

Strategic Communication of the Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh Celebration Committee in Promoting the Cap Go Meh 2025 Event in Singkawang

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to analyze the communication strategy implemented by the Committee of the Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh Celebration in Singkawang City in promoting the Cap Go Meh 2025 event. Cap Go Meh Festival is one of the prominent Chinese cultural heritages that attracts both domestic and international tourists, while also serving as a medium for preserving local traditions in Singkawang. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method, with data collected through in-depth interviews, non-participatory observations, and documentation. The findings reveal that the committee applied various communication approaches, including persuasive, informative, two-way communication, and word of mouth (WOM) techniques. The communication strategy was formulated based on audience segmentation, message planning, appropriate media selection, and the establishment of a dedicated team for promotion, publication, and media relations. The study shows that a comprehensive communication strategy involving local communities can effectively increase public participation and expand the promotional reach. This research offers practical insights for cultural event organizers and contributes academically to the development of cross-cultural communication strategies.

Keywords: *Communication strategy; public relations; cultural event; Cap Go Meh; Singkawang*

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia is an archipelagic country with a rich and diverse cultural heritage. Its culture which includes language, dance, music, traditional clothing, and local wisdom not only reflects national identity but also serves as a strategic asset in tourism development. In line with Law No. 10 of 2009 concerning Tourism, the optimization of culture as a tourism attraction is expected to stimulate economic growth and enhance community welfare.

One tangible form of cultural development in the tourism sector is through the organization of cultural events. These events not only enrich tourists' experiences but also strengthen the pride of local communities in their traditions. Several nationally and internationally recognized examples such as the Kecak dance in Bali, batik and the royal palace (Keraton) in Yogyakarta, and the Rambu Solo ritual in Toraja demonstrate that cultural promotion can make significant contributions to the tourism sector and the local economy. According to Detik.com (2017), the tourism sector contributed USD 13.568 billion in foreign exchange earnings in 2016, making it the second-largest contributor after Crude Palm Oil (CPO).

In this context, Singkawang City in West Kalimantan stands out as one of the regions with uniquely rich culture. The city is known for its ethnic diversity, particularly the dominance of the Chinese ethnic group, specifically the Hakka who make up 42% of the total population. This ethnic group has been living in the area since the 18th century, bringing with them cultural values, traditions, and beliefs that have become integrated and evolved into the city's identity. These traditions are strongly represented in the Cap Go Meh Festival, a cultural event that has become an annual icon of the city and draws attention from local, national, and international audiences.

The Cap Go Meh Festival in Singkawang has a unique charm, especially due to its main attraction, the Tatung ritual, a spiritual practice in which individuals believed to be possessed by ancestral spirits demonstrate their immunity to sharp objects. Beyond its powerful spiritual and visual aspects, other cultural elements such as the presence of the Tri Dharma Bumi Raya Temple add historical and architectural value to Singkawang's cultural tourism offering.

However, despite its popularity, the Cap Go Meh Festival does not yet have an official system for recording the number of tourists in attendance. Visitor estimates are typically based on indirect indicators, such as the number of grandstand tickets sold. Nevertheless, ticket sales have shown a significant year-to-year increase from 1,800 tickets in 2020 to 3,000 tickets sold out in 2025, following the COVID-19 pandemic.

The success of events such as the Cap Go Meh Festival depends not only on cultural richness but also on the communication strategies used to promote them. Cultural events require effective communication approaches to ensure cultural messages are delivered accurately and broadly. In this context, the role of Public Relations (PR) is vital not only to disseminate information but also to build trust, spark curiosity, and create emotional engagement with the public.

According to Allen et al. (2011), events serve as a medium for communicating social, cultural, and economic values to society. Therefore, events must be strategically planned to achieve high effectiveness. Getz (2012) adds that without systematic planning, an event can lose direction and fail to capture public interest. Effendy (2009) emphasizes that communication strategies must be developed based on a thorough analysis of the factors that

influence message delivery with the aim of achieving effective communication, building a positive image, and encouraging public participation.

Within the Cap Go Meh Festival organizing committee, the role of PR is handled by the Promotion, Publication, and Media Division. This division is responsible for developing and implementing communication strategies, fostering harmonious relationships between the committee and the public, and maintaining a positive image of the festival. Through the synergy of social media, mass media, and community engagement, PR plays a crucial role in determining the extent to which promotional information can reach a wider audience and increase public interest in the event.

The Cap Go Meh Festival is a concrete example of how local culture can be transformed into a tourist attraction through an effective communication approach. Communication strategies must be able to bridge cultural messages with diverse audiences, tap into emotional values, and create memorable experiences. According to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory, effective communication strategies are those that can influence public behavior through the systematic and sustained spread of new ideas. Meanwhile, Middleton emphasizes that the success of a communication strategy lies in the integration of key elements such as the communicator, message, media, audience, and the intended impact of communication.

In response to digitalization, the organizing committee is required to be both adaptive and innovative. Social media has become a primary channel for promoting the festival and reaching younger generations and global audiences. Collaborating with influencers and involving local communities also serve as strategic approaches. For instance, the Hakka community, with its authentic cultural values, can be leveraged to enrich the promotional narrative. Digital content such as photos, videos, and testimonials from locals and tourists can create a strong electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) effect, organically expanding the festival's promotional reach.

The promotional strategy employed must combine various communication approaches, including persuasive, informative, two-way communication, and word of mouth (WOM). The use of platforms such as Instagram and TikTok allows for interactive and viral communication. Elements like calls to action (CTA), casual language, and visually appealing content are essential for building emotional connections with the audience. At the same time, informative approaches are crucial for delivering technical details such as event schedules, parade routes, and regulations so that visitors feel safe and well-prepared. Moreover, two-way communication through social media comments and WhatsApp contact points enables direct engagement, allowing the public to ask questions or establish collaborations.

A comprehensive and well-structured communication strategy one that includes audience segmentation, appropriate media selection, and an organized promotional team has proven effective in broadening promotional reach and increasing participation. By integrating local wisdom, digital technology, and modern communication methods, the Cap Go Meh Festival has the potential to become one of Indonesia's premier cultural tourism destinations

not only well-known but also well-remembered by both local communities and international visitors.

Therefore, this study aims to explore in depth how the communication strategies used by the Cap Go Meh Festival organizing committee were designed and implemented to promote the cultural event. The study focuses particularly on the use of digital media and the involvement of local communities, with the hope of providing practical insights for other cultural event organizers and enriching academic discourse on cross-cultural communication strategies in tourism promotion.

This study is supported by three relevant previous studies that provide a foundation for understanding the role of strategic communication in event promotion and public engagement.

The first study is titled “Strategi Komunikasi Pemasaran Penyelenggaraan Even dan Festival Pariwisata di Kabupaten Banyuwangi” by Amalliah Katry Anggraini (2023) from Universitas Pamulang. The findings indicate that effective marketing communication strategies in tourism events require an integrated approach. Not only advertising and event execution are important, but all elements of Integrated Marketing Communication (IMC) must be involved. Public relations, direct marketing, and the use of digital media play a significant role in enhancing tourism appeal. Techniques such as press conferences, influencer collaboration, and social media dissemination help broaden public awareness and interest in visiting Banyuwangi.

The second study is “Strategi Komunikasi pada Special Events Jogja Java Carnival 2011 sebagai Icon Event Budaya” by A. Soraya (2014). This study analyzes the communication strategies implemented during the Jogja Java Carnival, highlighting the importance of persuasive communication and community involvement. The creative team behind the event focused on inspiring public enthusiasm and positioning the carnival as an iconic cultural celebration. The 2011 theme “MAGNIWORLD” emphasized creativity and integrated modern elements such as technology and artistic performances to attract both local and domestic tourists, ultimately boosting Yogyakarta’s cultural tourism.

The third study is titled “Strategi Komunikasi dalam Sosialisasi Pembangunan Jembatan Selat Sunda di Provinsi Banten dan Lampung” by Ali Nurdin (2013). It focuses on communication strategies in the context of development project socialization. The study emphasizes the importance of credibility, message alignment with community expectations, and appropriate media selection. It suggests the use of face-to-face communication, persuasive and informative techniques, and the involvement of opinion leaders and traditional institutions as intermediaries. The research highlights that mass media is not always effective in rural contexts, and personal approaches are more impactful for public understanding and support. Together, these studies reinforce the importance of tailored, strategic, and participatory communication approaches in promoting events and facilitating public engagement

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study draws upon several foundational concepts in communication, particularly within the realm of event promotion and public relations. The literature review is structured to highlight the strategic elements necessary for cultural event promotion and to identify the research gap in local event communication strategies, particularly in multicultural settings like Singkawang.

Strategic Communication

Strategic communication is a deliberate and structured process involving both planning and management, designed to achieve specific communication objectives. As explained by Effendy (2003), strategy not only provides direction but also defines how tactical actions should be implemented. It integrates macro-level strategies (planned multi-media approaches) and micro-level strategies (single-channel methods), both aimed at delivering informative, persuasive, and instructive messages in a systematic way.

Two main functions are emphasized:

1. Disseminating messages that are informative, persuasive, and instructional to targeted audiences for optimal outcomes.
2. Bridging cultural gaps caused by rapid media development, which, if unmanaged, may erode traditional values.

Effendy (2009) also outlines three core goals of communication strategy:

- To Secure Understanding: Ensuring mutual understanding between communicators and audiences.
- To Establish Acceptance: Fostering sustained acceptance of the message or idea.
- To Motivate Action: Encouraging the audience to take desired actions.

Formulating an effective communication strategy involves analyzing the strengths and weaknesses of communication components:

- Target Audience Analysis: Understanding whether the objective is simply to inform or to motivate behavior (persuasive/instructive).
- Media Selection: Choosing one or multiple media channels based on goals, message type, and communication techniques. No media is universally effective; each has strengths and limitations.

Message Purpose: Messages should be aligned with their communicative intent—whether informative, persuasive, or instructional.

- Role of the Communicator: The communicator must show empathy, understanding the emotions and context of the audience. This is especially important when engaging with audiences experiencing stress, confusion, disappointment, or other strong emotions.

Public Relations

Public Relations (PR) is a management function that seeks to build mutual understanding and cooperation between an organization and its public. According to Bertrand R. Canfield and Frazier Moore (in Djaja, 1985), PR is both a philosophy and practice of communication, executed through reciprocal interactions to foster collaboration and social harmony.

The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) defines PR as a strategic communication function aimed at maintaining harmonious relationships between an organization and its publics through mutual understanding, acceptance, and cooperation. PR is also tasked with issue management, serving as a conduit for public feedback, and helping organizations adapt effectively to change (Assumpta, 2002). This highlights PR's proactive role not only in information dissemination but also in public listening and adaptation.

In 1982, IPRA emphasized the interactive nature of PR communication: it is not merely top-down messaging but involves reciprocal feedback processes that shape decision-making and institutional responsiveness.

Core Functions of Public Relations

According to Canfield (in Siswa Nto, 1992), PR serves three primary societal and organizational functions:

1. Serving the Public Interest – Upholding ethical responsibility and social value.
2. Maintaining Good Communication – Ensuring consistent, transparent dialogue with stakeholders.
3. Upholding Moral Conduct – Promoting ethical behavior and professionalism in all organizational actions.

Daily Responsibilities of PR Practitioners

Rachmady (1992) outlines the following operational tasks of PR professionals:

- Communicating information—verbally, in writing, and visually—to ensure accurate public understanding of the organization's mission and activities.
- Monitoring and evaluating public opinion and reactions to the organization's policies or behavior.
- Analyzing public responses to help guide organizational strategy.
- Maintaining favorable relationships with the public and media to influence perception, generate support, and foster attitudinal change.

Event

Events play a vital role in the tourism sector, serving as platforms to attract visitors, celebrate cultural moments, and promote destinations. As defined by Noor (2013), events are organized activities commemorating significant moments in individual or collective life linked to culture, tradition, and religion and held at specific times.

Events serve not only as entertainment but also as strategic promotional tools for destinations through structured and engaging activities. By combining symbolic meaning and experience, events foster emotional connections that go beyond mere information-sharing.

Types of Events

According to Noor (2009), events are categorized into four types:

1. Leisure Events
These involve recreation or entertainment, such as sports competitions or concerts, designed to attract large audiences and offer enjoyment.
2. Personal Events
Organized by individuals or families, these focus on emotional bonding and celebration of personal milestones.
3. Cultural Events
These reflect and preserve community values and traditions, such as festivals, religious rituals, or traditional performances—making them highly relevant in promoting local heritage like Cap Go Meh.
4. Organizational Events
Events hosted by institutions or companies for specific purposes, including seminars, conferences, or trade exhibitions.

Characteristics of Events

Noor (2009) outlines several defining features that make events impactful:

- Uniqueness
Events should possess distinctive ideas, locations, or audience experiences to create lasting impressions and distinguish themselves from others.
- Perishability
Events are time-bound experiences. Poor planning or execution may lead to loss of atmosphere and unmet expectations, thereby diminishing their effectiveness.
- Intangibility
The value of an event often lies in the intangible experiences it offers. Organizers must turn abstract services into memorable impressions—through elements like sound, visuals, and emotional ambiance.
- Personal Interaction
Direct engagement with participants enhances the overall impact of an event. Audience participation contributes to energy, emotional investment, and perceived success of the experience.

In the case of the Cap Go Meh Festival in Singkawang, these characteristics are central to how the event is designed, communicated, and experienced—highlighting the need for strategic communication that resonates both visually and emotionally.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a descriptive case study method. The focus was to explore in-depth how the Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh Celebration Committee of Singkawang City developed and implemented their communication strategies for promoting the Cap Go Meh 2025 event.

Data collection techniques included:

1. In-depth interviews – conducted with five informants: three internal committee members (including the General Secretary, Deputy Secretary, and Head of Publication, Documentation, and Media) and two members of the public (a tourist and a local resident). These informants were selected using purposive sampling, targeting those directly involved in or influenced by the event.
2. Observation – the researcher observed promotional activities during the event.
3. Documentation – collection of official promotional materials, media content, photographs, and administrative records related to the event.

The collected data were analyzed using an inductive analytical approach as proposed by Bungin (2007). This included steps of data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and verification to identify patterns and develop conceptual insights. Triangulation of data sources (interviews, observation, and documentation) was applied to ensure the validity and credibility of the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study revealed several key components in the strategic communication process conducted by the Cap Go Meh 2025 Celebration Committee in Singkawang. The findings are categorized into thematic subheadings to better illustrate how communication strategies were formulated and executed effectively.

Communication Approach

Based on field observations and in-depth interviews, the Cap Go Meh 2025 Festival organizing committee adopted a multi-faceted communication approach that combined four methods: persuasive, informative, two-way communication, and word-of-mouth (WOM). These approaches were applied synergistically rather than separately, enabling the committee to effectively reach a broader and more diverse audience.

In the context of strategic communication, such approaches are essential for aligning messages with audience characteristics, communication goals, and the cultural-social environment (Effendy, 2003). Each approach served a specific function:

Persuasive Communication

The Cap Go Meh 2025 organizing committee implemented a persuasive communication approach as part of its strategic promotion. Persuasive communication aims to influence audience attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors (Nida, 2014). In this context, the strategy

was used to spark interest, generate curiosity, and encourage public participation in the festival.

Through Instagram and TikTok, the committee distributed content rich in visual aesthetics and emotionally driven narratives. Videos and photos highlighted iconic elements like Tatung rituals, lion dance parades, and local art performances. These were framed with inspirational and invitational captions such as “Let’s celebrate Chinese New Year in Singkawang!” or “Are you ready for the most exciting festival of the year?”

“We use persuasive content like flashback videos from previous years, then insert call-to-action messages and this year’s event info.”

(Informant 3)

The language was deliberately casual, friendly, and emotionally resonant, aimed especially at younger audiences familiar with informal digital communication styles. The goal was to convert passive viewers into active participants individuals who not only attend the festival but also help promote it through shares and conversations.

“Using phrases like ‘Ready for the most exciting festival of the year?’ creates that feeling of being invited like you’re part of it.”

(Informant 3)

By using emotionally charged, inclusive messaging, the committee was not just informing the public but mobilizing them. This aligns with the function of persuasive communication as a means of shifting audience roles from passive recipients to engaged advocates who feel a sense of ownership over the event.

Informative Communication

In addition to persuasive techniques, the Cap Go Meh 2025 organizing committee employed an informative communication approach to deliver clear, factual content regarding technical aspects of the event. This included schedules, locations, safety guidelines, and other essential details, distributed through digital posters, press releases, infographics, and social media posts.

Informative communication, as defined by Effendy (2011), is the one-way transmission of objective messages without emotional appeals or persuasive intent. It plays a critical role in ensuring audiences are well-informed and able to make decisions with confidence particularly in the context of large-scale public events.

“We share everything in detail from the schedule, parade routes, central venue to other practical info. Then our media division prepares and distributes the content.”

(Informant 1)

The committee posted structured content consistently through its official social media accounts to ensure visibility and avoid important information getting buried among promotional posts. Content was designed to be clear, concise, and visually accessible, helping

audiences especially visitors unfamiliar with Singkawang plan their attendance more effectively.

“It’s essential to give clear info. No one will attend an event without knowing when and where it’s happening!”
(Informant 3)

This strategy aligns with Rakhmat (2005), who asserts that informative communication delivers neutral facts that help audiences act with certainty. In this case, it provided a sense of security for visitors and reflected the committee’s accountability, readiness, and audience-centered communication.

By offering timely and transparent information, the committee not only enhanced visitor experience but also demonstrated a strong commitment to effective public service and professionalism in event management.

Two-Way Communication

The Cap Go Meh 2025 organizing committee implemented a two-way communication approach as a critical component of its promotional strategy. This method enabled dynamic interaction between organizers (communicators) and the public (communicants), fostering participatory dialogue rather than one-way messaging.

According to Priyono (2022), two-way communication allows recipients to respond, ask questions, and influence the flow of information. This model aligns with participatory and audience-centered communication practices, especially relevant in modern event promotions.

“We provided official WhatsApp numbers for each type of participant and event to keep communication focused and organized.”
(Informant 1)

The committee facilitated interaction through:

- Official WhatsApp contacts (customized per event category)
- Comment sections on Instagram posts
- Direct responses to public inquiries and feedback

This enabled the public not only to access information quickly but also to take real action such as registering for events, applying for sponsorships, or setting up booths at the festival. These interactions were often initiated through comments or messages on social media and transitioned to more personalized engagement via WhatsApp, showing a successful conversion from communication to participation.

“Audience members could ask questions via comments or message us directly. We provided phone numbers and addresses in selected posts to guide them.”
(Informant 1)

The strategy was structured: each category of inquiry (e.g., participant registration, logistics, sponsorship) had its own Person In Charge (PIC). This division ensured that every

query was handled by someone knowledgeable and responsible, preventing delays or miscommunication.

This approach reflects Call to Action (CTA) theory (Chen, Yeh & Chang, 2020), which emphasizes attracting attention, simplifying user action, and enabling decision-making. The committee succeeded in turning inquiries into partnerships, as seen in several cases where businesses reached out via WhatsApp and later became official sponsors.

Two-way communication not only enhanced trust and transparency, but also generated tangible outcomes, such as economic collaboration, public participation, and community-driven content amplification. It minimized miscommunication risks and aligned with the values of responsive and inclusive event communication.

Word of Mouth (WOM) Strategy

Word of Mouth (WOM) served as a powerful and organic communication strategy for promoting the Cap Go Meh Festival 2025. WOM involves interpersonal communication either direct or digital based on personal experience, which is often perceived as more trustworthy than formal promotional messages (RachmaDita, 2023).

During the festival, visitors both locals and tourists shared their experiences via personal conversations and social media posts. These narratives highlighted the festive atmosphere, cultural uniqueness, and comfort of the event, thereby organically enhancing the festival's positive public image.

To support this strategy, the organizing committee intentionally designed Instagrammable photo spots, cultural experiences, and a safe, vibrant environment to encourage visitors to share their experiences online. This informal method effectively complemented the committee's formal persuasive, informative, and two-way communication strategies.

"I heard about the festival from my friend KP, who showed me videos from 2024. I was curious, searched it on social media, and decided to come. After attending, I posted about it on Instagram, and many friends from Bandung started asking me questions."

(Informant 5)

This testimonial illustrates the two-step flow of communication (Katz & Lazarsfeld, 1955), where KP acted as the first opinion leader, influencing SHD. After attending the festival, SHD became the second layer of influence by sharing content through electronic Word of Mouth (e-WOM) on Instagram. This chain reaction extended the festival's visibility to new geographic and social circles.

According to Henning-Thurau et al. (2004), e-WOM involves any consumer-generated content about an experience that influences public perception through digital channels. SHD's Instagram posts served as e-WOM, portraying the festival's cultural richness, and triggered further inquiries from her followers.

This ripple effect demonstrates that WOM not only spreads information but also activates participation, drives curiosity, and fosters community-based promotion. In today’s digital environment, the synergy between WOM and e-WOM forms a vital promotional force that extends beyond organizational control making it an essential element of modern event communication strategy.

Audience Segmentation

The audience was segmented into:

- Local Citizens of Singkawang – received persuasive messages to build pride and participation.
- Domestic and International Tourists – received informative and promotional content.
- Chinese Cultural Community – received image-building messages focused on cultural identity.

This segmentation allowed the committee to tailor its message content and communication style to meet the unique expectations of each group.

Message Planning

Message design was tailored based on the segmented audience: local citizens, cultural tourists, and international visitors. Each segment received content through selected channels appropriate to their behavior and interests.

Table 1.1 Message Strategy

Segment	Purpose	Message Content
Persuasive	Build local pride and encourage active participation	"Let's celebrate our heritage together — your support matters!"
Informative	Provide practical and appealing cultural information	Event schedules, venue maps, travel access, and cultural introductions
Educative & Image-Building	Strengthen cultural identity and festival credibility	"Singkawang: A city of harmony – preserving our legacy through Cap Go Meh 2025"

Source : Processed by the researcher

The segmentation approach ensured that each group received messages that resonated emotionally and contextually, enhancing engagement and positive perception. For instance, the local community was engaged through participatory messages, while tourists were attracted through informative visuals and storytelling. The ethnic Chinese community

received emotionally symbolic content using visual cues such as lanterns, lion dances, and red-gold color schemes.

Media Selection Strategy

The organizing committee of Cap Go Meh 2025 in Singkawang carefully selected three primary social media platforms Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube as the core of their promotional strategy. These platforms were chosen based on their ability to engage different audience segments effectively while staying within budget constraints.

Instagram was utilized for its visually driven, interactive nature. The committee used Instagram's features such as feed posts, stories, and reels to share aesthetically pleasing visuals, event schedules, teaser clips, and community engagement content. The informal yet relatable tone aimed to resonate with the 18–34 age group, the most active demographic on the platform (We Are Social, 2024). This approach aligns with McQuail's (2010) view that social media enables dialogic and participatory communication, shifting the dynamic from top-down information delivery to two-way engagement.

TikTok served as a high-virality channel to attract a younger demographic through short, entertaining videos (15–60 seconds) covering behind-the-scenes content, creative preparations, and candid moments. According to Kietzmann et al. (2011), TikTok's algorithm allows organic content distribution, increasing the likelihood of content appearing on users' For You Pages. The committee capitalized on this by producing culturally engaging, emotionally resonant videos that foster public enthusiasm in a light and authentic manner.

“We use Instagram and TikTok to make the content more familiar and formal at the same time and also to help it go viral.”

(Informant 2 & 3)

YouTube was designated for live streaming major event components, such as the Tatung parade and rituals. This offered remote audiences real-time access, creating an inclusive experience for those unable to attend physically. The live broadcasts were also archived, serving as digital documentation and long-term promotional material. As Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016) highlight, YouTube is not only a credibility-building platform but also a strategic archive for cultural communication.

“We use YouTube for livestreaming the main event, so people who can't come can still join the celebration virtually.”

(Informant 1 & 3)

By leveraging the unique strengths of each platform Instagram's visual engagement, TikTok's virality, and YouTube's inclusivity and archival value the committee successfully created a dynamic, culturally rich, and far-reaching promotional campaign for Cap Go Meh 2025.]

Printed Media Usage

In addition to digital media, the Cap Go Meh 2025 organizing committee actively utilized printed media such as banners, posters, and infographics as part of its communication

strategy. These were strategically placed in high-traffic areas including main roads, traditional markets, tourist zones, and the festival venues to enhance public visibility and awareness.

According to Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2009), printed media remains an effective communication tool for local outreach due to its strong physical presence and repetitive exposure. Unlike social media content that quickly disappears from timelines, banners serve as persistent visual reminders, especially useful in location-based campaigns.

The printed served to reach segments of the population less active on social media particularly local residents accustomed to conventional visual communication. The content focused on technical information such as event schedules, venue locations, and parade routes. Visual design prioritized clarity through bold typography, bright color schemes, and symbolic imagery, ensuring accessibility even from a distance.

“We also use print media like banners so that local residents are triggered by the event and can help spread awareness. We placed them near the event venues for maximum visibility.”

(Informant 1)

One of the main printed deliverables was a detailed chronological schedule of the festival activities. This included key dates, names of events, specific locations, and times ranging from the city decoration and culinary expo to spiritual rituals and the main Cap Go Meh parade. Icons and layout elements were used to enhance visual readability for all literacy levels.

This approach highlights the committee’s commitment not only to design aesthetics but also to clear and functional public communication. By providing precise information through physical media, the committee minimized confusion, supported time planning for visitors, and fostered a smoother festival experience particularly for those unfamiliar with the geography of Singkawang.

Television Media Utilization

Television played a strategic role in enhancing the public legitimacy and nationwide visibility of the Cap Go Meh 2025 Festival in Singkawang. Beyond its function as an information medium, television was used by the committee to project a formal and credible image of the festival positioning it not merely as a local event, but as part of Indonesia’s cultural calendar.

National channels such as Metro TV and TV One were engaged as media partners to broadcast various segments of the event, including the opening ceremony, cultural parades, Tatung rituals, and the closing celebration. This partnership extended the festival’s reach to a wider demographic, especially audiences not active on digital platforms.

“Television is more targeted toward older audiences. But honestly, we think TV is for everyone if the event airs on a well-known national channel, it

helps us promote it much more broadly, even internationally.”
(Informant 1 & 2)

According to Effendy (2003), television is a powerful medium due to its audio-visual nature, offering viewers an immersive experience that simulates being present at the event. This makes it particularly effective for shaping public perception and institutional credibility. The committee strategically used this advantage to reinforce the festival's professional image and secure its place as a well-organized, inclusive, and culturally significant event. Television coverage also helped bridge generational gaps, appealing to older audiences who prefer traditional media formats. Moreover, its factual and visual storytelling contributed to solidifying the event's reputation beyond the Singkawang region, capturing national attention and strengthening its branding as a cultural heritage celebration of high value.

Media Partner Collaboration

As part of its collaborative communication strategy, the Cap Go Meh 2025 organizing committee partnered with various media partners, including local and national outlets, online platforms, and cultural publication channels. These partnerships were essential for broadening the reach and credibility of the festival's promotional efforts.

The scope of collaboration included:

- News coverage
- Republishing promotional content
- Live event reporting
- Distribution of materials via each partner's official platforms

“Most of the media partners and local influencers collaborated voluntarily and were willing to support the promotion. Their verified presence helped build audience trust.”

(Informant 1&3)

This mutually beneficial partnership gave the committee expanded access to established communication networks, while media partners gained valuable cultural content for their audiences. The relationship reflected a symbiotic model, where both sides contributed to and benefited from enhanced visibility and positive branding of the festival.

According to Grunig and Hunt's Excellence Theory (1984), this practice illustrates two-way symmetrical communication where organizations and publics both gain value from open, ethical, and responsive interaction. The committee's approach was adaptive, inclusive, and strategically aligned with the evolving media ecosystem.

Field observations confirmed that media partners consistently published official content such as parade schedules, Tatung profiles, and public invitations. These were shared by prominent regional outlets like Tribun Pontianak and Kompas TV Kalbar, as well as by community-based cultural pages, ensuring widespread yet consistent messaging.

This strategy not only expanded outreach but also maintained narrative coherence across digital and traditional channels strengthening the festival's identity and public perception.

Role of the Promotion, Publication, and Media Division

The Cap Go Meh 2025 organizing committee established a dedicated division Publication, Documentation, and Media which played a central role in implementing the event's strategic communication plan. This division functioned beyond technical promotion; it acted as a strategic public relations (PR) unit, facilitating two-way communication between organizers and the public.

Based on interviews with key team member RCH, the division's responsibilities were divided into three interdependent teams:

1. Content Team – responsible for producing promotional materials for both digital and print media.
2. Media Relations Team – managed partnerships with external media and monitored the accuracy of published content.
3. Documentation Team – handled real-time visual coverage (photo and video) of the event's activities.

“Our team is divided into three: content, media relations, and field documentation. We coordinate to avoid overlaps and also monitor external media to ensure what they post reflects the reality.”

(Informant 3)

In line with Rachmady's (1992) model of PR duties delivering accurate information, monitoring public opinion, and maintaining positive media relations the division functioned as a perception manager. It actively recorded audience interaction on social media, adjusted messaging to suit cultural values, and served as an early-warning system for potential misinformation or crises.

This structured division allowed the committee to maintain narrative consistency, enhance audience engagement, and foster trust. More than an administrative body, the division embodied the principles of professional and participatory communication, treating the public not just as message recipients but as active participants in the communication process.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research on the communication strategies implemented by the Singkawang City Chinese New Year and Cap Go Meh Celebration Committee in promoting the 2025 Cap Go Meh Event, it can be concluded that the strategies used have been designed in a structured and adaptive manner to keep pace with the times. The committee integrated various communication approaches, including persuasive, informative, two-way communication, and word-of-mouth (WOM) strategies. These four approaches have proven effective in reaching a wide audience, including local residents, domestic tourists, and international visitors. The strategy was implemented with consideration for the strong social and cultural context of Singkawang City.

Social media serves as the primary channel for disseminating information and promoting the event. The organizing committee utilizes platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok to share visual content that is not only aesthetically appealing but also contains educational elements. The communication strategy is developed based on careful audience segmentation, ensuring that the messages delivered are more targeted and relevant to the characteristics of the intended audience. The selection of media and communication styles is tailored to the preferences of each segment, particularly the younger generation and active users of digital media.

Additionally, the establishment of a specialized division responsible for promotion, publication, and media management is a key factor in the success of this communication strategy. This division not only communicates messages to the public but also fosters harmonious relationships with the community and media, ensuring smooth internal coordination. The involvement of the local community, particularly the Chinese-Hakka ethnic group, further strengthens the promotional strategy through the dissemination of more authentic and culturally nuanced information. Overall, the implemented communication strategy successfully increased community participation, expanded the reach of promotions, and reinforced the image of the Cap Go Meh Festival as an integral part of Singkawang City's cultural identity.

Overall, the communication strategy implemented is responsive to technological developments and community needs, while maintaining the cultural values embedded in the Cap Go Meh Festival. This study demonstrates that promoting cultural events requires a holistic and integrated communication approach to sustainably enhance community participation and regional tourism appeal.

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