

Government Public Relations Strategy of the Indonesian Capital City Authority in Managing the Nusantara Instagram @ikn_id

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the government public relations (GPR) strategy implemented by the Nusantara Capital City Authority in managing its official Instagram account, @ikn_id. As the body responsible for overseeing the development and governance of Indonesia's new capital city, Nusantara, the Authority holds a crucial role in shaping public communication. The study employs a qualitative descriptive method within a case study framework, collecting data through interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. Informants consist of the leader of the social media team in the public relation division, leader from the public relations team, and a communication consultant of the Authority. The findings indicate that the Authority applies a systematic and well-structured government public relations strategy. The strategy covers all stages of government public relations strategy, focusing on two-way asymmetrical communication, and also includes multi-source research, creating visual content, staying consistent with the account's persona, interacting with caution, adjusting to public needs, and doing regular evaluations.

Keywords: *Government Public Relations Strategy, Instagram, Nusantara Capital City, Nusantara Capital City Authority, Social Media Management.*

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of digital governance, the success of a government program is not only seen from how it is carried out, but also from how well it is communicated to the public. Government Public Relations (GPR) plays an important role in building trust, shaping public opinion, and encouraging people to take part in development programs (KOMINFO; Ruslan, 2005). The relocation of Indonesia's capital city from Jakarta to Nusantara in East Kalimantan is a major national project that exemplifies this need. Announced by President Joko Widodo in 2019 and reaffirmed by President Prabowo Subianto in 2024, the project aims to support the "Indonesia Maju 2045" vision, promote regional equity, and improve

governance efficiency (Kementerian Sekretariat Negara Republik Indonesia, 2024). However, being a highly ambitious initiative, the project has attracted both support and criticism from the public. In this landscape, GPR plays a crucial role in shaping favorable public opinion through consistent, transparent, and participatory communication, especially via social media platforms like Instagram, which has become a primary channel for engaging the younger, digitally active demographic.

Previous studies have explored how government institutions in Indonesia and abroad utilize social media for public relations. Putri (2023), for instance, examined the public relations strategy of Bandung City Government in managing the Instagram account @humas_bandung. Her research highlighted the use of the four-step PR strategy by Cutlip, Center, and Broom, fact-finding, planning, communication, and evaluation, in content creation and engagement. Another study by Sagiyanto (2021) focused on how the City Government of Tangerang used Instagram to promote local tourism. She found that visually attractive content combined with strategic messaging significantly improved public awareness and interest. Meanwhile, Farhatiningsih (2018) emphasized Instagram's role in modern government PR, noting its strength in enabling real-time interaction between government institutions and citizens. From a broader perspective, Dong (2021) and Kong (2022) have discussed the challenges of handling public discourse and crises through social media, emphasizing the importance of media choice and message framing. While these studies provide a solid foundation on social media in public sector communication, they mostly focus on local governments or general practices, and do not specifically address national-scale infrastructure projects or how social media is used to manage public perception at that level.

This study aims to address that gap by presenting a new perspective: analyzing the GPR strategy of the Nusantara Capital City Authority in managing its official Instagram account, @ikn_id. Unlike previous research that focuses on local contexts or tourism promotion, this research examines the strategic use of Instagram in the context of a high-stakes, long-term national development project. Instagram @ikn_id serves not only as a channel for information dissemination but also as a tool for building narrative, managing public sentiment, and increasing engagement surrounding the development of Indonesia's new capital. What makes this study unique is its focus on a central government body, a major national project, and a specific social media strategy used to shape public opinion in a challenging and sensitive setting.

This research is important because social media is becoming a main tool for government communication, especially in Indonesia, where over 220 million people use the internet (APJII, 2024). Instagram is one of the most popular platforms, with more than 30% of its users aged 18-34, an active and influential group in public discussions (Statista, 2024). Depending on how it's used, Instagram can help build or harm public trust. For the IKN project, public opinion is still mixed, some people support it, while others are skeptical or critical. In this situation, it's important to understand how the Nusantara Capital Authority

uses Instagram to communicate. This can show how government public relations works in the digital age. It also matters because the government faces public concerns about budget transparency, environmental impact, and whether the project is discontinued, issues that often appear in the comments on @ikn_id's posts.

This research was carried out with the main aim of understanding the government public relations strategies used by Nusantara Capital City Authority on Instagram, which has become its main digital platform. Compared to its other accounts, such as YouTube, Facebook, and X (formerly Twitter), Instagram remains the most consistently used and visually engaging platform. Through the analysis of content formats, themes, audience interaction, and response to public sentiment, this study seeks to understand how Instagram is leveraged to perform both promotional and conflict management functions. This includes showcasing progress, addressing skepticism, and fostering two-way engagement with the public. Moreover, the study is grounded in the strategic public relations framework of Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1994), enabling a systematic evaluation of GPR implementation across planning, execution, and assessment phases.

This study focuses on the project of IKN and through Instagram platform due to several main reasons. First, IKN represents one of Indonesia's most significant national projects in recent decades, making it an ideal case for analyzing high-impact government communication. Second, Instagram has shown significant influence in shaping public conversations around the project, especially among younger generations. Third, based on interviews with key public relations officials, AL, LM, and SH, from the Nusantara Capital City Authority team, Instagram is identified as the core communication platform due to its visual versatility, reach, and interactivity. Their testimonies confirm that the platform is used not only to inform but also to influence perceptions, manage misinformation, and shape narratives about the new capital.

Given this context, the research is framed around a central question: How does the Indonesian Capital City Authority apply government public relations strategies in managing the Nusantara Instagram account @ikn_id? This question aims to uncover how visual content, engagement strategies, and messaging are developed and executed to fulfill the goals of GPR, namely transparency, participation, and trust-building. By answering this question, the research provides both academic insight and practical guidance for future government communication strategies in the digital age.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Relations

Public relations is the management of communications between an organization and its public (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). According to Cutlip & Center (as cited in Siswanto, 2011),

the functional concept of public relations is to ensure the flow of public opinion, advise management on acceptable strategies, and implement programs that build positive perceptions of the organization. In line with this, Herimanto, Rumanti, & Indrojiono (2007, pp. 33–36) state that the five main duties of public relations are to convey accurate information to the public, monitor public opinion, enhance organizational image, uphold social responsibility, and ensure effective two-way communication, duties that aim to align organizational goals with public needs, foster trust, and support sustainable development. Furthermore, Grunig (as cited in Siswanto, 2011) outlines four models of public relations: press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical communication. These models range from one-way publicity and selective information sharing to research-based persuasion and mutual understanding through balanced two-way communication.

Communication Strategy

Communication strategy is a deliberate and coordinated effort by an organization to deliver targeted messages that support its goals, using the right media, timing, and content to influence audience attitudes and behaviors (Hallahan et al., 2007; Lindley-French, as cited in Shadrach, 2024; Dimiyati, 2006, as cited in Harahap et al., 2022; Gelders & Ihlen, 2010, as cited in Shadrach, 2024). While general communication focuses on informing, strategic communication aims to generate specific audience responses (Brown, 2012, p. 77) and integrates creative and systematic approaches for long-term impact (Shadrach, 2024). According to David (2002, as cited in Siswanto, 2023), this strategy includes three key stages: formulation, implementation, and evaluation, ensuring that communication efforts align with and support the organization's mission.

Government Public Relations (GPR)

Government Public Relations or GPR is a strategic communication tool used to facilitate interaction and disseminate information about national development through collaboration with various media, including print, electronic, and traditional formats (Ruslan, 2005, p. 339, as cited in Hasliani, 2019). In Indonesia, GPR is guided by Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2015 and aims to build public understanding and support for government programs and policies (KOMINFO, "Lingkup Program Government Public Relations"). Its core functions include securing government policies, providing quality information services, disseminating programs, mediating between government interests and public aspirations, and fostering a stable, dynamic environment for sustainable development (Ruslan, 2005, p. 338, as cited in Hasliani, 2019). GPR practitioners are also responsible for strategic issue management, identifying potential threats, and building stakeholder relations to prevent crises (Lee, Neeley, & Stewart, 2021, pp. 106–107). Ultimately, GPR supports public sector

missions, enhances governmental accountability, and strengthens public trust through integrated communication efforts (Lee, Neeley, & Stewart, 2021, pp. 12–13).

Government Public Relations Strategy

Government Public Relations strategy refers to a structured communication approach used by government institutions to foster public trust, clarify misinformation, and build positive public opinion around policies (Lee, 2000; Lubis, 2012). More than just information dissemination, GPR is a strategic tool for enhancing government reputation and policy success (Lani & Handayani, 2021). In the digital age, governments must go beyond traditional media and proactively engage citizens through social media, enabling direct, transparent, and interactive communication that shapes public perception (Dong & Lian, 2021; Cheng et al., 2017). According to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (1994), effective GPR follows four key steps: defining the problem through audience analysis, planning strategic communication, executing and delivering the message, and evaluating the program's impact for continuous improvement.

The Role of Social Media in GPR

Social media plays a crucial role in GPR by enabling direct communication, relationship building, and effective information dissemination. It encompasses various platforms that allow users to create content, interact, and form communities (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Boyd & Ellison, 2007, as cited in Ryan et al., 2017). As digital engagement rises, public relations professionals must strategically manage social media to align with audience needs through research-based planning, brand voice, audience targeting, and KPI evaluation (Freberg, 2018, pp. 218–245). According to the Chartered Institute of Public Relations (CIPR, 2012, p. 7), social media has shifted PR from being a media intermediary to a direct messenger. Platforms like Instagram, which offer interactive features such as Stories, Reels, and Insights, empower organizations to communicate more effectively and build long-term public trust (Etriany, 2022).

Understanding the Public: Situational Theory of the Public

According to Dewey (1927, as cited in Botan & Hazleton, 2006, p. 236) and Botan and Soto (1998, as cited in Botan & Hazleton, 2006, pp. 236–237), a public is a group of individuals with a shared interest in an organization who self-organize to monitor and regulate its activities, even if they lack formal structure or direct relationships (Abdurrachman, 1993, p. 28). The Situational Theory of the Public (STP) explains that individuals are classified based on their awareness, involvement, and perceived constraints regarding an issue, which determines whether they remain passive or become actively

engaged (Grunig, as cited in Kriyantono, 2014), with key situational variables including problem recognition, constraint recognition, level of involvement, and referent criterion (Grunig, 1979, as cited in Kriyantono, 2014, pp. 156–157). Moreover, Grunig (1979, as cited in Kriyantono, 2014) categorizes publics into three types, latent, aware, and active, reflecting an evolution from unawareness to active engagement in response to issues.

Agenda Setting Theory

Agenda Setting Theory, first conceptualized by Walter Lippmann (1922) in *Public Opinion*, suggests that the media shape public perception not by reflecting reality directly, but by constructing a “pseudo-environment.” This foundational idea was expanded by McCombs and Shaw (1972), who defined agenda setting as the process by which media highlight certain issues, guiding public attention rather than opinions. In public relations, this theory offers a strategic framework to influence media agendas and, consequently, public agendas through issue management, planned campaigns, and strong media relations (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 2006). Rogers and Dearing (1988) describe two levels of agenda setting: the first focusing on issue salience, and the second on framing, the media’s way of shaping public interpretation (Entman, 1993). With digital transformation, strategies now include social media amplification and influencer engagement (Freberg et al., 2011; Li & Bernoff, 2011), though challenges like media fragmentation, echo chambers (Sunstein, 2001), and algorithmic filtering (Pariser, 2011) make message control more complex and nonlinear (Dearing & Rogers, 1996).

METHODOLOGY

To understand the Government Public Relations strategy of the Nusantara Capital Authority on Instagram (@ikn_id), this study adopts a qualitative descriptive case study approach. The method was chosen to gain in-depth understanding of communication strategies and practices implemented by the institution. Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. The study involved three key informants selected through purposive sampling due to their direct roles in managing public communication at the Nusantara Capital City Authority. AL is the team leader of the social media public relations division. Since the early formation of the Authority, AL has played a central role in managing the Instagram account @ikn_id and coordinating its content strategy. With extensive experience in government public relations, AL provides insights into planning, execution, and evaluation of digital communication strategies. LM serves as one of the team leaders within the PR division and plays a supporting role in the development and implementation of the Authority’s communication strategies. LM is deeply involved in public engagement efforts and has detailed knowledge of internal PR dynamics and the challenges of managing the public image of IKN. SH is one of the two main communication consultants

for the PR team. With professional expertise in strategic communication, SH contributes to the planning and refinement of GPR strategies. SH provides a broader external perspective on how to design effective communication approaches that align with public expectations and improve public involvement through media platforms like Instagram. This qualitative study analyzes data from interviews, observations, and documentation, with key points selected and interpreted to draw conclusions (Yin, 2003, as cited in Kandawangko, 2011; Moleong, 2007, p. 247). This study uses triangulation, specifically source and theory triangulation, to test data credibility by comparing informants' responses with other perspectives and aligning findings with relevant theories (Moleong, 2007, as cited in Kandawangko, 2011; Pawito, 2007, p. 99, as cited in Natasha, 2021). The study focused on understanding communication strategy implementation, particularly on Instagram, based on Cutlip, Center & Broom's GPR stages: fact finding, planning, communication, and evaluation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Two-Way Asymmetrical Communication Model

Nusantara Capital City Authority adopts a two-way asymmetrical communication model in managing the Instagram account @ikn_id, an approach grounded in Grunig's theory (1984), where public input is acknowledged but the institution retains full control over its messaging. The communication team actively monitors public responses, comments, and digital trends, using this feedback to fine-tune tone, timing, and visual presentation rather than to reshape institutional narratives (Grunig, 2018; L'Etang, 2008). The strategy is reflected in the account's curated content: posts are visually polished, emotionally appealing, and focused on themes like development progress and inclusivity, while controversial topics, such as delays or criticism, are largely omitted. In line with Moloney (2006) notes, this persuasion-oriented approach prioritizes agenda promotion over mutual understanding. The result is a communication channel that is responsive in form but directive in purpose.

This model reflects a centralized and strategic institutional orientation, where public engagement is managed rather than democratized. Interactions are filtered and moderated, and the team selectively responds to constructive comments deemed safe for institutional reputation. Triangulated insights from an external expert confirm that Nusantara Capital City Authority's communication style is intentionally formal and top-down, structured to maintain state legitimacy and reduce public friction (Ronny, personal communication, 2025). While such an approach may limit transparency, it is contextually appropriate for a government body overseeing a nationally strategic project. Feedback mechanisms exist but function primarily to inform internal adjustments rather than enable participatory discourse. Thus, @ikn_id operates not as a forum for public negotiation but as a carefully managed platform for persuasive and visually driven narrative delivery.

Multi-Source Data Research

To create effective communication strategies, IKN's PR team applies multi-source research methods.

“For example, from news during a certain period of time. The news can be from print, online, or TV news. Then from information on internal data from various deputies... On social media itself we definitely do research, on instagram, on tik tok, on facebook, youtube, X we routinely do research. Both independent research and research from consultants.” (AL)

They integrate social media analytics, traditional media coverage, and internal government data. This comprehensive approach enables the team to detect public sentiment, track discourse trends, and anticipate misinformation or crises early on (White et al., 2025; Garhwal, 2023). Social media plays a crucial role in this process. Media monitoring collects quantitative and qualitative data on relevant posts and public interactions, while social listening analyzes sentiment, behavioral trends, and real-time conversations. Together, these methods provide a holistic picture of public engagement with IKN development. News from traditional media coverage such as print, online, and television sources is also reviewed to see how stories about IKN are being told and received by the public. This helps the PR team correct false information by strengthening accurate messages, and create better content that fits what the public needs.

Using the Situational Theory of the Public by Grunig & Hunt, the team uses this data to group audiences based on three factors: how much they see an issue as a problem, how involved they feel, and what limits they face in responding. By knowing whether the public is passive, aware, or active, the PR team can adjust their content and approach to fit each group better. With strategies based on ongoing data, the Nusantara Capital Authority can stay flexible and respond quickly to public opinion. Real-time monitoring helps them predict reactions, avoid problems, and keep their messages consistent. This research from many sources also helps the team decide what topics to focus on, while avoiding the spread of misinformation or damage to their image. In the end, it helps make @ikn_id a more trusted and effective platform for sharing updates about Indonesia's new capital city.

Youth-Oriented Strategy Adjustment

Recognizing youth as both future residents and key stakeholders of Nusantara, the IKN Authority places significant emphasis on targeting younger audiences in its public relations strategy. Understanding that digital natives are highly active on platforms like Instagram, the @ikn_id account is deliberately adapted to appeal to youthful preferences through vibrant visuals, casual language, and interactive formats (Freberg, 2018). Content is presented using trending formats such as reels, carousels, and stories, with visual aesthetics that include bright tones, minimalist layouts, and emotionally driven storytelling, features

aligned with younger audiences' media consumption habits that prioritize authenticity, creativity, and brevity.

“While on instagram, we target the audience, especially the younger generation, so that they know what IKN is. What is happening in IKN. What is the development and we convey information related to IKN officially.” (LM)

In line with Grunig and Hunt's Situational Theory of the Public, this strategy aims to move youth from the “aware” segment, those who recognize issues but remain passive, into “active publics” who are engaged, participatory, and supportive of the IKN project (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The approach involves identifying shared values and interests, crafting relatable narratives, and fostering engagement through comments, polls, and culturally relevant references such as memes or trending sounds. Beyond content format, this strategy also influences the account's tone, favoring a friendly and inclusive voice over formal or bureaucratic language. Post timing is also optimized to match peak activity periods among youth, while hashtag selection and visual design are tailored to appeal to their digital behavior. Altogether, this youth-focused communication not only informs but also connects meaningfully with the younger generation, cultivating trust, participation, and long-term advocacy for the vision of Indonesia's new capital.

Agenda Setting through @ikn_id

Agenda setting is a core component of the IKN Authority's communication strategy in managing the @ikn_id Instagram account. Guided by the Agenda Setting Theory proposed by McCombs and Shaw (1972), which emphasizes that media shape what people think about rather than what to think, the PR team strategically selects and prioritizes content that aligns with institutional goals. Key messages highlighted include Nusantara's beauty shoot, infrastructure progress, future milestones, and symbolic achievements that frame Nusantara as a visionary, nationally significant project. Rather than choosing topics arbitrarily, the team relies on insights from media monitoring, public feedback, and social listening during the fact-finding stage to determine which narratives resonate most. This allows the institution to elevate the salience of specific issues, directing public attention toward positive aspects of the IKN project while avoiding or cautiously framing more sensitive topics.

By applying agenda setting across all stages, fact-finding, planning, communication, and evaluation, the communication strategy ensures consistency in both message and tone (Parmelee & Bichard, 2012). Visually compelling content paired with structured, optimistic captions subtly guides public perception and reinforces a professional, forward-looking institutional image. This practice not only strengthens message alignment with national priorities but also helps increase public problem recognition, particularly when combined with the Situational Theory of the Public by Grunig & Hunt (1984). In doing so, @ikn_id supports engagement while minimizing the risk of reactive communication during crises.

Ultimately, agenda setting enables the IKN Authority to shape public discourse proactively and maintain narrative control over the development of Indonesia's new capital.

Persona Consistency in Communication



Figure 1 Friendly *ikn_id* interaction with the audience

Source: Author's processing from *ikn_id* comment section, 2025

The @*ikn_id* Instagram account consistently maintains a friendly, modern, and inclusive persona across its visual content, captions, and public interactions. This curated identity is not incidental but a deliberate strategy designed to align with the expectations of digitally native audiences, particularly young, urban users who dominate the platform. Through warm greetings, casual phrasing, humor, and the use of emojis, Nusantara Capital City Authority crafts a communication style that feels approachable and relatable. This friendly tone humanizes the institution and strengthens emotional connection with the public, transforming what might otherwise be a bureaucratic account into an engaging and trusted source of information. According to the World Bank (2022), social media accounts with consistent and approachable personas achieve up to three times higher engagement, highlighting the effectiveness of this strategy. While maintaining informality, the account still reflects government values by balancing accessibility with institutional professionalism (Lee & Kwak, 2012).

Beyond branding, this consistent persona serves as a tactical tool in achieving communication goals. Referencing Grunig and Hunt's Situational Theory of the Public (1984), publics are more likely to engage when messages feel accessible and relevant. By lowering psychological and linguistic barriers, @*ikn_id* reduces constraint recognition among latent and aware publics, gradually moving them toward active participation. This approach helps build familiarity and loyalty while fostering a sense of being heard and understood. Findings from data triangulation, including expert validation, support the view that persona consistency strengthens credibility and fosters long-term engagement. More than just an aesthetic decision, the account's identity enables Nusantara Capital City Authority to build

public trust and connection, an essential component in garnering sustained support for a high-stakes, long-term initiative like the development of Indonesia’s new capital city.

Rebranding @ikn_id as “City Showcase”



Figure 2 Change of account focus to city “showcase”

Source : Author's processing from ikn_id feeds, 2025

In 2025, Nusantara Capital City Authority strategically repositioned its Instagram account, @ikn_id, as a digital “city showcase” to visually represent Nusantara’s transformation into Indonesia’s new capital. This rebranding effort prioritized high-quality, aesthetically compelling content, such as beauty shots of key buildings, infrastructure development, green spaces, and everyday scenes in the new city, to craft an aspirational and forward-looking narrative. Rather than serving purely informational purposes, this visual storytelling strategy aims to evoke national pride and public support by framing IKN as a smart, forested, and livable capital (Wibowo & Pratama, 2022). The shift aligns with the planning phase of the GPR model (Cutlip et al., 1994), where communication strategies are recalibrated in response to institutional objectives and public sentiment. By focusing on promotional rather than bureaucratic messaging, @ikn_id differentiates itself from other government accounts, concentrating on building emotional connections and visual appeal while still embedding policy context through data-backed captions.

This visual branding approach also aligns with broader trends in digital communication, particularly among younger, image-driven audiences who favor visual narratives over text-heavy updates (Rodriguez & Dimitrova, 2011; Grabe & Bucy, 2009). From the perspective of the Situational Theory of the Public by Grunig & Hunt (1984), this strategy effectively raises issue awareness and perceived relevance among latent publics, those who may have little initial interest in IKN. As they are consistently exposed to engaging, visually curated updates, these audiences are more likely to develop interest

recognition and eventually become active publics. Additionally, the city showcase concept serves as a subtle yet effective tactic for managing public skepticism. Instead of addressing criticism head-on, the account provides indirect reassurance by presenting continuous visual evidence of progress. This aligns with a two-way asymmetrical communication model, where feedback is considered but the messaging remains controlled and institutionally guided. Ultimately, the city showcase is not just a branding shift, it is a strategic tool to build public trust, strengthen institutional legitimacy, and shape the collective imagination of what Nusantara represents for Indonesia's future.

Hierarchical Coordination in Communication

The communication process within Nusantara Capital City Authority follows a hierarchical coordination model typical of government institutions, where authority and decision-making flow through structured channels.

“Then also seen from the leadership's direction. The leadership in question is the leadership starting from the Head of the Authority, as the highest leader, then the main secretary, then our direct superior, namely the Head of the Bureau. If there is indeed direct direction from them ordering this theme to be published, then we will accommodate it” (AL)

While the social media team handles day-to-day tasks such as drafting captions, editing visuals, and scheduling content, any strategic or sensitive material must pass through approval from the above and also content can be created, edited and deleted at the direction of above. These include internal leadership, legal and protocol teams, and occasionally external partners such as ministries or national government agencies. This bureaucratic coordination ensures that every public-facing message aligns with institutional priorities, legal standards, and Indonesia's broader national development goals (Lee, 2000). As @ikn_id represents not just a government account but the voice of a major national project, even seemingly simple posts require careful cross-departmental planning and alignment with official narratives.

Although this process may reduce the team's flexibility and slow down content production, it is essential for maintaining accuracy, avoiding reputational risk, and ensuring diplomatic sensitivity, particularly when addressing politically charged issues or public criticism. The model reinforces institutional legitimacy and helps prevent miscommunication or misinformation that could undermine public trust. From a GPR perspective, this structure supports the planning and communication phases by prioritizing message coherence and institutional unity over real-time responsiveness or trend adaptation. Rather than operating as an autonomous digital brand, @ikn_id functions as a coordinated extension of government messaging, striking a balance between engaging digital audiences and respecting governance protocols. Ultimately, this approach enhances message credibility and reinforces public confidence in the integrity of IKN as a national development initiative.

Crossposting with Government or Related Agencies

Crossposting has become a key strategy for @ikn_id to expand its content reach, enhance visibility, and unify messaging across various government platforms. By utilizing Instagram's "collaborator" feature, Nusantara Capital City Authority can publish a single post that simultaneously appears on multiple verified accounts, such as those of ministries, state-owned enterprises, and affiliated institutions involved in the IKN development.

"We have collaborated with larger accounts several times. For example, for collaboration with the republikindonesia account. Usually we use this collaboration if there is a review from the ministries to the IKN to add, to strengthen ties, to maintain cooperation. At the same time, the bonus is that it increases engagement, yes, we collaborate because usually IKN friends who come here of course also update their social media about the IKN because we are both Indonesian Ministries and Institutions." (AL)

This method not only amplifies audience engagement but also strengthens the perception of a coordinated and unified government effort (Lee, 2000). The shared pool of likes, comments, and shares generated through crossposted content contributes to higher algorithmic performance, thus extending visibility. More importantly, it ensures that core narratives, such as IKN's identity as a future capital city, are consistently echoed across digital platforms, reinforcing strategic messaging and minimizing fragmentation.

Grounded in the principles of GPR, this approach underscores the importance of inter-agency synergy and message coherence, especially in the context of national-scale projects. A unified digital voice is vital for maintaining institutional credibility and avoiding public confusion. Crossposting supports these objectives by synchronizing communication workflows, reducing redundancy, and broadening message reach. From the perspective of Grunig and Hunt's Situational Theory of the Public, crossposting also helps introduce IKN-related discourse to latent publics, audiences who may not yet be engaged but are connected to other government accounts. By passively encountering crossposted content in their feeds, these individuals begin to recognize IKN-related issues, which can gradually increase their awareness, interest, and potential support. Thus, crossposting is not just a technical tool but a deliberate public relations strategy to foster inclusivity, extend narrative impact, and build sustained public engagement across diverse audience segments.

Readiness for Emerging Issues

Handling issues is a key part of how @ikn_id runs its communication, showing how important it is for government public relations to stay alert. Given the political sensitivity and national significance of the IKN project, Nusantara Capital City Authority maintains active monitoring of public sentiment, especially within the first hour after each post is published, a critical window for identifying potential backlash or misinterpretation (Lee, Neeley, & Stewart, 2021). The team observes comment sections, trending keywords, and broader

discourse to detect misinformation or emerging negative narratives. By monitoring content closely, the team can act quickly, such as changing captions, adjusting visuals, giving clarifications, or temporarily taking down posts. These actions follow a clear chain of command to keep everything in line with the institution's goals and to avoid damaging its reputation, especially when the content is sensitive or political.

This kind of readiness shows how important it is in government public relations to prevent problems before they grow. Instead of waiting for backlash, the Nusantara Capital Authority focuses on careful planning and review to avoid issues early on. Content is reviewed regularly, every hour, month, quarter, and year to make sure messages stay relevant and effective. This approach helps keep communication open and trustworthy, while still managing how messages are delivered. It also fits with the Situational Theory of the Public, where tracking changes in public awareness and involvement helps the team respond better when people start to speak up. In the end, managing issues isn't just about protecting image, but also about building real, informed, and lasting engagement with a changing audience.

Non-Confrontational Approach to Handling Issues

The Nusantara Capital City Authority uses an indirect and careful communication strategy to manage its image on Instagram @ikn_id. Instead of replying directly to negative comments, criticism, or misinformation, the PR team focuses on sharing content in a smart and subtle way. They post eye-catching visuals, updates on infrastructure, quotes from trusted sources, and informative graphics to build a positive image, without having to argue or correct things openly. This strategy helps avoid conflict or controversy, which is important for government bodies, since every public message carries weight.

This method aligns with formal government communication norms, which prioritize prudence and message discipline while still aiming to foster trust. As confirmed by triangulation interviews, this formalistic, top-down approach is typical in bureaucratic systems where messages often require multi-level approval. The expert notes that while avoiding confrontation is contextually appropriate, silence in the face of critical public issues can backfire. Communication scholars like Lee, Neeley, and Stewart (2021) emphasize the need for timely and honest clarification to build credibility. Likewise, under the Situational Theory of the Public, non-confrontational strategies can gradually convert latent or aware publics into active ones, if paired with transparency. Therefore, while Nusantara Capital City Authority's indirect approach is effective for maintaining institutional decorum and message control, it should be balanced with accountability and responsiveness to ensure sustained public trust and meaningful engagement.

Multi-Tiered Evaluation of Communication Strategy

Nusantara Capital City Authority implements a comprehensive multi-tiered evaluation system to assess and refine its communication strategies on Instagram @ikn_id.

“The evaluation has started since it was published. It is an intense evaluation until the first hour.... Then there is also a monthly evaluation, every month we report. We make a report like that, an Instagram insight report. Then later from these monthly ones we make it into quarterly ones. Well, this quarterly evaluation or report is what we will report to the leadership. So there is an early evaluation of 1 hour. After that, 1 month, 3 months like that in our case. And there is also an annual report, of course, but this annual one is indeed for the whole office.” (AL)

This process begins with immediate monitoring within the first hour after publication, where the team observes early audience responses, such as comments, shares, or sentiment shifts, to detect potential misinterpretations or emerging issues (Zerfass et al., 2018). Structured evaluations follow at monthly, quarterly, and annual intervals, using Instagram Insights and internal performance metrics, including reach, engagement rate, follower growth, and responsiveness to public discourse. These evaluations also assess alignment with the institution’s agenda-setting goals, ensuring that content consistently supports strategic objectives (Grunig, 2018; Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1994).

This layered approach enables the PR team to continuously improve message effectiveness while adapting to dynamic audience expectations. Monthly reviews inform tactical adjustments, such as modifying content themes or posting schedules; quarterly assessments provide broader insight for leadership decision-making; and annual evaluations serve as strategic checkpoints to recalibrate long-term communication priorities. As Kriyantono (2020) explains, structured evaluation is important in public communication because it helps improve strategies based on public feedback and behavior. This approach also follows the Excellence Theory by Grunig and Dozier (2002), which highlights the need for regular, research-based evaluation in public relations. By using data to guide both planning and execution, the Nusantara Capital City Authority keeps its communication relevant, trustworthy, and in line with its values, helping to build lasting public trust (Lee, 2000; KOMINFO, 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the Government Public Relations (GPR) strategy used by the Public Relations division of the Nusantara Capital City Authority through the Instagram account @ikn_id is carried out in an organized and structured way. The strategy is in accordance with the four stages of the GPR model by Cutlip, Center, and Broom: fact finding, planning, communication, and evaluation. Each stage is applied with clear strategy following both the institution’s goals and the fast-changing nature of public communication in the digital age through observation.

In the fact-finding stage, data was gathered from many sources, such as from mass media, social media, and internal coordination across government bodies. This helped the

team create two types of content: planned content based on a set agenda and responsive content that reacts to crises caused by current public discussions or online sentiment. This shows their commitment to communication that is both proactive and flexible, important for a sensitive national project like Nusantara.

In the planning stage, @ikn_id was repositioned as a "city showcase" for Nusantara, meant to present the new capital as a symbol of future progress. The team focused on visual content, like photography, carousels, and reels, all with minimal text, to attract younger audiences who prefer visually engaging and interactive media. The planning also involved making monthly content calendars, setting up a clear editorial workflow, and maintaining a consistent online persona in interacting and making posts.

In the communication stage, the team published content with a friendly and human tone. They used stories that highlighted progress, human-interest topics, and values tied to the IKN vision. Interaction with the public was managed carefully, especially in the comment section. The communication style followed the two-way asymmetrical model (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), where feedback is heard and analyzed, but the message still aims to persuade the audience toward the institution's goals. When negative sentiment appeared, such as criticism about delays or environmental impact, the team did not respond directly. Instead, they posted positive, factual content in an indirect and visually credible way to guide the narrative.

In the evaluation stage, the team applied a multi-level system, such as real-time checks an hour after posting, followed by monthly, quarterly, and yearly reviews. This system fits with the Excellence Theory (Grunig, 2002) and the performance-based communication model suggested by Kriyantono (2020). Evaluation used metrics like reach, engagement, comment sentiment, and how well the content follows the agenda setting. These insights helped improve both current and future strategies.

In conclusion, the GPR strategy used by the Nusantara Capital City Authority through @ikn_id shows a modern approach to public communication, even with the limited tools available. It combines visual storytelling, youth-oriented branding, and adaptive interaction. More than just giving out information, it also acts as a tool for building the institution's image and gaining public trust. Through flexible, forward-looking, and visually engaging communication, the @ikn_id account plays a key role in shaping positive public opinion about the IKN project and framing it as a vision of Indonesia's future.

5.2 Recommendations

This research gives contributions to the field of public relations, especially in the context of government communication in digital platforms, in particular Instagram. Academically, it is recommended that future researchers expand on this study by conducting comparative analyses between different government institutions, exploring the use of other social media platforms, or investigating the effectiveness of participatory communication, such as the two-way symmetrical model, in fostering public trust. Practically, the Public Relations team at Nusantara Capital City Authority is encouraged to improve transparency in

addressing public concerns while still aligning with institutional protocols. Implementing clearer messaging and adopting more proactive storytelling techniques can help strengthen emotional connections with the audience. Additionally, maintaining consistent audience analysis and collaborating with other government institutions through crossposting will be crucial for expanding reach and reinforcing message consistency. Sustaining a coherent and friendly persona in both content and interaction, particularly when dealing with sensitive national issues, remains vital for effective public communication.

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