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license**DIGITAL REVOLUTION IN PUBLIC COMMUNICATION
MANAGEMENT: A REVIEW OF OPPORTUNITIES AND
CHALLENGES FOR MALUKU REGIONAL POLICE
PUBLIC RELATIONS IN THE DIGITAL ERA****Kevin Chrisya Siregar^{1*}, Yustina Sopacua¹, Ronald Alfredo¹**¹Universitas Pattimura, Jalan Ir. M. Putuhena, Ambon 97233,
Indonesia*Correspondence E-Mail: chrisyasiregar10@gmail.comDOI: <https://doi.org/10.30598/baileofisipvol1iss3pp244-255>**ABSTRACT**

This article examines the transformation of public communication management in the digital era, focusing on the case of the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku). The study aims to explore both the opportunities and challenges brought about by digital developments in the field of public relations within law enforcement institutions. Using a qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis to understand the dynamics of communication practices in the digital context. The findings reveal that digital platforms—such as social media, online news portals, and mobile applications—present valuable opportunities to enhance transparency, foster community engagement, and strengthen public trust. However, several challenges also emerge, including the spread of misinformation, data privacy concerns, and the urgency of timely crisis communication. Organizational factors such as digital readiness, infrastructure availability, leadership orientation, and internal culture further influence the effectiveness of digital communication strategies. The novelty of this study lies in its contextual focus on Polda Maluku, offering a nuanced analysis that connects digital transformation with institutional capability and socio-cultural environments. This article contributes to the development of social and humanities scholarship by providing a critical lens to understand how public institutions navigate the complexities of digital communication. It recommends the advancement of infrastructure, digital literacy, and regulatory frameworks as key steps toward responsive and inclusive public communication in the digital era.

Keywords: Digital Government Readiness, Digital Revolution, Organizational Culture, Public Communication Management, Transparent Communication

INTRODUCTION

The digital revolution has significantly transformed the communication landscape, introducing new platforms that influence how organizations interact with the public. In this digital era, information can spread rapidly through various online media, such as social media and digital news sites (Naumova, 2021; Raniolo & Tarditi, 2020). However, while the digital revolution brings new opportunities in building relationships with the public and expanding communication reach, it also poses various challenges that must be addressed by public communication practitioners. These challenges include the spread of misinformation, privacy concerns, and cyberattacks (Gabor & Brooks, 2020; Mas & Gómez, 2021).

Discussing the issues of the digital revolution and public communication management is crucial because the digital revolution has changed the way organizations communicate with the public. The internet and other digital technologies have shifted the traditional communication paradigm, introducing various new platforms that allow direct interaction between organizations and the public (Garrido-Baserba et al., 2020; Knell, 2021). In this digital era, information can spread very quickly through social media, news websites, and other digital platforms. The ability to disseminate information quickly, which is a key characteristic of the digital revolution, reinforces the importance of effective public communication management (Birner et al., 2021).

However, the digital revolution also has two equally strong sides. On one hand, there is great potential to strengthen the relationship between organizations and the public, expand communication reach, and increase community engagement (Arni, 2024; Hidayati & Siregar, 2024). These new possibilities provide opportunities for organizations to build greater public trust and garner broader support. However, on the other hand, the digital revolution also brings serious challenges and risks. The spread of misinformation, cyberattacks, and privacy issues are some examples of challenges that arise in the context of this digital revolution (Bauer et al., 2021; Pencarelli, 2020).

The issues of public communication in government institutions, such as the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku), encompass several aspects that require deep understanding. One of the main issues is related to the quality of information conveyed to the public. Varied information, both positive and negative, often leads to a decrease in public trust. Uncertainty in this information can create misinformation between the public and the government, disrupting relationships that should be based on mutual trust.

Satisfaction in public communication also becomes an important spotlight, where the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku) faces challenges in achieving less satisfactory ratings in terms of public communication satisfaction and the quality of police personnel. Neutrality in conveying information is also an issue, with Polda Maluku criticized for not being neutral in responding to online media coverage. This can give the impression of unfairness in the dissemination of information to the public. Furthermore, non-compliance or injustice in the behavior of police officers is also a serious concern (Afdhal, 2023). For example, cases, where five members were dismissed from the Indonesian National Police (Polri) originating from the Maluku Regional Police, highlight the importance of fair and firm handling of ethical violations or internal rules in maintaining the integrity and public trust in the police institution.

This article aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the opportunities and challenges in public communication management at the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku). We believe that there are various wide-open opportunities with the advancement of digital technology such as social media, online news portals, and mobile applications. These platforms have great potential to strengthen transparent communication, increase community engagement, and build public trust in the police institution. However, alongside its positive potential, significant challenges also need to be addressed. Issues such as the spread of misinformation, privacy

concerns, and the need for swift responses to crises in the online realm are major focal points of this discussion.

Furthermore, this article also highlights the digital revolution challenges faced by the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku). Factors such as government readiness to adopt digital technology, the availability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure, leadership influence, as well as culture and work environment are also of concern. In facing these challenges, Polda Maluku is expected to take concrete steps such as expanding accessibility and improving digital infrastructure, developing targeted digital transformation strategies, and establishing rules that support such transformations. Through a deep understanding of the opportunities and challenges in public communication management as well as the challenges of the digital revolution, this article can provide a holistic view and beneficial solutions for Polda Maluku in carrying out its duties in facing the complex dynamics of this digital era.

RESEARCH METHOD

This article combines a qualitative approach with various data collection techniques to deeply understand the opportunities and challenges in public communication management at the Maluku Regional Police (Creswell, 2017). Firstly, in-depth interviews were conducted with public communication practitioners at Polda Maluku. These interviews focused on their understanding of digital platform usage, their perceptions of its effectiveness in communicating with the public, and the challenges they face in carrying out public communication tasks in this digital era. These interviews provided rich and contextual insights into public communication practices in the police environment.

In addition to interviews, direct observation was conducted to observe public communication practices carried out by personnel at Polda Maluku through digital platforms. This observation included monitoring online activities, interactions with the public, and communication strategies applied in real-life situations. By conducting direct observations, researchers could obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of public communication in the digital era and see how communication strategies are implemented in everyday practices.

Furthermore, a document study was conducted to analyze policies, guidelines, and related documentation issued by the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku). This document study aimed to understand the official framework governing public communication practices within the institution and to track the evolution of policies related to the use of digital platforms in public communication. The analysis of these documents provided a more structured overview of the organizational context and regulations influencing public communication practices at Polda Maluku.

The data collected through these three methods were then analyzed qualitatively. The qualitative analysis involved categorizing, coding, and interpreting data to identify patterns,

themes, and trends related to the opportunities and challenges in public communication management in the digital era, as well as the digital revolution challenges faced by Polda Maluku. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration and contextual understanding of the phenomena under study, in line with the complexity of the topics discussed in this article.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Social Change and Digital Revolution in the Maluku Regional Police

The social change and digital revolution in the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku) encompass various aspects that are reshaping the communication landscape and interactions between government institutions and the community. One major aspect of these changes is the transformation in digital communication (Korte, 2020; Popkova & Gulzat, 2020). The internet has drastically altered how organizations communicate with the public. Digital technologies, such as email, chat, and website interactivity, provide possibilities for building personal relationships between institutions and the community, which were previously challenged through traditional mass media (Achmad, 2021; Miguélez et al., 2021).

Furthermore, in the global and interconnected digital era, state involvement has also undergone significant changes. International cooperation tends to be minimal, with a focus on supporting open and democratic access to information and digital security for all parties (Acs et al., 2021; Recker et al., 2021). The adoption of digital-based services is also a crucial part of this transformation. For instance, the Maluku Regional Police has launched a Digital Service Transformation Program, which includes the development of an official website and the introduction of various other digital services (Kickbusch et al., 2021; Patel, 2023).

However, amidst these changes, some challenges need to be addressed. One of them is information bias, where the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku) is reported to respond to online media coverage in a manner deemed biased. This reflects the complexity of managing information in the digital era filled with various sources and differing perspectives. Lastly, changes in digital technology also impact democratic systems. According to SAR (47 years old), in an interview conducted, he conveyed that the Maluku Regional Police has been involved in responding to online media coverage deemed biased. He emphasized that this reflects the complexity of managing information in the digital era, where various sources and differing perspectives can easily spread widely. SAR stressed that these challenges highlight the need for a more cautious and structured approach to managing information in the dynamic and complex digital era. Furthermore, he also highlighted that changes in digital technology also have significant impacts on the democratic system, although their impacts do not always align with initial predictions. This underscores the importance of understanding the role and implications of technology in political and social contexts. Social change and the digital revolution are phenomena that not only have significant technological impacts but also influence the structure

and dynamics of society as a whole. Sociological analysis of these changes allows us to understand how human interactions, institutions, and social values are evolving in the digital era.

First and foremost, social changes that occur alongside the digital revolution can be observed in the patterns of communication and interaction between individuals and groups. Digital technologies, such as social media and other online platforms, have transformed how humans communicate, share information, and build social relationships. Interactions that were once limited by geography and physical boundaries can now occur globally and almost instantly. This creates new opportunities for connectivity and collaboration but also poses new challenges related to privacy, security, and the quality of information.

Furthermore, the digital revolution also affects the structure of power and the distribution of information within society. Digital technology enables individuals and groups that were previously marginalized to gain access to information and communication platforms they did not have before. However, in this context, there are also concerns about information polarization and the emergence of "filter bubbles" where individuals tend to be exposed only to views that align with their own beliefs and preferences. Moreover, changes in the world of work are also an important part of the sociological analysis of the digital revolution. Digital technology has altered the structure of jobs, affecting the types of jobs available and how humans work. The emergence of the gig economy, greater work flexibility, and automation are examples of how digital technology influences work patterns and economic livelihoods.

Opportunities in Public Communication Management at the Maluku Regional Police

Public Communication Management (PCM) is a strategic approach that not only manages the flow of information from an organization to the public but also builds sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships between them (De Vries, 2020; Irwin, 2021). This concept emphasizes the importance of transparency, where organizations are expected to be open and honest in conveying information to the public. With transparency, organizations can build trust and credibility in the eyes of the public. Additionally, PCM also encourages active dialogue between the organization and the public. Through two-way dialogue, organizations can better understand the needs, concerns, and expectations of the public, and provide appropriate and open responses to the feedback received (Christensen & Lægreid, 2020; Lee & Meng, 2021). This concept also includes reputation management, where organizations strive to understand, maintain, and improve their image or reputation in the eyes of the public through various strategic communication activities. The importance of message alignment is also a focus in PCM, where the messages conveyed must align with the values and goals of the organization to strengthen its image and identity. Evaluation and measurement are crucial stages in the PCM cycle, where organizations evaluate the effectiveness of their communication programs to enhance communication strategies in the future (Macnamara, 2021; Tam et al., 2022). By applying PCM concepts holistically, organizations can build strong relationships, strengthen their image, and achieve their communication goals more effectively.

In the context of the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku), several opportunities can be explored in public communication management. One of these opportunities is the utilization of digital technology. The utilization of digital technology such as social media, digital platforms, and mobile applications has opened up new opportunities for Polda Maluku to intensify engagement and direct interaction with the community. With a presence on these platforms, Polda can effectively convey information related to operational activities, security advisories, and law enforcement measures accurately and in real time. Through various digital channels, Polda can strengthen its relationship with the community, expand the reach of security messages, and respond quickly to situations that require attention.

This aligns with the perspective shared by JEP (45 years old) regarding the use of social media and digital platforms by Polda Maluku in interacting with the community. According to his observations, Polda Maluku has shown significant progress in utilizing digital technology to communicate with the public. He stated that the use of social media and digital platforms by Polda has opened up more effective channels of communication between the police institution and the community. JEP also highlighted that through social media, Polda can disseminate information about operational activities, security advisories, and law enforcement efforts quickly and promptly to the public. He also acknowledged that the adoption of digital technology has helped enhance the transparency and accountability of Polda Maluku in carrying out its duties. JEP concluded that the use of social media and digital platforms by Polda Maluku is a positive step towards improving the relationship between the police and the community, as well as strengthening cooperation in maintaining security and order in the Maluku region.

In addition to the utilization of digital technology, there is also the development of digital skills. The enhancement of digital skills among personnel at the Maluku Regional Police (Polda Maluku) offers significant opportunities to strengthen public communication management. Proficiency in managing social media, creating engaging content, and understanding digital analytics not only helps Polda expand the reach of security messages but also strengthens relationships with the community as a whole. With these skills, Polda personnel can be more effective in conveying information related to operational activities, security advisories, and law enforcement measures to the public. They can generate relevant and compelling content for audiences, thereby increasing community participation and engagement in efforts to maintain security and order.

Moreover, understanding digital analytics also enables Polda to evaluate the effectiveness of its communication campaigns, identify trends, and respond quickly to the needs and responses of the community. This aligns with the statement made by FM (38 years old) regarding digital development and the enhancement of digital skills at Polda Maluku. FM expressed his viewpoint stating that this step is highly positive and progressive from the police force. He emphasized that in today's digital era, institutions like Polda must adapt and utilize technology optimally in carrying out their duties.

FM highlights the importance of educating the community through content created by

Polda personnel and shared via platforms such as YouTube and social media, viewing this as a proper step to enhance public understanding of safety, regulations, and the role of the police in maintaining order. He believes that this initiative not only strengthens the relationship between the police and the community but also builds greater public trust through relevant and beneficial educational content. FM hopes the implementation of this program runs smoothly and gains full support from all relevant parties, emphasizing that improved digital skills and collaborative efforts between Polda and the community can foster a safer and more harmonious environment in the Maluku region. Furthermore, the development of public education programs on safety, law, and security is seen as a strategic opportunity for Polda Maluku to strengthen community engagement and raise awareness of police-related issues. By organizing seminars, workshops, and outreach campaigns, Polda can deepen public understanding of police duties while also promoting legal awareness and citizens' responsibilities. This approach not only narrows the information gap between the police and the community but also reinforces collaboration in addressing modern security challenges. Through increased community involvement in crime prevention and law enforcement, Polda Maluku can help build a more secure, informed, and cooperative society.

Challenges in Public Communication Management at the Maluku Regional Police

The challenges in public communication management at Polda Maluku are multifaceted and require focused attention, especially in ensuring the availability of accurate, relevant, and trustworthy information to the public. CMH (35) highlighted that in today's fast-paced digital era, the police must remain vigilant in monitoring the flow of information, particularly to prevent the spread of misinformation or manipulation from various sources. He emphasized that this effort necessitates strong coordination between the communication division and other internal units within the institution. In addition to accuracy, CMH underlined the importance of transparency, stating that Polda Maluku should be open and honest in its communication practices to foster greater public trust. He believes that by actively engaging with the community and implementing effective communication strategies, Polda Maluku can maintain its credibility, enhance institutional integrity, and build stronger, more positive relationships with the public.

Furthermore, the availability of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure poses a significant challenge. The Maluku region faces limitations in digital infrastructure, such as limited internet access in some areas. Polda Maluku must enhance ICT infrastructure to ensure more effective communication with the public and optimize digital platforms for widespread information dissemination. After interviewing ASP (38 years old) regarding the challenges in public communication management faced by Polda Maluku, ASP expressed his views. According to him, one of the main challenges is the limited digital infrastructure in the Maluku region, particularly concerning limited internet access in some areas. ASP emphasized that to ensure more effective communication with the public, Polda Maluku must improve the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure. He stated

that investing in ICT infrastructure would help expand police communication reach, especially in areas with limited internet access. Additionally, ASP also highlighted the importance of optimizing existing digital platforms to disseminate information widely to the public. He stressed that Polda Maluku must actively utilize various digital platforms, such as social media and websites, to convey security messages and advisories to the public. ASP hopes that with the improvement of ICT infrastructure and optimization of digital platforms, Polda Maluku can overcome challenges in public communication management caused by digital infrastructure limitations in the Maluku region. This is expected to strengthen the relationship between the police and the community and enhance the effectiveness of police efforts in maintaining security and order in the region.

Additionally, building good communication and interaction with all stakeholders is also a significant challenge. Polda Maluku must strengthen relationships with the community, local governments, civil society organizations, and other agencies to garner broader support and ensure good coordination in delivering public services. After interviewing ADA (38 years old) regarding the challenges in public communication management faced by Polda Maluku, ADA expressed his views. According to him, one of the main challenges is the need to strengthen relationships with various parties, including the community, local governments, civil society organizations, and other agencies. ADA emphasized that Polda Maluku must actively interact and collaborate with these stakeholders to gain broader support in carrying out police duties. He stated that strong relationships with the community, local governments, and civil society organizations are crucial to ensuring success in providing effective public services and being responsive to community needs. Additionally, ADA highlighted the importance of good coordination between Polda Maluku and other agencies, such as the military, health department, and disaster management agency, to enhance synergy in maintaining security and order in the Maluku region. ADA hopes that by strengthening relationships with various parties, Polda Maluku can address challenges in public communication management and build strong cooperation to enhance the effectiveness and responsiveness of the police institution in serving the community.

Lastly, securing national vital objects and specific locations within the jurisdiction of Polda Maluku is also a challenge that requires special attention. Polda Maluku must ensure security at these important sites through effective security systems and collaborate with various relevant parties to maintain security and order in those areas. By addressing these challenges, Polda Maluku can strengthen its public communication management and build better relationships with the public and its stakeholders.

Strategies for Addressing Challenges in the Digital Era at Polda Maluku

The strategy to address challenges in the digital era at Polda Maluku includes a series of steps aimed at strengthening public communication management and enhancing the institution's responsiveness to the needs of the community. Firstly, the focus is on enhancing the competencies of the Indonesian National Police (Polri) personnel. Polda Maluku must develop

the competencies of its personnel to cope with the dynamics and complexities of the digital era. This includes gaining an in-depth understanding of digital technology, cyber security, and effective communication strategies for interacting with the public online. In an interview with ADA (38 years old) regarding the strategy to address challenges in the digital era at Polda Maluku, ADA shared his views. According to him, enhancing the competencies of Polri personnel is the main focus in addressing the dynamics and complexities of the digital era. ADA emphasized that Polda Maluku must develop the competencies of its personnel to adapt quickly to the evolving digital technology landscape. This involves gaining an in-depth understanding of digital technology, cyber security, and effective communication strategies for interacting with the public online. He stated that continuous training and education are necessary to enhance the understanding and skills of personnel in addressing digital challenges. Additionally, collaboration with educational institutions and technology experts can also help in improving the competencies of Polri personnel in this field. ADA hopes that by enhancing the competencies of Polri personnel, Polda Maluku can effectively address challenges in the digital era, thus ensuring optimal security and order in the region.

Furthermore, enhancing ICT skills is a crucial step. In the era of public information openness, Polda Maluku must ensure that its personnel have adequate ICT skills to manage information and communicate effectively through various digital platforms. In an interview with USI (40 years old) regarding the strategy to address challenges in the digital era at Polda Maluku, USI shared his views. According to him, enhancing ICT skills is a crucial step in facing the dynamics of the digital era. USI emphasized that in the era of public information openness, Polda Maluku must ensure that its personnel have adequate ICT skills. This is important so that they can manage information effectively and communicate efficiently through various digital platforms. He stated that training and developing ICT skills need to be seriously emphasized within the police institution. This includes understanding the use of various software, the ability to manage and analyze data, and skills in communicating online. USI argued that by enhancing ICT skills, Polda Maluku personnel will be better prepared to face challenges in the digital era. They will be more effective in disseminating information to the public, monitoring security situations online, and maintaining data integrity and security in carrying out police duties.

The use of social media is also a strategy implemented by Polda Maluku. Social media serves as a crucial platform to drive opinions and interact with the community; however, Polda Maluku must also consider the limitations of internet access in certain areas. Additionally, the use of print and online media is also a relevant approach. Through print and online media, such as local newspapers and live broadcasts on Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), Polda Maluku can deliver accurate and relevant information to the public with broader coverage. In an interview with FND (48 years old) regarding the strategy to address challenges in the digital era at Polda Maluku, FND shared his views. According to him, the use of social media is one of the strategies implemented by Polda Maluku to communicate with the community in this digital era. FND emphasized that social media is a vital platform for Polda Maluku to drive opinions and interact

directly with the community. However, he also acknowledged that Polda Maluku must consider the limitations of internet access in certain areas, thus requiring a more inclusive approach. In addition to using social media, FND also highlighted the importance of utilizing print and online media as a relevant approach. Through local newspapers and live broadcasts on Radio Republik Indonesia (RRI), Polda Maluku can deliver accurate and relevant information to the public with broader coverage. FND argued that by combining various communication platforms, Polda Maluku can reach more layers of society and ensure that the information conveyed is accessible to everyone, including those in areas with limited internet access.

CONCLUSION

This article has elaborated in detail on the opportunities and challenges in public communication management at Polda Maluku in the digital era. Considering various aspects, from the use of digital technology to the enhancement of Polri personnel skills, we can see that Polda Maluku has great potential to strengthen its relationship with the public through digital platforms. However, the challenges faced cannot be ignored, such as the spread of misinformation and privacy concerns, which require prompt and appropriate responses from the police. Additionally, the article also highlights the expansion of accessibility and improvement of digital infrastructure as crucial steps in facing the digital revolution. By developing effective digital transformation strategies and establishing rules supportive of these changes, Polda Maluku can maximize the positive potential of the digital revolution in enhancing community relations and building public trust. In conclusion, Polda Maluku needs to continue developing innovative and responsive public communication strategies to address challenges and leverage opportunities in the digital era. Only through these steps can Polda Maluku meet public expectations and maintain its credibility as a responsible and trustworthy law enforcement institution.

ETHICAL STATEMENT AND DISCLOSURE

This study was conducted in accordance with established ethical principles, including informed consent, protection of informants' confidentiality, and respect for local cultural values. Special consideration was given to participants from vulnerable groups to ensure their safety, comfort, and equal rights to participate. No external funding was received, and the authors declare no conflict of interest. All data and information presented were collected through valid research methods and have been verified to ensure their accuracy and reliability. The use of artificial intelligence (AI) was limited to technical assistance for writing and language editing, without influencing the scientific substance of the work. The authors express their gratitude to the informants for their valuable insights, and to the anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this manuscript. The authors take full responsibility for the content and conclusions of this article.

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