity**

Integrity is the foundation of local government in maintaining a balance between honor and responsibility in carrying out work. So this characteristic is what makes people believe (*amanah*). Especially in the current democratic era, where the most significant demand from the public to the government is to be able to run the government transparently, openly, and accountably, and to avoid acts of corruption and broadly side with the interests of the community (Mukhlis, 2017, p. 112).

Based on research in the field, the integrity of the government in Banten Province has been considered quite good. The following are the results of the coding analysis using NVivo.



Figure 9. Word Frequency Integrity Aspect  
 Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

Based on the image of the coding results above, the majority of the community gives a trustworthy answer to the integrity aspect of the local government of Banten Province. In this case, it is a mandate to the interests of community groups. Because trust is one of the indicators of integrity, this can also be seen in the ease of service in various fields, such as road construction, bridges, clean water procurement, irrigation, electricity network, access to fertilizers, gas, seeds, and agricultural products. Satisfactory work results in education, health, infrastructure, economics, security, politics, and other fields.

**Attractiveness**

Attractiveness is one of the indicators that build government credibility. However, it is not the main thing; attractiveness can encourage people to obey the government, such as the friendliness and concern of government administrators for the community. The dominant factor that greatly influences the meaning of this attraction is the popularity of leaders in implementing local government in Banten Province. The results of the NVivo analysis that the author conducted on this attractive indicator are:



Figure 10. Word Frequency Aspect of Attractiveness  
 Source: Results by NVivo Data, 2023

The administration of government in Banten Province is also influenced by the presence of indicators of attractiveness, both physical and non-physical, from its leaders. Physically, it can be seen

from a firm posture, while from non-physical attractions, such as having charisma, being authoritative and brave, which makes one respected by subordinates and the people of Banten Province.

So it can be concluded that the government in Banten Province has physical and non-physical attractions built by the local government of Banten Province.

## CONCLUSION

The government's communication function in building credibility has not been optimally implemented, because of the four dimensions analyzed, only the function of educating and entertaining has been running, but the function of influencing and conveying information has not been implemented optimally. Meanwhile, from the dimension of local government credibility has been carried out well, of the four dimensions analyzed, all four have run in harmony and balance, there are no prominent dimensions, starting from power, competence, integrity and related attractiveness inseparable from the figure of the apparatus owned by the Banten Regional Government. This research has limitations. In the future, it is hoped that the next author can develop topics about government communication that are rarely discussed and have a relationship with other aspects in different loci.

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