

Improving the Image of Local Government with Leadership Communication Strategies: A Review of Karawang Protocol

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ABSTRACT

In the relationship between government and society, public trust in government agencies is needed. The image of the local government is a factor, as a public service organization the image affects the opinions circulating in the community. The preparation of this research, using qualitative research methods, with descriptive research design. Researchers used data collection methods through participant observation. In every activity agenda carried out by Regional Leaders, in this case the Regent of Karawang is certainly accompanied by the Protocol Team as a coordination and communication team in the field. In the implementation of the communication strategy carried out there are several stages, namely: 1. Activity Schedule Sharing, 2. Activity Data & Information Collection, 3. Observation, 4. Publication. Obstacles in implementation often occur, there are 3 factors that affect obstacles, namely, data, coordination & communication, and information delays. It can be concluded that, the image of the local government is very important in building public trust in government institutions, effective communication from local leaders, especially through the protocol team, plays a major role in improving the image of the government. The obstacles experienced certainly need to be overcome for the effectiveness of the communication strategy carried out, with the aim of improving the image of the Karawang Regency local government.

Keywords: Communication Strategy, Leadership Communication, Government Image, Protocol.

1. INTRODUCTION

The relationship between the government and the community can be influenced by the image of the local government, the image of the local government is a factor of public trust in government institutions, the greater the trust, the greater the expectations of the community, of course, as a public service organization, the government needs to apply the principles of good governance. Public image has a major influence on public opinion and behavior. The image formed by the media can influence the way people think and act towards certain individuals or organizations. (McQuail, 2019)..

Improving the image of local government can be achieved through effective communication from all government apparatus, especially by local leaders. As a government organization, local governments have a clear legal umbrella, as stipulated in Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government. Where as the head of the region, the regional leader has duties and functions

as an implementing element of the regional government and leads the affairs of government administration which are the authority of the autonomous region (Indonesia, 2014).

As an area that has advantages both in terms of population and large area, Karawang Regency certainly has greater challenges than other areas such as Purwakarta Regency, or Bekasi Regency which are demographically closest to Karawang Regency.

Based on data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), in 2023, Karawang Regency has a population of 2.526 million people and an area of 1,911.00 km². This figure shows that Karawang Regency has good potential, both in terms of population and area, when compared to neighboring regencies such as Bekasi Regency which has an area of 1,224.88 km² and Purwakarta Regency with an area of 971.72 km² (Karawang B. P., 2020).

The success of a regional head is strongly influenced by the way communication is applied in his leadership. In the context of government communication, leaders have various factors that influence communication actions, including vertical and horizontal communication (Widhiastuti, 2012). Government communication involving regional heads affects the effectiveness of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN). If leaders are able to communicate well, their level of success and achievement will be recognized by the community (Mau, 2015).

In carrying out their duties, regional leaders are certainly assisted by a team as the front guard in managing, organizing, and preparing all the needs of regional leaders when carrying out government activities. According to Karawang Regent Regulation (Perbup) Number 51 of 2021, the protocol is tasked with carrying out protocol affairs and coordinating the protocol activities of the regent and deputy regent, presidential protocol, guests, and administrative management of the regent and deputy regent. The role of protocol is to place state or government officials to be given proper respect, treatment, and seating in official and unofficial events.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The preparation of this research, using qualitative research methods, with a descriptive research design. Researchers collect data that will be used and do not change the data, descriptive research presents general descriptions that are studied without analyzing and drawing generalizable conclusions (Sugiyono, 2023).

Researchers use data collection methods through participant observation. Through participant observation research proves that researchers are not passive or only observers but also play a role in the reality that occurs (Irwan, 2015: 77). Researchers are members of the Karawang regional secretariat protocol team so that through this participant observation researchers can very easily dig up in-depth information and verify the data obtained.

The technique of determining informants in this research is using purposive technique. The technique implies that the researcher already has preliminary information as a basic understanding, so the researcher can point to certain people who are considered to be able to provide information (Ratna, 2010; 226). According to Sugiyono (2008: 122), purposive technique is a qualitative sampling technique based on certain considerations. In addition, this technique also provides criteria to become informants or sources of information.

3. RESULT & ANALYTICS

This research was conducted to obtain data on "Improving Local Government Image through Leadership Communication Strategy: A Review of the Karawang Regency Regional Secretariat Protocol". In the data collection process, the author will present data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. The interview technique is carried out by means of direct communication to research informants by asking several oral questions related to the research study with the aim of strengthening the research results. In addition, the documentation technique is also one of the data collection techniques taken from organizational documents obtained in order to add to the accuracy of the data obtained from the interview results.

In this study, researchers focus on what steps are taken in supporting the image of the Karawang Regency local government through the Communication Strategy carried out by the Regional Leader, in its implementation, of course, the Regional Leader has a special team in supporting government activities, namely the Protocol Team of the Karawang Regency Regional Secretariat.

Protocol is a set of activities that regulate the implementation of state events and other official events, including the arrangement of places, ceremonies, and respect as a form of appreciation for individuals who have positions or positions in government, state, and society. (Ministry of State Secretariat of the Republic of Indonesia, 2024). According to Karawang Regent Regulation (Perbup) Number 51 of 2021, the protocol is tasked with carrying out protocol affairs and coordinating the protocol activities of the regent and deputy regent, presidential protocol, guests, and administrative management of the regent and deputy regent.

a. Communication Strategy Process Conducted by Leaders Through the Protocol of the Karawang Regency Regional Secretariat

In every activity agenda carried out by Regional Leaders, in this case the Regent of Karawang is of course accompanied by the Protocol Team as a coordination and communication team in the field, currently the Protocol Team itself has 23 people, with 1 Kasubag (Head of Sub-section) Protocol. The Protocol Team itself is tasked with accompanying, preparing, and facilitating every need of the leadership in these activities. Before carrying out activities to accompany and facilitate regional leaders, of course there are several stages carried out by the Karawang Regional Secretariat protocol team:

- **Distribution of Activity Schedule**
The activity agenda that has been scheduled by the Regent's Staff team is forwarded to the Protocol Team to divide the team in each activity, and plan the appropriate communication strategy for each agenda to be carried out to support the effectiveness of the activity. The team division consists of 3-4 protocol teams, 2 leadership communication teams, and 1 documentation team.
- **Activity Data & Information Collection.**
The agenda that has been scheduled and compiled by the protocol team is then verified with the activity organizer, to ensure the schedule of activities, and the activity agenda goes according to plan. The protocol team also coordinates with the security forces, both Satpol PP, Police, and TNI to ensure security strategies, and event order. The protocol team also ensures the presence of all invited guests, regional officials, and civil apparatus to attend the scheduled agenda.
- **Activity Agenda Observation & Survey.**
This process concerns activities that are organized in a large scale, or mass, such as the Karawang Hut, and the Ceremony to Commemorate the Independence of the Republic of Indonesia. Events held involving a large number of participants, and involving many OPDs (Regional Apparatus Organizations) or related agencies certainly require observation and survey of the venue, and rehearsals to ensure the entire series of events goes according to plan. The protocol team must of course communicate the arrangement of the event to the parties directly involved, such as Mc, Event Organizer, Head of OPD, Security Team, etc. so that there is no miscommunication between the organizers, protocol team, and invited guests who attend the event.
- **Publication on Social Media.**
The most important process of Communication Strategy is publication. Publication according to Uchjana (in Rahutomo, 2013): Publication is the activity of disseminating information to the public using communication media. An activity agenda that has been well organized certainly needs to be documented and published to the public. Activities that have been running are well documented by the protocol team and published on the

@protokolsetdakarawang and @prokompimkabkarawang Instagram accounts as archives and information on activities carried out by regional leaders. The social media is managed directly by the Karawang Regency Regional Secretariat Protocol Team, as a form of improving the image of the Karawang Regency local government.

b. Barriers to Leadership Communication Strategy

According to a member of the protocol team who was interviewed on Friday, May 2, 2025 at 15.00 WIB said; There are 3 components that hinder the Leadership Communication Strategy, namely:

1). Data.

The incompleteness of data regarding the agenda of activities to be carried out, can hinder the communication strategy carried out, as for some of the data needed such as, a. Purpose and Objectives of the Activity, b. Activity Participants, c. Invited Guest Data, d. Event Fillers, e. Security & Order, f. Activity Location Details, etc.

2). Communication & Coordination between Stakeholders.

Another obstacle is regarding coordination with stakeholders and the person in charge of the activity or activity organizer, poor communication between stakeholders certainly hinders the communication strategy that will be implemented by the protocol team.

3). Delay in Event Organizer Information.

Delays regarding the information needed can hinder the communication strategy to be implemented, of course, with less preparation time making the strategy to be implemented certainly not easy. The need for information to be conveyed as quickly as possible allows for more optimal strategic planning.

4. CONCLUSION

From the research conducted on "Improving Local Government Image through Leadership Communication Strategy: A Review of the Karawang Regency Regional Secretariat Protocol", it can be concluded that:

- **Local Government Image:** Local government image is very important in building public trust in government institutions. A positive image can increase public expectations and support the sustainability of government institutions.
- **The Role of Communication:** Effective communication from local leaders, especially through the protocol team, plays a major role in improving the image of the government. A good communication strategy can influence public opinion and behavior towards the government.
- **Communication Strategy:** The communication strategy process carried out by local leaders includes the distribution of activity schedules, data collection, observation, and publication on social media. All these steps aim to ensure that every government activity can run well and the government's image can be maintained.
- **Obstacles:** There are several barriers in the communication strategy, such as incomplete data, poor communication between stakeholders, and delayed information from event organizers. These barriers need to be overcome to improve communication effectiveness.

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