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Digital Message Construction in Public Communication: An Analysis of the Instagram @PemkabBadung

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Abstract *- The digital transformation of public administration has shifted government communication from linear bureaucratic models toward dynamic, platform-based social constructions. During Badung Regency's 2025 leadership transition, sustaining institutional legitimacy required adaptive messaging attuned to digitally literate publics. This study examines how the @PemkabBadung Instagram account constructs digital messages, a case made distinctive by Badung's status as Bali's leading tourism hub with the province's highest Regional Original Revenue, which demands balancing modern, transparent governance with Balinese local wisdom. Using a qualitative constructivist design, the study combines Burhan Bungin's Social Construction of Mass Media Reality theory (externalization, objectivation, internalization) with Robert N. Entman's Framing Analysis. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with three key informants from the Diskominfo Badung team, documentation, and non-participant observation of 15 high-engagement Instagram post (Feeds, Reels, and Stories) from 2025. Findings show message construction unfolds through a continuous dialectical cycle: externalization by the Head of Public Media Section, objectivation by the Creative Team, and internalization by the Admin. Achievement and identity-themed content dominated emotional engagement, while public service infographics dominated sharing behavior. The study confirms the continued relevance of Bungin's framework for analyzing local government digital communication and offers practical guidance for other regional communication teams.*
Keywords*: Digital Message Construction; Framing Analysis; Public Communication; Instagram; Pemkabbadung*

Abstrak - Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana akun Instagram @PemkabBadung mengonstruksi pesan digital, sebuah kasus yang menjadi khas karena status Badung sebagai destinasi wisata utama Bali dengan Pendapatan Asli Daerah tertinggi di provinsi tersebut, yang menuntut keseimbangan antara tata kelola pemerintahan yang modern dan transparan dengan kearifan lokal Bali. Dengan menggunakan desain kualitatif konstruktivis, penelitian ini memadukan teori Konstruksi Sosial Realitas Media Massa dari Burhan Bungin (eksternalisasi, objektivasi, internalisasi) dengan Analisis Framing dari Robert N. Entman. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam dengan tiga informan kunci dari tim Diskominfo Badung, dokumentasi, dan observasi non-partisipan terhadap 15 unggahan Instagram berengagement tinggi (Feed, Reels, dan Stories) sepanjang tahun 2025. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa konstruksi pesan berlangsung melalui siklus dialektis yang berkesinambungan: eksternalisasi oleh Kepala Seksi Media Publik, objektivasi oleh Tim Kreatif, dan internalisasi oleh Admin. Konten bertema prestasi dan identitas mendominasi keterlibatan emosional (engagement), sementara infografis layanan publik mendominasi perilaku berbagi (sharing). Penelitian ini mengonfirmasi relevansi berkelanjutan dari kerangka kerja Bungin dalam menganalisis komunikasi digital pemerintah daerah, serta menawarkan panduan praktis bagi tim komunikasi daerah lainnya
Kata Kunci: Konstruksi Pesan Digital; Analisis Framing; Komunikasi Publik; Instagram; Pemkabbadung

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Introduction

Digital transformation over the past decade has brought a fundamental shift in the paradigm of public administration, changing government communication patterns from a linear model into a hybrid, dialogical media system. Government institutions are now required to negotiate with the logic of digital platforms in order to maintain public legitimacy amid a fast-moving flow of information (Chadwick, 2017). This phenomenon has created a new space in which visual-based platforms such as Instagram no longer function merely as public-relations channels, but have developed into a primary instrument for legitimizing policy while simultaneously constructing regional identity among an increasingly digitally literate public. The Instagram account @PemkabBadung represents a concrete manifestation of this shift, a space where regional development policy is translated into visual content consumed by the public on a daily basis.

In Indonesia, local governments' adoption of visual platforms has become the new standard for public information services that are expected to be more transparent and participatory. Instagram's emphasis on visual power and short-form narrative is considered effective in breaking through the communication deadlock long associated with rigid and elitist bureaucratic image (Rulli N, 2015). Through modern features such as Reels, local governments seek to turn performance reports into content that is more popular, brief, compact, and entertaining, in order to reach the younger generation that now dominates the digital space. This shift in format is not merely an aesthetic matter, but an adaptive strategy to keep policy messages relevant amid the increasingly fierce competition for public attention on social media timelines.

Badung Regency holds a strategic position as both a center of the tourism industry and the region with the highest locally generated revenue (Pendapatan Asli Daerah) in Bali. This condition creates a particular urgency for the Badung Regency Government to project an image of transparent and forward-looking governance, while still remaining grounded in local wisdom as part of its regional identity (Pratiwi & Purwanti, 2024) . This communication dynamic becomes increasingly complex entering the 2025-2026 period, which marks a new leadership transition in the region. This moment constitutes a critical juncture for the reconstruction of political identity to align with the vision of the new leadership (Jennifer Lees-Marshment, 2014), while also testing the consistency of digital communication management amid a shift in policy direction. The central challenge arising from this situation is how the process of transforming rigid, administrative policy information can be turned into visual content that is fluid, relevant, and appealing to the digital public, without losing substance or informational accuracy.

Research on government social media accounts is by no means new within Indonesian communication literature; however, most prior studies stop at the level of content effectiveness or its impact on audiences, without unpacking how meaning is produced backstage. (Rohmad, 2023)examined the social media management of the @kemendag Instagram account and found that the ministry's team followed a Share-Optimize-Manage-Engage cycle, with engagement driven mainly by visual consistency and rapid response time; the study does not, however, explain how content decisions were negotiated internally before publication. A related study on a regional legislative institution's Instagram account (2021) similarly found that content categories were dominated by ceremonial and legislative-agenda posts organized around a fixed publication calendar, but did not trace how those categories were decided or how conflicting institutional and audience interests were reconciled. (Ainussyifa et al., 2022), studying the Ministry of Social Affairs' Instagram account, found that transparency-oriented, budget-disclosure content was the dominant strategy used to rebuild public trust after a corruption scandal, evaluated through Instagram Insights; again, the internal division of labor behind these

choices was not examined. Taken together, these studies confirm that government Instagram accounts are managed strategically and that specific content choices are tied to engagement outcomes, but they consistently treat message production as a black box, documenting the finished post and its audience effect rather than the process by which policy is translated into an image, a caption, and a publishing decision. This is a significant theoretical gap: it leaves unanswered how much of the observed effectiveness is attributable to deliberate internal negotiation of meaning as opposed to ad hoc, reactive practice. Understanding the internal construction process therefore offers a new perspective - asking how communicators actively construct social reality prior to publication, a question existing content- or effect-focused studies are not designed to answer, since media content is fundamentally shaped by an organization's routines and internal policies.

Beyond the Indonesian context, international scholarship on government social media communication offers further theoretical resources justifying this study's focus on internal message construction. Research on platform governance shows that algorithms are not neutral technologies but actively shape which government messages become visible, forcing communication teams to design content legible to platform logic as well as to citizens (Gorwa et al., 2020). Studies of social media engagement in the public sector have moved from simply counting interactions toward classifying the structural and content features that generate different forms of engagement, treating engagement as a designed outcome rather than an incidental one (Wukich & Mergel, 2016). Digital public relations scholarship argues that practitioners must now manage two-way, algorithmically mediated relationships rather than one-way dissemination (Huang et al., 2017), a shift increasingly relevant to how digital crises and trust repair are managed through social platforms(Hilvania1 et al., 2026) . Comparative research on government microblogging in China further shows that citizen engagement is shaped by the interplay between government posting behavior and platform affordances (Wang & Luo, 2021), while studies of algorithmic visibility on creator platforms show how governance structures determine who gets seen, even within institutional accounts (Duffy & Meisner, 2022) .Collectively, this body of work confirms that contemporary government communication cannot be understood merely as message dissemination; it is co-produced with platform algorithms, audience engagement metrics, and internal organizational routines, reinforcing the need for a study that opens up the internal construction process rather than treating it as a black box.

This gap becomes even more relevant to explore in the case of @PemkabBadung, given that the region faces a combination of challenges rarely found together in comparable research objects: the pressure to maintain its image as a leading tourist destination, the need to foreground Balinese local wisdom within a platform governed by global logic, and a leadership transition that demands a rapid adjustment in communication direction. This research therefore focuses on thoroughly examining this process, from the content-planning stage through to the management of public interaction, positioning the Instagram account @PemkabBadung as its primary object of study.

Based on the discussion above, this research formulates three core problems. First, how is the process of translating public policy carried out by account managers during the content-planning stage? Second, how is message-construction strategy carried out through visual and narrative elements to shape the local government's image? Third, how is the management of interaction and message distribution carried out to sustain the digital reality that has been constructed before the public?

In line with these research questions, this study aims to (1) describe and analyze the content-planning process undertaken by the managers of the @PemkabBadung account in translating government policies and agendas into digital content material; (2) identify and

analyze the message-construction strategies, both visual and narrative, used to build a positive image of the local government amid the dynamics of new leadership; and (3) analyze the patterns of interaction management and content distribution carried out by account managers to sustain the continuity of the digital reality that has been constructed. Through these three objectives, this research is expected to make an academic contribution to the development of studies on government communication in the social media era, while also providing practical input for digital communication managers in other local government institutions facing similar challenges in translating policy into effective and meaningful public content.

Methods

This research is qualitative in nature and draws on a constructivist paradigm. A qualitative design fits the purpose here because the goal is not to measure outcomes but to understand, in depth, how digital messages get constructed, a process that is inherently layered and shaped by context. (Moleong, 2017)frames qualitative research as an attempt to understand a phenomenon the way the people living it actually experience it, not in fragments, but as a whole. Rather than reducing that experience to numbers, the researcher renders it through narrative description, written words that stay close to the natural setting in which the phenomenon unfolds. The constructivist paradigm aligns with the grand theory employed, (Burhan Bungin, 2012) Social Construction of Mass Media Reality, which operates under the assumption that reality is plural, relative, and socially constructed.

Research subjects were selected through purposive sampling, based on the consideration that the selected informants possess the greatest depth of knowledge, experience, and direct involvement with the phenomenon under study. Three key informants representing three levels of the message construction process were designated, as presented in Table 1.

Although the number of informants in this study is limited to three, this was not an arbitrary cutoff but a decision guided by structural, rather than purely numerical, data saturation. Interviews were concluded when three conditions were jointly met. First, the Social Media Admin's (Informant 3) responses began substantively repeating the categories and reasoning already articulated by Informants 1 and 2, rather than introducing new codes. Second, the possibility of adding a fourth informant was considered but set aside, since preliminary discussion indicated that no additional role in the account's management chain held a distinct strategic or creative decision-making function beyond the three levels already represented. Third, the three informants were cross-checked against the account's internal division of labor (see Table 1) and confirmed to jointly represent the complete vertical structure of message production at @PemkabBadung: the policy-decision level (Head of Public Media Section), the production level (Creative Team), and the distribution/interaction level (Social Media Admin). Saturation was thus assessed by structural coverage of the organization's message-production hierarchy rather than by informant count alone, consistent with (Moleong, 2017) view of qualitative sampling as depth-driven rather than count-driven.

Table 1. List of Research Informants

No.	Informant	Position/Role
1	Informant 1 (Agung Mayun)	Head of Public Media Section / Public Relations Officer
2	Informant 2 (Wira)	Creative Team / Content Designer

3	Informant 3 (Ardi Putra)	Social Media Admin @PemkabBadung

Source: Primary research data, 2026

The research objects comprise 15 Instagram @PemkabBadung content items from 2025 with the highest engagement (likes and comments), divided into three formats: Feed/Photo & Infographics (5 items), Instagram Reels (5 items), and Instagram Stories or Highlights (5 items). The determination of the number of informants adheres to the principle of data saturation, as articulated by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

The 15 highest-engagement items were identified using the native engagement metrics that Instagram Insights provides for each content format, since each format foregrounds a different primary indicator of audience response. For Feed posts, ranking was based on combined likes and comments recorded as of 31 December 2025. For Reels, ranking was based on view count together with hook rate (the percentage of viewers watching past the first three seconds), the metric Instagram itself foregrounds for short-video content and the one the @PemkabBadung Creative Team uses internally to evaluate Reels performance. For Stories, ranking was based on view count and profile-visit interactions, the only metrics Instagram retains for ephemeral content after 24 hours, supplemented by screenshots archived by the Admin before expiry. Because the three formats are measured through different native metrics, engagement criteria were not applied identically across Feed, Reels, and Stories; rather, the top five items within each format were selected using the metric(s) most appropriate to that format, a format-specific selection procedure confirmed with the Social Media Admin as consistent with how the @PemkabBadung team internally defines "high-performing" content.

This study employs two complementary data collection techniques. First, in-depth interviews using semi-structured interview guides were conducted face-to-face at the Diskominfo Badung office, lasting 60-90 minutes per informant. Second, documentation encompassing systematic archiving of content screenshots, recording of engagement data (likes, comments, views, and shares), as well as archiving of captions and other textual elements. The combination of both techniques enables data triangulation between the subjects' perspectives and the artifacts they produced.

Data analysis follows the interactive analysis model of(Alam et al., 2025) ,which moves through three components that overlap and feed back into one another rather than proceeding in a strict sequence: condensing the data, displaying it, and then drawing and continually re-checking conclusions. The coding process followed three iterative steps. First, all interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and returned to the informants for verification prior to analysis (member checking). Second, open coding was applied line-by-line to the transcripts and to the documentation data (captions, screenshots, and engagement records) using descriptive labels drawn from the informants' own language (e.g., "following trends," "relevance," "combination of formal and humanistic language"). Third, these open codes were grouped into analytical categories through axial coding, guided deductively by the three stages of (Burhan Bungin, 2012)Social Construction of Mass Media Reality framework (externalization, objectivation, internalization) and, within the objectivation stage, further refined using Entman's (1993) four framing functions (problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, treatment recommendation). Codes that did not fit either framework were retained as open categories and examined for their potential to extend or qualify the theoretical model, following the constant comparative logic recommended by (Miles et al., 2018). Each of the 15 documented Instagram items was independently coded against the same category scheme, allowing interview-based codes (what informants said they do) to be cross-checked against documentation-based codes (what the content actually shows), which constituted the

technique triangulation described below. Analytical categories were revised twice during the coding process as new patterns emerged from the data, and the final coding scheme was discussed with the informants during member checking to confirm that the categories accurately represented their intended practices.

To safeguard validity, two forms of triangulation were applied (Moleong, 2017): (1) source triangulation, comparing the credibility of information across the three informants; and (2) technique triangulation, cross-checking interview data with content documentation data. Member checking was also performed by presenting transcripts and preliminary interpretations to the informants prior to final analysis

Result and Discussion

Overview of the @PemkabBadung Account

The Instagram account @PemkabBadung is the official social media channel of the Badung Regency Government, with approximately 50,000 followers, managed by the Department of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo) Badung Regency under the coordination of the Public Information Management Division, Public Media Sub-section. As the regency with the highest PAD in Bali driven by the tourism sector, this account functions as a strategic instrument for constructing an image of modern, transparent, and community-oriented governance. The management team consists of three principal elements: the Head of Public Media Section/Public Relations Officer as the policy decision-maker and content coordinator (Agung Mayun, serving since 2020), the Creative Team responsible for visual and narrative production (Wira), and the Social Media Admin managing distribution and public interaction (Ardi Putra).

Externalization: Translating Policy into a Digital Content Agenda

Within (Burhan Bungin, 2012)framework, externalization constitutes the first stage in which an institution pours itself into the social world through message production activities. Research findings indicate that this process is dynamic and highly responsive to evolving social media trends. Agung Mayun, as the Head of Public Media Section, stated:

> *"The strategy we use for the Pemkab account... it also depends on trends, trends in social media."*
>
> *(Interview, Agung Mayun, Head of Public Media Section, 2026)*

This statement reflects how the externalization process does not merely follow the government's policy agenda, but actively considers the algorithmic logic of the Instagram platform. As (Taina Bucher, 2018)emphasizes, social media algorithms are not neutral technologies, as they actively determine the visibility and reach of messages; consequently, the management team consciously aligns its content strategy with the rhythm and preferences of Instagram's algorithm. From the Creative Team's perspective, Wira elaborated:

> *"If we ourselves also use social media, whatever we frequently see automatically becomes a trend, at least algorithmically within our surrounding area... from that, we draw a reference, one reference for the packaging of information."*
>
> *(Interview, Wira, Creative Team, 2026)*

Three strategic rationales for selecting Instagram as the primary communication platform were identified: (1) Badung's local market segment remains strongly concentrated on Instagram; (2) the engagement-based algorithm is measurable and calculable; and (3) the short-video format (Reels) is actively recommended by Meta to wider audiences. The team's genre-based division of responsibilities with clearly delineated roles enables the externalization process to proceed efficiently and in a focused manner.

This algorithm-aware pattern of externalization resonates with, but also extends, the algorithmic-governance literature. Gorwa et al., (2020) documented how algorithmic content moderation creates governance challenges primarily from the platform's side, while (Duffy & Meisner, 2022) showed that individual content creators develop informal, experience-based strategies to cope with algorithmic (in)visibility. The present finding is similar in that @PemkabBadung's management team likewise relies on informal, trend-reading heuristics rather than formal analytics training to align with the algorithm; Wira's account of content becoming a trend from what the team frequently encounters online mirrors the intuitive, experiential algorithmic literacy Duffy and Meisner describe among independent creators. The difference is that prior studies examined this dynamic among individual creators or platform-moderation actors operating outside formal bureaucratic structures, not within a government institution whose content nominally originates from top-down policy. The new contribution of this study is thus to show that algorithmic mediation has penetrated even institutional, policy-driven communication: the Badung government's externalization process is no longer purely top-down but is co-produced with the platform's algorithmic logic, effectively requiring bureaucratic communicators to acquire the same kind of informal algorithmic literacy previously documented only among independent digital creators.

Objectivation: Visual and Narrative Content Construction

Objectivation in (Burhan Bungin, 2012)framework represents the stage at which the products of construction acquire a character of facticity and objectivity in the eyes of the public. This process unfolds along two primary dimensions: the construction of visual elements and the construction of narrative elements. The primary visual strategy centers on relevance:

> *"We employ one strategy that we must prioritize, which is relevance... we must remain relevant to what is in demand on social media."*
>
> *(Interview, Wira, Creative Team, 2026)*

A three-second hook strategy is applied to Reels content to capture audience attention from the outset: "What is used to capture audience attention in the first 3 seconds is definitely the visual and a few lines that can generate curiosity" (Wira, 2026). For language construction, the team employs a combination of formal and humanistic styles, as explained:

> *"We must maintain the government's professionalism, but we also don't want to create a communicative distance between the government and the community. So we just play with a combination."*
>
> *(Interview, Wira, Creative Team, 2026)*

From the perspective of Entman's (1993) framing analysis, the choice of language constitutes the most decisive framing instrument in shaping how audiences understand and derive meaning from content. The carousel format is also deployed strategically to convey information-dense material in a structured manner, consistent with the construction dissemination stage in (Burhan Bungin, 2012)model.

Internalization: Distribution, Interaction, and the Maintenance of Digital Reality

Internalization is the stage at which the objectivated digital reality is absorbed by the audience as part of their consciousness. Admin Ardi Putra manages this process through three primary mechanisms. First, a data-driven distribution strategy: the scheduling of uploads is determined through continuous monitoring of audience peak activity hours via the platform's insight analytics, with a same-day edit standard of a maximum of three hours post-event. Second, two-way dialogue management: a call-to-action is embedded within each content item to elicit direct audience feedback. Third, comment moderation and negative issue mitigation: a humanistic-professional moderation strategy is applied, wherein citizen complaints are

forwarded to the relevant departments and engagement data is processed into regular reports for management.

Analysis of @PemkabBadung Instagram Content in 2025

In addition to in-depth interviews, this study also conducted documentary analysis of the 15 highest-engagement content items from the @PemkabBadung Instagram account throughout 2025, serving as technical triangulation and concrete empirical evidence of the objectivation process..

Table 2. Engagement Data Summary for Reels Content @PemkabBadung, 2025

No.	Content Theme	Date	Likes	Comments	Views	Hook Rate
1	Inauguration of 5,449 P3K & CPNS	May 26, 2025	5,046	68	223,078	19%
2	Gong Kebyar Wanita	Jul 9, 2025	984	8	44,731	44.0%
3	Culinary Review: "Don't Eat This Burger…"	May 31, 2025	1,428	17	59,667	53.4%
4	Kerobokan Traffic Management	Dec 19, 2025	327	178	45,244	41%
5	Paskibraka, Badung Regency 2025	Aug 21, 2025	801	25	41,661	35.3%

Source: Instagram Insights @PemkabBadung, processed by researcher (2026)

Based on Table 2, the Reel with the highest engagement is the Majesty Burger culinary review content (Content 3), with 59,667 views and a hook rate of 53.4%, utilizing a provocative title as a verbal-visual hook. The thematic diversity of the five most viral Reels reflects an externalization strategy that extends beyond formal governmental topics to encompass everyday community issues.

Table 3. Engagement Data Summary for Post/Feed Content @PemkabBadung, 2025

No.	Content Theme	Date	Likes	Comments	Views	Shares
1	Interest-Free MSME Credit of IDR 100 Million	Sep 13, 2025	21,568	1,439	1,543,205	69,500
2	Athlete Malana Silver Medal, SEA Games 2025	Dec 20, 2025	5,699	150	112,348	103
3	Opening Ceremony of MPLS 2025/2026	Jul 21, 2025	748	8	26,725	15
4	Emergency Complaint Number Infographic	Dec 2025	240	27	86,167	56
5	Kerobokan Kelod Traffic Management	Dec 12, 2025	767	48	120,276	543

Source: Instagram Insights @PemkabBadung, processed by researcher (2026)

The data in Table 3 reveals diverse patterns of message construction across content themes. Content 1, concerning the Interest-Free MSME Credit Program of IDR 100 Million, recorded the most impressive overall metrics: 21,568 likes, 1,439 comments, 1,543,205 views, and 69,500 shares. These achievements are inseparable from an externalization strategy that

foregrounds concrete figures and direct benefits in the headline effectively reflecting both the Define Problems and Treatment Recommendation functions of Entman (1993) thereby compelling audiences to disseminate the message on a massive scale.

Content 2, featuring athlete Ni Wayan Malana Fairbrother who won a silver medal at the 2025 SEA Games, recorded 5,699 likes and 112,348 views, leveraging a nationally viral achievement momentum to affirm a riding the wave strategy in Bungin's externalization stage, whereby the management team rapidly captured an external event and constructed it as part of the regional pride narrative. Content 4 (Emergency Complaint Number Infographic) warrants closer examination: despite only 240 likes, it recorded 86,167 views and 56 shares, with an exceptionally high shares-to-likes ratio. From Entman's (1993) perspective, this content effectively executed the Treatment Recommendation function the team constructed emergency information as a concrete and immediately actionable solution for residents, thereby generating sharing behavior that far exceeded mere appreciation. Content 5, on traffic management, recorded the highest views among all posts (120,276 views, 543 shares), demonstrating that the objectivation of messages addressing citizens' everyday problems generates the most pervasive and consistent digital reality dissemination, consistent with the construction dissemination stage in Bungin's (2008) framework.

Table 4. Engagement Data Summary for Instagram Stories @PemkabBadung, 2025

No.	Content Theme	Date	Views	Interactions	Profile Activity
1	Response to Pothole Complaints & BPJN Coordination	Apr 2, 2025	4,300	10	6
2	Opening of PKB 2025 Badung Ambassador Peed Aya	Jun 21, 2025	26,342	23	7
3	Behind-the-Scenes Production Podcast	2025	6,915	3	4
4	Mangupura's 16th Anniversary MANGUCITA	Nov 16, 2025	2,615	14	4
5	Deputy Regent Visits HUT Mangupura Event	Nov 23, 2025	8,689	14	16

Source: Instagram Insights @PemkabBadung, processed by researcher (2026)

The most strategically significant Stories content is Content 1, concerning the government's responsiveness to community complaints: these Stories displayed a screenshot of resident complaints regarding potholes along with documentation of the coordination efforts already undertaken. This represents a concrete example of a closed social construction cycle public complaints in the comment section (internalization) are absorbed by the Admin, acted upon, and then communicated back through Stories (a new externalization). Within Bungin's (2008) framework, this constitutes the most tangible manifestation of the confirmation stage. Content 4, concerning Mangupura's 16th Anniversary, employed a template with distinctive Balinese visual elements that was adopted by 349 other accounts through the "Add Yours" feature, demonstrating a high level of collective internalization wherein the symbols constructed by the government are voluntarily adopted by citizens.

This closed-loop case is significant because it empirically demonstrates something that prior applications of Bungin's framework to Indonesian media content have described only at the level of a single message-producing entity.Riauan et al., (2020), applying Bungin's (2012) three-stage dialectic to a mayoral candidate's political messaging in Riau Pos, and (Hidayat,

2022) applying the same framework to the @infokejadiansemarang Instagram account, both confirmed that the externalization–objectivation–internalization cycle is analytically traceable in Indonesian digital and print media content. The similarity with the present study lies in confirming that the three-moment dialectic remains a valid lens for Indonesian public-communication content nearly a decade after Bungin's original formulation. The difference is that both prior studies treated the three moments primarily as sequential discursive stages performed by one message-producing actor (a media outlet or a single account admin), without organizational data to show whether the three moments correspond to distinct human role-holders working in sequence. This study's new contribution is to empirically map Bungin's three dialectical moments onto three separate, formally defined roles within one real organizational structure (Head of Public Media Section, Creative Team, Social Media Admin) and to show, through the pothole-complaint case above, that the cycle closes: audience internalization (complaints in the comment section) itself becomes the seed of a new externalization (the Admin's follow-up Stories) an intra-organizational, role-differentiated, and self-renewing elaboration of Bungin's theory that single-actor studies were not positioned to observe.

Discussion: The Dialectical Cycle of Digital Reality Construction at Badung Regency Government

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the digital message construction process on the @PemkabBadung Instagram account operates through three interrelated dialectical stages consistent with (Burhan Bungin, 2012)framework. In the externalization stage, the Head of Public Media Section functions as the key actor who translates the policy agenda into a content plan that is adaptive to Instagram's trends and algorithmic logic. This process does not proceed mechanically in a top-down fashion; rather, it is dialogic in nature, simultaneously considering institutional interests and the preferences of digital audiences.

In the objectivation stage, the Creative Team transforms the content plan into concrete visual and narrative products through a three-second hook strategy, the use of carousel format for information-dense content, and a combination of formal-humanistic language. Engagement data is consistent with the effectiveness of this strategy, with hook rates of 35-53% on Reels and substantial sharing of public service infographic content. In the internalization stage, the Admin ensures that content reaches and interacts with audiences through insight-based data-driven distribution, same-day edit standards, organic two-way dialogue management, and humanistic-professional comment moderation.

This study also finds that content themed around achievement and local cultural identity dominates emotional engagement metrics (likes and comments), while public service and emergency information content dominates sharing and utility metrics. This finding is consistent with (Burhan Bungin, 2012) objectivation process: content constructed as a concrete solution to citizens' problems through Entman's Treatment Recommendation framing element tends to be associated with broader and more meaningful digital reality dissemination, although this study's design cannot rule out that the practical utility of the underlying information, rather than the framing choice alone, drives this pattern.

This pattern is consistent with prior research on Indonesian government-linked Instagram accounts. Alam et al., (2025) studying @kumparancom's Reels-based message construction, similarly found that emotionally resonant, identity and achievement-oriented narratives generated the highest volume of likes and comments, while more utilitarian, information-dense content produced lower emotional engagement but higher save/share rates a similarity suggesting this engagement split is not unique to @PemkabBadung but may reflect a broader pattern in how Indonesian audiences respond to government Instagram

content.Ainussyifa et al., (2022) , examining the Ministry of Social Affairs' account, reported a comparable image-building role for achievement-themed content but did not disaggregate engagement by content function, leaving the mechanism behind this split unexamined. (Riauan et al., 2020; Wukich & Mergel, 2016) structure-content framework predicts a similar interaction between content structure and communicative function, though it was developed from U.S. emergency-management contexts rather than a tourism-economy regional government mid-leadership-transition. The present study's new contribution is therefore to (1) confirm the emotional/utilitarian engagement split under the specific institutional pressures of a high-PAD, tourism-dependent regency, and (2) explicitly connect this split to Entman's framing functions, with Treatment Recommendation content driving utility-based sharing and identity/Moral Evaluation content driving emotional engagement, a theoretical bridge between Bungin's constructivist stages and Entman's framing elements that prior studies of government Instagram accounts have not made explicit.

It is important to note a methodological caveat regarding these interpretations. The Instagram engagement metrics used in this study capture audience interaction and behavior; they do not, by themselves, establish that a specific framing strategy or content-construction choice caused higher engagement. Content 1's high share count, for example, coincided with both a Treatment Recommendation frame (Entman, 1993(Paul D'Angelo, 2018)) and the direct financial relevance of the announced IDR 100 million credit program, so the framing choice and the substantive appeal of the message are confounded within this design. Similarly, Content 2's virality co-occurred with a nationally trending sporting achievement independent of any deliberate framing decision by the account team, meaning that external news momentum, rather than message construction per se, may equally explain the engagement spike. Because the research design does not experimentally vary framing while holding content topic constant, nor does it capture audience-side interpretation directly, the engagement patterns reported here should be read as associations consistent with the proposed framing mechanisms rather than as evidence that framing choices directly caused the observed audience response. Future research combining framing analysis with audience reception methods (e.g., surveys or comment-content analysis) would be needed to test causal claims more rigorously.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the @PemkabBadung Instagram account does not merely function as a digital government notice board, but rather as an actively, deliberately, and adaptively managed space of reality construction by a three-actor team with complementary roles. The digital message construction process operates through a continuous dialectical cycle of externalization, objectivation, and internalization, as theorized in Bungin's framework.

Three keys to @PemkabBadung's digital communication success were identified: first, the team's capacity to rapidly read and adapt to platform trends without sacrificing policy substance; second, a humanistic-professional language strategy that effectively reduces the communicative distance between government and citizens; and third, an engagement-data-driven evaluation approach that treats each content item as a learning opportunity for the ongoing refinement of communication strategy.

Theoretically, this study confirms that (Burhan Bungin, 2012) Social Construction of Mass Media Reality framework remains relevant and applicable in analyzing the digital communication practices of local governments in the era of social media platforms.

Based on these findings, several recommendations can be offered. For practitioners, local government communication teams are encouraged to formalize the internal division of labor identified in this study, an explicit externalization-objectivation-internalization workflow, into a documented content governance protocol, so that the currently informal, trend-responsive

process remains consistent even as personnel change, particularly during leadership transitions. Diskominfo Badung and similar agencies are also encouraged to standardize engagement-tracking criteria across content formats (Feed, Reels, Stories) so that internal evaluation of "successful" content is methodologically comparable across formats rather than relying on format-specific ad hoc metrics. For policymakers, these findings suggest that public-service and emergency-information content, which this study found to generate disproportionately high sharing relative to likes, merits sustained investment even though it may not produce the same emotional engagement volume as achievement- or culture-themed content, since its distribution value to the community is arguably higher. For future researchers, this study recommends: (1) complementing the message-producer perspective adopted here with audience reception studies, using surveys, focus groups, or comment-content analysis, to test whether the framing strategies identified are actually interpreted by audiences as intended; (2) employing a comparative multi-case design across several regional governments to examine whether the dialectical cycle observed at @PemkabBadung generalizes to other socio-economic and cultural contexts; (3) applying critical discourse analysis or semiotic analysis to probe the ideological dimensions of local government content, particularly how Balinese local-wisdom symbols are commodified alongside policy messaging; and (4) adopting quasi-experimental or content-controlled designs capable of isolating the causal contribution of specific framing choices from confounding factors such as topic salience or external news cycles, addressing the interpretive limitation noted in the Discussion section above.

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