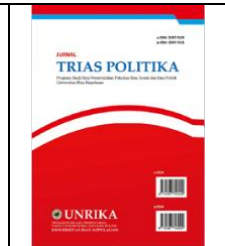


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Journal Homepage : <https://www.journal.unrika.ac.id/index.php/jurnaltriaspolitika>**BUILDING PUBLIC TRUST THROUGH GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES: A CASE STUDY OF TAPERA POLICIES IN INDONESIA****Abim Sastrawan^{1*}, Dian Eka Rahmawati²**^{1,2} Department Government Science, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, Universitas Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Abstract : Government communication plays a strategic role in building public trust and ensuring policy legitimacy. This study aims to analyze the effectiveness of the Indonesian government's communication strategy in implementing the Public Housing Savings (TAPERA) policy. This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method, utilizing secondary data sourced from official government documents, online media reports, public responses on social media, and academic literature. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman interactive model, including the stages of data collection, reduction, presentation, and drawing conclusions. Three main indicators are used to evaluate communication strategies: information transparency, public engagement, and government responsiveness, which were developed from symmetrical two-way communication theory and public trust theory. The results show that only transparency indicators are partially effective, while public engagement and responsiveness show significant weaknesses, especially in the lack of participatory space and delayed response to public aspirations. Theoretically, this study confirms the relevance of participatory communication approaches in the context of social policies. In practical terms, this study recommends a more inclusive, adaptive, and dialogical communication strategy to increase public participation and reduce resistance to state policies.

Keywords : government communication; public trust; TAPERA; Indonesia.

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**INTRODUCTION**

In the past two decades, the dynamics of the relationship between the state and its citizens have undergone a transformation as public expectations for transparency, accountability, and public participation in policymaking have increased (Praratya et al., 2024). In the midst of the complexity of the crisis of trust that has hit public institutions globally, government communication plays a strategic role in shaping public perception and strengthening policy legitimacy (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2021). An effective government communication strategy is not only about the delivery of information, but also serves as a tool to bridge the gap between the state and the public through dialogue, openness, and responsiveness (Kuswati et al., 2025).

Globally, the crisis of trust in government institutions has been a major concern in governance studies (Reveilhac & Boomgaarden, 2025). In many countries, the failure of inclusive public communication has led to public rejection of public policies, even on issues of public interest such as health, education, and housing policy (Kim & Lee, 2020; Lee & Li, 2022). This phenomenon highlights the importance of repositioning communication as a fundamental element in modern public policy design. Recent studies emphasize that

* Corresponding Author: a.sastrawan.isip22@mail.umy.ac.id

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participatory and evidence-based communication strategies can increase public acceptance of policies and strengthen trust in state institutions (Moy & Ng, 2021; Waisbord, 2021).

In the Indonesian context, the discourse of public trust in the government has become increasingly relevant with the emergence of various policy controversies, including in the housing sector (Antara News, 2024). One of the policies that has drawn criticism from the public is the Public Housing Savings (TAPERA) policy which was stipulated through Government Regulation No. 25 of 2020. TAPERA is intended as a long-term solution to overcome the national housing backlog that has reached more than 12 million units (BPS, 2023). However, this policy triggered resistance because it was considered burdensome for workers and did not sufficiently involve the community in the public consultation process (Kompas.com, 2024a). TAPERA actually marks the point of the government's communication crisis because it is coercive, involves direct economic contributions from citizens, and is implemented with a normative-administrative approach that does not pay attention to public perception. The public reaction to TAPERA shows that there is a fundamental problem in the government's communication strategy in disseminating information about this mandatory contribution-based policy (Tempo.co, 2024).

Studies on policy communication and public trust in Indonesia have been carried out in various sectors, starting from COVID-19 vaccination (Prasetyo et al., 2021) Online Education Policy (Sari & Nugroho, 2022) for disaster management (Rachmawati & Suryani, 2023) However, there is still little research that specifically examines government communication strategies in housing sector policies, especially TAPERA, with a qualitative approach that focuses on meaning, experience, and public perception. This creates *Literary Gap* It needs to be filled, considering that housing is a strategic social issue that has a wide impact on community welfare and social stability. This gap is the contribution of the novelty of this research, namely in the unit of analysis (housing), approach (perception-based qualitative), and policy context based on mandatory contribution—dimensions that have not been explored in depth in previous studies.

Some literature states that public trust is the result of social processes influenced by communication consistency, information transparency, and community participation (Bouckaert, 2020) Top-down and technocratic communication strategies often fail to reach the emotional and cultural dimensions of society, leading to mistrust (Waisbord, 2021) In the context of TAPERA, communication with minimal dialogue, the use of technical language without adequate public elaboration, and limited socialization time are indications that the government has not fully made communication a tool to build social relations with citizens (Liu et al., 2021) In addition, TAPERA also shows limitations in the aspects of risk communication and participatory communication, two important elements of public-based policy. Research by Garden & Lee (2021) shows that in policies that involve economic contributions or burdens to society, communication focused on long-term benefits, cost openness, and accountability mechanisms is essential to prevent the erosion of trust. Unfortunately, TAPERA is more communicated through an administrative and normative approach without taking into account the public's perceptions and concerns in depth (OECD, 2024). Previous research searches were also conducted using VOSViewer analysis with Network Visualization, to explore previous research related to the focus to be studied. The data source was obtained from 200 articles with the keywords used, namely public trust, government communication, policy and Indonesia, the results of which can be seen in the figure below.

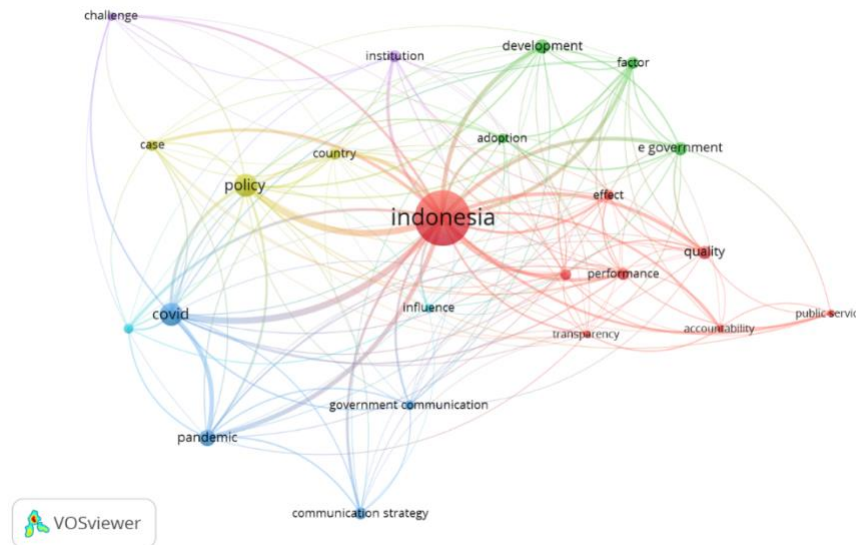


Figure 1. Network Visualization Analysis Results
Source: Processed data (2025)

The bibliometric visualization above, generated using the VOSviewer tool, shows the dominant pattern of linkages between keywords in scientific studies related to government communication strategies, public policy, and public trust, especially in the Indonesian context. The keyword "Indonesia" emerged as the most central and large node, reflecting the geographical focus of most publications. This is in line with the focus of this research which examines the Public Housing Savings (TAPERA) policy as a strategic case study in the national context. In the visualization, several relevant thematic groups are visible. The blue cluster shows the close relationship between keywords such as "covid", "pandemic", "government communication", and "communication strategy". This indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has become an important contextual background in shaping the government's communication strategy discourse. This strengthens the theoretical framework of research that uses a symmetrical two-way communication approach (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Because the pandemic has emphasized the importance of openness and dialogue between the government and the public. Meanwhile, the red cluster, which includes keywords such as "transparency", "accountability", "quality", and "public services", represents the realm of study on public trust and governance quality, which is directly related to the analysis indicators in this study. Indicators such as information transparency, public engagement, and government responsiveness are part of the measurement of public trust in TAPERA policies. Other clusters such as green (which contains "e-government", "development", and "factors") and yellow (which include "policies", "institutions", and "challenges") also show that public policy issues are inseparable from institutional dynamics, digitalization, and complex implementation challenges. Thus, this research not only reflects the strategic position in the academic realm, but also answers the empirical need to evaluate government policy communication that has a direct impact on public trust in Indonesia post-pandemic.

Most of the previous research focused more on government communication strategies in the context of handling the pandemic and improving the quality of public services, as well as related to the application of technology through e-government. However, no research has been found that directly links government communication strategies to housing policies such as TAPERA. This condition suggests that there is a study gap in the academic literature that can be filled through this study, which specifically analyzes government communication in the

context of housing policy. Therefore, this research has a novelty contribution by presenting perspectives that are still rarely raised in the study of policy communication in Indonesia.

In a theoretical framework, this study uses the government's strategic communication approach to understand how the communication process in TAPERA policies contributes to public acceptance or rejection. This approach emphasizes the importance of communication as an arena for negotiating meaning between the state and citizens, not just the process of conveying information (Ratzan et al., 2020). By adopting a qualitative methodology, this study aims to delve deeper into the public's experience, perception, and interpretation of government communication in TAPERA policies. This research tests the two-way symmetrical communication theory of Grunig & Hunt (1984) in the context of a policy full of resistance. This study not only confirms the relevance of the model, but also poses an empirical challenge to the assumption that governments have implemented participatory communication. The TAPERA case shows that in practice, government communication is still elitist, technocratic, and does not open up meaningful reciprocal spaces. To enrich the analysis, this study also integrates the communicative governance approach and public engagement theory, which emphasizes the importance of public involvement from the policy formulation stage, not just during implementation. Two major theories—namely *Two-way symmetrical communication* (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) and *Public Trust Theory* (Bouckaert, 2020)—brought together in one frame of thought to analyze TAPERA policy communication from the aspects of information transparency, public engagement, and government responsiveness.

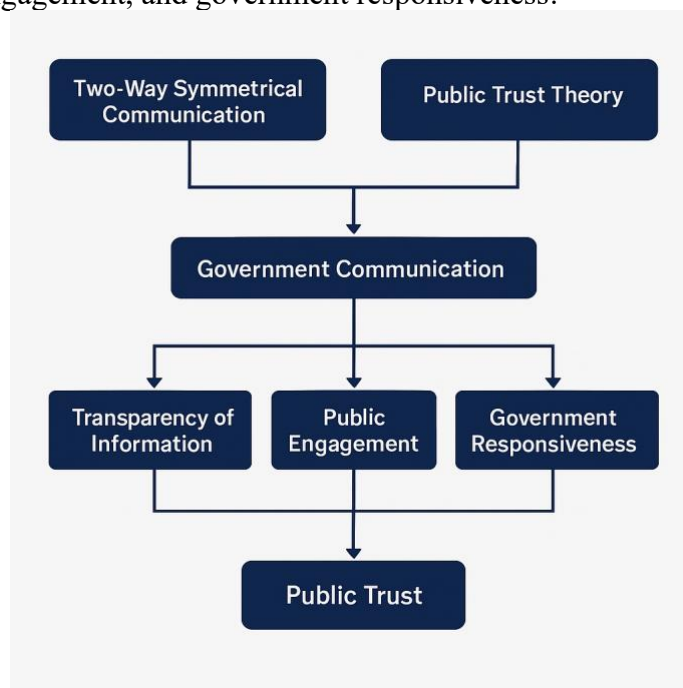


Figure 2. Conceptual Framework Diagram

Thus, the formulation of the problem that is the focus of this study is: "How effective is the Indonesian government's communication strategy in building public trust in TAPERA policies?". The purpose of this study is to analyze how the government's communication strategy in the TAPERA policy shapes the level of public trust in the state. The focus of this research lies in how messages are constructed, conveyed, and received by society, as well as how public responses are developed to institutional communication. This study also explores citizens' experiences and perceptions of state housing policy based on contribution, to understand the dynamics of the relationship between policy communication and social belief. The contribution of this research is theoretical and practical. Theoretically, this study enriches

the public communication literature by adding case studies from the context of housing policy in developing countries. Practically, the findings from this study can be used by governments, housing agencies, and policy communicators to design communication strategies that are more participatory, inclusive, and adaptive to the needs of the community. In the long term, this research is expected to contribute to strengthening the capacity of the state in building social trust through more responsive and democratic policy communication.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study strategy to explore the dynamics of government communication in building public trust in TAPERA policies. The case study strategy was chosen because it is able to capture the socio-political complexity and communication processes that are narrative and contextual in a single public policy (Sosiawan & Suparno, 2023). The focus of the research is directed at secondary data analysis, considering that TAPERA as a national program has given birth to various digital documentation and a wide public response. Data is obtained from credible secondary sources, including official government documents (e.g. Government Regulation No. 25 of 2020), scientific articles, releases from the Ministry of PUPR and BP Tapera, online media articles, government social media posts, and public opinion spread across platforms, YouTube, and Instagram. The documentation process is carried out systematically with selection based on relevance to strategic communication issues and public perception. Inclusion criteria include the authenticity of the data, the relationship to the TAPERA issue, and the diversity of viewpoints. Data analysis was performed using Miles & Huberman's (1994) interactive model which included subtraction, presentation, and Conclusions drawn. Source triangulation is used to ensure data consistency between platforms and media types. The results of the analysis are interpreted based on the theory of symmetrical two-way strategic communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), thus resulting in a complete understanding of TAPERA policy communication in the digital public space.

Data Selection Criteria

In order to maintain the quality and accuracy of the data analysis, data selection is carried out based on the following criteria:

1. **Relevance:** Data must be directly related to TAPERA policies and their public communication dimensions (such as transparency, participation, or responsiveness).
2. **Credibility:** Preferably documents from authoritative institutions (e.g. Ministry of Public Works and Public Works, BP Tapera), reputable national media, and indexed academic journals.
3. **Update:** The data collection time span is limited between 2020 (the beginning of TAPERA) and mid-2024 (policy revision and peak public response).
4. **Diversity of perspectives:** Data includes both institutional perspectives and community responses from social media to capture the voices of various actors.
5. **Accessibility and verification:** Only publicly accessible and verifiable data is used to guarantee transparency and repeatability.

Limitations of Use of Secondary Data

Although secondary data analysis provides broad coverage and time efficiency, the study recognizes the following limitations:

- **Lack of depth of interpretation:** Secondary data are not always able to capture the motivations or deep emotions of people's responses, especially vulnerable groups.
- **Potential bias:** Government documents can represent institutional narratives, while media and social media content can be selective or opinion-biased.

- Limited interactivity: The absence of in-person interviews or focused group discussions makes it impossible for researchers to explore or clarify public perspectives further.
- Verification difficulties: Not all sources on social media can be verified for authenticity, so there is a risk of including unrepresentative content.

To minimize these risks, this study applied source triangulation, cross-validation, and analysis based on two-way symmetrical communication theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) and public trust theory (Bouckaert, 2020) to interpret the communication patterns and public responses that emerged from the data.

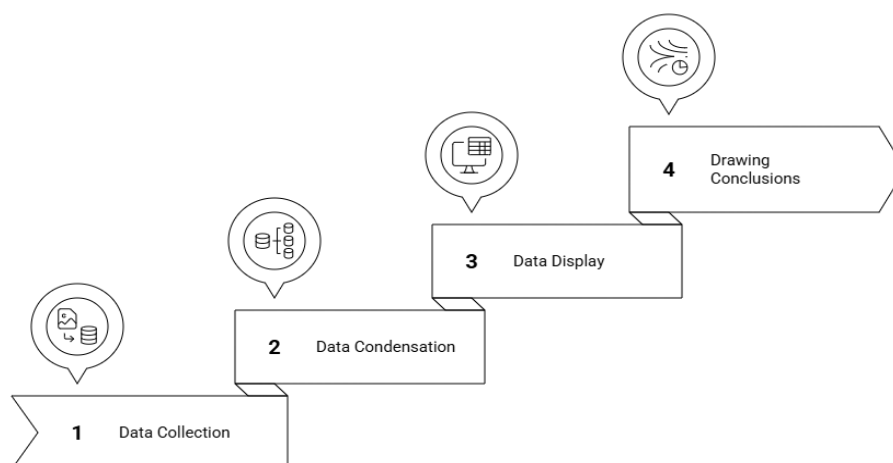


Figure 3. Qualitative Data Analysis Model Flow

The data obtained was analyzed interactively through four stages, including: (1) Data collection, which in this study was carried out through literature review, analysis of policy documents (such as Government Regulation Number 25 of 2020 and Government Regulation Number 21 of 2024), official government social media uploads, as well as news articles and public opinion. This process aims to obtain relevant information about the government's communication strategy in socializing the TAPERA policy, as well as the public's response and perception of it. (2) Data condensation, which is the process of filtering, summarizing, and focusing the data that has been collected to match the focus of the research. In the context of this study, data reduction was carried out by categorizing information based on public trust indicators: information transparency, public involvement, and government responsiveness. This stage allows researchers to sort out significant data, weed out irrelevant information, and craft an initial theme for further analysis. (3) Data display, which is compiling data that has been reduced into narrative and visual forms (such as tables, bar graphs, and narrative quotes) so that it can be analyzed systematically. The presentation of data in this study includes thematic visualization of the level of information transparency, public response to TAPERA, and government response to public criticism. (4) Verification or drawing of conclusions, which is the process of interpreting the meaning of data and finding conceptual patterns that support or refute theoretical assumptions. In this study, conclusions were drawn based on the suitability of the government's communication strategy with the principle of symmetrical two-way communication (Grunig and Hunt, 1984) and the extent to which the strategy contributes to the formation or weakening of public trust in the TAPERA policy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Concept of Government Communication

Government communication is part of organizational communication carried out by public institutions in conveying policies, programs, and information to the public (Hartanto & Siregar, 2021). In the era of modern governance, communication is no longer one-way, but is required to be more open, participatory, and adaptive to social dynamics (Winarno, 2021). Effective government communication is one of the strategic instruments in building public trust, because through the delivery of transparent and responsive information, the government can increase the legitimacy of the policies carried out (Masduki, 2021).

More specifically, government communication aims to create a common understanding between the state and society, especially in the context of policies that touch the interests of the wider community (Post & Wijoyo, 2024). This requires the ability of the state to not only inform, but also to listen, respond to criticism, and involve citizens in the decision-making process (Yulianti & Susanto, 2022). Therefore, the success of a communication strategy is not only measured by how much the message delivery is carried out, but also by how strong the two-way interaction is built, as emphasized in the symmetrical communication approach. In the context of the TAPERA policy, government communication is key in explaining the substance of the regulation and overcoming public resistance. When communication is done exclusively and with minimal participation, public trust tends to decline. On the other hand, if the government is able to open a space for dialogue and convey information transparently, it will create a healthier relationship between the state and society (Siregar & Yusuf, 2023).

Government Communication Strategy

This study uses *Theory of two-way symmetrical communication* from Grunig and Hunt (1984) as the main framework for evaluating government communication strategies in TAPERA policies. This model positions communication as a dialogical process between government and society, characterized by openness, feedback, and the creation of mutual understanding (Lee & Li, 2022). This kind of communication is considered effective in building trust and support for public policies that are controversial or have a direct impact on society. As a complement, the public *Belief Theory* It is also used to state that trust is built through information transparency, institutional responsiveness, and active community involvement in the policy process (Bouckaert, 2020; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2021). These two theories form the basis for the analysis of three main indicators in this study:

1. **Information Transparency:** This indicator refers to the extent to which the government provides information that is accurate, complete, easy to understand, and accessible to the public. In the context of TAPERA, transparency is evaluated through the openness of policy documents, the quality of socialization materials, and the extent to which the communication media used are able to reach various policy target groups.
2. **Public Engagement:** Public involvement is measured based on the presence of participation space provided by the government for the community, both in the form of consultative forums, feedback mechanisms, and involvement in the policy formulation and socialization process. This indicator reflects the extent to which communication is participatory and not just one-way information.
3. **Government Responsiveness:** Responsive is seen as the government's ability to respond to public criticism, questions, and concerns openly and constructively. In the TAPERA policy, responsiveness is analyzed through government corrective actions (such as policy revisions), the speed of response in public communication channels, and the involvement of public officials in responding to issues that arise in the community.

These indicators are in line with Bouckaert's theory of public belief (2020) which states that trust grows when institutions demonstrate openness, consistency of communication, and citizen participation. Based on the analysis of secondary data from online media, social media, official documents, and public opinion, it was found that the government's communication strategy in the TAPERA policy tends to be one-sided, technocratic, and minimal participation. The public only receives information in the form of official broadcasts from the Ministry of PUPR and BP TAPERA, without adequate public dialogue space. The language of communication is also technical and not adapted to the socio-cultural context of the work community.

a. Information Transparency

Although the government has provided the official website of TAPERA, the information conveyed is limited to the technical aspects of the administration. The explanation of urgency, benefit scheme, and guarantee of fund security are not well conveyed. As a result, the public fills the information gap with negative speculation and narratives. This is exacerbated by the government's slow clarification of controversial issues that are widely circulated on social media (Kompas, 2024). A study by Park & Lee (2021) states that in policies that have a direct impact on people's finances, risk communication and openness are essential to maintain trust.

The government through the TAPERA Management Agency and the Ministry of PUPR has provided formal information about TAPERA schemes, benefits, and regulations. However, communication content is dominated by technical terms that are difficult for the general public to understand, such as "investment manager", "management return", and "fund compensation", without being explained in public language. This fuels confusion and even suspicion (Heriyanti, 2022)

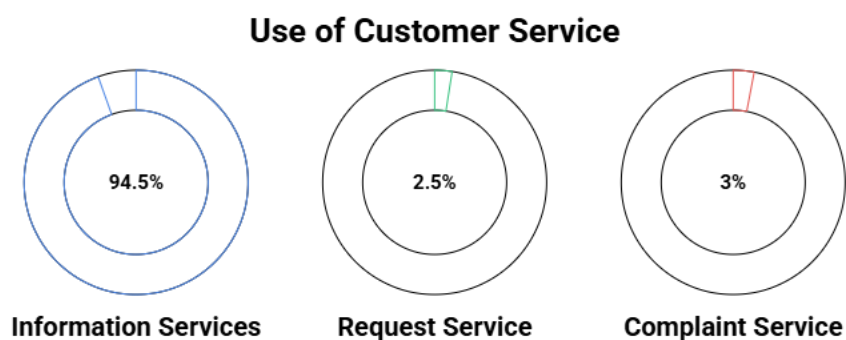


Figure 4. Use of Customer Service

Source: BP TAPERA (2024)

The above data shows that TAPERA's information communication strategy has been proven to provide fairly wide access to information through official channels. However, the lack of easy access to complaints and public dialogue calls for improved two-way communication mechanisms. Interactive channels and participatory dialogue need to be strengthened so that transparency is not only about the quantity of information delivery, but also the quality of openness and public engagement.

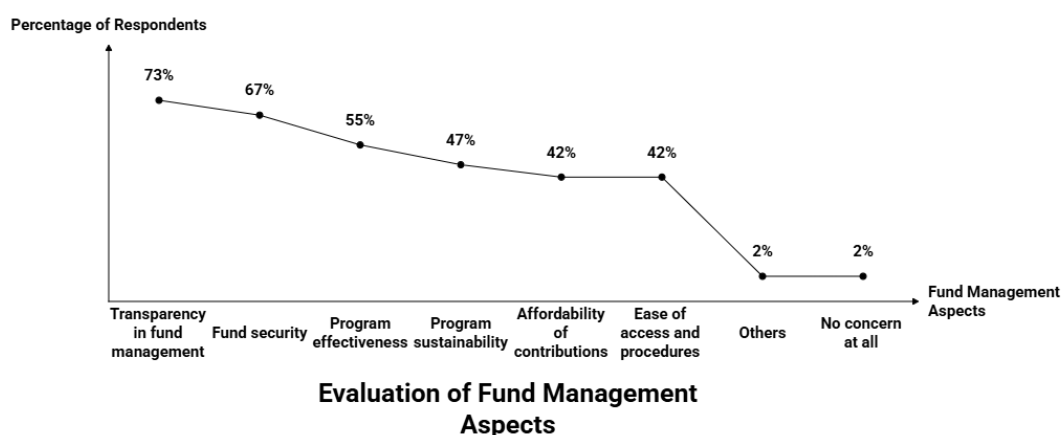


Figure 5. Evaluation of Fund Management Aspects

Source: Populix (2024)

The decline in the index in 2024 is a signal of a transparency crisis, where the public feels that there is a lack of honest, complete, and easy-to-understand information about TAPERA. This is in line with the findings Moy & Ng (2021) that the lack of openness in policy communication can reduce the perception of the legitimacy of public institutions.

The transparency of information in the TAPERA policy shows partial effectiveness that is more symbolic than substantive. Although official channels such as the TAPERA website and the SALAM TAPERA 156 service have been opened, the pattern of public interaction is still dominated by the search for basic information. This indicates that technical access to information has not been balanced with the government's ability to convey policy content in a clear, relevant, and easily understandable manner by the wider community (Kompas, 2024; TAPERA, 2024).

The disparity between the availability of information and public understanding is reflected in the high level of confusion and concern over the management of funds, which goes even beyond the issue of program effectiveness and security (Populix, 2024). This imbalance indicates that transparency has not been realized as a dialogical communication practice, but rather a mere normative distribution of information that does not activate public engagement. Within the framework of symmetrical two-way communication (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), this situation indicates the absence of a two-way feedback and dialogue mechanism that allows correction, clarification, and the formation of mutual understanding. These findings also strengthen the thesis Bouckaert (2020) that institutional legitimacy is greatly influenced by transparency that is not only quantitative, but also qualitative. Transparency that is only oriented towards *supply of information* without considering *public reception and interpretation* has the potential to strengthen distrust. In line with (Moy & Ng (2021), when government communication does not answer citizens' information needs in a concrete and meaningful way, public perception of authority tends to be negative.

The public discussion held by the Central Information Commission (KIP) in June 2024 highlighted the government's weak explanation regarding the governance and investment scheme of TAPERA funds. The absence of detailed information that is publicly conveyed opens up space for speculation, while strengthening suspicion of potential misuse of public funds (Kompas, 2024). This shows that transparency is not enough just through the openness of channels, but demands openness of meaning—i.e., clarity of narrative, depth of explanation, and active participation of the public in policy interpretation. Thus, TAPERA's communication strategy fails to meet the principles of deliberative and participatory public communication.

The government has not made transparency an arena for social dialogue, but merely an administrative obligation. To build sustainable trust, transparency must be reconceptualized as a two-way communication process, where information becomes the starting point of engagement, not the end of state-citizen relations.

b. Public Engagement

The data shows that there were no formal forums or participatory channels provided by the government prior to the implementation of TAPERA. The policy was announced in the form of a final regulation without representative public consultation. Public posts on Twitter/X and YouTube show that most citizens are surprised by this policy which is considered burdensome without a monitoring mechanism from the community (Ramadhani, 2023) These findings are in line with the opinion of Waisbord (2021) that communication strategies that ignore public participation will lead to resistance and a crisis of legitimacy.

One of the main weaknesses of TAPERA's communication strategy is the absence of a public consultation mechanism before the policy is enacted. There is no record of publication of open discussions, online forums, or public surveys that can reflect the aspirations of the public. This causes the public to feel "positioned as an object", rather than as a partner in the policy process. The negative response of the public to TAPERA is reflected in the analysis of social media.

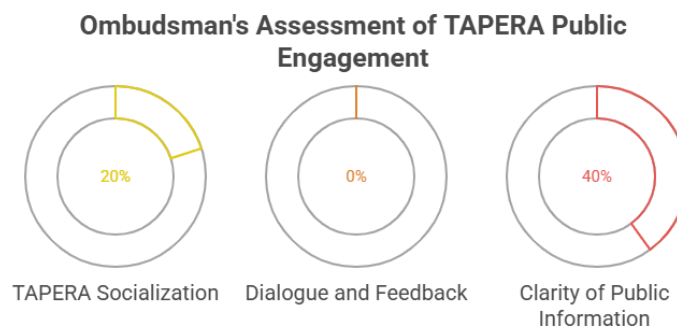


Figure 6. Ombudsman's Assessment of TAPERA Public Involvement

Source: Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia (Antaranews, 2024)

The graph above illustrates the results of the Ombudsman's evaluation of public involvement in TAPERA policies. Only about 20% of people accessed socialization before the policy was implemented, and no public feedback space was found. The level of clarity of the information conveyed is also low, reaching only 40%. This data reflects that the TAPERA socialization process is minimal, one-sided, and lacks room for active community participation, which is contrary to the principles of openness and two-way communication in public policy.

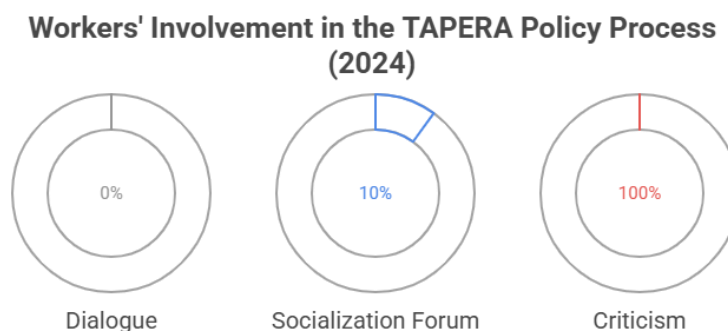


Figure 7. Worker Involvement in the TAPERA Policy Process

Source: Sarbumusi Labor Union & SPSI (Sarbumusi, 2024)

The figure above shows the low participation of workers in the TAPERA policy formulation process. There was no worker involvement in tripartite dialogue forums, and only about 10% of workers were involved in socialization activities. In contrast, 100% of the data reflects that workers are actively expressing criticism of their lack of participatory space and representation in policy structures. These findings confirm that government communication processes tend to be top-down and do not accommodate the principle of inclusive engagement, as emphasized in symmetrical two-way communication models.

Based on the two graphs above, it can be concluded that the level of public involvement in TAPERA policies is very low. The Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia highlighted the low socialization and lack of space for public dialogue before the contribution policy is enforced. This is reinforced by data from national trade unions, which criticize the absence of tripartite consultations and the absence of labor participation in policy formulation and oversight. In addition, Members of Commission VI of the House of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia also reminded that the collection of public funds must be carried out in a transparent, accountable, and through discussion first so that policies are positively accepted by the public (Kompas, 2024). This situation shows that the government's communication strategy in the case of TAPERA is not in accordance with the principle of symmetrical two-way communication, as it closes the opportunity for constructive and participatory dialogue.

c. Government Responsiveness

The government's response to public criticism is considered slow and reactive. Instead of opening up dialogue, official statements tend to be defensive and technocratic. There has been no systematic effort to accommodate the concerns of the community, especially from the most affected informal workers. (Hidayat, 2021) This suggests that communication is more built on a one-way model, as opposed to symmetrical principles that emphasize two-way interaction and empathy.

The Evolution of TAPERA Policy in Indonesia



Figure 8. The Evolution of TAPERA Policy in Indonesia

Source: Compass (2024)

The image above shows the government's institutional response to public criticism of the Public Housing Savings (TAPERA) policy which is marked by the issuance of Government Regulation (PP) Number 21 of 2024 as a revision of Government Regulation (PP) 25 of 2020. Public criticism began to emerge massively in early May 2024, after the TAPERA contribution policy would be applied not only to the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), but also to private and informal workers. The wave of rejection is motivated by a number of issues, including the burden of contributions that are considered unfair, the lack of space for public consultation, and the lack of transparency in fund management. In the context of symmetrical two-way communication theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984), the government's response through regulatory revisions does show a willingness to respond to public pressure, but it remains reactive and does not reflect a parallel two-way dialogue. Policy revision steps are not accompanied by consultative forums, open communication, or educational clarifications. According to a report by Detik News (opinion column), the implementation of TAPERA requires strict supervision and the government's response to date has been more administratively reactive, less involving dialogue with the public or an emotional response to public concerns (Detik News, 2024). This indicates that the government has not fully adopted the principles of openness and active participation as emphasized in the theory of public trust (Bouckaert, 2020), so the effectiveness of government communication in building public trust in TAPERA is still questionable.

Confirm Findings with Theory

These findings confirm that the government's communication strategy does not reach the target population effectively. In fact, these groups are the parties directly affected by the implementation of TAPERA. This low level of knowledge reinforces the argument that government communication is still elitist and limited to formal channels, with no penetration into channels close to the general public, such as social media, worker forums, or local communities. According to Park & Lee (2021), The success of policy communication is largely determined by the accessibility of information and the reach of messages to all levels of society. If the communication strategy does not take into account the demographic characteristics and patterns of people's information consumption, then the policy in question will be difficult to accept and even widely rejected. In addition, the above findings also show that the

government's communication strategy in the case of TAPERA has not met the participatory and transparent strategic communication indicators. When public communication is top-down, unresponsive, and far from the reality of society, the result is not acceptance, but resistance (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2021). This is also the case with the TAPERA policy, where the failure to build effective communication leads to a crisis of trust in the government. This situation underscores the importance of communication as an integral part of the policy process, not just an administrative complement.

Further, in perspective Habermas (1989) about *Public Spaces (Public Sphere)*, policy communication should bridge the state and its citizens through rational, inclusive, and open discussions. However, in the context of TAPERA, the digital public space that was formed became a place of resistance due to the absence of deliberative forums provided by the government. The government is not present in public discourse in an empathetic and communicative manner, but only through press releases and technocratic infographics. This contributes to the institutionalization of opposition narratives in the social media space, where the public not only criticizes the substance of policies, but also questions their procedural legitimacy. This phenomenon confirms the argument that one-way communication in public policy can be a trigger for policy delegitimization in the eyes of the public (Waisbord, 2021).

When compared to policy communication practices in other countries, Indonesia lags behind in the implementation of deliberative communication in the housing sector. In South Korea, for example, public housing policies are designed through a *citizen hearing* and *Public Policy Forums*, which allows citizens to express their objections or preferences before the regulations are finalized (Kim & Lee, 2020). In Singapore, housing contribution schemes such as the Central Provident Fund (CPF) are communicated gradually and based on public education from the outset, resulting in high public acceptance of the policy (Lee & Li, 2022). Even in India, although socially complex, the local community-based communication approach in PMAY's housing program (*Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana*) helps increase public participation and understanding of policies (Sengupta & Tiple, 2021). This comparison shows that countries with successful housing policy communication tend to adopt the principles of dialogical transparency, public involvement from the design stage, and contextual education. In contrast, TAPERA policy communication fails to consolidate social legitimacy because it does not build consensus and focuses only on the delivery of administrative information. The absence of reflective and consultative communication makes the public an object of regulation, not a partner in deliberation, which ultimately creates a symbolic and emotional distance between the government and the people.

In a study by Kim & Lee (2020), it was explained that poor communication strategies in socioeconomic policies can lead to sustained mistrust and undermine the legitimacy of government institutions. Public trust is not only formed by the content of policies, but also by the way those policies are communicated and socialized. In this context, a symmetrical two-way communication approach is not only a normative ideal, but also a practical necessity. Governments need to redesign policy communication mechanisms to be more participatory—for example, by organizing online consultative forums, opening public feedback channels, and using social media in dialogue, not just as a tool for policy promotion. A study from Ratzan et al. (2021) shows that public trust tends to increase when governments use communication that listens and responds, rather than just delivering. In addition, the limited communication of TAPERA also reflects structural problems in public communication governance in Indonesia. The absence of national standards for policy communication leads to capacity inequality between institutions. While the healthcare sector has thrived with public-based risk communication since the pandemic, the housing sector still lags behind in a participatory and transparent approach.

CONCLUSION

The results of the study show that the government's communication strategy in the TAPERA policy has not been effective in building public trust. Of the three main indicators—transparency, engagement, and responsiveness—only transparency appears to be partially effective, but remains one-way and technocratic. The low space for participation and the slow response to criticism reflect communication that has not been dialogized. This study applies symmetrical two-way communication theory (Grunig & Hunt, 1984) and public trust theory (Bouckaert, 2020) contextually in Indonesia's housing policy. The results reinforce the relevance of the two theories, but at the same time challenge their application in a country with a paternalistic political culture, where communication patterns are still dominant, top-down and normative. Practically, this study recommends the preparation of the National Policy Communication Playbook as a guide for cross-sectoral policy communication. This playbook is expected to be a standard in building inclusive, adaptive, and responsive communication to the public. This research is limited to the context of TAPERA and qualitative approaches. Follow-up studies with quantitative or mixed approaches are recommended to broaden understanding of the social and institutional factors that influence trust in public policy communication.

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