

## Village Information Delivery through Suara Waditra Community Radio amidst Digital Media Challenges

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### ABSTRACT

Community radio is one form of broadcasting institution that is legal and exists in Indonesia based on Law No. 32 of 2002 on Broadcasting. Community radios are created by and for the benefit of the communities they serve. One of the community radios that currently still exists in broadcasting is Suara Waditra Community Radio, which is used by the local village government as a medium for delivering information about the countryside. This research aims to find out the extent of the communication strategy of the Sukasetia Village Government in terms of delivering information to residents. This research is descriptive qualitative research with a case study approach. Data was collected through observation and in-depth interviews with selected informants. The results showed that the Village Government's communication strategy through radio broadcasting on Suara Waditra Community Radio was quite good. Through the Village Corner segment, the Village Government conveys information about the countryside that can be accessed easily and cheaply by residents. The village corner segment is welcomed by residents, as evidenced by statements from villagers that the information delivered on Community Radio is especially useful. However, the integration of Community Radio and digital media should still be done to support the delivery of faster and more comprehensive information.

**Keywords:** Broadcasting; community radio; information delivery

## Penyampaian Informasi Desa melalui Radio Komunitas Suara Waditra di Tengah Tantangan Media Digital

### ABSTRAK

Radio komunitas merupakan salah satu bentuk lembaga penyiaran yang legal dan eksis di Indonesia berdasarkan UU No. 32 tahun 2002 tentang Penyiaran. Radio komunitas dibuat oleh dan untuk kepentingan komunitas yang dilayaninya. Salah satu radio komunitas yang saat ini masih eksis mengudara adalah Radio Komunitas Suara Waditra, yang digunakan oleh pemerintah desa setempat sebagai media penyampaian informasi seputar pedesaan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui sejauh mana strategi komunikasi Pemerintah Desa Sukasetia dalam hal penyampaian informasi kepada warga setempat. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif deskriptif dengan pendekatan studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi dan wawancara mendalam dengan informan terpilih. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi komunikasi Pemerintah Desa melalui siaran radio di Radio Komunitas Suara Waditra sudah cukup baik. Melalui segmen Pojok Desa, Pemerintah Desa menyampaikan informasi seputar pedesaan yang dapat diakses dengan mudah dan murah oleh warga. Segmen Pojok Desa disambut baik oleh warga setempat, terbukti dengan pernyataan warga bahwa informasi yang disampaikan di Radio Komunitas sangat bermanfaat. Namun demikian, integrasi Radio Komunitas dengan media digital tetap harus dilakukan untuk mendukung penyampaian informasi yang lebih cepat dan komprehensif.

**Kata-kata Kunci:** Penyampaian informasi; penyiaran; radio komunitas

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## INTRODUCTION

Communication is one of the main requirements that must be met in the delivery of information and or other messages through media that are considered appropriate to their needs (Jones, 2017). Communication is the essence of all social interactions conducted by humans in everyday life. Through communication, information can be appropriately conveyed from one informant to another to the recipient. Communication is carried out as a bridge to achieve goals, including the goals of a community (Novrica et al., 2017). Conceptually, community comes from the English syllable community, which refers to a certain level of bond resulting from social interaction in society. The Oxford Learner's Dictionary states that a community 'is all the people who live in one place or a group of people with some interests' (Oxford University Press, 2021).

Community is not only about a group of people who live in the same place but also relates to relationships built on its members' shared vision, mission, or interests (Davcheva, 2021). Smallness of territory and typical desires are the main characteristics of the community. For example, a community of book lovers often hold community discussions; they have a common interest, namely books. The small area of a community makes the interaction between its members more intense, and due to the similarity of interests, its members support each other; this is where the bridge between communication and community is established. Communities are at the third level in the hierarchy, after individuals and families. This shows how vital the role of a community is in human life. The community can be a place to collaborate, exchange ideas, even solve problems. To form something, one of which is community radio. Community radio is one of the results of community formation in communication science (Masduki, 2005). Community radio is a medium for delivering information and a place for community members to share inspiration. Through community radio, their voices can be heard more widely, and this has become an effective way to build solidarity and bonds between members.

Community radio is one of Indonesia's legal and existing broadcasting institutions based on Law No. 32 of 2002 on Broadcasting (Sjuchro et al., 2022). Community radio is established by and for the benefit of the community it serves. Through community radio, people can voice their needs, interests, and issues that are important to them (Essel et al., 2023; Moges, 2020). The emergence of community radio in Indonesia is always related to the existence of community harmony organizations, either through internal initiatives through meetings or external interventions such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

Community radio is fully recognized as a player in the constellation of broadcast radio (Arif et al., 2022; Nurlaili & Warnaen, 2019). However, community radio is not a new phenomenon in Indonesia. Since the early days of reform in the 2000s, community radio has emerged as an alternative media that is closer to the community. At that time, many communities were formed and began to realise the importance of having their own media to voice the interests of the community, especially given the limited access to fast-moving media (Masduki, 2005). Thus, the existence of community radio can be said to have deep roots in Indonesia's broadcasting ecosystem, although its official recognition was only strengthened later.

Community radio faces severe obstacles related to managerial quality and human resources (H.R.). Community radio is often run by people who need to gain the skills and experience in broadcasting, making the quality of their broadcasts less than optimal. The

passion that community radio members have is not supported by their skills due to the limited resources that are needed to improve the capacity of managers. In West Java alone, Rakom's peak achievement was the establishment of Community Radio (F.M.) Pass in Katapang, Bandung (Nadita, 2020).

The establishment of Rakom Pass was also recognized by the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (C.I.R.D.A.P.). This is undoubtedly a new stepping stone for community radio, where community radio is recognized internationally and shows that community radio has excellent potential. However, over time, the glory of community radio began to fade. Based on data from B.P.S. West Java, out of 300 community radios that applied for licenses, only 31 were licensed in West Java (Sjachro et al., 2023). The decline of community radio is due to the low political will of the Government in encouraging the optimization of the role of community radio and regulations that still limit community radio, low public appreciation, as well as low sources of funding and failure to innovate (Pavarala & Malik, 2021). In addition, operational funding is also a significant obstacle. Many community radios need help finding funds or sponsors for their operations. Usually, community radio will get funds from advertisements, but due to Government regulations, the provision of ads in community radio is limited. However, in some areas, community radio is still an effective medium for conveying information, one of which is the Suara Waditra Community Radio in Sukasetia Village.

Suara Waditra Community Radio is present amid the community's need for information, especially for people not exposed to internet technology. This condition means Suara Waditra still has listeners in the middle of the digital era. The local Village Government utilizes this momentum to deliver Village information. Through Suara Waditra Community Radio, the local Village Government delivers information about the Village and general knowledge to build community enthusiasm. Community radio, as one of the electronic mass media, certainly provides convenience regarding information facilities. This is where the urgency of information technology can be utilized for various purposes, including being used as a contributor to Village information, as done by the Sukasetia Village Government. In addition, radio can also be used as a medium that can target all levels of society so that information can also reach all audiences. This has advantages in terms of space efficiency, as it can produce information in a brief time. Therefore, radio media is convenient and efficient as a means of informational mass media; this is a necessity that cannot be negotiated anymore. The researcher wants to know the extent of the Sukasetia Village Government's strategy in utilizing Suara Waditra Community Radio as a medium for delivering information.

Several previous studies related to community radio and its existence have been conducted, one of which is a study by Jayendra et al. (2019) entitled *The Role Of Kayoman Pedawa Group In The Revitalization Of Tourism Potential Based On Local Wisdom In Pedawa Village, Banjar District, Buleleng District*. Based on the results of Jayendra et al. 's research, interactive dialogue through radio broadcasts is one of the socialization media that is often used to broadcast cultural portraits based on Village life. Radio broadcasts are well known and familiar in reaching rural areas. Interactive dialogue through radio broadcasts was chosen because it is an affordable and cheap socialization media, even at no cost. Radio broadcasting was deemed suitable for socializing several aspects of Pedawa Village's local wisdom through Radio Guntur Singaraja. However, the disadvantage of radio broadcast socialization media is that interactive dialogues are not held regularly for one community

but alternate with other communities. In 2019, only two interactive dialogues on Pedawa Village have been held. Another weakness is the signal coverage, which is limited to the Buleleng area. Other efforts need to be made so that various aspects of the local wisdom of Pedawa Village can be socialized through radio and attract more tourists to visit Pedawa Village.

Panuju (2018) conducted another study titled Networking Strategy of Madu Fm Tulungagung Islamic Community Radio. This research aims to discover community radio's broadcasting strategy, especially in the Madu FM community radio contest in Tulungagung in East Java, Indonesia. The phenomenon of Madu FM community radio is fascinating to study because it is a community radio station that has successfully grown amid contestation broadcasting. Madu FM can adapt to the situation without breaking the rules. The result is that the community radio broadcasting strategy has successfully innovated to come into existence. The changes and transformations in Madu FM occurred due to tensions; on the one hand, community radio faced internal limitations; on the other hand, its space was narrowed and still added to the burden of obligations by the state. Rational choice encourages the behaviour of egoistic interests over economic interests. Another fact that reinforces this theory is the participation of residents in placing advertisements on the Rakom because of the belief in getting blessings. The financial businesses around Madu, without advertising on Rakom, have no effect. Their business is already running, but because they believe in helping the *pesantren* as a good deed, they participate.

Previous studies have highlighted the existence of community radio from various perspectives. For example, Jayendra et al. (2019) focused on the role of community radio in the context of revitalising tourism based on local wisdom. Then there was a study conducted by Panuju (2018), which discussed the strategies used by Rakom in developing the potential of Islamic-based broadcasting. Unfortunately, most of these studies have emphasised social-cultural aspects or organisational sustainability. Few have specifically explored the communication strategies of local governments in leveraging community radio, particularly in areas with limited technology. This is the research gap that this study aims to address, specifically in the context of the Swara Waditra Community Radio.

The novelty of this research lies in several aspects. First, it examines the use of Community Radio Swara Waditra as a communication medium for the village government, emphasizing its role in rural areas, particularly among listeners aged 35 to 70. This aspect has not been extensively studied before. For example, Panuju (2018) and Jayendra et al. (2019) primarily discuss community radio in the context of tourism. Second, the research explores opportunities to integrate radio with other digital platforms, specifically WhatsApp; to expand its reach, an approach that previous studies have not optimally explored. Therefore, this research was conducted to know the extent of the Sukasetia Village Government's communication strategy in terms of delivering information to residents.

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research is qualitative descriptive research with a case study approach. According to Moleong (2015), qualitative research is research that intends to understand phenomena about what is experienced by research subjects, for example, behaviour, perceptions, motivations, actions and others in a holistic and descriptive way in the form of words and language, in a special natural context and utilizing various natural methods.

Commented [A1]: After reviewing previous research, please state where the novelty of this research lies?

Case study is an in-depth qualitative research approach regarding individual groups, institutions, and so on within a certain period. The purpose of case studies is to try to find meaning, investigate processes, gain understanding and deep understanding starting from individuals, groups, or certain situations (Dumez, 2015; Swanborn, 2018).

This study was conducted in Sukasetia Village, Cisayong, Tasikmalaya. The location was selected based on purposive sampling because Sukasetia Village has an active community radio station called Suara Waditra, which is still used as a means of communication by the local village government. Additionally, Sukasetia Village has a community where most residents listen to the radio in their daily lives, despite the prevalence of other media in the community. Therefore, the researcher believes that Sukasetia Village is an appropriate location to study the local government's communication strategies through the community radio station.

The data collection process of this research was conducted through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation in accordance with the results of research in the field. Researchers observed things related to communication strategies in Community Radio, then verified the sources through an in-depth interview process. In-depth interview is a data collection technique conducted by researchers to obtain oral information through question and answer directly with a number of informants who can provide information related to research problems (Alshenqeeti, 2014). This study involved five informants who were selected purposively, considering their knowledge and involvement in community radio communication strategies and the process of broadcasting village information. The selection process considered the principle of role representation, namely producers (radio managers), distributors (village officials), and audiences (active listeners). The five informants consisted of two radio managers (involved in content production), one village official (who provided policy direction for information), and two active listeners aged between 35 and 70 who regularly followed the 'Pojoy Desa' segment. The selection also considered the accessibility and willingness of informants to participate in the entire research process. This research was conducted from April to May 2024. The data were analysed qualitatively through three key stages, firstly, transcribing and organizing the data by grouping the results of in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Secondly, conducting thematic analysis using Braun & Clarke's (2006) approach to identify patterns, such as the effectiveness of the *Pojok Desa* segment and the challenges of digital integration. Lastly, interpreting the findings by comparing them with relevant theories and previous studies. The coding process was conducted manually and validated through source triangulation to ensure the reliability of the results.

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## RESULT

The emergence of Community Radio in remote or rural areas provides information, education, and entertainment as well as a means of social control (Aminah, 2018; Saputra, 2018). Community radio can meet the community's needs according to its locality (proximity). The birth of Law No. 32 of 2002 on Broadcasting, which also strengthens the existence of Community Radio in Indonesia, has provided a breath of fresh air (Handiriono, 2023). Article 21, paragraph 1, explains that a Community Broadcasting Institution is a broadcasting institution in the form of an Indonesian legal entity (Dwiana & Wahyuni, 2013; Sjucho et al., 2024). It is established by a particular community, independent and non-commercial, with low transmitting power, limited coverage area, and to serve the interests

of its community. Various community radios, such as student community, farmer community, breeder community, and others, have sprung up nowadays.

Suara Waditra Community Radio is one of the community radios that still exists to broadcast. Suara Waditra is in Sukasetia Village, Cisayong District, Tasikmalaya Regency. Suara Waditra was established in 2005 but received legality from the Government through Kominfo in 2018. The existence of Suara Waditra in Sukasetia Village is, in fact, still maintained compared to community radio in other areas or even radio in general. Suara Waditra Community Radio broadcasts non-stop for 24 hours. Various segments are broadcast on Suara Waditra Community Radio, including karaoke, Sundanese songs, nostalgia, Village corner, wayang, and greetings for radio listeners. According to Suara Waditra's survey report, 30% of the total population of Sukasetia Village still faithfully listens to the radio. When converted into numbers, this percentage reaches one thousand people out of the total population of Sukasetia Village of five thousand. One thousand people who listen to Suara Waditra Community Radio are 35-70 years old. Usually, they listen to Suara Waditra Community Radio while relaxing, cooking, and making typical Sukasetia regional crafts.

This momentum is then utilized by policymakers at the Village level to disseminate Government information to the community. Informant one, one of the Village officials, and the manager of Suara Waditra Community Radio, said that in one week, there are at least two to three pieces of information entrusted by Village officials to be broadcast on Suara Waditra Community Radio. The broadcaster delivers this information through a segment entitled Village corner. The Village Corner segment was initially designed only to provide information entrusted by R.R.I. or just an advertisement, but at the initiative of informant one, the Village Corner was then present as one of the communication strategies conducted by local Village officials in conveying information.

*'..... In the village corner from 7 to 9 o'clock, information is conveyed, but for other segments, it is free to want entertainment or karaoke; the point is that in the village corner, it is intended to convey information, or for example, there are questions from residents for the village conveyed via WhatsApp.'* (Informant 1)

In this segment of the Village corner, various information about Village administration is conveyed, such as community service, family planning injections, and mobile driving licenses. Delivering this information is not necessarily done in collaboration with Village officials alone but with other stakeholders, such as B.K.K.B.N., AMAK, and J.R.K.I. Each stakeholder has essential information entrusted to the broadcaster, of course, welcomed by listeners. Informant 2 (54), a listener of Suara Waditra, said that through the broadcast of the Village corner conducted by Suara Waditra Community Radio, he felt much helped, especially in the information section about the Government.

*'Primarily an appeal to clean the environment, such as sewers. .... In the past, we collaborated with B.K.K.B.N.; such services have socialized with residents about implementing family planning, such as implants et al. So, the radio invites residents. Then there was A.M.A.K. We gathered community members and provided education on how the economic community could improve their living standards, so we gave a little education. Someone from J.R.K.I. came. J.K.R.I. is the Indonesian Community Radio Network.'* (Informant 2)

*'Oh yes, I also participated in the mobile SIM because I got information from the Waditra, at that time there were also many who participated because they got the information...'*  
(Informant 4)

According to informant two, the Village Corner segment is also filled with the delivery of general information through talk shows. This presentation is, of course, a collaboration between the Community Radio manager and the Village officials. Village officials bring in informants; then, the broadcaster becomes the moderator. For example, Suara Waditra Community Radio once conducted a talk show on organic rice planting. However, if it is not possible to do a talk show due to the condition of the villagers who need more confidence if they must broadcast, this general information is usually packaged in the form of storytelling delivered by the broadcaster.

*'For villagers, we cannot force them, for example, if we want to make craft A, there is a process, and I cannot explain it to them. Then I cannot force it, right? So, at most we convey according to Mr A the process of making this 'besek' from this many bamboos, then this much.'*  
(Informant 2)

This is undoubtedly an effective communication strategy, considering that the listenership of Suara Waditra Community Radio is still above 25%. In addition, in the realm of broadcasting, radio as an electronic mass communication medium certainly has advantages that other communication media do not have. It was firstly, maintaining mobility.

## DISCUSSION

Radio still tries to keep the mobility of listeners high (Nyre, 2015). In this case, Suara Waditra Community Radio can be listened to without stopping the activity; for example, as mentioned above, it can be listened to while relaxing, farming, cooking, and making crafts. This also reinforces that the presence of the radio on every occasion is perceived as non-disruptive. Secondly, it is auditive. Although it only produces sound, not visuals like print media or moving visuals like television, radio still has an advantage. The reason is that the operational process is relatively more straightforward, the operational costs are cheap, and that communication with sound has advantages in approaching listeners (Lewil Diedong & Dzisah, 2023). Third, it creates a theatre of mind. Radio production, which is only sound without images, can create 'imagination' that often tempts listeners' curiosity (Sonjaya, 2022). For example, when listening to the voice of an announcer or preacher, the listener's mind will imagine the figure of the announcer following the limits of his fantasy by processing the character of the announcer's voice. The power of imagination is often termed the theatre of mind. Fourth is personalized communication. The nature of radio, with its communication, is very beneficial in creating intimacy between radio and listeners so that the bond of need and mutual benefit becomes strong (Bonini, 2014).

In the context of Sukasetia, the communication strategy implemented by the village government through Suara Waditra has become a form of productive resistance to the tide of digitalisation. Although considered conventional, this approach has proven effective, with listener engagement reaching 30% of the village population. This reinforces the Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973), which states that audiences actively choose media based on their needs. Most residents of Sukasetia who lack internet access still rely on radio

as their primary source of information. Additionally, the geographically limited reach of community radio becomes an advantage in the context of local communication. The information conveyed is more focused, contextual, and relevant to the daily needs of residents. One informant noted that because the content is highly localised, residents find it easier to understand and act upon the messages broadcast.

Community radio has a narrow reach. However, the Sukasetia Village Government utilized this to convey information. Informant said that it is closely related to issues, and the information conveyed on Suara Waditra Community Radio is narrower so that residents will receive information more efficiently and be updated on issues around them. In the end, the narrow range of broadcasts from Community Radio is also something to be grateful for. According to Moores (2005), communication media such as radio is one of the community media that can be used to build social interest. Community media has a significant role in providing space for residents to communicate, share information, and build solidarity (Garnham, 2020; Kettunen, 2022). This is undoubtedly a positive thing that deserves to be maintained. Although the communication strategy conducted by the Sukasetia Village Government through community radio is considered quite good, things still need to be developed further to make communication more effective. However, challenges remain. Younger generations tend to abandon radio and switch to digital platforms (Greenberg & Scanlon, 2016). To address this challenge, the Sukasetia Village Government has begun integrating radio with digital platforms such as WhatsApp. Information broadcast on the radio is also disseminated through residents' WhatsApp groups to reach a wider audience. This hybrid strategy demonstrates the potential of blended-media communication models in the era of digital transition.

The findings of this study reinforce the Uses and Gratifications theory by demonstrating how residents utilize Radio Suara Waditra to meet their practical information needs (such as village service schedules) and access local entertainment, aligning with Lewil Diedong & Dzisah's (2023) findings in Ghana. While the results regarding village government and radio collaboration are consistent with Panuju's (2018) study, this research offers a fresh perspective by uncovering specific strategies within the *Pojok Desa* segment that have not been previously explored. Additionally, the findings on radio dependence among individuals aged 35-70 complement the work of Jayendra et al. (2019), which primarily focused on younger audiences, and support Garnham's (2020) Community Media theory on the role of local media as a social glue in regions with limited internet access.

## CONCLUSION

Suara Waditra Community Radio remains one of the most important media outlets for disseminating information from the Sukasetia Village Government to the local community. Despite the proliferation of digital media in society, Suara Waditra Community Radio still attracts 30% of the Sukasetia Village community as listeners. Through the 'Village Corner' segment, the residents of Sukasetia Village can access information related to village services, agricultural education, and other programmes beneficial to the local community. According to the Uses and Gratifications theory, this indicates that residents do not merely listen out of habit but also because they require the information conveyed in the 'Village Corner' segment. Thus, community radio remains a relevant choice as it meets the needs of the local community, particularly for those aged thirty-five and above who are no longer actively engaged in the digital world. However, to ensure the radio station's continued existence,



community involvement must be enhanced. The community should not only be listeners but also contributors of ideas, broadcasters, and helpers behind the scenes. Because, fundamentally, community radio will become stronger if managed collectively by its own community members. One way to achieve this is through broadcasting training, storytelling, and content development to make the information more engaging and easily understood by listeners. Then, a communication strategy that can be implemented is to combine two platforms, namely community radio and other media such as WhatsApp. This aims to make information from the radio more widely accessible, especially for the younger generation who rarely listen to the radio. This strategy is one of the most realistic strategies because not all people in Sukasetia village have internet access, but everyone still needs clear and easily accessible information.

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