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Optimizing Village Websites as a Development Communication Media: Case Study of the Tridadi Village Website, Sleman District

Nina Kusumawati[1], Jaqualine Pramanta Putra[2], Laurensia Retno Hariatiningsih[3]

[1,2,3]Lecturer, Faculty of Communication Sciences, Bina Sarana Informatika University, Indonesia

ABSTRACT: Village websites are vital instruments within Indonesia's e-Government framework, designed to enhance transparency, participation, and accountability in local development. This study examines the Tridadi Village website to explore how digital infrastructure aligns with the communication culture of local governance. Using a qualitative descriptive method that combines non-participatory observation, content analysis, and literature review, the research assesses the website's effectiveness as a medium for development communication. Findings indicate that while the website performs well as an informational portal, it lacks participatory features, open data, and interactive mechanisms that enable two-way communication. This limitation reveals a gap between digital infrastructure and communication culture, where technological readiness is not accompanied by dialogical or reflexive communicative practices. The study contributes theoretically by emphasizing that digital participation depends not only on technology but also on the transformation of communication values and institutional behavior. Practically, it recommends strengthening human resource capacity, integrating participatory features, and developing digital communication strategies based on openness, inclusiveness, and accountability. These steps are crucial for transforming village websites from static administrative tools into dynamic communication ecosystems that embody the principles of sustainable and participatory local governance.

KEYWORDS: Communication; E-Government; Digital Participation; Transparency; Communication Culture

I. INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology (ICT) has driven significant changes in governance, including at the village and sub-district levels. Digitizing public services is a key strategy in realizing a more open, participatory, and efficient government. One implementation of this digital transformation is the use of village websites as a medium for information and communication between the government and the community. Village websites function not only as a means of publishing village government activities, but also as a medium for development communication, namely the delivery of information related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of development programs. Through the website, village communities can obtain fast, accurate, and easily accessible information, and have a space to express aspirations, criticisms, and suggestions.

According to Law No. 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure, every public body, including village governments, is obliged to provide and open access to information transparently to the public. At the technical level, this regulation is strengthened by Information Commission Regulation (Perki) No. 1 of 2010 concerning Public Information Service Standards, which requires public bodies to utilize information technology in providing information. In addition to fulfilling the public's right to information, providing development information through websites is also part of development communication. Development communication is a process of exchanging information that aims to increase community participation in the development process through two-way, participatory communication that is relevant to the local context (Servaes, 2008).

However, in practice, utilizing village websites as a development communication medium still faces various challenges. Several studies show that most village websites in Indonesia function only as one-way (top-down) channels, where information is delivered in a limited manner without interactive spaces that encourage community participation (Topohudoyono & Budiyono, 2018). The content presented is often ceremonial, outdated, and does not reflect the principles of public information transparency. A study by Prananda and Wahyudi (2020) in the Journal of Development Communication shows that the existence of village websites tends not to be optimally utilized as a means of development communication due to limited human resources, low digital literacy, and the absence of a targeted digital communication strategy

This is relevant to research in Tridadi Village, Sleman District, which already has an official website at https://tridadi.slemankab.go.id . This website serves as a digital showcase for village government information. However, the extent to which the website has been optimized as a development communication medium has not been widely studied.

Considering the importance of digital media in realizing transparency, accountability, and citizen participation, research is needed to evaluate the function of the Tridadi Village website in the context of development communication. Thus, the results of this study are expected to provide recommendations for developing village websites to be more effective and responsive to community needs.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study method, focused on understanding and analyzing in depth how the Tridadi Village website is utilized as a development communication medium. This approach was chosen to explore the phenomenon contextually, interpretively, and holistically, without manipulating the object of study. A qualitative approach was used because this research does not aim to test hypotheses or measure variables, but rather to explore the meaning, function, and context of digital media utilization in the village government sphere. In this approach, reality is viewed as dynamic and shaped by social meanings constructed by individuals or groups (Creswell, 2014).

Qualitative research aims to describe the social world from the perspective of participants through in-depth exploration of meanings, experiences, and social processes in a particular context (Denzin and Lincoln (2005). In the context of this research, a qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to examine how the village website is designed, used, and interpreted in the context of development communication. Analyze the content and structure of the website comprehensively to assess the extent to which information disclosure and citizen participation are facilitated. Understand the factors that may cause the website to not function optimally without the need for direct interaction with managers or users.

This type of research is an intrinsic case study, meaning the case (in this case, the Tridadi Village website) is the focus of attention because it has unique values and characteristics that are important to study in depth (Stake, 1995). According to Robert K. Yin (2014), case studies are suitable for researchers who want to answer 'how' and 'why' questions, and when researchers do not have control over the events being studied and the focus is on contemporary phenomena in a real-life context. This research is descriptive, because it aims to describe phenomena based on observations and textual data, without relying on numerical or statistical data. Researchers observe how the structure and content of the website are used as a development communication tool by the village. Characteristics of Qualitative Studies in This Research, Some of the qualitative characteristics adopted in this research include:

1. Natural Setting
   The research was conducted in a natural digital environment, namely the official sub-district website, without modification or intervention.
2. Data as Text and Images
   The data studied is in the form of text, images and digital documents published openly on the site.
3. Interpretive
   Researchers act as the main instrument in interpreting the content and structure of the website based on development communication theory.
4. Exploratory and Evaluative Objectives
   The research aims to explore the function of the website and evaluate the extent to which the site supports the principles of development communication.

Non-participatory observation is a data collection technique in which researchers observe objects or phenomena without directly participating in the observed activities (Sugiyono, 2019). In this context, researchers only observed the Tridadi Village website as the research subject, without interacting with the website administrators or users. In this study, observations were conducted by periodically accessing the official Tridadi Village website at https://tridadi.slemankab.go.id from July to September 2025.The focus of observation includes: Page structure and website navigation Available menus and features, Content categories and public information, Frequency of content updates, Linkages with social media or other government portals The data from this observation were recorded through manual recording, screenshots, and activity logs. Content analysis is a systematic technique for identifying, classifying, and interpreting the meaning of messages contained in documents or communication media, such as text, images, and symbols contained in the Krippendorff website (2004).

In this study, content analysis was applied as the main analytical technique to examine how the Tridadi Village website performs its role as a medium of development communication. The analysis focused on several key aspects. First, the type and theme of content were identified to determine whether the published information was administrative, developmental, social, or general in nature. This classification helped to reveal the dominant orientation of the website whether it was merely used for bureaucratic publication or for broader developmental engagement. Second, the format of content was analyzed, including whether information appeared in textual form, photographic documentation, videos, or downloadable PDF documents. The diversity of format reflects the level of digital literacy and the extent to which the website utilizes multimedia potential to enhance public engagement.

The third analytical dimension involved information transparency, focusing on the availability and accessibility of essential public documents such as village budgets, work plans, and activity reports. This assessment is crucial for understanding whether the website fulfills the mandate of Law No. 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure. The fourth dimension examined participation and interactivity, emphasizing features that allow two-way communication such as comment sections, citizen forums, online complaint channels, or integration with social media platforms. These features indicate whether the website functions as a participatory medium rather than a one-way information channel.

Each finding was grouped thematically to form analytical categories that were subsequently interpreted through the lens of development communication theory and e-Government principles. This thematic interpretation allowed the researcher to identify patterns of communicative behavior in the digital governance context. To provide a clearer conceptual foundation, a model was developed illustrating the relationship between information technology, transparency, participation, and communication for development. The model visualizes how optimizing village websites can transform them into participatory and sustainable communication platforms that support inclusive local governance and empower communities in the digital era.

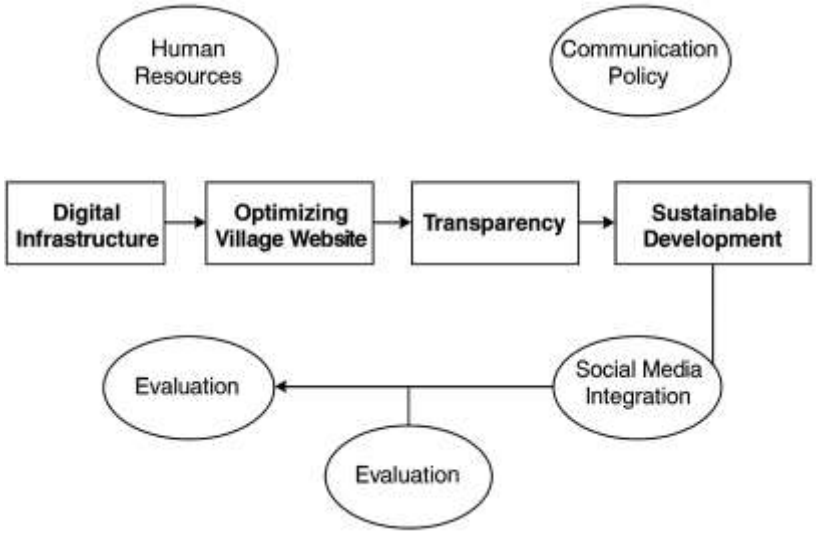


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of Village Website Optimization as a Development Communication Medium

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual flow that begins with developing digital infrastructure as a prerequisite for information transparency, encouraging citizen participation in an open dialogue space. This participation strengthens the two-way development communication process between the village government and the community, thus contributing to inclusive and sustainable village development. Four supporting variables, human resource capacity, communication policies, social media integration, and evaluation and monitoring mechanisms, are reinforcing factors at each process stage. This model emphasizes that village websites are not merely a means of publication but a strategic instrument for fostering dialogue, accountability, and community empowerment within local digital development.

III.RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overall Website Overview

The official website of Tridadi Village, Sleman Subdistrict, can be accessed at https://tridadi.slemankab.go.id. This site is part of the official subdomain network of the Sleman Regency Government, intended for each village/district as a medium for information and digital services to the public. This website is built using a content management system (CMS) commonly used by local governments in Sleman, and is managed by village officials or an information management team.



Figure 2. Website Structure and Appearance
Source: https://tridadi.slemankab.go.id

The Tridadi Subdistrict website has a fairly simple and user-friendly navigation structure. Some of the main menus available on the front page include: Home, Profile, Village History, Vision and Mission, Organizational Structure, Public Information, News and Activities, Agenda, Announcements, Services, Service Flow, Forms, Gallery, Activity Photos, Contact The website's appearance is dominated by white and light blue hues, with the village logo and identity in the header. The layout is responsive and accessible on both mobile and desktop devices.



Figure 3. News and Activities
Source: https://tridadisid.slemankab.go.id/home/category/berita/

This website contains news related to government activities, services, and social issues. Examples include vaccination campaigns, community outreach activities, and internal village coordination meetings. However, content updates are relatively low, with an average of only 2–3 new articles per month.



Figure 4. Announcements and Agendas
Source: https://tridadisid.slemankab.go.id/home/category/agenda/

The announcements menu is used to convey information to residents, such as service schedules, official circulars, and village activities. However, use of this menu remains limited, with some announcements not being updated in recent months.



Figure 5. Public Services
Source: https://tridadisid.slemankab.go.id/home/category/panduan-layanan-publik/

There's a service menu explaining administrative procedures, such as requesting a certificate, changing domicile, and so on. However, this service is informational only and doesn't integrate with online service systems or online application forms.



Figure 6. Sub-district potential and cultural data
Source: https://tridadisid.slemankab.go.id/home/category/potensi-wisata/

Some documentation is presented in photo galleries, but not all of it is accompanied by informative captions or narratives. There are no videos or other multimedia that could enhance the visualization of the development program

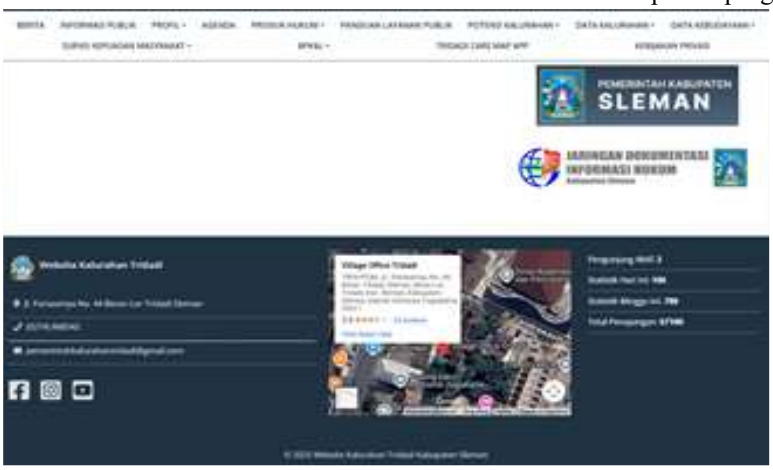


Figure 7. Interactive and Participatory Features

The overall condition of the Tridadi Village website shows that, while the platform fulfills its basic function as an informational portal, it still lacks the communicative components necessary for participatory governance. The absence of interactive features, limited document disclosure, and minimal feedback mechanisms indicate that the website operates within a predominantly one-way communication structure. This structure reflects an administrative orientation that prioritizes compliance and publication over engagement and dialogue. As a result, the website's potential to serve as a medium for development communication where citizens can exchange ideas, express aspirations, and contribute to decision-making remains underutilized. To further understand how these limitations manifest across various aspects of content, a detailed analysis was conducted on the website's main categories.

As presented in Table 1 below, content analysis shows that the Tridadi Village website is still dominated by administrative and informational content, while the participatory and development dimensions are limited. Most sections such as Profile, Agenda, and Public Services serve as static displays of organizational structures and routine activities, rather than spaces for citizen engagement or collaborative problem-solving. Meanwhile, categories crucial to participatory governance, including Legal Guidelines, Village Potential, and Public Satisfaction Surveys, are incomplete, not regularly updated, or presented in formats discouraging interaction. This imbalance suggests that the website's communicative function is shaped more by bureaucratic documentation practices than by the principles of dialogue and inclusivity underlying development communication. Consequently, the digital platform has yet to develop into an interactive communication ecosystem where information flows from the government to the public and recirculates as feedback, critique, and collective knowledge.

Tabel 1. Content Analysis

Content Elements	Findings / Characteristics	Implications for Development Communication Media
Profile	• Contains history, vision & mission, organizational structure (if available). • May lack depth: demographic data, development framework, achievements • May be static and rarely updated.	A comprehensive profile helps citizens understand who's who and where, thereby strengthening regional identity and legitimizing development. If the website remains merely a formality, it loses its potential as a tool for shaping citizens' understanding of development.
Agenda	• Shows the schedule of village activities, announcements, and coordination meetings. • Update frequency can be low; information may only cover internal routine activities.	An open and regularly updated agenda reflects the dynamics of government and provides citizens with opportunities to engage with and observe the development process. Without a clear agenda, communication becomes passive, and citizens feel less informed.
Legal Guide / Legal Products	• Policies, regulations, and service guidelines are sometimes unavailable or difficult to access. • Formats may be PDF-only or image-only without a navigable structure.	The availability of legal guidance is crucial for transparency, accountability, and public education. In the context of development communication, citizens need to be aware of their rights, services, and applicable regulations to be active participants. A lack of such guidance can lead to potential conflict, miscommunication, or a lack of participation.
Village Potential	• Local potential such as MSMEs, tourism, culture, natural resources • Visualization can be limited (photos only without stories or data)	Highlighting a region's potential helps not only inform but also encourage collaboration between residents and external parties. This strengthens participatory and sustainable development communication. Without highlighting potential, a website becomes merely an administrative "showcase."
Village / Population Data	• Demographic, infrastructure, and local economic data -may be present but may not always be updated or presented visually. • Download access or graphic visualization may be limited.	Open and easily understood data helps citizens and stakeholders understand regional conditions and development priorities, and can stimulate public dialogue. If data is unavailable or difficult to access, evidence-based development communication is limited.
Culture	• Information about local traditions, arts, events is sometimes overlooked or not updated enough.	Culture is a crucial element in building identity and community participation. Showcasing culture on a website helps development communication become more humane,

	• Photo galleries only without in-depth narratives or citizen participation	contextual, and grounded. Without it, websites tend to be technical and less "lively."
Public Satisfaction Survey	• Survey links or mechanisms may be available, but results or follow-up may be less transparent • Citizens may be unaware or unmotivated to provide feedback	Satisfaction surveys demonstrate that the government is open to input, strengthening accountability and participation. Posting the results on the website strengthens public trust and makes the website a two-way communication channel. Without such a mechanism, the website remains one-way and less empowering for citizens.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings summarized in Table 1 confirm the argument that digital transformation in governance often advances faster at the infrastructural level than at the communicative one. According to Servaes (2008), development communication must be understood as a *dialogical and participatory process* that enables communities to co-create meaning and collectively shape development outcomes. However, the Tridadi Village website reflects what can be described as an *asymmetric communication model* a system where technological tools are present, but communicative participation is absent. The website fulfills the procedural aspects of e-Government by providing basic access to public information, yet it fails to realize the transformative potential of digital platforms as spaces for mutual exchange, reflexivity, and empowerment. This condition illustrates a broader phenomenon in local digital governance: technology is often adopted as a symbol of modernization, while the communicative culture that sustains participation, accountability, and trust remains underdeveloped. In this sense, the Tridadi case exemplifies how the ideals of transparency and inclusivity, central to both e-Government and development communication theory, can be constrained when digital media are treated as administrative tools rather than as dialogic public spaces.

Taken together, the findings in Table 1 illustrate a consistent pattern in which digital tools are employed to maintain administrative visibility rather than to facilitate participatory communication. The website performs well in presenting official identity and routine information, yet the absence of interactive design, user-oriented features, and transparent data practices limits its function as a democratic medium. This situation underscores that access alone does not equal participation; the mere availability of a website does not automatically transform citizens into active communicators within the governance process. Instead, the sustainability of digital participation depends on how institutions internalize dialogical values and adapt their communication behavior to the norms of online interaction. In this regard, the Tridadi case reveals the importance of viewing digitalization not only as a technical reform but also as a cultural and institutional transformation. The next subsection, *Interpretation and Theoretical Implication*, elaborates this point further by explaining how the gap between digital infrastructure and communication culture shapes the effectiveness of development communication in the context of local governance.

Interpretation and Theoretical Implication

The case of the Tridadi Village website clearly illustrates a gap between digital infrastructure and communication culture. On one hand, the infrastructure for digital communication already exists: the website is operational, hosted on an official government subdomain, and technically capable of disseminating information. However, on the other hand, the communication culture that supports participatory and dialogical interaction remains underdeveloped. This gap arises because digital transformation in governance often prioritizes technical deployment building websites, portals, and databases without an equivalent transformation in organizational practices, communicative values, and user orientation. The Tridadi case shows that while the platform fulfills administrative transparency requirements, it still embodies a bureaucratic and one-way communication logic, limiting the empowerment function of digital media. The lack of interactive features, outdated content, and minimal public feedback channels signal a deeper issue: the persistence of hierarchical communication norms inherited from offline bureaucratic culture, which are merely transposed into the digital space

From a theoretical perspective, these findings offer significant implications for development communication in the digital era. Classical models of development communication, such as those proposed by Servaes (2008) and Melkote & Steeves (2001), emphasize participatory dialogue as a core mechanism for social change. The Tridadi case demonstrates that technological provision alone does not automatically foster such participation. Instead, participation depends on socio-cultural adaptation and institutional reflexivity the willingness of local actors to redefine roles, power relations, and communication norms in digital contexts. Hence, this study reinforces the argument that development communication should not be reduced to the use of ICTs for dissemination, but rather understood as a process of cultural negotiation and meaning construction between institutions and citizens.

Furthermore, the Tridadi website's limited evolution highlights the need for a theory of "digital communicative capacity" within development communication one that integrates infrastructure readiness with cultural and institutional capability. This concept stresses that communication for development in the digital age must bridge the technological cultural divide by cultivating literacy, empathy, and responsiveness in online governance practices. In sum, the Tridadi case invites a

reconceptualization of digital development communication as a structurally enabled but culturally constrained process, emphasizing that true participation requires not only access to digital tools but also the transformation of communicative values that govern their use.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study reveal that the Tridadi Village website, despite its existence as part of the digital infrastructure under the Sleman Regency e-Government framework, has not yet functioned optimally as a participatory communication platform. The website operates primarily as a tool of information dissemination, offering basic administrative data, announcements, and government activities, but it lacks dynamic content that reflects two-way communication or participatory governance. Essential documents such as budget reports, work plans, and community surveys are incomplete or inaccessible, and interactive features like feedback forms, comment spaces, or online citizen forums are absent. This limitation indicates that digital technology has been implemented more as a compliance mechanism than as a communication transformation tool. As a result, the village's digital infrastructure remains a one-way information conduit, mirroring the bureaucratic hierarchy of offline governance. This condition represents a visible gap between the technological capacity of the platform and the communicative capacity of its users and managers, demonstrating that access to ICT tools alone is insufficient to achieve transparency, accountability, or citizen empowerment.

From a broader theoretical lens, the Tridadi case contributes significantly to the discourse of development communication in the digital era. It illustrates that the success of digital participation depends not only on infrastructure readiness but also on the evolution of local communication culture. The persistence of top-down information flows in a digitally enabled environment reinforces the argument that technological innovation without communicative transformation merely digitalizes bureaucracy rather than democratizing it. Consequently, this study strengthens the theoretical proposition that development communication must be reconceptualized as a process of cultural negotiation, where technology serves as a medium for co-creation, reflexivity, and institutional learning. For digital communication to foster inclusive development, local governments must cultivate dialogical values transparency, responsiveness, and collaboration as integral parts of digital literacy and governance ethics. In this sense, the Tridadi case is not merely a technical challenge but a cultural lesson: sustainable digital transformation requires a shift from informing citizens to engaging them as communicative actors within the village development ecosystem.

Policy Implications

Based on the findings and theoretical interpretations, several policy implications emerge for optimizing village websites as participatory development communication media. First, the development of an integrated digital communication strategy at the village and subdistrict levels is essential. This strategy should not only regulate website management routines such as content updates and information disclosure but also define clear communication goals, user engagement frameworks, and participatory mechanisms. The strategy must be formulated through inclusive processes that involve government officials, local community leaders, and youth groups, ensuring that digital governance reflects local communication cultures and values of participation.

Second, capacity building for human resources is a prerequisite for the sustainability of digital participation. The subdistrict government needs to invest in both technical and communicative competencies training staff not only in web design, uploading, and SEO but also in storytelling, digital ethics, and community interaction. Equally important is cultivating a sense of accountability and service orientation among website administrators so that digital content represents a dialogue, not merely a report.Third, integration of participatory and transparency features must become a structural component of the website's design. Comment sections, online suggestion boxes, satisfaction surveys, and public complaint channels should be made functional, accessible, and regularly monitored. Publishing documents such as the APBKal, development plans, and performance reports in open formats would further strengthen accountability and trust. Fourth, the website should function as a showcase for local potential including tourism, MSMEs, and cultural heritage through narrative-driven, multimedia-rich storytelling that invites collaboration from private partners, universities, and civil society. This approach transforms the website into a cultural hub that reinforces collective identity and economic participation.

Finally, establishing a periodic monitoring and evaluation system is crucial. Evaluation should not only assess content quantity but also measure engagement, responsiveness, and impact on community participation. With these policy directions, village websites can evolve from static information platforms into dynamic communication ecosystems that embody the principles of transparency, inclusiveness, and good governance bridging the gap between digital infrastructure and communication culture in Indonesia's local development context.

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