

Political Communication Analysis: The West Sulawesi DPRD's Approach in Absorbing the Aspirations of Constituents in the Constituency

¹Muchsin Fadly, ²M Iqbal Sultan, ³Muh Akbar

¹²³Department of Communication, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Hasanuddin University Makassar, Indonesia

Article History:

Received: 12-11-2024

Revised: 17-12-2024

Accepted: 06-01-2025

Abstract:

This study examines the political communication strategies of West Sulawesi Provincial DPRD members in absorbing people's aspirations during recess activities, using the Contingency Theory framework. This theory emphasizes that the effectiveness of an organization depends on the leader's ability to adapt strategies to specific conditions. With a qualitative descriptive method, this study explores communication strategies applied in diverse social and cultural contexts.

Introduction: Political communication has an essential role in forming an accountable, participatory, and responsive government to public needs. The DPRD, as a legislative institution, functions as a representative of the people in fighting for their aspirations through policymaking. In this context, political communication not only functions as a means of disseminating information, but also as a medium of interaction that allows public participation in the democratic process and policy decision-making. Contingency Theory provides a relevant conceptual framework for understanding the success of political communication strategies

Objectives: The purpose of this study is in accordance with the formulation of the problem that has been stated previously, namely Knowing How the Political Communication Strategy of Members of the West Sulawesi Provincial DPRD in absorbing Community Aspirations. Knowing how to solve the obstacles encountered by Members of the West Sulawesi Provincial Parliament in absorbing Community Aspirations.

Methods: This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, which is an approach that aims to describe systematically, factually, and accurately the facts and characteristics of the population or research subject. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen to study social phenomena in depth with a focus on answering research questions such as who, what, where, and how an event or experience occurred. Thus, this approach allows researchers to analyze phenomena in detail and find patterns that arise from the observed events.

Results: The political communication strategy applied by the Members of the West Sulawesi Provincial Parliament in absorbing the aspirations of the community during recess activities is based on the principle of Contingency Theory. (Suntara & Hijran, 2023) according to this theory, the successful management of an organization depends on the leader's ability to analyze and adjust strategies based on the specific situation at hand. In the context of political communication, this theory teaches that there is no one strategy that is suitable for all situations. Members of the West Sulawesi DPRD must consider several main factors when conducting a recess, including the social and

cultural context of the community, relevant issues, and the level of community education

Conclusions: The conclusion of this study shows that the political communication strategy implemented by members of the West Sulawesi Provincial Parliament during recess activities is based on the principles of Contingency Theory. According to this theory, the effectiveness of leadership and the success of an organization depend heavily on the leader's ability to adapt strategies to the specific conditions faced. Members of the West Sulawesi DPRD managed to adapt their approach by taking into account factors such as socio-cultural context, relevant local issues, as well as the level of education of the local community.

Keywords: Communication Analysis, Political Communication, Community Aspiration.

1. Introduction

Political communication has an essential role in forming an accountable, participatory, and responsive government to public needs. The DPRD, as a legislative institution, functions as a representative of the people in fighting for their aspirations through policymaking. In this context, political communication not only functions as a means of disseminating information, but also as a medium of interaction that allows public participation in the democratic process and policy decision-making. Contingency Theory provides a relevant conceptual framework for understanding the success of political communication strategies. This theory argues that the effectiveness of an organization depends largely on the ability of leaders to adapt their managerial approach to a specific situation. In political communication, the contingency approach emphasizes that effective communication strategies are situational, depending on various factors such as the social, cultural, and needs of the local community. This is especially important in the context of West Sulawesi Province, where there is significant social and geographical diversity, which includes communities in mountainous and coastal areas. Each region has unique characteristics, which affect the type of aspirations they convey to their representatives in the legislature. (Pahrudin & Amiruddin , 2023).

As an area with diverse social and economic conditions, West Sulawesi Province requires DPRD members to have a deep understanding of the social background and specific needs of the community in each constituency. For example, communities in coastal areas may prioritize fisheries and marine issues, while communities in mountainous areas may need more attention to the agricultural sector. This diversity requires DPRD members to develop adaptive and contextual communication strategies so that people's aspirations can be properly accommodated in the legislation process.

The recess activities carried out by DPRD members are a strategic moment to interact directly with the community and absorb their aspirations. (Zuhriansyah, 2013) aspirations in Recess provide an opportunity for legislative members to visit the constituency directly, communicate with constituents, and understand the needs and expectations of the community directly. In this activity, DPRD members are faced with complex communication challenges, namely how they can adjust their communication approach to be able to reach various community groups, including those who are less active in voicing

their opinions. Therefore, a responsive and measurable communication strategy is needed, which is able to bridge the interests of the community with the representative duties of the DPRD.

In this context, members of the West Sulawesi Provincial Parliament implemented various communication strategies in recess activities, such as interactive dialogues, the use of social media, and field visits. Interactive dialogue allows for two-way communication between DPRD members and the community, where the community can convey their aspirations directly and transparently. The use of social media allows information to be disseminated more widely and encourages greater public involvement, especially the younger generation who are active in the digital world. Meanwhile, field visits provide an opportunity for DPRD members to directly observe the condition of the community and listen to their problems on the spot. These approaches are designed to build stronger and more responsive relationships between DPRD members and the communities they represent. This study aims to analyze the political communication strategies applied by members of the West Sulawesi DPRD in absorbing the aspirations of constituents in the constituency.

Using the Contingency Theory approach, this study explores how DPRD members adapt their communication strategies to the social context and characteristics of the local community. The results of this study are expected to make an empirical contribution to the development of more effective and adaptive political communication strategies in recess activities, as well as provide a deeper understanding of the role of political communication in fighting for people's aspirations in the context of heterogeneous constituencies.

2. Objectives

The purpose of this study is in accordance with the formulation of the problem that has been stated previously, namely Knowing How the Political Communication Strategy of Members of the West Sulawesi Provincial DPRD in absorbing Community Aspirations. Knowing how to solve the obstacles encountered by Members of the West Sulawesi Provincial Parliament in absorbing Community Aspirations.

3. Methods

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method, which is an approach that aims to describe systematically, factually, and accurately the facts and characteristics of the population or research subject. The qualitative descriptive method was chosen to study social phenomena in depth with a focus on answering research questions such as who, what, where, and how an event or experience occurred. Thus, this approach allows researchers to analyze phenomena in detail and find patterns that arise from the observed events. Qualitative approaches are increasingly in demand, especially in the field of social sciences, because of their flexibility that can be adapted to various research designs to answer various research problems. (Mappasere & Suyuti, 2019) this approach allows researchers to explore deep aspects of a phenomenon or event, which often cannot be answered by quantitative methods. Qualitative research provides a more comprehensive explanation of the complexity of social problems and results in a richer understanding of the social context in which the research focuses (Ulfah et al., 2022)

In short, a qualitative approach can be interpreted as a research method that focuses on a deep understanding of a certain process or event, so as to allow researchers to draw conclusions or generalizations based on the results of observations in the field. The level of naturalness is the main aspect in this study, where the researcher is directly involved in the situation or experience that occurs in the field to obtain a complete picture of the observed context. Qualitative research requires the intensive involvement of researchers in the community being researched in order to be able to reveal reality authentically and comprehensively (Yusanto, 2019; Badjari, 2015).

4. Results

The political communication strategy applied by the Members of the West Sulawesi Provincial Parliament in absorbing the aspirations of the community during recess activities is based on the principle of Contingency Theory. (Suntara & Hijran, 2023) according to this theory, the successful management of an organization depends on the leader's ability to analyze and adjust strategies based on the specific situation at hand. In the context of political communication, this theory teaches that there is no one strategy that is suitable for all situations. Members of the West Sulawesi DPRD must consider several main factors when conducting a recess, including the social and cultural context of the community, relevant issues, and the level of community education. Taking into account local characteristics, DPRD members can devise relevant and effective approaches, such as using language that is easy for local people to understand to strengthen two-way communication. This approach is expected to maximize the absorption of community aspirations as a basis for more targeted policy decision-making (Utomo & Cangara , 2013).

Interactive dialogue is one of the main methods used by DPRD members in interacting with their constituents. In this dialogue, DPRD members provide a space for the public to express their aspirations, complaints, and inputs related to public policies that affect their lives. This strategy aims to build strong interpersonal political communication through a face-to-face approach, where DPRD members not only explain ongoing policies, but also listen to public input (Pureklolon, 2016). For example, if the recess is carried out in a rural area where the majority of the people work as farmers, then the issue discussed may be around support for the agricultural sector, such as fertilizer or seed assistance. On the other hand, in coastal areas where the majority of the community is fishermen, the issues discussed may be related to fisheries, such as assistance with fishermen's equipment or programs to improve fishermen's welfare. This interactive dialogue allows for two-way communication that helps DPRD members understand the needs of the community directly, and this is recorded by the recess companion to be used as a report.

In addition to face-to-face meetings, members of the West Sulawesi DPRD also use social media as an important means of political communication. Social media, especially Instagram, is used by DPRD members to disseminate information related to recess activities, work agendas, and issues that are being fought at the legislative level (Meifilina, 2021). Social media allows DPRD members to interact directly with the public, both in the form of comments and personal messages, so that public participation can be built. The existence of social media makes it easier for people to follow policy developments and voice their opinions in real-time. For example, the public can directly submit questions or inputs that will be responded to by DPRD members through comments or direct messages. This not only increases transparency, but also strengthens the relationship between DPRD members

and their constituents, considering that the public can access information and provide feedback quickly and openly.

Field visits are also an important element in the political communication strategy of DPRD members during the recess period. By visiting certain locations that are relevant to the aspirations conveyed by the community, DPRD members can see firsthand the problems faced by the community, such as damaged roads, inadequate health facilities, or problems with access to education. During this visit, DPRD members interacted with the community and saw factual conditions in the field, which could enrich their understanding of community needs. This field visit also provides an opportunity for the public to make direct criticism of the performance of the DPRD, as well as provide input that can be the basis for DPRD members in determining the direction of regional policies. Thus, recess activities are not just a formality, but also a real means for DPRD members to listen, respond, and design policies that are more relevant and focus on the public interest.

5. Discussion

The discussion of the results of this study shows that the political communication strategy applied by members of the West Sulawesi Provincial Parliament in recess activities is very closely related to the Contingency Theory introduced by Fiedler. Contingency Theory focuses on the idea that there is no one-size-fits-all leadership style or strategy. The success of leadership, according to Fiedler, depends on the leader's ability to assess the situation and adjust its approach based on situational factors. In the context of political communication, this approach means that DPRD members must adjust their communication strategies based on the characteristics of the people who are constituents, such as socio-cultural backgrounds, relevant issues, and the level of education of the community.

1). Interactive Dialogue

Interactive dialogue is one of the main approaches used by DPRD members to absorb aspirations and input from the community. In the context of Contingency Theory, interactive dialogue functions as a communication tool that builds direct interpersonal relationships and creates two-way communication between DPRD members and the community. According to Fiedler, a leader's effectiveness is greatly influenced by the extent to which they have a good "leader-follower relationship", where the leader can gain the trust and support of his followers. In practice, members of the West Sulawesi DPRD use interactive dialogue to strengthen relationships with local communities through a more personalized face-to-face approach, which allows them to hear directly the aspirations and grievances of the community, as well as tailor the topic of discussion to local needs (Dafindri et al., 2024). For example, in rural areas where the majority of the population is farmers, DPRD members focus on discussing issues related to agriculture, while in coastal areas, fisheries issues are the main topic. This adjustment demonstrates the application of the principles of Contingency Theory, where DPRD members adjust their topics and communication approaches based on local contexts to make them more relevant and effective.

2). Use of Social Media

Social media, especially Instagram, is used by DPRD members as a platform to communicate with the public more broadly and interactively. The use of social media allows DPRD members to convey

information related to recess activities, work agendas, and legislative issues that are being fought for in a more direct and accessible way to the general public. Fiedler's Contingency Theory explains that leadership effectiveness also depends on the leader's understanding of the "work environment" or the characteristics of the media used to convey the message. The use of social media as a communication channel reflects adaptation to changes in the communication patterns of society that are increasingly digital. In this case, social media allows real-time communication that increases transparency and public engagement, as well as strengthens the relationship between DPRD members and the public, as the public can provide feedback or direct responses through comments or private messages. Thus, social media serves as a relevant political communication instrument for situations where people have become accustomed to digital technology and are more accessible through these platforms. The use of social media shows that DPRD members adapt their communication strategies to the characteristics of a more digital communication environment, which is in line with the principle of flexibility in Contingency Theory.

3). Field Visits

Field visits are an important part of the communication strategy that allows DPRD members to see firsthand the problems in the field and dialogue with the community in more depth (Dafindri et al., 2024). Based on Contingency Theory, effective leaders must have strong control and influence over the environment they face. Field visits provide DPRD members with the opportunity to identify and understand the problems faced by the community directly, as well as receive input and criticism openly. This is in line with the situational aspect of Contingency Theory, where leaders must observe and assess actual conditions on the ground before making decisions. During field visits, DPRD members can identify specific problems, such as damaged infrastructure, lack of health facilities, or problems with access to education, which may not be clearly revealed through formal communication. This visit not only strengthens the understanding of DPRD members regarding the needs of the community, but also builds their credibility in the eyes of constituents, who feel involved and heard. This approach allows DPRD members to be more adaptive in responding to the needs of the community, which is the core of Fiedler's Contingency Theory.

Overall, the application of political communication strategies by members of the West Sulawesi DPRD in recess activities shows that they adopt the principles of Contingency Theory by adjusting communication strategies according to the social, cultural, and needs of the local community. By implementing an adaptive and situational approach, DPRD members have not only succeeded in improving the effectiveness of their communication with the public, but also building closer and more transparent relationships with constituents. The principle of flexibility in Contingency Theory allows DPRD members to navigate the existing socio-cultural complexities, so that the resulting policies are more relevant and responsive to public needs. The application of this theory shows that adaptive and situation-based political communication strategies can serve as an important tool in increasing community engagement and strengthening political legitimacy at the local level.

References

- [1] Dafindri, P., Pradana, B. C. S. A., & Ekoputro, W. (2024). Peran Humas Sekretariat Dprd Dalam Menyerap Aspirasi Masyarakat Kota Surabaya. *Prosiding Seminar Nasional Mahasiswa Komunikasi (SEMAKOM)*, 2(1, Januari), 351–362.
- [2] Mappasere, S. A., & Suyuti, N. (2019). Pengertian Penelitian Pendekatan Kualitatif. *Metode Penelitian Sosial*, 33.
- [3] Meifilina, A. (2021). Media sosial sebagai strategi komunikasi politik Partai Golkar dalam melakukan pendidikan politik. *Jurnal Komunikasi Nusantara*, 3(2), 101–110.
- [4] Pahrudin, P., & Amiruddin, A. (2023). Aspirasi Dan Keterlibatan Masyarakat Dalam Pembentukan Peraturan Daerah. *Jurnal Arajang*, 6(2), 62–72.
- [5] Pureklolon, T. P. (2016). *Komunikasi politik*. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- [6] Suntara, R. A., & Hijran, M. (2023). Implementasi Teori Kontingensi dalam Eskalasi Efektivitas Kepemimpinan Mahasiswa. *Jurnal Basicedu*, 7(6), 3406–3419.
- [7] Ulfah, A. K., Razali, R., Rahman, H., Ghofur, A., Bukhory, U., Wahyuningrum, S. R., Yusup, M., Inderawati, R., & Muqoddam, F. (2022). *Ragam Analisis Data Penelitian (Sastra, Riset dan Pengembangan)*. IAIN Madura Press.
- [8] Utomo, E. P., & Cangara, H. (2013). Strategi Komunikasi Dalam Menyerap Aspirasi Masyarakat Adat Oleh Anggota Dprd Kabupaten Teluk Bintuni Provinsi Papua Barat. *KAREBA: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 351–360.
- [9] Zuhriansyah, M. (2013). Penyerapan aspirasi masyarakat dalam anggaran pendapatan dan belanja daerah pada dinas cipta karya, permukiman dan perumahan (studi di desa Baharu Utara Kecamatan Pulau Laut Utara Kabupaten Kotabaru Kalimantan Selatan). *Jurnal Ilmu Politik & Pemerintahan Lokal*, 2(2).