

Communication on Development and Investment in Education: Analysis of Wajo Regency Government Strategy

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Abstract

This study analyzes the development communication strategy implemented by the Wajo Regency Government in encouraging investment in education as an effort to develop human resources. This study uses a qualitative approach. Collecting data by conducting interview techniques, participatory observation, and conducting document analysis. This study states that development communication is the most important thing in building community involvement, maintaining local cultural values, and becoming a liaison for information between the government and citizens. The results of the thematic analysis obtained data related to the success of communication strategies influenced by the socio-cultural context, messages delivered consistently, and the active involvement of various stakeholders, local communities and people who take roles. This finding contributes to the understanding of how important participatory communication integration is in the planning and implementation of education development programs in the region, especially Wajo Regency.

Keywords: Government Strategy, Development Communication, Education Investment, Wajo Regency, Traditional Media.

INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental pillar in the development of human resources and the progress of a nation. Several studies have stated that education is the main foundation in forming human resources. According to (Siregar & Hasibuan, 2024) Education and human resource development have an important role in increasing economic growth and helping to accelerate social and economic development. Meanwhile (Ngandoh, 2012) stated that education has a function in the economic sector and can have an influence on the development of human resources. A similar thing was conveyed by (Ridwan, 2016) in his research, that education can help the workforce competency needed in the sustainable national development process.

However, there are obstacles for local governments in facing budget constraints in financing the development of the education sector as a whole. (Irianto, 2020) stated that the factor of budget constraints in a region is the cause of the gap between rich and poor regions in financing the education sector. (Sutansyah, 2021) mentioned this in his research, that a major challenge in financing education is due to the budget and social disparities that occur in a region.

Wajo Regency, an area in South Sulawesi Province, faces these challenges. Based on the report of the Wajo Regency Education Office (2023), infrastructure development and improving the quality of education are still constrained by limited public funds. Therefore, a strategy was created to involve the private sector through an education investment scheme.

Attracting investment in the education sector certainly requires a strategy, because this is not an easy problem. Although the industrial or tourism sectors are much easier, the education sector has a higher risk profile with several things that need to be measured, so that there is no long-term investment return, as well as socio-political sensitivity. Therefore, development communication plays a fairly important role. Local governments are expected to be able to develop communication strategies, so that they can build a positive image, and how the strategy conveys the urgency of educational needs in a targeted manner, and fosters trust for investors in the stability and prospects of the education sector. (Servaes, 2008).

(Haloho & Perwirawati, 2021) have conducted research related to the role of the Simalungun Regency Communication and Informatics Service in building a positive image of the government through various communication media. Such as electronic media, print media and online. The strategy used is to provide information and provide counseling to the surrounding community. Similar things were found (Afida, 2024) in her research, the Public Relations Communication Strategy of the Purbalingga Regency Government in Improving a Positive Image in the Community. From the results it was found that the Government is taking a symmetrical two-way communication approach to build public trust.

Development communication strategy is a process of planning messages, selecting communication channels, and involving key actors in influencing opinions and decisions of external parties. According to (Ida, 2015) It is very important to carry out communication planning in the implementation of the development process. This begins with selecting the right communicator, determining the audience with careful consideration, and compiling messages to choose the right media in planning. A similar thing was conveyed by (Zahra & Evi, 2023) stating that this is closely related to the government's communication strategy in increasing community participation. This study provides information related to an inclusive and open communication approach, one of which is by getting the community to participate in government program development activities. (Sabrina & Unang, 2024) also stated that communication strategies need to be considered by observing the characteristics of village communities, as well as the role of communication in development.

The Wajo Regency Government has utilized various communication channels, ranging from digital media, public forums, to direct partnerships with potential investors. However, the effectiveness of communication strategies in attracting investor interest in the education sector has not been widely studied scientifically.

This study aims to analyze the development communication strategy implemented by the Wajo Regency Government in attracting investors to the education sector. By using a communication approach and looking at the challenges faced, this study is expected to contribute to the development of a more effective and adaptive public communication strategy to the dynamics of social investment.

In a geographical context, the study conducted in Wajo Regency has not been widely discussed in the development communication literature related to education investment. The research focuses on the education sector, where the majority of previous studies are development communication that focuses on health, the environment, or infrastructure. The following are previous studies that researchers found: Andi Adityawarman Mandafi and Muhammad Iqbal Sultan (2015) with the title of the study: Analysis of Community Participatory Communication in the Implementation of the Village Musrenbang Flood Resorption in Lake Tempe, Wajo Regency. This study is a study related to the communication process between the community and the government in the Village Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang) forum in the village. The results of the study found that there was an increase in the intensity and participation of community communication, although women's representation was still very minimal. This study provides an illustration that it is very important to use participatory development communication in infrastructure planning in a region. (Mandafi & Sultan, 2015).

Next, a study conducted by Saiful, Alwi, and Muhammad Akbar (2018) entitled: Public Opinion on the Implementation of the Village Fund Program in Wajo Regency. In this study, it was found that the infrastructure development program through village funds provided real benefits. However, even though it provides benefits, involving the community in the planning stage still faces obstacles. In this study, it is stated that an important factor in influencing the level of public trust must be carried out using transparent two-way communication. (Saiful, Alwi & Akbar, 2018).

In 2022, the author also conducted a study by looking at the socio-religious aspects of development communication with the title Islamic Organization Preaching Communication Strategy in Reducing the Level of Juvenile Crime in Pitumpanua, Wajo Regency. This study made observations on the communication strategy implemented by one of the authors obtained research results that the interpersonal communication approach can effectively increase awareness so that it can change adolescent behavior to stay away from crime in the area. (Elfrianto, 2022).

This study highlights the education sector in the investment framework using the local government communication approach. So starting from this, this study aims to enrich the discourse of development communication by focusing on the role of strategic communication in attracting social investment in the education sector.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Development Communication

Development communication is a communication process created to support changes that occur socially, economically, and politically, especially in developing countries (Servaes, 2008). This approach focuses on community involvement, communication that is a dialogue, and equitable distribution of information in order to achieve development goals.

Communication strategy in the context of development is a special planning process in achieving a planned goal. Erlinawati, & Purwanto (2024) states that communication strategies can be used in infrastructure development in underdeveloped areas, including education. This study shows that an effective strategy needs to involve face-to-face communication, empowering community leaders and a local cultural approach.

There are many studies related to the development of a region that has succeeded after involving the community. Masri et al. (2023) stated that the strategy used was community-based empowerment. So that it can foster awareness of the role of each individual in the development of a region. Sakir, Hermansyah, & Syamsuddin (2023) also stated that successful development is development that begins with the collective awareness of the local community.

From the study explained by Masri & Sakir, it can be concluded that community participation is important and a key element in the success of regional development. If it is associated with people's media, this kind of participation can be strengthened and expanded.

The basic thing about people's media is to form social closeness, in strengthening cultural identity and becoming a bridge between the gap between the two media, namely modern and traditional. Something new or in the form of a development idea can be packaged in the form of a story, drama, or performance that is relevant to the cultural context of society.

People's media will continue to have a role that is considered important in the development communication process, especially in the context of a society that is still struggling with local traditions. Although, the relevance and effectiveness of this media continue to be challenged amidst the development of digital media and changes in the way people communicate.

Kapoor (2025), explains that the cultural structure of folk media, such as folklore or traditional performances, can cause ineffective communication because it becomes a barrier in conveying information about contemporary development such as education or investment. This requires content adaptation while maintaining the inherent cultural essence.

This is in line with research from Journal of Scientific Temper (2023) which observed the positive side of folk media in conveying scientific information in the form of education. Folk media is considered to be able to translate concepts that are considered complicated into simple narratives that are easily understood by the general public. This can provide assistance in overcoming communication barriers based on formal literacy. Therefore, folk media takes on the role as a means of knowledge translation and makes it quite important, especially in areas that have limited access to formal education.

A study from JPPSS Uniuoyo (2025) argues that by prioritizing institutional intervention, the policies implemented can contribute to the preservation and utilization of people's media systematically. People's media is threatened with death and being replaced by global and capitalist media if there is no institutional support. If observed, this study shows that people's media has great potential and contributes to supporting more participatory, effective, and local culture-based development communication.

Local Government Communication Strategy

An effective government communication strategy will involve mapping stakeholders, selecting the right media, and packaging messages more effectively so that they are easily accepted in conveying the public policy vision. This is in line with the opinion of (Makrydakis, & Spiliotopoulos, 2025) who stated that there are elements in a strategy, namely stakeholder mapping, integration of traditional and digital communication channels, and determining a schedule for communication activities.

Investment in the Education Sector

Investment in the education sector can be seen as a fairly long-term investment. Local governments must be able to present education as a strategic sector that is considered worthy of investment, including in terms of public-private partnerships (PPP). Septiadi & Supriyanto (2024) stated that in a study of the PPP scheme for infrastructure development, including the education sector, it was found that cooperation between the government and the private sector was seen to be able to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. A similar thing was conveyed by Suhardi & Polma (2025) who stated that this scheme can improve human resources in the region through the education sector.

Education plays an important role in the progress and development of a region which will certainly affect its people. Education functions as a means of connecting to global competition.

This confirms that the state through the government continues to make efforts to make education a priority in development. So through this, the state can reveal it widely or to the global world. This is in line with the opinion of Manullang (2024) that using a strategic approach can increase community participation and build trust in education programs that have been formed by the government.

The description above shows that education has a central role in human development throughout history and has an important role in bringing progress and transformation to all aspects of life.

METHOD

The research was conducted in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi Province and became the focus of the location in this study. Data collection was conducted during the period of April to May 2025. Geographically, Wajo Regency consists of several urban and rural areas with uneven information technology infrastructure conditions, so that this is one of the important focuses in communication of education and investment development.

According to (Sari & Nugroho 2023) determining the location of the research is the most basic but very important thing because it is the main context for understanding the social phenomena to be studied. A similar thing was conveyed by (Hendriyanto, 2024) who stated that the location of the research is important and in its selection must see the availability of data sources so that information collection can run effectively.

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach in an in-depth study of the development communication strategy by the Wajo Regency Government in an effort to increase investment in education. (Nurjannah, 2021) states that using a qualitative descriptive method can aim to understand the phenomena related to what is experienced by the research subjects as a whole and can produce descriptive data in the form of words or verbally. According to (Nana Syaodih Sukmadinata, 2011) that qualitative descriptive research is a process of describing and depicting phenomena that occur, both natural and human engineering by paying attention to the quality, characteristics, and relationships between activities.

Therefore, a qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore processes and meanings, and most importantly, to draw conclusions regarding the social dynamics that have occurred in the context of educational development policies.

Data was collected using several techniques, namely:

1. In-depth interviews: Interviews were conducted with key informants. Among others: Wajo Regency Education Office Officials, Public Relations and Communications Section of the Local Government, Community leaders and educators (principals, teachers), Representatives from local media. (Munro et al. 2023) stated that it is important to choose the right key informants, so that in the interview process data can be found that is in accordance with the questions.
2. Direct observation: Observation is carried out by observing public communication activities and socialization of education policies. Musrenbang forums, socialization of education budgets, and campaigns to increase school participation. In this case, researchers are directly involved in observing their behavior and interactions. According to (Adinda, et al., 2023) participant observation is considered quite effective because it provides a deep understanding of matters related to social interaction and group dynamics. Meanwhile, (Hidayad, 2016) states that by conducting direct observation, it can make it easier to find out what you want to look for in a place.
3. Documentation study: In this section, the author conducts a study of regional development planning documents, education budget reports, regional head speech scripts, and official publication media materials. According to (Bowen, 2009), documentation can provide historical context and facts that can support qualitative research.
4. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a structured discussion involving several participants. This is done to get interaction related to the research topic. (Mwilongo, 2025) states that practical guidelines in using FGD for qualitative data collection. The important thing is to set basic rules by paying attention to how to use effective communication skills, so that when asking open questions can be answered well.

Data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Researchers identified important themes that are reflected in development communication strategies, looked for relevant themes related to the effectiveness of message delivery, and how the community responded to education investment policies in Wajo Regency.

Braun (2006) states that Thematic analysis is a way of analyzing data. The purpose of this analysis is to identify patterns to find themes using data that has been collected by researchers. This method is quite an effective method. If the research intends to open in detail the qualitative data possessed with the need to find the relationship between the pattern of an event and provide an explanation related to the extent to which a phenomenon occurs with observations made by researchers (Feredey, 2006).

In ensuring the validity and reliability of data, triangulation techniques can be used, namely sources and techniques. This seeks to compare the results of an interview that has been conducted, observations, and documents related to the phenomenon being studied. Validity can also be strengthened through member checking on several informants to confirm the results of data interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication Strategy of Wajo Regency Government in Attracting Investment

The development communication strategy in the education sector in a region is a systematic plan in conveying development messages to the community with the aim of achieving the expected social change. According to (Sihombing, 2023) the communication strategy used by the local government can increase community participation in development programs, one of which is in the education sector. In line with this, (Karimah, 2023) and (Darmawan & Jumriani, 2023) state that good educational communication can open up opportunities for increasing social participation.

In setting communication goals and wanting to change behavior or form positive attitudes towards development programs, steps need to be taken to identify target audiences by understanding their demographic, psychographic, and cultural characteristics. In addition, in selecting communication media, mass media or interpersonal, it must be adjusted to local conditions. Because if all are mature with the formulation of effective and communicative messages and in accordance with the cultural context and values of society, it will provide the expected effect. When evaluating and getting feedback, it will certainly be in line with the strategy that has been carried out.

In (Education Quality, 2018) it is stated that the communication strategy carried out by the Duampanua District government apparatus in mobilizing the community to be actively involved in the development process in the area. (Putri, et al. 2024) stated that the Karawang Kulon Government carried out a communication strategy in increasing community participation in development programs. (Sulistiyowati, 2014) Conducted observations regarding the importance of education and training in empowering the community. This is expected so that the community can be involved in the planning process, carry out implementation, and until the final process, namely development evaluation. (Nurjanah, 2021) stated that the importance of development communication in the education sector. Active community participation in the education decision-making process is something that needs to be considered.

In addition, by utilizing digital media such as social media, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube channels and the official website of the Wajo Regency government to be used in publishing superior programs related to the education sector and achievements that have been achieved.

However, the effectiveness of communication still faces obstacles, such as the lack of human resource capacity in the field of strategic communication, the lack of synergy between the Education Office and the Investment Office (Ministry of Finance, 2023), and the absence of detailed data regarding investment potential in the local education sector. (Directorate General of State Assets, 2022).

1. The Role of Local Media and People's Media in Educational Investment Communication such as traditional performances, has been used to convey messages of educational development in the Wajo community. This strategy is relevant to several regional conditions that are still very low in digital media literacy. People's media can bridge the communication gap between the government and grassroots communities.

Several research journals have discussed similar matters. In (Rasidin, 2020) wrote with the title Traditional Media as a Communication Media for Community Development in Titidu Gorontalo. The study stated that traditional media has taken on roles such as performing arts and folklore, in conveying development messages to the community in Titidu Village, Gorontalo. (Mokoginta, 2020) also mentioned that traditional communication media such as birongan (bamboo gong) and tatangkalan (structured shouts) in Talaud, North Sulawesi. These media are used by the community to convey health and education campaigns. (Sutisna, 2015) said that local governments need to pay attention to traditional media as a strategic asset in conveying information related to development, especially in rural areas that are difficult to reach by digital media. From the three research journals above, it can be concluded that

people's media is still effective in reaching people in the regions, especially remote villages, in conveying information.

Rasidin emphasized that traditional media is still an effective communication tool because of its closeness to local culture and the still low level of digital literacy. This study shows how educational and social development messages can be conveyed well through a cultural approach.

Radio Suara Wajo is a community radio that acts as a means of information to reach the wider community, such as people who do not yet have access to online media. One of the programs, namely: "Schools for All" is broadcast regularly to provide education to the community that it is very important to be involved in the education space and open up a space for interaction between the Wajo regional government and the surrounding community.

However, the author considers that investment communication using popular media cannot reach the investor audience optimally. Especially from the national and international private sectors that prioritize statistical data, economic projections and financial reports. (Todaro & Smith, 2015).

2. Communication Barriers to Attracting Education Investment

Some obstacles in development communication in the education sector. Here are some of them:

- a. **Low Education Investment Data:** Investors need accurate prospective data, including social returns on investment, demographic projections, and educational infrastructure needs. However, this data has not been systematically developed by local governments (Ministry of Finance, 2023; Directorate General of State Assets, 2022).
- b. **Limited Access to Information Technology:** In Wajo Regency, information technology infrastructure is not evenly distributed, so the distribution of messages through online media is still very limited. (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2023). There are many schools that are not connected to the internet, so this obstacle makes it difficult to realize the digital education showcase model.
- c. **Social Resistance:** Some local communities show resistance to the entry of investors in the education sector due to concerns about the commercialization of basic services. Therefore, the communication approach needs to pay attention to cultural sensitivity and local values. (Servaes, 2008).

3. Strategic Implications and Learning

The results of the study indicate that development communication can be an effective strategy in mobilizing external resources, including investment. If it can be managed structurally and adaptively to local characteristics. So the author assumes that the Wajo Regency government needs to do several things below:

- a. **Forming Cross-Sector Coordination:** Communication between agencies needs to be integrated into a narrative of educational development that is carried out consistently.
- b. **Conducting development in the Digital Education Investment Portal:** This portal can be filled with information on investment opportunity data, projections of educational needs, as well as inspirational things and successes of public-private cooperation.
- c. **Providing training for human resources in the communication section of the Wajo Regional Government:** Providing strengthening of communication capacity at the technical level to be the key to the effectiveness of delivering development messages.

Creating People's Media with Modern Media Collaboration: Collaboration between these two media can strengthen the reach of messages and build a more contextual development narrative.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that development communication plays a strategic role in attracting investors in the education sector, in this case Wajo Regency. The Wajo Regency Government has made various efforts in developing communication strategies by connecting several digital channels and local media, as well as involving the community in public dialogue forums with the aim of hearing suggestions related to improving the quality of education to various stakeholders, including potential investors.

From the analysis results, it was found that with a communication approach that prioritizes participation and transparency and reinforcement through education related to the urgency of education as a long-term social investment, it will be the key to shaping the image and building public and private partner trust. This strategy reflects the principles of development communication, namely by disseminating inclusive information, empowering the community by involving and listening to their suggestions, and active involvement of stakeholders.

However, in the explanation above, there are still obstacles in implementing the strategy, namely: low digital literacy which has not been evenly distributed among the community, limited institutional communication capacity of local governments and at the local level, there is no comprehensive education investment policy framework.

Thus, it is necessary to strengthen the capacity of local government communication, develop collaborative policies between the public and private sectors, and utilize traditional and modern communication media, so that both media can collaborate actively. Therefore, development communication needs to emphasize the aspects of education, participation and strengthening public trust which can be a basic instrument in creating a positive, sustainable and inclusive education investment ecosystem, especially in Wajo Regency.

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