

## THE COMMUNICATION STRATEGY OF DIGITAL-BASED MEDIA ORGANIZATIONS

### STRATEGI KOMUNIKASI ORGANISASI MEDIA BERBASIS DIGITAL

Gatut Priyowidodo<sup>1</sup>, Chory Angela Wijayanti<sup>2</sup>, Titi Nur Vidyarini<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Universitas Kristen Petra

Jalan Siwalankerto 121-131, Surabaya, Indonesia

<sup>1</sup>gatpri@petra.ac.id; <sup>2</sup>chory@petra.ac.id; <sup>3</sup>vidya@petra.ac.id

Diterima tgl. 03/07/2020; Direvisi tgl. 30/04/2021; Disetujui tgl. 19/05/2021

#### ABSTRACT

*Indonesia is experiencing a high growth in digital-based start-up companies, from 52 businesses in 2015 to 2,210 start-ups in 2020. This growth is related to the strategy and communication model of techno-entrepreneurs or business actors. The purpose of this research is to find out the communication strategy of the selected companies by using an ethnomethodological approach. The data analysis technique applies a conversation analysis by NVIVO 12 software, and the validity test of the data uses sources and theory triangulation. The findings cover two important aspects. First, six communication strategies used in digital media management are communication management, the communication message and context, the communication plan execution, the involvement of parties as internal and external communicators, the usage of communication media, and the communication receiver and channels. Second, several factors determine these strategies which include the company's internal conditions and the strong relations with external parties. The digital-based business information must be supported by a combination of two core strengths, namely professionals with information technology knowledge and professionals with management skills. Finally, the survival of businesses is determined by three important stakeholders: advertisers, sources of production, and subscribers.*

**Keywords:** *Communication Strategy, Digital Media, Ethnomethodology*

#### ABSTRAK

Indonesia mengalami peningkatan jumlah bisnis rintisan (*start-up*) berbasis digital yang tinggi, yaitu dari 52 perusahaan di 2015, menjadi 2.210 perusahaan di 2020. Peningkatan jumlah *start-up* ini tentu terkait dengan strategi dan model komunikasi yang dilakukan para teknopreneur atau pelaku usaha. Riset ini bertujuan untuk menemukan strategi tersebut dengan menggunakan metode penelitian etnometodologi. Teknik analisis data dilakukan dengan menggunakan analisis percakapan dengan bantuan *software* NVIVO 12, serta uji keabsahan data dengan menggunakan triangulasi sumber dan teori. Temuan penelitian ini meliputi dua aspek penting. Temuan pertama, strategi komunikasi dalam pengelolaan media digital mencakup enam hal, yaitu pengelolaan manajemen komunikasi; penggunaan saluran komunikasi; eksekusi perencanaan komunikasi; pemilihan saluran komunikasi untuk menggerakkan roda organisasi; penggunaan media komunikasi; serta keterlibatan berbagai pihak sebagai komunikator baik internal maupun eksternal. Temuan kedua, faktor-faktor yang mempengaruhi terbentuknya strategi, yaitu kondisi internal perusahaan serta relasi yang kuat dengan pihak eksternal. Usaha yang berbasis digital informasi harus didukung kombinasi dua kekuatan inti, yaitu tenaga ahli di bidang teknologi informasi serta tenaga profesional dengan ketrampilan manajemen di bidang media digital. Sementara, kelangsungan bisnis ditentukan oleh tiga stakeholder penting. Pemasang iklan sebagai sumber pendapatan perusahaan, narasumber sebagai pemasok bahan produksi dan pembaca/*subscriber* sebagai khalayak konsumen.

**Kata Kunci:** Strategi Komunikasi, Media Digital, Etnometodologi

## 1. BACKGROUND

It is a prospective time to manage and run digital media businesses. The start-up development in Indonesia has occurred very fast. In 2015 there were only 52 start-ups. However, in 2018 the number of start-ups increased to 996 businesses (Zaky M, Nuzar I., 2018). In 2020, Indonesia is experiencing a sharply growing number of 2,210 start-ups, which makes Indonesia the fifth largest number of start-ups after the United States, India, Great Britain, and Canada (startupranking.com/, 2020). *Kumparan* as a pioneer in the digital media business generated many digital media start-ups. In the "1001 Start-up Media Online" program, *Kumparan* has developed 36 digital media start-up businesses from 34 provinces in Indonesia (www.kumparan.com/30/10/2019, n.d.).

Inevitably, the *technopreneur* sector is a prospective business. The profile of the start-up founder was dominated by generation Y (born 1981-1994) which reached 69.20%. While generation X (1965-1980) and generation Z (1995-2010) ranged from 15.60% to 15.20% respectively (Zaky M, Nuzar I., 2018). From the perspective of business penetration, generation Y people can communicate more aggressively and interact with those from generation Z and generation X who are more senior. That is why they need a sharp business instinct, that is the ability to create a space of communication and interaction that can be accepted by both parties. A good communication strategy is a strong capital for success in business ventures (Susanti, 2015). Communication strategy and appropriate medium determine the effectiveness of messages delivered to other parties (Kusumadinata & Fitriah, 2017).

Unfortunately, the study of communication strategy and model based on ethnomethodology is limited. Therefore, this study tries to fill this gap by focusing on two research questions: (1) *What are the appropriate communication strategies for a digital-based start-up company?* (2) *What are the influential factors of the communication strategy for a digital-based start-up company?*

### 1.1. Digital Media Entrepreneurship or Technopreneur Media

The usage of digital technology is inevitable. It has far-reaching influences on our daily interaction and communication. For some people, the internet is no longer secondary, but it has become the primary need (Wagner & Fernández-Ardèvol, 2020). We live in the digital age, marked by a series of increasingly sophisticated information technology developments. Nevertheless, face-to-face communication remains irreplaceable (Priyowidodo, 2019). Consuming information in the era of digital media is easier because of the easy access provided by the online network than consuming information from traditional media such as newspapers, television, or radio. The abundant information provided on the internet has encouraged the increasing number of business ventures.

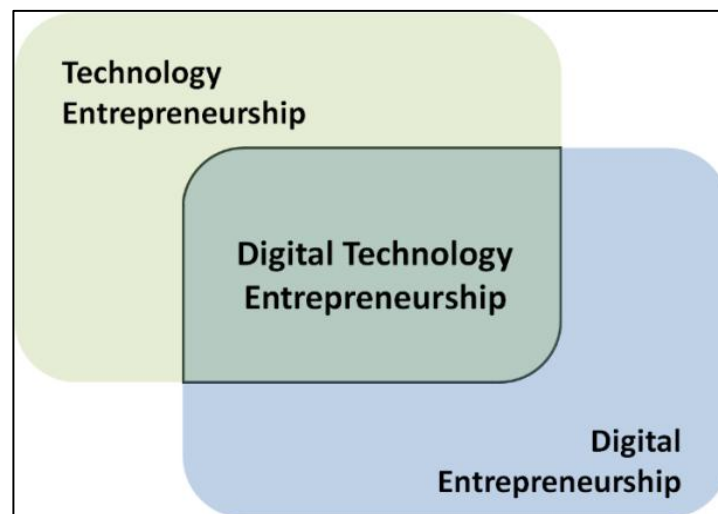
Start-up businesses are emerging in the field of e-commerce, financial technology, games, entertainment, and education; all of which benefited from the *world wide web*. Persons or groups of people who entwine the advancement of information technology and the spirit of entrepreneurship are called '*technopreneur*'. The need for information boosts several potential and prospective business opportunities. As a result, various types of start-up businesses have sprung up from e-commerce, fin-tech, games, entertainment, and education, and they give opportunities to those who specifically work in the online media field.

Indonesia is a country that is very responsive to the growth and development of the start-up businesses. Based on Mikti and Bekraf data, there are at least 996 digital start-ups in Indonesia (Zaky M, Nuzar I., 2018). According to Ries, a start-up is a newly established business and is still at the stage of development and research to find market potentials, and all start-ups are classified in

the field of technology and information businesses. Due to its novel enterprise characteristics, technopreneurs who venture into this field, are not immune to failure despite having business potentials (Praditya, 2019); (Ries, 2011).

Although digital-based media start-ups are newcomers, according to Carlson and Usher (2016) the vision does not interfere with the fundamental ideals and traditional aspirations of journalism. Instead of trying to replace the field of journalism, they perpetuate its aspiration by maintaining the purpose of journalism and by incorporating the new types of products that will make journalism better for the public (Carlson & Usher, 2016); (Priyowidodo, 2011).

Digital-based media is a digital format of the previously analog-based journalistic product. The news may be produced, distributed, and consumed digitally with the latest Information and Communication Technology. It is a new business opportunity that creates information need for audience in the internet era.



**Figure 1.** Digital Technology Entrepreneurship is an overlapping area between technology and digital entrepreneurship (Giones & Brem, 2017)

As seen in Figure 1, digital technology entrepreneurship is an overlapping area between technology and digital entrepreneurship (Giones & Brem, 2017). Moreover, those who want to build a digital start-up company should be aware of the development of information and digital technology. Understanding this basic concept is important so that when the contents of the media are published and marketed, the public would respond positively. Digital media is always contrasted with an old one, that is the conventional media platform. According to Biagi, the term digital media is used to describe all forms of digital communication media (Biagi, 2015). Also called the new media, it combines texts, graphics, sound, and videos using computer technology to create a product that is different from the traditional (old) media (Permana & Mahameruaji, 2019).

There are at least four Indonesian start-ups in the unicorn category having asset valuations of more than 1 billion US dollars, namely *Bukalapak*, *Gojek*, *Tokopedia*, and *Traveloka* (CBI Insight, 2020). There are still hundreds and even thousands of start-up businesses of these *technopreneurs* who struggle and compete closely with each other to exist and improve their business performances. Most of the start-up companies fail because of these intense competitions. According to CB Insight, the lack of teamwork is one of the 20 keys that causes the failure of start-up companies (CBI Insight, 2020). Teamwork in organizational communication is a determinant of business success. Namie et al, remind technopreneurs of keeping teamwork intact especially in the

same workplace. If teamwork is undermined, the organization will not reach its goals (Namie et al., 2009).

Communication errors may harm good professional relations and interactions. One way to restore the damaged relationship is to keep maintaining constructive and appreciative professional communication. Hence, the right communication strategy is needed. Selinker argues that communication strategy cannot be separated from strategic competence (Selinker, 1972). According to Szpekman, there are six aspects in a communication strategy, that is (1) skills and knowledge; (2) size, (3) rewards; (4) process structure; (5) leadership, and (6) communication. If one of these elements has malfunctioned, it may affect the company's efforts to achieve its goals (Szpekman, 2008).

The communication strategy as an interactional phenomenon, and that the communication strategy is “a joint effort between two interlocutors to agree on meaning in situations where the structure of the required meaning is not shared” (Tarone, 1980); (Kim, 2019). He argues that the main characteristic of a communication strategy is the negotiation of an agreement on meaning. That means that if the two parties communicate, they must have an agreement on meaning for the topic of attention. If both parties have different interpretations related to the same object, it will lead to information distortion.

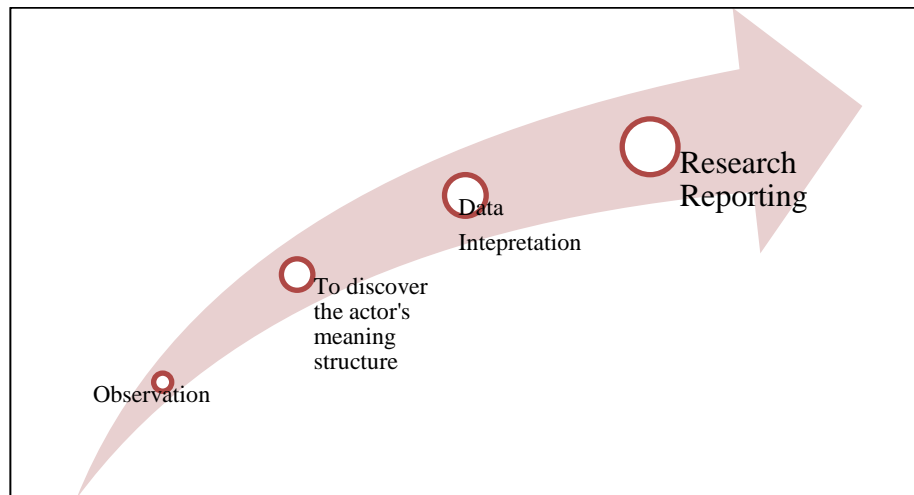
The communication model emphasizes more on the aspects of how the message is received. Berlo who expanded Shannon and Weaver's linear communication model, created the Source-Message-Channel-Receiver (SMCR) communication model. The SMCR model identifies four elements of communication (Berlo, 1960); (Nobleza C., 1988). The first element is the source, which refers to a person or a group of people who cipher thoughts into a message. The second element is the message which amasses meaning. The third element is the channel through which the message is sent. The last element is the receiver in the form of an individual or a group of people. Several scholars has developed this model such as Walther (1995) who proposed an idea of a transactional communication model. Further dynamics gave rise to a constructionist model that inspired a linear model, an interactive model, and a transactional model. Whatever forms the development of the communication model takes, the point will return to the initial model that remains relevant, the SMCR model. In the context of this research, the SMCR model is relevant as a perspective instrument to see how the management of digital start-up media sends and responds to messages.

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research applies an ethnomethodological method, which was introduced by Harold Garfinkel in 1954, based on the interpretative paradigm. This method specifically emphasizes how individuals create and understand their daily lives (subject matter) (Atkinson & Atkinson, 2007); (Emirbayer & Maynard, 2011). The primary data collection was done with interviews and focus group discussion. The objects of this research were three digital media companies. The informants fulfill several qualifications, namely 1) digital media practitioners with more than three years of experience, 2) owners or businessmen in the field of digital media, 3) those involved in digital media management.

The researchers used online interviews mediated by the Google Meet application and written interviews assisted by the Whatsapp application. The use of online interviews was compulsory because of the government's restriction or limitation for a face-to-face meeting (enactment of PSBB or Large-Scale Social Limitation) concerning the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ethnomethodological studies of courts and classrooms, homes and therapy sessions, conversations, and phone-in programs address these features as matters for investigation. (Anderson, Hughes, and Sharrock, 2002). The data analysis is carried out by Nvivo Software. This software allows us to handle qualitative data by exploring, coding, reflecting, and visualizing the model.



**Figure 2.** Steps of Ethnomethodology (Gidlow, 1972)

Figure 2 shows the ethnomethodological procedural steps that include testing the validity of the data by using source and theory triangulation. Triangulation was conducted in two phases. The first phase was comparing the data from one source with other data or sources of data. The purpose is to obtain alternative data to deepen the analysis. The second phase was crossing the analyzed data from informants with relevant theories so that it may reduce the researcher's biases and assumptions. The goal of this phase is to increase the depth of analysis based on theories, covering larger empirical data than just the SCMR theory.

### 3. DATA FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Digital media companies that are analyzed have been established for more than 3 years. The focus of those companies is to produce and broadcast local news from Surabaya and East Java. Based on the data findings in the field, it turns out that the communication strategy undertaken by entrepreneurs or *technopreneurs* in the field of digital-based media at the East Java level includes six strategies. The six strategies are 1) the communicator involved in the planning and implementing strategy; 2) the medium of communication; 3) the communication plan; 4) the message delivered; 5) the channel of communication; 6) the communication management. Of course, this is somewhat different from the communication strategy which has so far only emphasized communicators, messages, audiences, the media used, and their effects (Kusumadinata and Fitriah, 2017). As mentioned above, the findings of this research can be understood from the perspective of the SMCR communication model. The transactional model of communication emphasizes the dialogue between the communicator and communicant via the channel, which can alter the whole message. In managing digital media, the transactional model plays an important part, particularly the access of information obtained by the receivers that allow them to post messages, in which the communicator (in this case the digital media people) must be aware of the impact. The nature of digital media itself guarantees a transactional communication if the source

allows it by providing the means, such as comment forms, opinion pages on the media, and a direct chat via the media.

To understand an organization's strategy, we should know the organization's vision, strengths, weaknesses, and approaches in realizing its goals and objectives. The companies of this study have set up priority scales in their management. This was admitted by one of the informants who is also the owner and founder of the online media company:

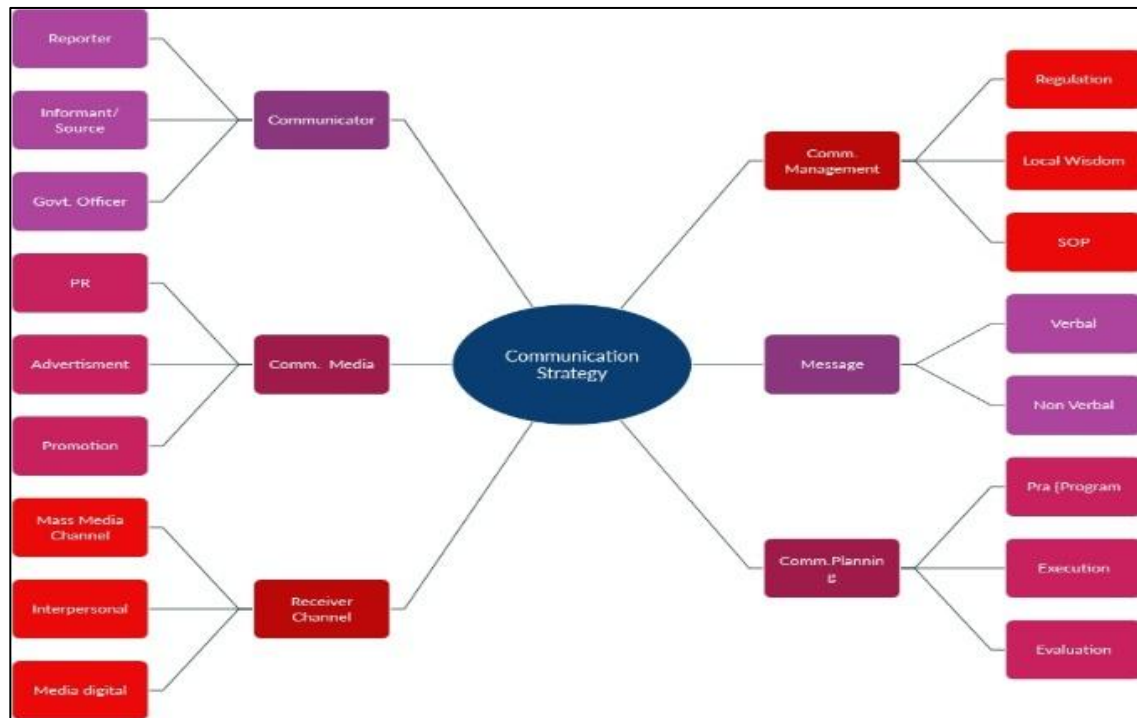
*It was not easy to run an online media business at first. Five of us have no experience in that field. Four of us are print media journalists. Only one of us is experienced in media management. So, we run this business only with the passion to become entrepreneurs and everything is run while learning. Our priority is to choose only the regional level, not the national level. It is because we are sure, if we do it seriously, we will get the maximum result (AR, FGD/interview, May 18, 2020).*

People who work in digital media businesses need to understand the business processes and the scale of priority. Not only that, they need to acquire at least two main skills: the production of information commodity and the digital media business management (Liu and Picard, 2014; Xamardo, 2013). The precondition is strengthened by the explanation of an informant who also serves as the Digital Media Production Manager:

*I do not only handle organizational management but also oversee how the news is produced. Especially in the media that I manage, I must be able to balance the interests of many parties. (For example) we must understand the wishes of the Province but must also pay attention to the interests of the City government. However, as an independent media company, we must not sacrifice the objectivity and accuracy of news either. Thus, in the eyes of the public, the media that we manage remain a reliable and reputable source of information (EP, FGD/ interview, May 19, 2020).*

Managing information business, both digital and conventional, is not easy. One of the four pillars of democracy is mass media. The importance of mass media for democracy for example, lies on how a news anchor communicates the product of the media company, yet still provides accurate and reliable information. From the educational perspective, it is difficult to find commercial products from goods and service industries that are not merely profit-oriented.

That is why those who become *technopreneurs* in the digital media industry must be able to play important roles in communicating their ideas to all levels of society. There is a need for a good communication strategy for important messages. They are related to the public interest, to be easily transmitted to the audience, listeners, and viewers quickly and accurately. Figure 3 shows the actors that may be involved in the communication strategy formation of the digital media company. Some diverse elements and interests should be considered in maintaining the relationship with the company. Some important elements are 1) society; 2) Programs; 3) companies. Other crucial elements of relationships to be maintained are the public's interest, the media role, and social interests. All those elements depend on the reliability of the communication strategy. The communication strategies implemented in digital media business management can be seen in the following figure.



**Figure 3.** Data Visualization of Communication Strategy, from NVIVO Analysis (2020)

One informant described the aspects of the communication strategy in details:

*Communication and interaction must be clear and measurable in every company in general or especially in digital-based media companies. It is because the main tool for digital media is information technology. Thus, how we interact with our subordinates must also be clear. Even when we give orders, we note who gives the fastest response. That is how we control that the message we send reaches reporters in the field. If it is not fast, we must ask why the response is slow. That way, we can evaluate whether our communication strategy is appropriate or needs improvement (RCt, FGD/ interview, May,18 2020).*

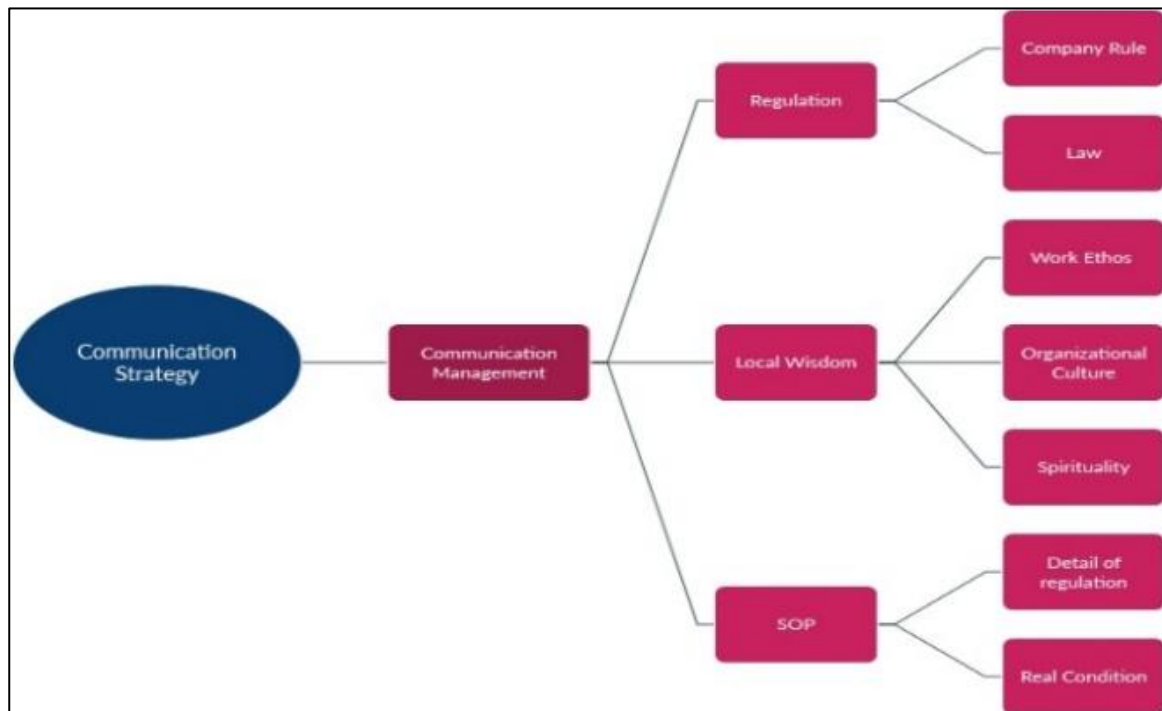
That fact is also in line with the idea that communication can be effective if the communicator knows the audience (communicant/public), namely individuals or groups of individuals who have various characteristics, including cultural characteristics and local wisdom (Bahri, Ramly, Gani, & Sukmawati, 2021). In media companies, the leader must understand the characteristics of their employees whether they are field reporters or administrative staff in the company. Only by using the method, the chosen communication strategy can be properly implemented.

### 3.1. Communication Management

As a corporation in the digital information service industry, the principles of data speed and accuracy are non-negotiable. It can be considered as a business spirit. All journalists must hold these principles. Although every journalist is given the authority or freedom of expression in the field, they must still obey the rules and existing system. This attitude needs to be emphasized because every journalist has a different character and background. That is why if a problem arises, the appropriate step to be taken is to find the best solution to keep the company's reputation. It is further explained by an informant who is also a production manager:

*Discuss with each other to find the most effective way to solve problems. Then, the Manager distributes it to each team member to work on. This system makes sure that the success achieved belongs to the community because the goals are shared goals (EP, FGD/ interview, May 19, 2020).*

Such a democratic work atmosphere shows that the work rhythm of the organization's crew has formed a good organizational culture. In addition, they work based on Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) and existing regulations but also pay close attention to local wisdom. More details can be observed through the visualization of the research findings below:



**Figure 4.** Data Visualization of Communication Management, from NVIVO Analysis (2020)

The explanation above is in line with the thoughts which emphasize that local wisdom is a concrete form of cultural practices. As explained by Wood that “to interpret communication, we have to consider the system in which it takes place.” Communication can be effective if the communicator knows the audience (communicant/public), namely individuals or groups of individuals who have various characteristics, including cultural characteristics (Wood, 2018).

This opinion was also strengthened by Mungmachon who said that local wisdom is basic knowledge gained from living in balance with nature. It is related to culture in the community, which is accumulated and passed on. This wisdom can be both abstract and concrete, but the important characteristics are that it comes from experiences or truth gained from life. The wisdom from real experiences integrates the body, the spirit, and the environment (Mungmachon, 2012).

Based on the explanation above, it is very clear that local wisdom is a specific organizational character. It is because these values may be very suitable in the culture of an organization like this, but perhaps not for the organizations in different regions.

### 3.2. Message Context

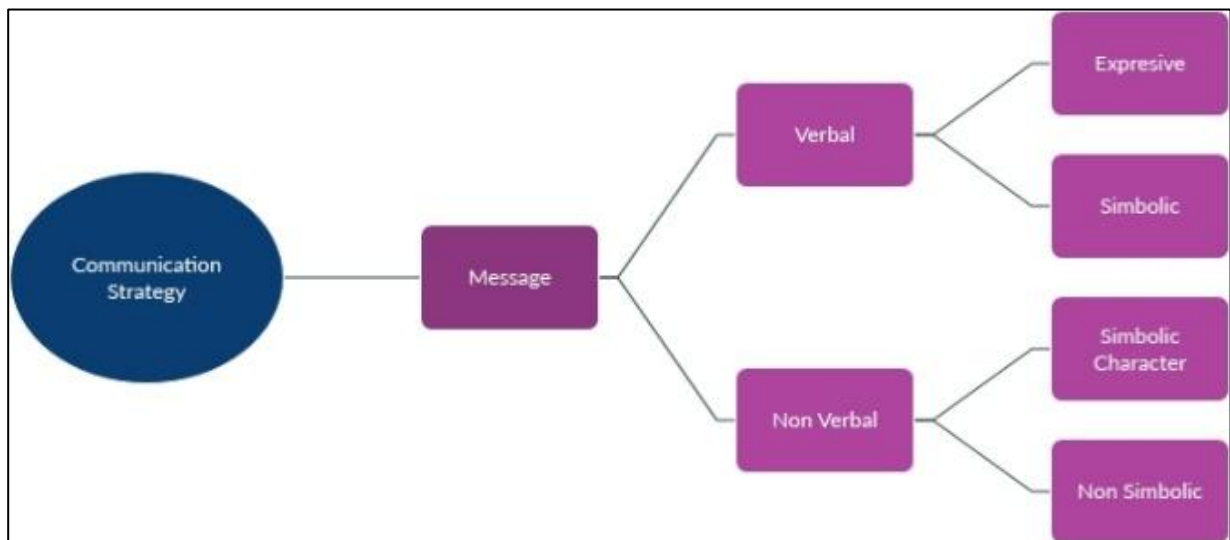
Another important element in a communication strategy is the message. Messages can be constructive but also destructive. It is especially true if the nature of the message is non-verbal, in



the form of facial expressions, body language, certain cues, eye contact, and voice intonation. Of course, it is not easy to interpret the contents of the message if the interpreters do not know the context. Especially in this COVID-19 pandemic era, the distribution of messages from leaders to employees or staff must be fast, accurate, and responsive. Digital media must be a pioneer in maximizing the power of accurate message distribution. If message distortion is minimal within the organization, it is expected that errors can be prevented in broadcasting news . The informant further explains:

*We have many broadcasting channels such as radio, news media, SCG (Surabaya City Guide), She radio. Each of us communicates through WA. Starting from the WA group communication, the SS media family, then each media, continued with each division having their own WA group. Through the WAG, we discussed many things intensely. So, before broadcasting a piece of news, many parties read it. For us, news has a convergence value. There is no classification. The convergence includes content, mindset, and organization. Outside the division group, each has his/her points. HRD Manager, mas Erol, mas Ijang, She radio. All of them are involved (EP, FGD/ interview, May 19, 2020).*

More details related to the description of messages that are divided into verbal, non-verbal, and symbolic characters can be observed through the figure below.



**Figure 5.** Data Visualization of Message Context, from NVIVO Analysis (2020)

Based on empirical data, it was found that the message content and the way to express the message are very important. Messages can be expressed verbally and non-verbally. Non-verbal expression is manifested in its symbolic and actual form. The fact is in line with the idea that from an influence standpoint, social media platforms are particularly interesting for people to share messages with others that may, in turn, spread that message's influence through one's social network (Nabi et al., 2019). In another words, we need a 'Strategic Approach' or some other combination of similar-sounding words (Tibbie, 1997).

Confirming the above findings, at least three things need to be examined in composing a message: (1) *over power'em theory*. This theory shows that if the message is often repeated, long, and loud enough, then the message will pass from the communicant; (2) *Glamor theory*. A message that is beautifully packaged, offered with the power of persuasion, will make the communicant interested in taking up that idea; (3) *Don't tell 'em theory*. If an idea is not conveyed to others, they

will not know and ask about it; therefore, they will not make an opinion about the idea (Wijaya, 2015).

### 3.3. Communication Plan

Entering the world of digital media was not an easy problem. The informant admitted that they were experienced in managing print media. Thus, getting into the digital media business was like entering a new jungle. Their inclination to enter the business was the belief that the business sector did not have many players yet. It had a low competition. This was a positive business opportunity in the future. That is why they focused only on competing in East Java region and not playing at the national level.

Digital media business requires a careful planning. It needs a minimum of three stages, namely pre-activity preparation, implementation, and post-activity. It is further explained by the informant:

*We started this business because of forced conditions. Our start was not a zero. Each of us had experience in each field. That was why the planning that we did was business as usual like when we worked in print media. Even though there were many differences in the field, we continued to adapt and innovate. It also involved how to convince investors that this business was profitable (AR, FGD/interview, May 18, 2020).*

IDN Media Production Manager also explained a similar opinion. He said that managing digital media had to be carried out flexibly according to trends. He further explained:

*One of the factors that support the system is that the goals or targets are dynamic, meaning that they often change following the development of the community in the social media. This means that what we are aiming for can change in the middle of the road because there is a shift in patterns or trends in the society. This method is effective enough to follow so that we can change the old objectives with new ones (RCt, FGD/interview, May 20, 2020).*

The figure below shows the relation of each stage in communication planning:

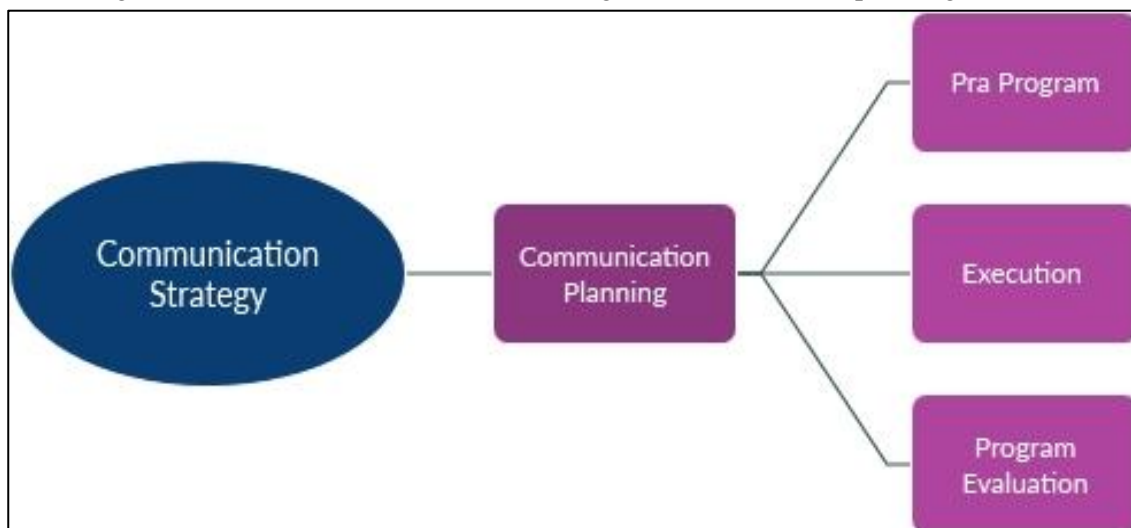


Figure 6. Data Visualization of Communication Plan, from NVIVO Analysis (2020)

Regardless of whatever business is chosen, the planning aspect must be profoundly considered before the execution of activities. It is because communication planning is the process of allocating communication resources to achieve organizational goals. These resources include not only mass media and interpersonal communication but also every activity designed to change the behavior

and create certain skills among individuals and groups within the scope of tasks assigned by the organization (Wijaya, 2015).

### 3.4. Communicator

Communicators are like 'raw materials in the process of producing goods and services. Not only is the working relationship important but also maintaining good relations among journalists and interviewees. Government officials are the official information center. Other sources such as businessmen, activist organizations, community leaders, opinion leaders, academics, and anyone else must maintain interpersonal relations.

*Because our media is read by the people of the Province and also the City, then if there is news that does not quite suit one of the parties, we are also subject to complaints. Sir, why is the news like this? We must be able to accommodate them all. However, we still maintain the integrity and are on the public interest side (EP, FGD/ interview, May 19, 2020).*

Therefore, because the focus area for the chosen digital media is at the provincial and district/city levels, good relations with the government officials must be maintained properly. As the main actor in communication activities, a communicator who will act as the spearhead of a program must be skilled in communication, rich in ideas, and full of creativity. Some requirements that must be acquired by a communicator are credibility, attractiveness, and strength (Wijaya, 2015) and the objectivity of news (Priowidodo, 2010).

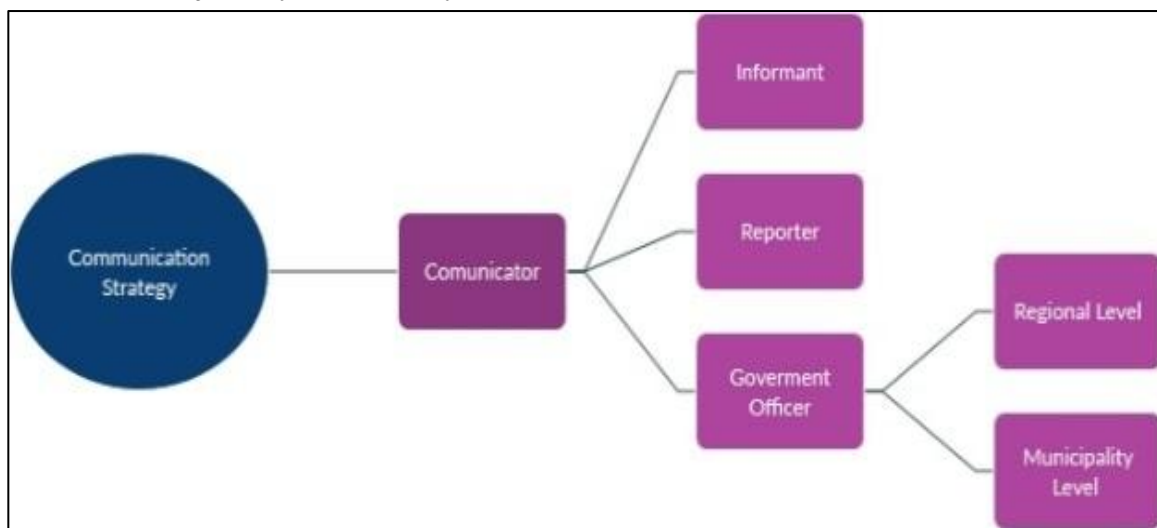


Figure 7. Data Visualization of Communicator, from NVIVO Analysis (2020)

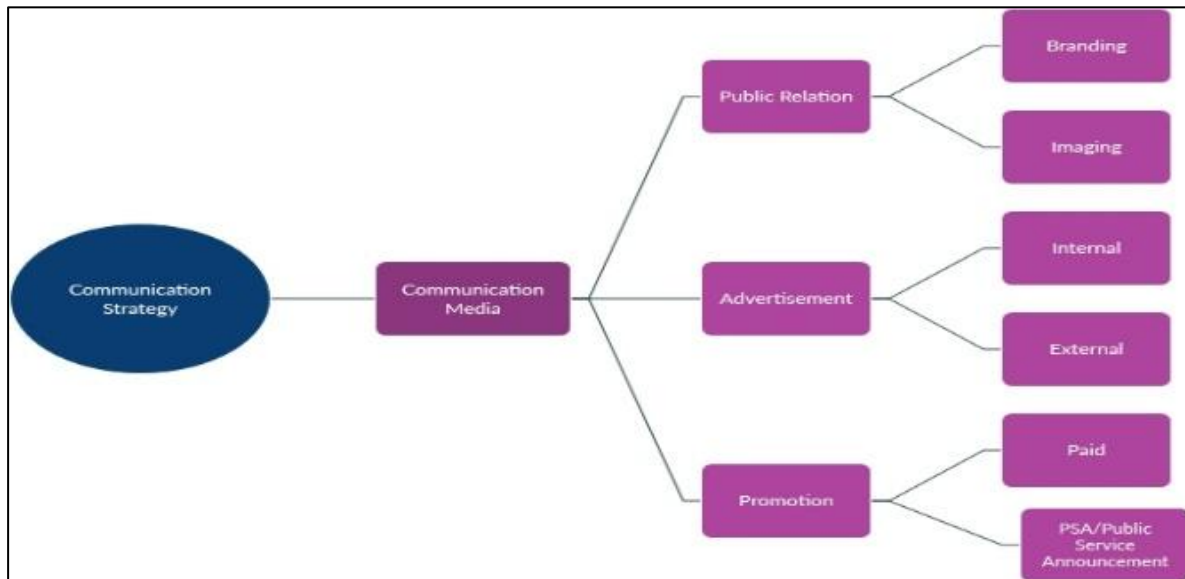
### 3.5. Communication Media

Any company must be wise in choosing the media to communicate its messages. It is not only a tool for marketing products but also represents the identity of the organization itself. The selection of communication tools is determined by the purpose of promoting the products or services. It does not necessarily require an expensive and over-the-top medium of communication. The company must be selective to advertise, promote or conduct public relations campaigns for the products. Due to the current trends, people tend to choose digital media devices and platforms, rather than face-to-face communication.

*Digital media platforms are the right means to communicate. That was why I decided to go into this business. We are aware of limited technical capabilities. However, we try to recruit human resources who are experts in the field of information technology. In the future, we see this business very potential (AR, FGD/ interview, May 18, 2020).*

This finding is in line with the Caballer's opinion (2005) which confirms that the most deleterious effects of time pressure are produced in groups working face-to-face, while groups mediated by video-conference improve their affective responses under time pressure (Caballer, Amparo; Gracia, Francisco; & Peiró, 2005).

Media investors view this trend in digital media as new business opportunities. They take advantage of trend. The following visualization further explains the scheme:



**Figure 8.** Data Visualization of Communication Media, from NVIVO Analysis (2020)

### 3.6. Receiver and Channel

The focus of digital media companies is information technology. The product being sold is an information commodity. Therefore, the choice of information channels in building communication strategies must be correct. Three things are the focus of this receiver's channel, namely the communication channel, the media used, and the interpersonal channel. The true communication channel talks about the company's core business. This digital media company is engaging four business sectors, that is television streaming, radio streaming, online media, and print media. Another prospective activity undertaken is the media consultant.

*Focusing on the digital media business, in addition to requiring special skills, we must also be able to read market opportunities. At first, it was not easy to convince readers or customers, especially those who initially saw us only as print media journalists, who are now media entrepreneurs. However, for us, it was a good opportunity. Many have asked us to become media consultants, related to the projects they are working on in East Java. Then, we can also do this as a new business wing. Even though at first we did not know about being media consultants, we learned from field experiences. We have the knowledge firsthand from the field (AR, FGD/ interview, May 18, 2020).*

This information-based company is very interested in establishing good relations both internally and externally (stakeholders). When relations and communication are established well

within the company, they will reflect a good reputation for external parties. It makes it easier for the company to convince other parties that the company is trustable and credible.

This idea is in line with King, Lenox, and Barnett who introduced the concept of *reputation commons (problems)* to explain reputational interdependence. *Reputation commons* is a reputation identified as a general resource shared by an industry's members. "A reputation commons becomes a reputation commons problem when stakeholders can act against firms"; and when they do not "possess sufficient information to distinguish an individual firm's performance" (King, Lenox, & Burnett, 2002); (Frandsen & Johansen, 2018)

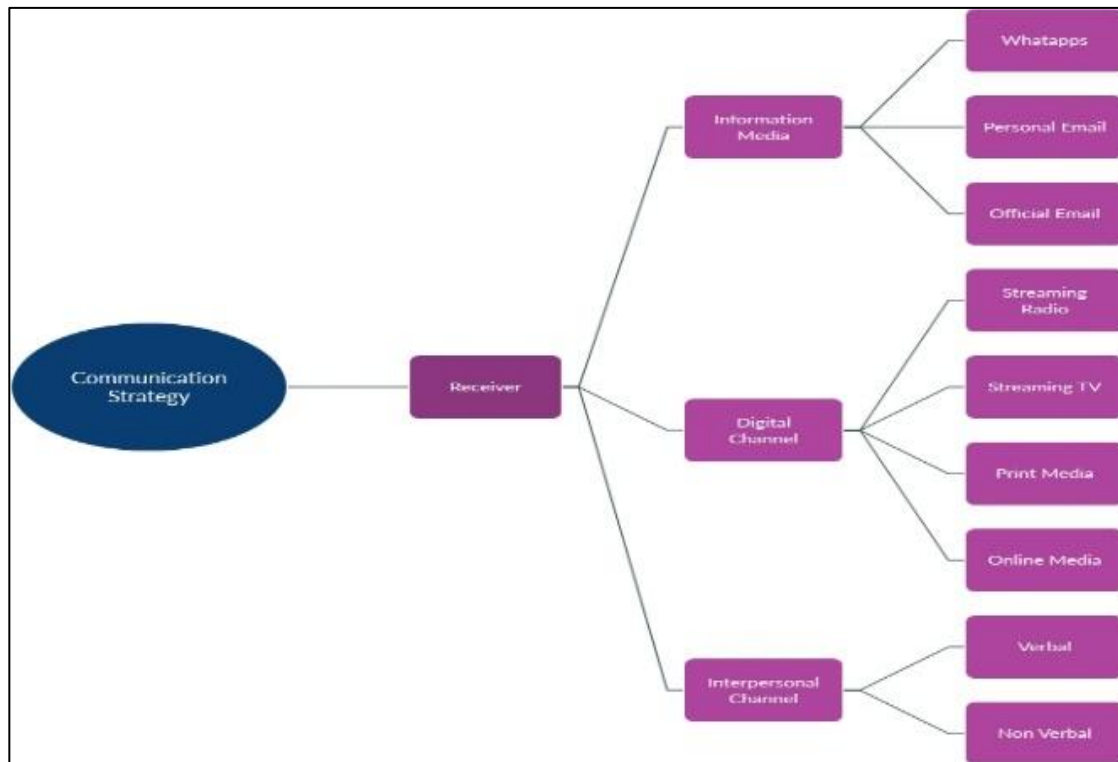


Figure 9. Data Visualization of Receiver Channel, from NVIVO Analysis (2020)

Due to the company's reputation importance, informants believe that non-physical assets must be properly guarded. Customer or client advertisers must be assured that they are in the right media because it produces and delivers news that is true and accurate. Although the leaders do not always meet field reporters, they continue to communicate intensely through office e-mail, personal e-mail, and Whatsapp. Even in certain situations, they can directly contact the leader by all communication means.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and analysis of the data, there are at least two important conclusions. First, there are six aspects of the communication strategy that may apply in the digital media industry, namely: (1) the communication management; (2) the communication message and context; (3) the communication plan execution; (4) the involvement of parties as internal and external communicators; (5) the communication media used; and (6) the communication receiver and channels.

Second, there are two influencing factors of the communication strategy. First, a digital-based information business needs two primary strengths: professionals with information technology skills

and professionals with management skills. The focus of digital media companies is information technology. The product being sold is an information commodity. Thus, digital media companies should be aware of the development of information and digital technology. A strong management team with comprehension of the current trends in the business and digital world is required to manage the business. Second, the company should build a good external relationship at least with three important stakeholders: advertisers, suppliers, and consumers. These relations are driven by direct leadership, the implementation of verbal and nonverbal messages and channels, and the possibility of receiving feedback from the stakeholders.

### Acknowledgments

This research was conducted in the PSBB (Large-Scale Social Limitation) period. The regulation was issued by the Ministry of Health to accelerate the Handling of COVID-19. The PSBB rules are recorded in the Minister of Health Regulation No. 9 in 2020. Surabaya implemented the PSBB on 28<sup>th</sup> of April – 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020. The researchers are grateful that they were able to conduct interviews via Google meet, telephone, and written interviews. This research is funded through Internal Grant Research from the Institute of Research and Community Service (LPPM), Petra Christian University, by the Contract Number 07/HBK-Research/LPPM-UKP/I/2020 at 20<sup>th</sup> January 2020.

### REFERENCES

- Anderson, R. J., Hughes, J. A., & Sharrock, W. W. (2002). The Relationship Between Ethnomethodology and Phenomenology. *A Primer of Lebesgue Integration*, 16(3), 93–105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-012083971-1/50011-0>
- Atkinson, P., & Atkinson, P. (2007). Ethnomethodology: A Critical Review. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 14(1988), 441–465. Retrieved from [http://www3.nccu.edu.tw/~95254005/ethnomethodology\\_a\\_critical\\_review.pdf](http://www3.nccu.edu.tw/~95254005/ethnomethodology_a_critical_review.pdf)
- Bahri, S., Ramly, M., Gani, A., & Sukmawati, S. (2021). Organizational Commitment and Civil Servants Performance: The Contribution of Intelligence, Local Wisdom and Organizational Culture. *European Journal of Business and Management Research*, 6(1), 128–134. <https://doi.org/10.24018/ejbmr.2021.6.1.720>
- Berlo, D. K. (1960). *The Process of Communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc.
- Biagi, S. (2015). *Media / Impact An Introduction to Mass Media* (Eleventh). Retrieved from [www.cengage.com](http://www.cengage.com).
- Caballer, Amparo; Gracia, Francisco; Peiró, J.-M. (2005). Affective responses to work process and outcomes in virtual teams: Effects of communication media and time pressure. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 20(3–4), 245–260(16). <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1108/02683940510589037>
- Carlson, M., & Usher, N. (2016). News Startups as Agents of Innovation: For-profit digital news startup manifestos as metajournalistic discourse. *Digital Journalism*, 4(5), 563–581. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21670811.2015.1076344>
- CBI Insight. (2020). The Top 20 reasons Startups fail. *CB Insights*, 1, 1–9. Retrieved from <https://www.cbinsights.com/research/startup-failure-reasons-top/>
- Emirbayer, M., & Maynard, D. W. (2011). Pragmatism and Ethnomethodology. *Qualitative Sociology*, 34(1), 221–261. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-010-9183-8>
- Frandsen, F., & Johansen, W. (2018). Voices in Conflict? The Crisis Communication of Meta-Organizations. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 32(1), 90–120. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0893318917705734>
- Gidlow, B. (1972). Ethnomethodology--A New Name for Old Practices. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 23(4), 395–405.
- Giones, F., & Brem, A. (2017). Digital Technology Entrepreneurship: A Definition and Research Agenda. *Technology Innovation Management Review*, 7(5), 44–51. <https://doi.org/10.22215/timreview1076>

- Kim, M. (2019). *Communication Strategy of Korean EFL Learners*. 5, 1–68.
- King, A. A., Lenox, M. J., & Burnett, M. L. (2002). Strategic responses to the reputation commons problem. In M. J. V. Andrew J. Hoffman (Ed.), *Organizations, Policy and The Natural Environment Institutional and Strategic Perspectives* (pp. 393–406). <https://doi.org/10.4337/9781788970693.00010>
- Kusumadinata, A. A., & Fitriah, M. (2017). Strategi Komunikasi Pelayanan Publik melalui Program Pos Pemberdayaan Keluarga. *Jurnal ASPIKOM*, 3(1), 225–238.
- Liu, Y. L., & Picard, R. G. (2014). Policy and marketing strategies for digital media. In *Policy and Marketing Strategies for Digital Media*. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315794303>
- Mungmachon, M. R. (2012). Knowledge and Local Wisdom : Community Treasure. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 2(13), 174–181.
- Nabi, R. L., Huskey, R., Nicholls, S. B., Keblusek, L., & Reed, M. (2019). When audiences become advocates: Self-induced behavior change through health message posting in social media. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 99(July 2018), 260–267. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2019.05.030>
- Namie, G., Namie, R., Lutgen-sandvik, P., Einarsen, I. S., Hoel, H., Zapf, D., ... Bullying, W. (2009). Challenging Workplace Bullying in the USA: A Communication and Activist Perspective. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 447–468.
- Nobleza C., A.-L. (1988). Developing a Unit of Intercultural Communication for a Bilingual Education Program. *Annual Conference of the National Association for Asian and Pacific American Education*. Denver.
- Permana, R. S. M., & Mahameruaji, J. N. (2019). Strategi Pemanfaatan Media Baru Net. Tv. *Jurnal Studi Komunikasi Dan Media*, 23(1), 21. <https://doi.org/10.31445/jskm.2019.1770>
- Praditya, D. (2019). 5 Alasan Terpopuler Mengapa Startup Gagal dan Terpaksa Tutup. <https://id.Techinasia.Com/Alasan-Startup-Gagal>, p. 1. Retrieved from <https://id.techinasia.com/alasan-startup-gagal>
- Priyowidodo, G. (2010). Reporting on ‘ Monas Incident ’ in the Mass Media Construction. *Jurnal ILMU KOMUNIKASI*, 8(2), 131–143.
- Priyowidodo, G. (2011). How Cyberspace Age Shaped the Political Party ’ s Identity. *Journalism and Mass Communication*, 1(2), 98–105. <https://doi.org/10.17265/2160-6579/2011.02.003>
- Priyowidodo, G. & et. a. (2019). *Communication Patterns Based on Social Media As a Political Marketing Strategy in Indonesian Democratic Party of Struggle*. 5, 33–44. <https://doi.org/10.17501/2357268x.2018.5104>
- Ries, E. (2011). *Wiki: The Lean Startup: How Today’s Entrepreneurs Use Continuous Innovation to Create Radically Successful Businesses*. Retrieved from [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean\\_Startup](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lean_Startup)
- Selinker, L. (1972). Interlanguage. *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching*, X(3), 209–232. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1515/iral.1972.10.1-4.209>
- startupranking.com/. (2020). *Start Up Ranking 2020 Countries*. 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.startupranking.com/countries>
- Susanti, H. A. (2015). Strategi Komunikasi Badan Kependudukan dan Keluarga Berencana Nasional (BKKBN). *Jurnal ASPIKOM*, 2(4), 243. <https://doi.org/10.24329/aspikom.v2i4.75>
- Szpekman, A. (2008). Help Managers Master the Art of Communication. *Strategic Communication Management*, 12(4), 12.
- Tarone, E. (1980). Communication Strategies, Foreigner Talk, and Repair in Interlanguage. *Language Learning*, 30 (2)(March), 417–431. <https://doi.org/doi:10.1111/j.1467-1770.1980.tb00326.x>
- Tibbie, S. (1997). Developing communications strategy. *Journal of Communication Management*, 1(4), 356–361. <https://doi.org/10.1108/eb023438>
- Wagner, S., & Fernández-Ardèvol, M. (2020). Decolonizing mobile media: Mobile Internet appropriation in a Guaraní community. *Mobile Media and Communication*, 8(1), 83–103. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2050157918822163>
- Walther, J. B. (1995). Relational Aspects of Computer-mediated Communication: Experimental Observations over Time. *Organization Science*, 6(2), 186–203.

- Wijaya, I. S. (2015). Perencanaan Dan Strategi Komunikasi Dalam Kegiatan Pembangunan. *Lentera*, 17(1), 53–61. <https://doi.org/10.21093/lj.v17i1.428>
- Wood, J. T. (2018). *Communication in Our Lives* (Eighth). Boston, MA 02210 USA: Cengage Learning.
- www.kumparan.com/30/10/2019. (n.d.). kumparan Raih Penghargaan WAN-IFRA Asian Best Digital News Startup. *Kumparan.Com*. Retrieved from <https://article/kumparan+Raih+Penghargaan+WAN+IFRA+Asian+Best+Digital+News+Startup-V39Rv1>
- Xamardo, N. (2013). Website Development and Digital Skill: The State of Traditional Media in European Minority Languages. *International Journal of Communication*, 7, 26.
- Zaky M, Nuzar I., S. W. dkk. (2018). *Mapping & Database Startup Indonesia 2018* (Pertama). Retrieved from <http://mikti.id/download.php>