

Strategic Communication of Local Government

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ABSTRACT

The development of the public sector governance paradigm in local government has changed the perspective of local government institutions in organising concurrent government affairs in the field of communication/public relations. Various forms of innovation, agile & adaptive organisations and digital transformation, including strategic communication management, are an important part of the current administration of local government affairs in the field of communication. Strategic communication is planned communication to advance the organisation's mission. In this research, local government strategic communication is the management of information and communication based on government administration to improve performance, realise effective internal communication, build institutional image and reputation, and increase public and stakeholder understanding and participation from various messages delivered by local government agencies in charge of local government affairs in the field of communication. The results of this study indicate that a strategic communication superstructure is needed as well as policy innovations in the implementation of concurrent government affairs in the field of communication that can accommodate activities in local government agencies oriented towards strategic communication such as public sector marketing activities, regional branding / place branding or city branding and regional competitive identity analysis.

Keywords: *strategic communication of local government, institutional image & reputation*

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of communication affairs including public relations in regional governments is currently still complementary. This can be seen from the implementation of communication activities which generally only include the production of photos, videos, news scripts/press releases and other content which is then published via print, electronic and digital media (Makmur, 2021). In fact, communication is a central concept in governance to improve performance, collaboration, build institutional reputation and optimize institutional interactions with the public and stakeholders (Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, 2007). In table 1, the researcher describes the conditions for implementing regional government affairs in the field of communication as follows:

Table 1. Current implementation of Regional Government Affairs in the field of Communication

Aspects	Description
Communicator (Institutional & Impersonal)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The form and composition of work units in charge of communications in regional governments are not proportional to the current developments in contemporary communications dynamics; There are two work units, namely the Public Information and Communication Sector at the Communication and Information Service and the Leadership Communication Section at the Regional Secretariat, but these two work units do not complement each other. 2. Unavailability of public relations coordination and communication forums across regional apparatus. 3. Unavailability of coordination and communication forums with stakeholders (universities, industry/business world, civil society, BUMD, mass media). 4. Does not yet have a permanent spokesperson. 5. ASN participation in Regional Government in disseminating information regarding the achievements of development results is still minimal
Basis for Organizing Activities	Regulations (Laws, Government Regulations, Ministerial Regulations, Regional Regulations, Regional Head Regulations), planning and budget documents (RPJPD, RPJMD, RKPD, SKPD Strategic Plan, APBD, P-APBD)
Packaging and disseminating message	Ceremonial: with/without issue management (agenda setting) and dominant one-way (linear) message dissemination
Use of Traditional Media	Social communication institutions, both the Community Information Group and the People's Performance Group, are not yet sustainable
Use of Conventional Media	Publication expenditures on television, radio and newspapers are not yet systematic in measuring the achievement of information dissemination/access
Use of New Media	Flexible, tends to follow trends with/with or without good governance
Use of Outdoor Media	The majority use billboards, banners and videotrons
Internal Communications	Only focuses on external communications/no work units that handle internal communications. therefore, internal communication tends to be partial and does not yet have interactive media within/between regional apparatus. Example: there is no electronic mail as an internal communication medium so that internal (administrative) correspondence within the regional government is still done manually.
Public communication/ public relations	The majority do not yet have a cross-sector coordination forum, generally focusing on publication spending
Crisis Management	Curative: the majority are not preventive/anticipatory
Issue and Reputation Management	Curative: the majority are not preventive/anticipatory
Target audience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The public and stakeholders tend to be heterogeneous 2. General audience analysis has not been carried out.
Communication effects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Communal (informing and educating the community) 2. Efforts to increase public satisfaction with public services and public participation in regional development, 3. Communication impact surveys have generally not been carried out.

Source: Research Data, 2024

The table above shows that the implementation of communication affairs in local governments currently does not lead to communication activities that have a strategic impact (Sánchez Vergara et al., 2021). Strategic impact in this case refers to the principle of implementing activities of local government affairs in the field of communication that have outputs and outcomes that are of value to institutions such as improving the image and reputation of institutions, increasing regional attractiveness, optimising the performance of regional macro indicators and increasing public participation in regional

development(Annisarizki; Mardiana, 2022). The implementation of communication affairs requires directed planning, synergy and carried out on an ongoing basis to become a means of effective information exchange, intervention and multi-party support in achieving organisational goals and objectives, these various actions are called strategic communication(Wilcox, Dennis L., Cameron, Glen T., & Reber, 2015).

Strategic communication is communication carried out intentionally to advance the organization's mission(Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, 2007). Strategic communication is a continuous communication process carried out by communication actors (individuals, groups and organizations), internal and external, in order to understand each other to work together to achieve organizational goals (Estaswara et al., 2020). Strategic communication is communication that can improve an organization's positioning and competitiveness, based on the organization's vision, mission and values consistently(Cangara, 2022).

Based on these definitions, strategic communication is a new concept that can be applied by local governments to achieve the organization's vision, mission, goals and objectives through collaboration, mutual understanding consistently and continuously; such as conducting discussions, interventions and actions/actions that can be taken to overcome various obstacles and problems that become obstacles in achieving various performance indicators including regional macro indicators such as HDI, economic growth rate, open unemployment rate, poverty rate, stunting rate, Gini ratio etc(Radiansyah; Sabilla, 2022). This is what Kirk Hallahan calls part of strategic communication, namely achieving "alignment" where there is the same perception, steps, support, collaboration, synergy from various parties to achieve the goals and objectives of the organization(Estaswara et al., 2020)(Annisarizki; Mardiana, 2022).

From these descriptions, researchers conducted research to find out how the conceptual construction of strategic communication in the implementation of local government affairs in the field of communication has a strategic impact on improving performance and building the image and reputation of local government institutions by proposing a title: Strategic Communication of Local Government(Argenti, Paul A & Forman, 2022).

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach by examining the concept of strategic communication implemented by Regional Government. Data collection was carried out by literature study and document analysis. Data analysis techniques are carried out using data theorization using an inductive thinking approach where various data findings are drawn up to find new concepts or theories at the abstract level. Field data is treated as a source of theory, social phenomena are studied carefully as findings(Creswell, 2016).

Through a series of logical studies, various types of data are developed to form various categorizations that contain information. The relationship between various categorizations will display a complete social concept based on field data. This concept will be very useful for developing new social theories. As a further step from Glasser's thinking regarding the discovery of new concepts in the induction process which is carried out through two steps, namely the exploration step and the inspection step, where qualitative research does not only describe data but tries to develop new concepts or theories based on research data.

The form of data collected in this study is the construction of meaning regarding the implementation of strategic communication that can be implemented by local governments in improving performance in achieving predetermined goals and

objectives, building institutional image and reputation and optimising the implementation of public communication between local government institutions and the community and stakeholders.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Local government strategic communication concept

Strategic communication or strategic communication is a relatively new concept in communication science (Estaswara et al., 2020). Strategic communication as planned communication to advance an organization's mission (Hallahan, K., Holtzhausen, D., van Ruler, B., Verčič, D., & Sriramesh, 2007). Estaswara et al further explained that strategic communication is a continuous communication process carried out by communication actors (individuals, groups and organizations), internal and external, in order to understand each other to work together to achieve organizational goals (Estaswara et al., 2020). Strategic communication includes the relationship between the organization, message and stakeholders (Wilcox, Dennis L., Cameron, Glen T., & Reber, 2015). There are 4 important aspects that need to be considered in strategic communication: 1) communication actors; 2) understand each other; 3) cooperate, and; 4) a communication process that takes place continuously, in the context of achieving organizational goals (Estaswara et al., 2020). From a number of explanations regarding strategic communication, it is clear that strategic communication is an important part in improving an organization's positioning and competitiveness based on the vision, mission and values developed by the organization on an ongoing basis.

There are 3 (three) main characteristics of strategic communication, namely, first, strategic communication in principle aims to advance the organization's mission by mutual understanding, cooperation between all regional apparatus in achieving the agency's goals and objectives. Second, strategic communication includes carrying out intensive and continuous internal communication to achieve alignment of human resources, budget, equipment and methods in achieving organizational goals and objectives (Nucholis, 2011). And third, strategic communication is a combination of communication disciplines ranging from public relations, corporate communication, internal communication, health communication, intercultural communication, advertising and marketing communication. In the context of regional government, the various communication disciplines are adapted to regulations and provisions related to the implementation of regional government affairs. As with the application of marketing communications, of course the public sector marketing concept is used (Hardjana, 2008).

Regional Government reflects the institution of administering regional government affairs or regional autonomy as a multi-dimensional concept. This is based on the principle of broad dynamics in implementing decentralized tasks and assistance tasks within the scope of regional government, both provincial and district/city governments (Quiros, 2009).

In Law Number 23 of 2014, regional government affairs which are the basis for implementing regional autonomy are called concurrent government affairs which consist of mandatory affairs relating to basic services and non-basic services as well as optional affairs. Viewed from the governance aspect, regional government strategic communication is contemporary organizational communication which is holistic in the sense that every communication action takes into account the targets and targets of regional apparatus organizations in accordance with the field of regional government affairs which consists of mandatory service and non-service matters as well as optional matters.

Based on the descriptions provided by the researcher above, the definition of regional government strategic communication in this article is a series of planned activities regarding information and communication management which are structured based on government administration which provides prospective benefits for regional government institutions; realizing effective internal communication in achieving organizational goals and objectives; building institutional image and reputation; and optimizing institutional communication with the community and stakeholders (Tkalac & Anja, 2020).

This definition implies 5 (five) important aspects that must be considered: namely first, government administration which is the management of decision making and/or actions by Government Agencies and/or Officials. As regulated in Law Number 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, every action/implementation of regional government must be based on the general principles of good governance, one of which is legal certainty. Generally, an element of legal certainty is the existence of a legal basis for the implementation of various regional government activities, including those originating from laws, government regulations, ministerial regulations, regional regulations and regional head regulations. Therefore, regional government strategic communication should ideally have legal certainty based on the attributive and delegative authority possessed by each work unit within the regional apparatus to carry out strategic communication to achieve organizational goals and objectives

Second, strategic communication management includes planning and budgeting activities, work team formation, communication actions and evaluation. To achieve organizational goals and objectives, strategic communication management is needed that involves human resources and various organizational resources.

Third, human resources as strategic communicators who have technical competence regarding various regional government matters which fall under the authority of the regional government. The main objective of strategic communication is to change the cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects of human resources in local government officials to carry out all actions/performance to contribute to the targets/goals or targets that have been set.

Fourth, action and communication such as holding coordination meetings, outreach, seminars/symposia, education/training, benchmarking, penta-helix collaboration and so on. Regional government strategic communication emphasizes the importance of aligning communication activities to achieve organizational goals and objectives, shape institutional image and reputation and optimize institutional communication with the community and stakeholders.

And fifth, the supporting capacity of information and communication technology to simplify and automate the implementation of various activities in regional government strategic communications. This is also in line with the development of the public sector governance paradigm, Governance 4.0, where the management of the public sector is based on adequate main supporting capacities of the internet of things, big data and cloud computing.

Regional Government Strategic Communication Superstructure

Based on document analysis, 3 (three) forms of Regional Government Strategic Communication superstructure are needed. First, the Governor's apparatus as the Central Government Representative (GWPP) as regulated in Law Number 23 of 2014, Government Regulation Number 33 of 2018 and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 12 of 2021. The GWPP apparatus has duties and functions, namely providing

guidance and supervision of the implementation regional government affairs which are the authority of the district/city government(Hansson, 2024).

The GWPP apparatus has the authority to carry out guidance on government affairs which is the authority of the district/city regional government. Therefore, the GWPP Tool can discuss in detail interventions, efforts/actions that can be carried out together to overcome various obstacles and problems that become obstacles in achieving macro indicators at the district/city level and hold joint discussions related to the achievement of regional macro indicators (such as HDI, Economic Growth Rate, Open Unemployment Rate, Poverty Rate, Inflation, Gini Ratio, stunting rate, etc.)(Leliana & Gogali, 2019). Bearing in mind that the macro indicator achievements of the Provincial Government are the accumulative achievements of districts/cities and the mandate of article 210 of Law Number 23 of 2014 which mandates that the relationship between provincial government apparatus and district/city government apparatus be coordinative and functional as well as 93 paragraph (1) of Law Number 23 of 2014 which mandates that the Regional Apparatus of the Provincial Government as the Governor's Apparatus as the Representative of the Central Government has the authority to provide guidance and supervision.

In the Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 12 of 2021 concerning Implementing Regulations of Government Regulation Number 33 of 2018 concerning the Implementation of the Duties and Authorities of the Governor as a Representative of the Central Government, especially in article 2 paragraph (5), it is explained that the Governor's Apparatus as a Representative of the Central Government carries out functions based on their duties and authorities(Liu & Qi, 2021). The Governor as Representative of the Central Government, among others:

- a. coordinating guidance and supervision of assistance tasks in district/city areas;
- b. carry out monitoring, evaluation and supervision of the administration of district/city regional government in its territory;
- c. empower and facilitate districts/cities in their region;
- d. carryout evaluations on evaluations of draft district/city regional regulations regarding regional long-term development plans, regional medium-term development plans, regional budgets and expenditures, changes to regional income and expenditure budgets, accountability for implementing regional income and expenditure budgets, regional spatial planning, regional taxes, and regional levies;
- e. supervising district/city regional regulations;
- f. Carry out other duties in accordance with statutory provisions.

(Source: Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 12 of 2021)

The results of other research show that so far, the coordinative-functional working relationship (which is regulated in Law 23 of 2014) between provincial government officials and the government has not been running optimally but the working relationship is only administrative in nature. A functional coordinative working relationship is a working relationship in the context of synchronizing the implementation of the main tasks and functions of provincial government apparatus and district/city government apparatus in carrying out the same Government Affairs (Syaukani, 2022)(Lerouge et al., 2023). So that through the GWPP Tool, the Provincial Government can provide guidance to Regency/City Government tools in order to achieve regional macro indicators(Radiansyah; Sabilla, 2022). The following is a picture showing the coordinative-functional working relationship between the Provincial Government and the Regency/City Government:

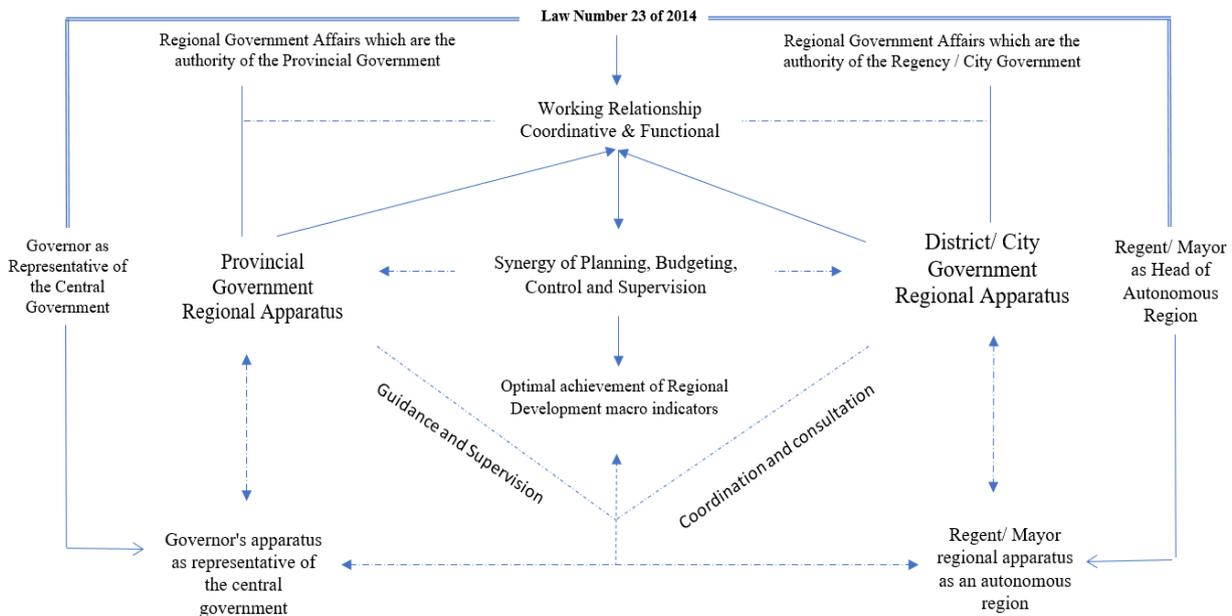


Figure 1. Functional Coordinative Working Relationship Model in Increasing Macro Indicator Achievements in the Regions
Source: Syaekani, 2022 (modified)

Second, Technical Institutions in the form of Regional Services and Secretariats, each of which has a work unit in charge of government affairs in the communications sector which plays a central role in managing communications affairs. However, according to researchers, the two work units (echelon 3/administrator officials) at both the Department and the Regional Secretariat have not been able to accommodate the 11 sub-public information and communication matters as regulated in the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 8 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Concurrent Government Affairs in the field of Communication and Informatics. Where the implementation of communication sub-affairs includes: 1) formulation of technical policies in the field of public information and communication; 2) monitoring public opinion and aspirations; 3) monitoring information and setting the Regional Government's communication priority agenda; 4) content management and planning for Public Communication Media; 5) management of Public Communication Media; 6) Public Information services; 7) media relations services; 8) partnerships with stakeholders; 9) crisis communication management; 10) strengthening the capacity of public communication resources; and 11) administrative, financial and governance support for regional information commissions. The results of this research indicate that internal communication activities that regulate the implementation of intra- and inter-regional communication have not been regulated in the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 8 of 2019.

Third, the Regional Government Strategic Communication Working Team which can be formed consists of several working teams, namely as follows:

1) Coordinator of the Regional Public Relations Coordinating Board (BAKOHUMAS) as regulated in the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 35 of 2014 concerning the Public Relations Coordinating Board. Bakohumas is a non-structural institution which is a forum for coordination and cooperation between work units in the field of public relations ministries, secretariats of state institutions, government institutions at ministerial level, non-ministerial government institutions, public broadcasting institutions, non-structural state institutions, provincial and district/city regional governments, universities state, and State-Owned

Enterprises/Regional-Owned Enterprises; 2) Social Media Management Team as regulated in the Regulation of the Minister for Empowerment of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Number 83 of 2012 concerning Guidelines for the Use of Social Media for Government Agencies where in this work team social monitoring & listening can also be carried out on social media; 3) Social Communication Institution Empowerment Team (Community Information Group, Traditional Media Institution, Media Monitoring Institution, Professional Organization Communication Institution as regulated in the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 6 of 2010 concerning Guidelines for the Development and Empowerment of Social Communication Institutions; 4) The Multi Sector Collaboration Management Team (hexa-helix) can refer to Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 22 of 2020 concerning Procedures for Regional Cooperation with Other Regions and Regional Cooperation with Third Parties; 5) Internal communication and crisis communication teams as regulated in the Regulation of the Minister for Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Number 29 of 2011 concerning General Guidelines for Managing Crisis Communication within Government Agencies. 6) Development Data Management Team as regulated in Presidential Regulation Number 39 of 2019 concerning One Indonesian Data; 7) Information and Documentation Management Team as regulated in Government Regulation Number 61 of 2010 concerning Implementation of Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Openness of Public Information.

Table 2. Regional Government Strategic Communication Superstructure

NO	FORM	FUNCTION
1.	Strategic Institution	
	Governor's apparatus as Central Government Representative	Carrying out guidance and supervision of regional government affairs which are the authority of the district/city government as regulated in Law 23 of 2014, PP 33 of 2018 and Permendagri 12 of 2021
2.	Technical Institution	
	Public Information and Communication Sector (or other name) in the Communication and Informatics Service	Carrying out information and public communication sub-affairs as regulated in the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 8 of 2019 concerning the Implementation of Concurrent Government Affairs in the field of Communication and Information Technology
	Internal Communications Sector at the Communications and Informatics Service	It has not yet been regulated in statutory regulations regarding communications affairs carried out by regional governments
	Leadership Communications Section at the Regional Secretariat	Organizing the preparation of leadership materials, leadership communications and leadership documentation as regulated in Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 90 of 2019 concerning classification, codification and nomenclature of regional development and financial planning
3.	Strategic Communication Working Team	
	Social Media management team	Carrying out the management of social media for local government agencies as regulated in the Regulation of the Minister for Empowerment of State Apparatus and Bureaucratic Reform Number 83 of 2012 concerning Guidelines for the Use of Social Media for Government Agencies (including being able to carry out social monitoring & social listening)

	Coordinator of the Regional Public Relations Coordinating Agency (BAKOHUMAS).	Organizing coordination between work units in the field of public relations ministries, secretariats of state institutions, government institutions at ministerial level, non-ministerial government institutions, public broadcasting institutions, non-structural state institutions, provincial and district/city regional governments, state universities, and state-owned enterprises/ Regionally Owned Enterprises as regulated in the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 35 of 2014 concerning Public Relations Coordinating Bodies.
	Empowerment of Social Communication Team	Carrying out the development and empowerment of Community Information Groups, Traditional Media Institutions, Media Monitoring Institutions, Professional Organizational Communication Institutions as regulated in the Minister of Communication and Information Technology Regulation Number 6 of 2010 concerning Guidelines for the Development and Empowerment of Social Communication Institutions;
	Multi Sector Partnership working team (penta-helix)	Organizing multi-party collaboration between regional government and industry, universities, mass media, civil society, can refer to Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 22 of 2020 concerning Procedures for Regional Cooperation with Other Regions and Regional Cooperation with Third Parties
	Internal communications and crisis communications teams	Carrying out internal communication management and crisis management as regulated by Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation Number 29 of 2011 concerning General Guidelines for Managing Crisis Communication within Government Agencies
	Development Data Management Team	Carrying out development data management as regulated in Presidential Regulation Number 39 of 2019 concerning One Indonesian Data
	Information and Documentation Management Team	Carrying out information and documentation management (public information services) as regulated in Government Regulation Number 61 of 2010 concerning Implementation of Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Openness of Public Information

Source: Research Results, 2024

Regional Government Strategic Communication Management

Based on the results of document analysis and observations made, researchers categorize regional government strategic communication management as covering 5 main aspects, namely: first, the establishment of regional government administrative law as the basis for implementing strategic communication. The main legal basis that can be used is Law 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government and several implementing regulations such as PP Number 38 of 2017 concerning Regional Innovation, PP 33 of 2018 concerning the Governor's Apparatus as Representative of the Central Government, Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 12 of 2021, as well as statutory regulations. invitations that regulate concurrent regional government affairs in the field of communications.

Second, the preparation of Strategic Communication programs and activities in regional government planning and budgeting documents. The meaning of program refers to the general provisions in Law Number 25 of 2004, where the program in question means a policy instrument containing one or more activities carried out by government agencies/institutions to achieve targets and objectives and obtain budget allocations, or coordinated community activities by government agencies. Programs are usually associated with planning documents; where in a program there are various activities with detailed budgets and benchmarks for the goals and objectives to be achieved by an organization. Apart from that, it is necessary to include new activities in the strategic communication program such as regional branding activities or also known as place branding or city branding, regional competitive identity analysis, public perception surveys, public sector marketing and so on.

Third, activating the regional government's strategic communication superstructure: the Governor's apparatus as a representative of the Central Government to provide guidance to district/city government apparatus in achieving regional macro indicators as well as the formation of a Regional Government Strategic Communication work team involving multi-party human resources: regional apparatus, universities, industry, mass media, civil society.

Fourth, socialize the goals and objectives of Regional Government Strategic Communication. Organizational goals are the final results that an entity wants to achieve at the organizational, division or unit level, regardless of whether any communication activities are carried out or not, while communication goals are changes in behavior that are the direct result of strategic communication activities to achieve goals and objectives. Organization.

Fifth, prepare a Strategic Communication work calendar which contains targets and achievements of various strategic communication activities in the current year to evaluate the implementation and achievements of regional government strategic communication activities. From the descriptions that the researcher has conveyed, to simplify the delivery of the discussion in this research, the researcher put forward a regional government strategic communication model as follows:

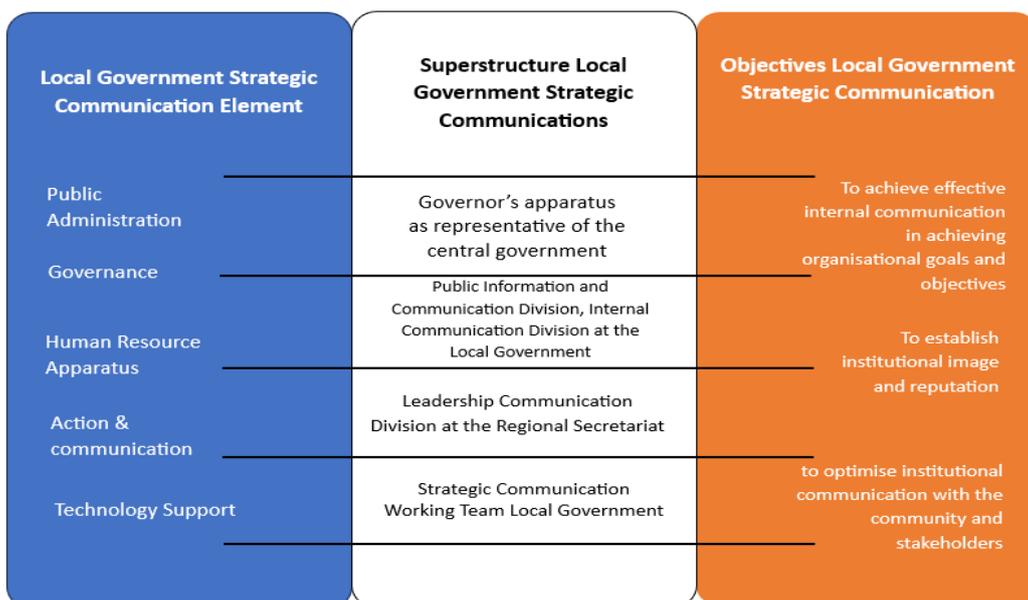


Figure 2. Regional Government Strategic Communication Model
 Source: Research result, 2024

CONCLUSION

Based on the descriptions that have been presented, the following conclusions can be drawn; *first*, local government strategic communication is the management of information and communication based on government administration to improve performance, realise effective internal communication, build institutional image and reputation, and increase understanding and participation of the public and stakeholders from various messages delivered by local government agencies in charge of local government affairs in the field of communication.

Second, to be able to optimise strategic communication, local governments need a strategic communication superstructure: namely 1) activating the Governor's Apparatus as a Central Government Representative who has the authority to provide guidance on the implementation of district / city government affairs. 2) technical work units where as many as three communication work units are needed, namely the Public Information and Communication Division and the Internal Communication Division at the Communication and Informatics Office and the Leadership Communication Section at the Regional Secretariat both at the Provincial and Regency / City Government levels; and 3) strategic communication work teams can consist of Social Media Management Teams, Regional Bakohumas Coordinators.

And the *third* conclusion is that policy innovation is needed in the implementation of concurrent government affairs in the field of communication to be able to accommodate activities in local government agencies oriented towards strategic communication such as public sector marketing activities, regional branding or place branding / city branding and regional competitive identity analysis.

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