

# **Communication Strategy of KPPBC TMP B Balikpapan In Instagram Account : @pojok.inspirasi.bpn Personification As A Strategy “Remaja Hobi Ngopi”**

**Darmadi Joko Sumarah<sup>1</sup>, Pawito<sup>2</sup>, Albert Muhammad Isrun Naini<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Social and Political Faculty – Department of Communication Science – University Sebelas  
Maret

<sup>3</sup> Research Center for Area Studies, National Research and Innovation Agency (BRIN)

<sup>1</sup>darmadi.joko@student.uns.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>pawito\_palimin@staff.uns.ac.id,  
<sup>3</sup>albert\_muhammad@staff.uns.ac.id

**Abstract.** The low level of media literacy in Indonesian society, especially in the sphere of social media, coupled with the emergence of a pessimistic view of the Government’s public communication, demands changes to the Government’s social media accounts. KPPBC TMP B Balikpapan, the representative of the Government, found the same condition and tried to find the answer. This study aims to explain digital communication policies carried out in social media. In-depth interviews were conducted with key informants to reveal insights into the communication phenomenon under study. The result of this study state that the digital communication policy implemented by KPPBC TMP B Balikpapan is a branding strategy through the personification of “Remaja Hobi Ngopi.” The personification of teenagers who like drinking coffee has the power of a friendly and open impression on the community.

**Keywords:** Media Literacy, Branding, Personification, Communication Policy.

## **1. Introduction**

The emergence of a pessimistic perspective on the Government in the use of social media is that the Government only disseminated information without expecting a response and as if it has not required collaboration from the community (DePaula & Dincelli, 2016). Even if response and collaboration occurred, it was minimal and in a limited context (Idris, 2018).

Based on the 2016 Government Public Relations (GPR) policy implementation review in Indonesia (Bappenas, 2017), it can be conveyed that the Indonesian Government has understood the importance of the role of the public relations sector. The field of public relations serves to disseminate information and build public trust and support. Government Public Relations (GPR) is currently still at the Central Government level in the form of policies. Meanwhile, the GPR program at the lower Government level it still does not have a straightforward form and direction for its operations. Provincial and Regional Governments use face to face communication as a medium for disseminating

information and are still minimal in using social media. Information that is not sustainable, the implementation of activities that do not have operational references, and the absence of integration of GPR activities in the Cyber Platform, especially social media, are obstacles that occur in implementing GPR. However, public relations activities that refer to the GPR policy appear quite intense at the Ministry of Finance. All social media communication channels are utilized optimally to reach various categories of society. Public relations activities are carried out by disseminating information and disseminating a single narrative from the Ministry of Communication and Informatics. Evaluation of the implementation of the GPR within the Ministry of Finance is also carried out periodically.

Various types of social media applications demand different perceptions in their acceptance due to the demographics of their users (Chan-Olmsted et al., 2013). Some of the social media applications that Indonesian people widely use are Instagram, Youtube, Twitter, Line, Whatsapp, Tiktok, and Facebook. Instagram is the most extensive application used by the younger generation of Indonesia to search for news through social media (Kepios, 2022). The Instagram app allows users to take photos and videos, apply digital filters, and publish them on various social media platforms. Having a visual presentation with a caption feature, Instagram requires the Government to use it in unique ways to maximize its potential.

The Government in conveying social media information cannot be separated from the role of public relations. In the government bureaucracy, the public relations function also has ties that must be carried out and become a reference in every movement. Government Public Relations is a term used to describe the process of public relations in Government to accommodate the public or the community. The Government's goals in public relations are primarily information dissemination, notification of government activities, creating a sharp government image, and information transparency. In practice, most GPRs have not maximized their use of social media. Much of the content on social media contains rigid narratives that are characteristic of official speeches. The content is only a duplication of the speech text (Bappenas, 2017).

Then how can the Government, through the GPR, change the image attached to it through social media? The Government has realized that social media has the ability to increase public engagement, especially for the younger generation. However, it is unfortunate that the use of social media has not considered the community's expectations in preparing content and communication activities. Hence, community involvement is still deficient (Graham & Avery, 2013). KPPBC TMP B Balikpapan (Beacukai Balikpapan), part of the Ministry of Finance, is also experiencing the same problem. Official accounts on digital platforms have a low level of public engagement and inappropriate content preparation techniques (@beacukaibalikpapan). To solve this problem, Balikpapan Customs made a change movement by implementing a new strategy through a new digital platform account (@pojok.inspirasi.bpn), as shown in figure 1.



Source: phlank.com

**Figure 1.** Comparison of Engagement Rate Balikpapan Customs Account

Balikpapan Customs considers the personification of youth in the preparation of content as a solution. Balikpapan Customs and Excise feels that it must complete the tasks assigned to it by using adaptive, innovative, and targeted methods rather than focusing on structures and bureaucracy that are sometimes confusing for ordinary people. Balikpapan Customs chose social media, Instagram, to implement this communication strategy in accordance with the principle of "go where the people are" (Sadeghi, 2012).

A branding strategy is needed To get the maximum benefit from the use of social media for the branding activities of an entity. Branding activities in the digital world are not only attached to a product. Still, they can be extended to the company's image, individuals as portfolios (professionals), government agencies, and individuals as individuals (van Hove et al., 2018).

The Indonesian Government communicates with the public also through digital media as an implementation of E-Government. Through the Kemenpan RB, the government has issued Guidelines for the Use of Social Media for Government Agencies with Ministerial Regulation number 83 of 2012 as a guideline for its implementation. However, in the regulation, the Government's image theory is only in the good and ethical image category, providing a wide space in its translation. Branding strategies are commonly used by government agencies in an activity or program. Motto and mascot are the main branding techniques used by most Government Agencies.

Previous research focuses on branding strategies for ongoing activities or programs. Such as the use of slogans and mascots by the Regional Government in East Java Province in every tourist publication to leave a unique and friendly impression so that it is hoped that it will always be remembered (Hilman et al., 2018). The Ministry of Tourism also uses the slogan "Wonderful Indonesia" for marketing tourism to foreign countries. The change in motto and mascot significantly influences the image and image depicted (Yuristiadhi & Sari, 2018). Some conduct research with content analysis on private university Instagram content through branding dimensions, organizational dimensions, cultural dimensions, individual dimensions, physical dimensions, and relationship dimensions (Pratiwi et al., 2019). Several studies on government social media have paid attention to the level of public involvement/engagement rate and efforts to maximize it (Widya, 2021), the types of interactions that occur in social media (Izzati et al., 2018), analysis public sentiment on the kind of government social media content (Furqon et al.,

2018) and the majority analyze the sentiment analysis on policies issued by the Government through social media (Ibrahim et al., 2021; Isnain et al., 2021; Karim et al., 2022). Unfortunately, very little research has been found regarding government branding strategies in social media.

Branding activity is an effort to shape the face/facade displayed to be seen by other social media users with a specific purpose. This is in line with Goffman's presentation of self theory which states that in a social environment, an individual will assess their status and pay attention to their appearance in front of others (Goffman, 2021). Therefore, the Presentation of Self communication theory can be used to analyze this phenomenon. Branding activities on social media have the same main points as conventional branding activities (face-to-face). The communication theory framework can also be applied to branding activities on social media (Merunková & Šlerka, 2019).

Government accounts communicating through social media always expect a positive self-image. Every content uploaded on social media accounts is considered to have the best impression to be shown to its followers. This branding activity in social media is in accordance with the notion of impression management described by Goffman in the Presentation of Self theory (Merunková & Šlerka, 2019). Any activity aimed at image formation is categorized as performance (Goffman, 2021).

In performing the performance, there are 2 (two) areas that are used in displaying branding, namely the front area (front page) and the back area (backstage). The front area is an area that is displayed in front of other people as a stage for performing performance activities. In this area, the individual shows a self image that has been engineered to get a specific impression. The backstage is an area where individuals are themselves and make preparations. In this area, there are preparatory steps to support the appearance. Usually, this area is not shown to others, so it becomes a private matter for individuals (Merunková & Šlerka, 2019).

Teen personification on Instagram is a content strategy that focuses on the psychological elements contained in media content. This content strategy seeks to persuade followers on social media to respond to the content being distributed. Liking, commenting, and sharing content are response features found in most social media applications. Teen personification is a combination of 3 (three) content strategy factors, namely brand post vividness, brand post consistency, and brand post content type. The first factor, brand post vividness, is the ability to present content so that the purpose of the description (material/wording, photos, videos) is clear. The second factor, brand post consistency in personification, is consistency in image formation and placement. Finally, the brand post content type is a form of the content type that can provoke follower involvement in responding to information conveyed through social media (Tafesse, 2015).

This study aims to provide an overview of the Government's efforts to change its image through social media, how Balikpapan Customs breaks down barriers of rigidity and brings hospitality as a strategy to embrace the people it serves, how Balikpapan Customs uses the personification strategy of teenagers who like to drink coffee to form an informal and friendly image.

## 2. Method

This study used a qualitative approach. Qualitative approaches often reveal perceptions held by research subjects and did not appear on the surface. In a qualitative approach, the researcher was the key instrument, source, and purposive sampling, and the data were carried out purposively. The data were validated by triangulation of data using other qualitative data. Qualitative research can be concluded as research that focuses on social phenomena. The study was conducted through explanations of behavior, perceptions of motivation, and behavior which were thoroughly researched and then presented through words in certain contexts.

Qualitative research had several very prominent characteristics, namely (1) research was carried out holistically and thoroughly, (2) research was subjective, (3) was carried out by communication and observation, (4) the basic elements of research were analysis and words, (5) focused on process rather than results, (6) paid attention to uniqueness. The qualitative approach believed that truth and knowledge were dynamic things that were known through understanding the interactions of the people involved (Pawito, 2007). This could be done by explaining the branding strategy of Balikpapan Customs through the @pojok.inspirasi.bpn Instagram account, which focused on how interactions occurred between the Inspiration Corner and the public on a wide scale. The purpose of this activity was to increase community involvement in the brand of the Balikpapan Customs office.

Descriptive research used every word of data information founded during the research process. The data were then analyzed and presented in the form of words that were arranged systematically and sequentially. Descriptive research did not seek to find an influence relationship between several variables but aimed to describe and explain the phenomenon in that event (Pawito, 2007).

The descriptive qualitative research method was a type of research that strengthened the research process, which included observation and realistic situations. Human interaction was not considered a variable but rather an action aiming to understand the social phenomenon. This type of research did not seek to prove a theory but had the characteristics of explaining phenomena through words. Information collected from interviews and observations was then managed to be interpreted. The data were then organized to have a pattern of themes and categories. The meaning here meant giving sense, explaining each pattern, and finding the relationship between the various interactions that occurred during the data collection process.

The stages of data reduction, data presentation, and concluding/verification used the analysis of the Miles and Huberman model and are completed in 3 (three) stages. The amount of data received from the field during the collection process was quite significant, so it needed to be considered in detail for data reduction. Data reduction required adopting and selecting data that focused on the most significant aspects to provide a clearer picture and facilitated future data collection. Data Display could be done with short descriptions or other forms such as charts or categories. This activity was intended to facilitate understanding by grouping data into several types. And drawing conclusions or

verification was done through the categories of data that had been made. A conclusion would be drawn based on data analysis and supported by valid and consistent evidence during the data collection. Conclusions could be in the form of description, causality, interaction or theory based on interviews conducted with the key persons mentioned and participant observations of approximately one month (Pawito, 2007).

Triangulation was carried out to examine the use of data collection methods, whether the information obtained by the interview method, by the observation method, or whether the results of the observations were by the information provided during the interview. Similarly, the technique used to test the data sources, whether the data sources during interviews and observations would provide the same or different information. The goal was to find the similarity of data with different methods. The data validity process used source triangulation, namely credibility testing, by checking data obtained from several sources. The source triangulation technique was done by checking the degree of trustworthiness of information obtained through different times and tools through the following stages (1) comparison of observational data with interview results, (2) comparison of what someone said in public with what is said in private, (3) compared what was said in the research situation with what was said all the time, (4) compared the case with the point of view of someone who thought as an ordinary person, educated, and government official (Moleong, 2010).

The data sources used in this study are divided into 2 (two) parts: the results of in-depth interviews with crucial PR persons and an analysis of documents taken from the @pojok.inspirasi.bpn Instagram account and other Instagram accounts that responded to or mentioned the @pojok.inspirasi.bpn account in their posts. The informants interviewed were the Head of the Customs Information Services Section of Balikpapan, Mr. Wijaya Arief Nurrochman, and 2 (two) administrative employees who directly had the task of drafting the uploaded concept and responding to comments related to the upload, namely Nawang Nugrahaning Gusti and Naufal Bagus Priambodo. Since restrictions on the movement of community activities were still in effect for the prevention of COVID-19, data collection was carried out online on Thursday, October 28, 2021.

Based on in-depth interviews and document analysis, there were several advantages of using Instagram over other social media. One of the reasons @pojok.inspirasi.bpn used Instagram is because it provided a public and direct platform for users and governments to communicate. As a result, Instagram was an excellent platform for communicating with stakeholders and the general public.

### **3. Result and Discussion**

Balikpapan Customs and Excise is a service office under the Ministry of Finance of the Government of Indonesia that supervises and provides services for export, import, and excise activities (taxes on certain goods such as cigarettes, alcoholic beverages, etc.). The main objective is to increase public awareness and understanding of the duties and functions of customs agencies to encourage the level of stakeholder compliance and improve a positive image and reputation to gain public trust. Based on the answers from critical informants about the role of Public Relations, Balikpapan Customs has 2 (two)

leading roles, namely relations with the public and relations with the media with a description of activities, namely the delivery of public information to the public, information on customs activities, and maintaining good relations with the press. This is in line with the objectives of GPR (Sadeghi, 2012), which are to inform the public about the activities of the institution as a way to contribute to an informed public, to disseminate information as a prelude to citizen participation in institutional decision making, and to listen to public opinion.

The customs of Balikpapan in conveying information using various communication channels. Balikpapan Customs adheres to the ethics of honesty or honesty in communicating information to the public or the wider community. The truth of information is considered the most important and is a good intention that must be maintained. Publication activities are carried out primarily through online media, namely social media (Instagram, Twitter, Youtube) and websites, as well as through mainstream media (newspapers). In establishing relations with the press, Balikpapan Customs uses a two-step communication method in which several mainstream media will be given special treatment to get the first information which is expected to determine the direction of the formation of public opinion.

Importers, exporters, factory entrepreneurs, the people of the city of Balikpapan, and the surrounding districts (Paser Regency, North Penajam Paser Regency, Samboja District, Kutai Kartanegara) and the general public are the external vital stakeholders that are managed. Public relations practitioners consider their distinctive characteristics to determine steps and strategies to increase public engagement. The head of the Balikpapan Customs office, as the highest leader, is, of course, an internal key stakeholder whose opinions and decisions determine the direction of policy in public relations activities.

Since the end of 2020, Beacukai Balikpapan has been working hard to change its previously rigid and bureaucratic image. Along with the progress of the City of Balikpapan and its surrounding districts, adaptive, innovative, and facilitative are the main demands for Customs to support this progress. In addition, Balikpapan Customs conducts analysis and public research to determine the appropriate strategy. Finally, an informal and friendly image is expected to support this progress by increasing public engagement and reducing the bureaucratic feeling of Balikpapan Customs.

Balikpapan Customs makes various social media platforms as the front area / front page to bring out the desired image. The available features on the social media platform page are used and combined as an image-building tool. *"At Balikpapan Customs, we use the personification of a 19-year-old teenager who publishes the style of speech and the model of speech on IG (Instagram) and Facebook. If our website is pure (pure), we use the speech style of the head of the office,"* explained the Head of Customs Information Services Section. Meanwhile, *"Ngopi"* (drinking coffee) is a bridge in discussions with stakeholders. Coffee is a daily activity carried out by most people in Indonesian society. It is hoped that an atmosphere of togetherness will be created and find solutions in the discussion.

Implementing the communication strategy was preceded by various core meetings with the Head of the Office to determine the image to be formed on each social media

platform. Then proceed with a limited meeting to assess the attributes and equipment used to support these images. Every upload on social media is consulted and discussed by the team first to analyze and evaluate the image that may be formed and adjust it. Finally, monitoring and assessment of the uploaded concept compiled by the Administrative Executive are carried out by the Head of the Customs Information Services Section. These preparatory activities can be categorized as a backstage area according to the presentation of self theory.

The front area (Front Page) is the entire thing displayed in the upload, including visual display, narration, and feedback to followers (followers). All digital actions taken to implement the personification strategy fall into this area. In digital platforms, what appears visually and narrated is the key to image formation. Impression Management can be seen from the extent to which digital content is responded to by followers or people who view the uploaded digital content.

The personification strategy of teenagers who like coffee has become a significant breakthrough for Balikpapan Customs in increasing public engagement and towards the desired image on social media, especially on Instagram. As the most extensive social media application used by the younger generation of Indonesia, Instagram is the right place to carry out branding activities. Instagram social media with photo and video content features and feedback/comments features are considered a medium capable of carrying out this strategy. In addition, the Instagram application can provide links to other accounts to indicate engagement in the content. This personification strategy is implemented in the official Balikpapan Customs Instagram account with the account name @pojok.inspirasi.bpn. This personification strategy is prepared against the demographic background of Instagram users, mostly teenagers.

In carrying out this strategy, the Inspiration Corner highlights 3 (three) factors as a form of personification. These factors are coffee while chatting, personalizing content (materials, photos, and videos), and responding with subjective tones. Determination of these factors is carried out through research and studies by considering the demographics of Instagram users as well as government policies or regulations, especially customs in the field of public relations.

Coffee while chatting is the first factor in the personification strategy. Balikpapan Customs, through the @pojok.inspirasi.bpn in communicating with the public, always uses coffee intermediaries at the Inspiration Corner coffee shop. Coffee activities at the cafe became an old activity but reappeared, becoming teenagers' hallmarks. The coffee activity itself is a fundamental activity that unites the older generation with the younger generation so that stakeholders receive the same treatment. Chat in coffee has an informal and friendly image. Coffee drinkers will usually take a sip of coffee and chat. Two parties who feel they are close carry out coffee and chat activities. Balikpapan Customs and stakeholders who are forced to participate in coffee activities together psychologically will form a relaxed and friendly image. It is hoped that chatting over coffee will remove the barriers of reluctance to convey something to Balikpapan Customs. Coffee chat can also bring the atmosphere into an exciting discussion, straightforwardly expressing the



purpose of communication and interspersed with laughter so that the sense of the conversation can be fully conveyed, as shown in Figure 2.



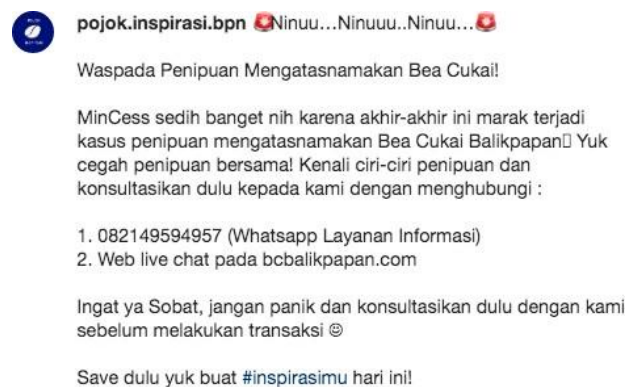
Source: Instagram @pojok.inspirasi.bpn (2021)

**Figure 2.** Coffee while chatting

The second factor to consider is the personalization of content, including the preparation of materials, photos, and videos. Most government social media still use official language taken from speeches by authorized officials (head of the office) as the basis for compiling materials. This also contributed to forming the old, rigid, bureaucratic image that had been formed so far. In this case, the inspiration corner is composing the material using the youth style. The inspiration corner uses informal language in conveying information. As stated by Nawang Nugrahaning Gusti, several provisions need to be considered in compiling the uploaded concept. These provisions were previously mutually agreed upon in a team meeting to highlight the personification factor in uploads. These provisions include:

1. The admin of @pojok.inspirasi.bpn refers to itself as "MinCess";
2. The use of the word "Sobat" to refer to Instagram users (other people who see and read the upload);
3. The depiction of emotions (sad, empathy, joy) in the material;

Preparing material that has emotional content and is more familiar with informal language will strengthen the impression of personification. Content that has emotions is described with an atmosphere of empathy for followers over a problem, as seen in Figure 3.



Source: Instagram @pojok.inspirasi.bpn (2021)

**Figure 3.** Emotional content

Photos that seem amateurish and natural adorn the content of the inspiration corner. Photo angles and proportions that are reasonable to ordinary people add to the strong impression of personification. The balance of photos of coffee drinks also gives the impression that these "teens" are fond of drinking coffee or have even started their coffee shop, as seen in Figure 4.



Source: Instagram @pojok.inspirasi.bpn (2021)

**Figure 4.** Techniques for taking photos and content proposition

The third factor is the subjective pitched response. @pojok.inspirasi.bpn in responding to comments using an informal and personal style of language. The perception that the Instagram account is a teenager is getting stronger. The traits and emotions highlighted in response are similar to those of ordinary human individuals. Naufal Bagus Priambodo stated that in replying to comments from Instagram users, efforts were made to use casual language commonly used by teenagers and avoid using formal language such as narratives in a news story. Additionally, Priambodo was also given instructions to reply to comments with positive and effective sentiments.



Source: Instagram @pojok.inspirasi.bpn (2021)

**Figure 5.** Subjective pitched response

Instagram by the Inspiration Corner increases Balikpapan Customs's self-exposure to the image developed by stakeholders. Instagram is powerful in encouraging activities to increase public engagement, especially in the personification of teenagers through the 3 (three) factors mentioned above. By doing so, Pojok Inspiration can increase public engagement and form an informal and friendly image. The strategy for using personification is visible in the uploads/posts made by stakeholders on their personal Instagram accounts by linking the @pojok.inspirasi.bpn account, as shown in Figure 6.



Source: Instagram @pojok.inspirasi.bpn (2021)

**Figure 6.** Content stakeholders

Personification is the giving of human traits to an object. In this case, personification is embedded in content, including activities carried out by Instagram accounts (coffee while chatting), content preparation, and subjective responses. Personification can make the public or stakeholders respond more relaxed to create an informal atmosphere. In addition, personification in the preparation of material that contains emotions can highlight a sense of empathy that can be seen immediately.

The strategy to increase branding at Balikpapan Customs through the Inspiration Corner account can be said to be effective by applying three factors: Coffee while chatting, personalizing content (materials, photos, and videos), and responding subjectively in preparing content. Coffee while talking is a description of the brand post consistency factor, which shows the consistency of the Inspiration Corner in using coffee facilities to form an informal and friendly image. Brand post vividness is visible in the preparation of content (material/composition of words, photos, videos) so that an individual appears in the minds of followers when interacting with the @pojok.inspirasi.bpn account. Finally, a subjective response that can trigger follower engagement is a description of the brand post content type factor.

These factors are used by Balikpapan Customs to break the image of an authoritarian government and bureaucracy into an informal, adaptive, innovative, and affordable image to the community, especially the younger generation. Able to take advantage of Instagram social media by maximizing the characteristics of its use which consists of young people, so that they take branding strategy steps that are considered appropriate. The average level of Public engagement (View) in the inspiration corner account is very high at 19,49%

(Nineteen points forty-nine) from 244 total followers. It means that every post made by the inspiration corner will have an amount of 46 likes and four comments each.

The personification of teenagers who like coffee activities has the power to blend and adapt ideas to the general public. This personification can give the general public a friendly and portable impression to increase engagement with Balikpapan Customs. The personification method is likely to be one of the main methods to change the image of the Government on social media. This positive image change can be seen from the results of the Service User Satisfaction Survey conducted annually to Balikpapan Customs's stakeholders, where in 2019, it was 3.9 and jumped dramatically in 2021 by 4.5 from a scale of 5.

#### 4. Conclusion

Presentation of Self theory can provide an understanding of branding behavior in the digital world. Uploading content is a front area intentionally shown to others to get a specific impression. Meanwhile, activities that support the creation of an upload can be categorized as backstage.

KPPBC TMP B Balikpapan establishes a digital communication policy on the Instagram platform through the personification strategy of "Remaja Hobi Ngopi." The community's informal, adaptive, informative, and affordable impression becomes the image/facade you want to form. These image impressions appear in visual content, content themes, and subjective responses addressed to other social media users. The communication policy of KPPBC TMP B Balikpapan represents the Government's efforts to communicate with the public to create a better image.

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