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Strategic Communication of Indonesian Parliament in Countering Political Disinformation

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze the function of strategic communication in combating political disinformation within The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia. This study seeks to elucidate the necessity for communication tactics to evolve in response to the emergence of digital information environments, characterized by the swift dissemination of disinformation via digital platforms that shape public perception. The research examines digital disinformation and strategic communication, with the use of narrative tactics and the Ends-Ways-Means paradigm in enhancing institutional communication. The findings reveal that disinformation encompasses not only the spread of false information but also the creation of narratives that influence public perception, necessitating institutions to transition from reactive measures to more proactive and systematic communication strategies. Strategic communication significantly influences public perception, affects information interpretation, and upholds institutional credibility, especially through counter-narratives and alternative narratives that address false information. Moreover, effective communication necessitates consistency in messaging, active public interaction, and the capacity to function within dynamic digital settings. This study advances strategic communication strategies inside political institutions, specifically aimed at bolstering public trust, sustaining institutional legitimacy, and improving resilience against digital disinformation in modern political environments.

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Keywords: Strategic Communication; Disinformation; Indonesian Parliament; Political Communication; Digital Communication; Asymmetrical Wars; Military Strategy.

INTRODUCTION

Digital communication technologies have changed the way political information is spread drastically due to their rapid development. Social media platforms have emerged as crucial venues for influencing public opinion, facilitating the swift dissemination of information to extensive audiences. This change has enabled the spread of disinformation, a significant non-military threat that can erode public trust in democratic institutions (Bennett & Livingston, 2018; Bradshaw & Howard, 2019). In national security, disinformation serves as an asymmetric threat by leveraging digital networks, cognitive biases, and social dynamics to manipulate perception and undermine institutional legitimacy (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017).

Disinformation tactics have increasingly targeted The House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, especially during highly heated times. Reports indicate a substantial increase in politically motivated disinformation disseminated on digital platforms, particularly during public rallies and electoral times (Kementerian Komunikasi dan Informatika [Kominfo], 2024). In 2025, orchestrated digital activities featuring altered films, deceptive narratives, and AI-generated propaganda proliferated on social media platforms, undermining the legitimacy of The Indonesian Parliament and exacerbating public suspicion. These advancements signify the increasing intricacy of information risks in digital contexts.

Comprehending the dissemination of disinformation and its impact on public perception necessitates a multifaceted theoretical framework. Network-based perspectives underscore the swift transmission of information throughout digital ecosystems, whereas cognitive approaches focus on how individuals understand and assimilate information according to their preexisting ideas and experiences (Cinelli et al., 2021). Moreover, social interaction is crucial in reinforcing narratives, since repeated exposure and social validation influence collective perception and behavior (Vosoughi et al., 2018).

Although there is an expanding corpus of research on disinformation, the majority of studies concentrate on digital literacy, legal frameworks, and fact-checking methodologies. Insufficient emphasis has been directed towards institutional strategic communication, especially regarding the responses of state institutions to disinformation as an asymmetric threat. The disparity is substantial, as efficient communication tactics are vital for sustaining institutional legitimacy and public confidence in democratic institutions.

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In light of asymmetric information threats, this paper investigates the Indonesian Parliament's strategic communication in combating political disinformation. This research seeks to synthesize insights from network theory, cognitive interpretation, and social learning to elucidate how institutional communication can effectively address disinformation and enhance democratic resilience in digital contexts.

OVERVIEW OF DIGITAL DISINFORMATION

Digital disinformation poses a significant difficulty in modern political communication, especially in extensively interconnected digital contexts. Disinformation denotes the deliberate production and distribution of inaccurate or deceptive information aimed at misleading audiences and shaping public perception for strategic objectives (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017; Broda & Strömbäck, 2024). This contrasts with misinformation, which entails the inadvertent dissemination of erroneous information without the goal to deceive. The difference essentially resides in the aspect of intentionality, rendering disinformation a more systematic and planned information manipulation (Bennett & Livingston, 2018).

The dissemination of disinformation is greatly enabled by digital networks and platform structures. Social media platforms facilitate the swift dissemination of information among interconnected users who function as both consumers and creators of content. Algorithmic methods expedite this process by favoring information that elicits substantial engagement, frequently irrespective of its factual veracity (Cinelli et al., 2021; Maulidia et al., 2025). Moreover, digital settings cultivate echo chambers and filter bubbles, wherein individuals are consistently exposed to analogous opinions, thus reinforcing particular narratives and constraining exposure to divergent perspectives (Pariser, 2011).

In political circumstances, misinformation serves as an asymmetric threat aimed at cognitive and social aspects rather than physical infrastructures. Its objective is to alter perception, construct narratives, and sway public opinion, ultimately eroding trust in democratic institutions. Empirical research demonstrates that disinformation exacerbates political polarization, confuses public comprehension of policy matters, and undermines institutional legitimacy (Recuero et al., 2020; Ho, 2025).

The ramifications of disinformation are especially significant for institutions like the Indonesian Parliament. Disinformation campaigns can undermine public trust, distort institutional performance, and affect citizens' political attitudes. Consequently, comprehending the nature, causes, and effects of digital disinformation is crucial for formulating effective institutional

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responses to protect democratic governance.

OVERVIEW OF STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION

Strategic communication has become an essential method for institutions in tackling intricate information concerns, such as the spread of digital disinformation. Strategic communication denotes the intentional, coordinated, and objective-driven application of communication to affect perceptions, construct narratives, and fulfill organizational goals (Hallahan et al., 2007; Falkheimer & Heide, 2022). In political situations, it is essential for preserving institutional legitimacy, shaping public perception, and enhancing the interaction between institutions and citizens.

In digital contexts, strategic communication extends beyond the mere transmission of information. Institutions are required to proactively engage with audiences across multiple platforms and adapt to the dynamic nature of digital communication environments. This shift necessitates a transition from reactive communication approaches to more proactive and interactive strategies (Camilleri, 2021).

A fundamental element of strategic communication in combating disinformation is the employment of narrative methods. Counter-narratives aim to promptly challenge and correct misinformation, while alternative narratives endeavor to provide credible and persuasive interpretations that influence public perception (Wang & Huang, 2023). Studies indicate that proactive narrative methods surpass reactive corrections in efficacy, especially in digital environments where misinformation proliferates rapidly and is bolstered by social interactions (Denniss, 2025), as they not only address false information but also shape the narrative landscape to prevent the spread of future disinformation.

Furthermore, establishing trust is a primary goal of strategic communication. Public trust is crucial for the legitimacy and efficacy of political institutions, while disinformation constitutes a direct danger to this trust. Consequently, effective communication strategies should prioritize transparency, consistency, and credibility when communicating (Falkheimer & Heide, 2022). For entities like the Indonesian Parliament, strategic communication is essential for sustaining public trust, combating false narratives, and establishing institutional resilience against digital information threats.

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION THEORY

Strategic communication has evolved as a critical approach in managing information within

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complex political environments, particularly in the digital era. It refers to the deliberate, coordinated, and goal-oriented use of communication to influence public perception, shape narratives, and achieve institutional objectives (Hallahan et al., 2007; Falkheimer & Heide, 2022). Unlike conventional communication, which focuses on information transmission, strategic communication emphasizes the alignment between messaging, audience engagement, and organizational goals.

In contemporary political contexts, communication functions as a strategic instrument for shaping how institutions are perceived by the public. The process of shaping perception is central to strategic communication, as public understanding of political institutions is often constructed through mediated narratives rather than direct experience. Digital platforms further intensify this process by enabling rapid dissemination and continuous interaction between institutions and audiences (Camilleri, 2021).

Moreover, strategic communication plays a crucial role in influencing public attitudes and behavior. Through carefully designed messages and communication strategies, institutions can guide public interpretation, reinforce credibility, and build trust. This is particularly important in environments where competing narratives, including disinformation, challenge institutional legitimacy. Research suggests that consistent and transparent communication significantly contributes to strengthening public trust and reducing uncertainty in political contexts (Fukuyama, 2020).

For institutions such as the Indonesian Parliament, strategic communication is not merely a supportive function but a core strategic capability. It enables institutions to actively shape public discourse, respond to emerging information challenges, and maintain legitimacy in the face of digital disruption. Therefore, strategic communication serves as a fundamental tool for influencing perception, guiding public understanding, and ensuring institutional resilience in contemporary political communication environments.

NARRATIVE STRATEGY IN COUNTERING DISINFORMATION

In the context of digital disinformation, narrative strategy has become a central component of effective strategic communication. Disinformation operates primarily through narratives, structured stories that simplify complex realities, evoke emotional responses, and influence how individuals interpret information. As such, countering disinformation requires not only correcting false information but also engaging in the construction and contestation of narratives within digital spaces.

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Two key approaches in narrative strategy are counter-narratives and alternative narratives. Counter-narratives are designed to directly challenge and refute misleading or false information by providing factual corrections and clarifications. However, research indicates that corrective approaches alone are often insufficient, as individuals may resist information that contradicts their existing beliefs (Wang & Huang, 2023).

In contrast, alternative narratives aim to provide credible, coherent, and persuasive interpretations that reshape public understanding without directly confronting misinformation. These narratives focus on framing issues in ways that align with public values, making them more effective in influencing perception over time. Studies suggest that proactive narrative construction is more impactful than reactive correction, particularly in digital environments where information spreads rapidly and is reinforced through social interaction (Denniss, 2025).

The concept of a “digital narrative battlefield” further illustrates the competitive nature of information environments. Multiple actors, including state institutions, media organizations, and non-state actors, continuously compete to shape dominant narratives. In this context, the success of communication strategies depends on the ability to produce compelling narratives, maintain consistency, and engage audiences effectively.

For the Indonesian Parliament, adopting narrative strategies is essential for countering disinformation. By developing strong, credible narratives and engaging proactively with digital audiences, institutions can challenge misleading information, influence public perception, and strengthen institutional legitimacy within an increasingly contested information space.

Ends-Ways-Means (Lykke Model)

The Ends-Ways-Means paradigm, typically linked to strategic planning in defense studies, offers a systematic method for evaluating institutional reactions to intricate threats, such as digital disinformation. This model, initially created by Arthur F. Lykke Jr., highlights the necessity of aligning objectives (ends), tactics (ways), and resources (means) to achieve effective and lasting results.

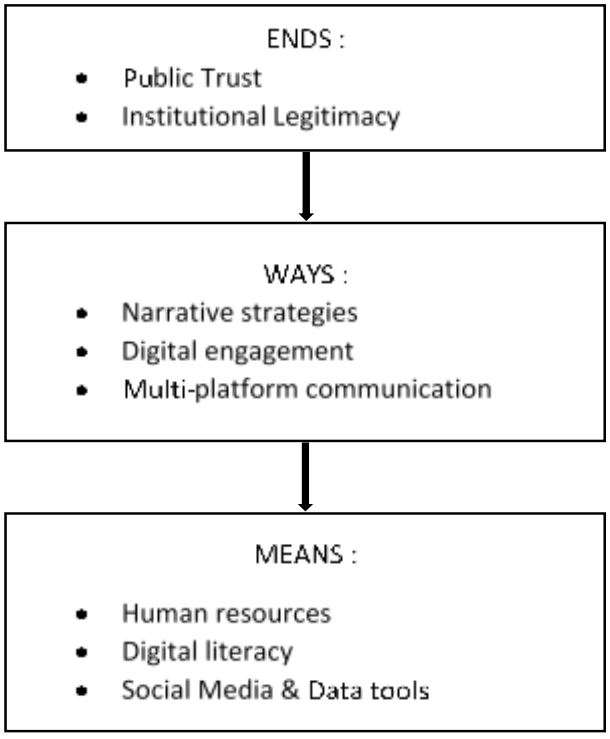
In the realm of combating political disinformation, the "ends" denote the principal aims sought by entities like the Indonesian Parliament. This encompasses rebuilding public trust, preserving institutional legitimacy, and guaranteeing an accurate public comprehension of democratic processes. Trust and legitimacy are essential assets for democratic institutions, as they directly affect public compliance, participation, and the general stability of governance (Fukuyama, 2020; Edelman, 2023).

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The "ways" denote the strategic methodologies utilized to attain these aims. This entails employing multi-platform communication tactics in digital contexts, such as social media interaction, real-time information delivery, and story development. Narrative techniques, especially counter-narratives and alternative narratives, are essential in contesting misinformation and altering public perception (Wang & Huang, 2023). Moreover, active interaction with digital audiences, via interactive communication and prompt responsiveness, bolsters institutional visibility and legitimacy.

The "means" denote the resources and capabilities that facilitate the execution of certain plans. This encompasses human resources like communication specialists, institutional digital literacy capabilities, and technological tools including social media platforms, data analytics systems, and monitoring procedures. The incorporation of digital tools allows organizations to monitor disinformation trends, react swiftly, and enhance communication tactics (Camilleri, 2021).

Figure 1 Strategic Communication Framework Based on Ends-Ways-Means



Source: Developed by the authors based on Lykke Model

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To further clarify the operational distinction between strategic elements, Table 1 presents a structured overview of the Ends-Ways-Means components in the context of countering political disinformation.

Table 1 Components of Ends–Ways–Means in Strategic Communication

Component	Description	Application in Disinformation Context
Ends	Strategic objectives to be achieved	Public trust, institutional legitimacy
Ways	Strategies or approaches used	Narrative strategies, digital engagement
Means	Resources and capabilities	Human resources, digital tools, platforms

Source: Developed by the authors

The efficacy of the Lykke model is rooted in the congruence of these three elements. A disjunction of objectives, methods, and resources might undermine strategic results, but their alignment strengthens institutional capability to combat disinformation efficiently. Consequently, the utilization of the Ends–Ways–Means framework offers a significant analytical perspective for comprehending how the Indonesian Parliament might formulate and execute strategic communication to combat digital disinformation.

THEORETICAL INSIGHT

` Digital disinformation, strategic communication, and institutional strategy all suggest that communication should not just be thought of as a way to share information but also as a way to intervene in complicated digital systems. In today's digital world, false information spreads through networks that are linked together, where information travels quickly, is interpreted in different ways, and is reinforced by social interaction. This makes a system that is always changing, where false stories may quickly spread, gain credibility, and change people's minds.

In this situation, communication is very important for how information moves and how stories are made and perceived. Strategic communication is more than just sending out true information; it's also about being involved in the ways that information is shared and understood. This implies that institutions must actively influence in how information flows, how people see it, and how specific stories become popular online.

Institutions must do more than just fix inaccurate information to properly fight disinformation. They need to know how digital ecosystems work and how to use them. This includes sending targeted messages, telling strong and consistent stories, and talking directly to

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people. In this way, communication can stop the spread of false information and help people grasp things more clearly.

This means that the Indonesian Parliament should be proactive and flexible in how they communicate. The institution can affect how information is understood and lessen the effects of false information by harmonizing goals, tactics, and resources in a changing digital world. In this manner, communication becomes a deliberate move that helps shape how people see things, keep institutions legitimate, and strengthen them against digital misinformation.

DISCUSSION

According to the results of this study, the Indonesian Parliament faces challenges stopping the fast spread of false information about politics online. Because disinformation spreads quickly through networks and stories that people believe in, traditional ways of communicating are no longer enough. Instead, the Indonesian Parliament needs to use strategic communication methods that are flexible, proactive, and in line with how digital ecosystems work.

The Indonesian Parliament has progressively adopted digital communication channels, particularly social media platforms, to disseminate official information and rectify misleading narratives in response to disinformation. But the success of these replies typically depends on when they happen, how often they happen, and how interested the audience is. Reactive communication, such giving clarifications after false information has already spread, usually doesn't work very well since false information is typically perpetuated by repeated exposure and social interaction. This shows how important it is to switch from reactive to proactive communication tactics, as strategic communication theory says.

From a narrative point of view, it's very important that the Indonesian Parliament can create and keep strong institutional narratives. Disinformation often works because it makes complicated political topics easier to understand and fits with what people think, which makes it more accessible and emotionally engaging. Institutional communication, on the other hand, is frequently formal, broken up, and not as interesting. This leaves room for false stories to take over public conversations. So, the Indonesian Parliament needs to improve how it uses story tactics by making sure that its messages are clear, consistent, and easy for people to understand and relate to. Using alternative narratives instead than just counter-narratives is very crucial for changing how people think in the long term.

The study also shows how important it is to be involved in digital communication. Strategic communication is more than just sending messages; it's also about talking to people. The

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Indonesian Parliament needs to talk to digital users, respond to their questions, and take part in online debates. This method makes things more visible, gives institutions more legitimacy, and lets them shape how digital communities understand information.

The Ends-Ways-Means paradigm offers a helpful perspective for assessing The Indonesian Parliament's strategic communication initiatives. The Indonesian Parliament's "ends" are to keep the public's trust and the legitimacy of its institutions. But to reach these goals, you need to be on the same page with the right "ways" and "means." The "ways" include digital platforms, narrative strategies, and getting people involved, whereas the "means" are communication tools, digital tools, and the ability of the organization to do things. If any of these parts are out of balance, communication tactics may not work as well.

The conversation shows that fighting disinformation is not just about correcting wrong information; it's also about proactively changing the information environment. The Indonesian Parliament must make communication an active part of digital systems by changing how information circulates, how stories are told, and how people understand messages. The Indonesian Parliament can better deal with false information, keep its legitimacy, and build public trust in a digital political scene that is getting more and more complicated by using strategic communication, narrative techniques, and structured planning frameworks.

CONCLUSION

This study investigates the role of strategic communication in countering political disinformation within the Indonesian Parliament. The findings reveal that disinformation in digital environments operates through rapid networks, persuasive narratives, and social validation, creating a complex challenge that cannot be effectively addressed through conventional communication approaches alone. As a result, institutions need to shift from reactive responses toward more proactive and strategic communication practices, including the development of targeted messaging, active public engagement across digital platforms, and collaboration with media actors. The study highlights that effective communication is not only about delivering accurate information but also about shaping public perception and influencing how narratives are constructed and interpreted. The integration of strategic communication theory, narrative strategies, and the Ends-Ways-Means framework provides a comprehensive approach to understanding how institutions can respond to disinformation. In particular, counter-narratives and alternative narratives play a crucial role in challenging misleading information and building more credible public discourse. This research contributes to the literature by positioning strategic

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communication as a core institutional capability in addressing digital disinformation, while also offering a practical framework for improving communication strategies in political institutions. For The Indonesian Parliament, strengthening communication capacity through proactive strategies, enhanced digital engagement, and consistent messaging is essential to maintain public trust, uphold institutional legitimacy, and improve resilience against evolving digital information threats.

FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Future research ought to investigate the dynamic characteristics of digital disinformation and its ramifications for institutional communication strategies, especially as technological progress, including artificial intelligence, facilitates more advanced methods of manipulation, such as deepfakes, automated content creation, and algorithm-driven amplification. It is essential to investigate the influence of AI-generated disinformation on public perception and how institutions might modify their communication strategies to effectively address these evolving dangers. Additionally, next research must examine the function of digital governance in the management of information ecosystems, particularly how regulatory frameworks, platform regulations, and institutional coordination might mitigate the dissemination of disinformation while preserving freedom of expression. It is also important to do comparative study across other countries or political systems to find best practices and make strategic communication frameworks that are more flexible. This is because different political and cultural environments may respond to false information in different ways. In general, future research should take an interdisciplinary approach by combining communication studies, political science, and digital media analysis. This will help us better understand how strategic communication can be used to fight false information and make democracy stronger in digital environments that are becoming more complicated.

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