

Mass Communication: Building Community Empowerment Through Instagram @karangtaruna_sewet

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Abstract. This study aims to analyze the role of mass communication in community empowerment through the Instagram account @karangtaruna_sewet as a means of disseminating community development innovations. The rapid development of information technology has changed the patterns of interaction and information sharing among communities, making social media platforms such as Instagram an effective instrument of mass communication. Karang Taruna, as a youth organization, faces challenges in communicating innovative ideas and increasing community participation. This study examines the effectiveness of using the Instagram account @karangtaruna_sewet in supporting the community empowerment process. Using Everett M. Rogers' (1983) Innovation Diffusion Theory, this study analyzes how Karang Taruna's innovative programs are disseminated and adopted by the community through the Instagram platform. The research method used is qualitative with a literature study approach for data collection and analysis. The results show that Instagram plays a significant role in every stage of the innovation diffusion process, including: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. Optimizing Instagram features, using communicative language, and emphasizing the concrete benefits of the program proved effective in encouraging innovation adoption. This study contributes to the understanding of the application of innovation diffusion theory in the digital era and the effectiveness of social media as a strategic instrument in sustainable community development.

Keywords: Innovation Diffusion, Instagram, Mass Communication, Social Media, Community Empowerment.

1 Introduction

The quick advancement of information and communication technology has brought about significant changes in the way people interact, access information, and organize themselves. Social media, especially Instagram, now serves not only as a personal entertainment platform, but has evolved into a strategic means of mass communication. With its dominant visual power and interactive features, Instagram facilitates the rapid dissemination of information and reaches a wider audience. Social media has great potential to strengthen community participation and expand the reach of empowerment messages [1]. This phenomenon, as stated by McQuail (2010), has changed the paradigm of conventional mass communication, in which society now plays an active role as an interacting participant, rather than merely a passive recipient of information [2]. These changes provide a great opportunity for community organizations, such as Karang Taruna, to optimize their role in community empowerment.

Karang Taruna, as a youth organization focused on social development at the community level, has the responsibility to develop the potential, creativity, and active participation of the younger generation and all elements of society in myriad areas of development [4]. However, a classic challenge that is often faced is how to convey information, inspire, and encourage the public to be willing to accept and implement innovative ideas, programs, or activities that are initiated. Conventional communication methods often have limitations in terms of reach and speed of dissemination, especially amid the quick flow of information in the digital age.

In this context, the use of the Instagram account @karangtaruna_sewet is an interesting form of communication innovation to study. This account not only serves to upload documentation of activities, but also strives to be a medium for spreading ideas, encouraging participation, and shaping positive behavior in the community. However, a crucial question arises: how effective is this communication innovation through Instagram in supporting the community empowerment process? Can the ideas, programs, or invitations disseminated through @karangtaruna_sewet be adopted by the wider community so as to encourage their active involvement?

To answer these questions, this study uses the Diffusion of Innovations Theory framework proposed by Everett M. Rogers (1983). Rogers defines diffusion as the process of communicating an innovation through certain channels within a certain period of time among members of a social system. According to Rogers, the success of spreading new ideas or practices depends heavily on several key factors: the characteristics of the innovation (relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability), the communication channels used, the time dimension, and the surrounding social system [5].

In the context of @karangtaruna_sewet, Instagram serves as a communication channel used to disseminate “innovations” in the form of Karang Taruna programs, educational content, or calls for community participation. The issue that arises is: can Instagram @karangtaruna_sewet function as an effective communication channel to distribute these innovations to various categories of adopters (innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards) in the Sewet community? Can the characteristics of the content presented influence the community's perception of innovation, thereby encouraging the adoption process through the stages of knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation? Rogers emphasizes that mass communication is vital in the early stages of diffusion (knowledge), while interpersonal communication is more influential in the stages of persuasion and decision. Therefore, it is important to understand how @karangtaruna_sewet integrates these two forms of communication through the Instagram platform.

Based on the above description, this study aims to examine in depth the role of mass communication through Instagram @karangtaruna_sewet as an instrument of innovation diffusion in the context of community empowerment. The main focus of this study is to understand how this account supports the dissemination of innovative information and ideas, as well as to analyze the extent to which the community accepts and adopts this information using the dimensions of the Innovation Diffusion Theory. This research is important for evaluating the effectiveness of social media as a strategic instrument in sustainable community development efforts, while also contributing to the understanding of the application of innovation diffusion theory in the digital era.

2 Literature Review

Several previous studies have examined the role of social media and innovation diffusion theory in the context of community empowerment and mass communication. First, research conducted by Widaswara & Pramana (2022) entitled “Innovation Diffusion and Social Media Adoption as a Communication Medium in the Era of Online Learning” used Rogers' Innovation Diffusion Theory with a focus on the elements of innovation diffusion, which include innovation characteristics, communication channels, and social systems that influence public interest. This study used a quantitative approach with multiple linear regression analysis and found that innovation characteristics and communication channels have a positive and significant effect on social media adoption in online learning [6].

Second, Suchya's (2017) research entitled “Diffusion of Waste Bank Program Innovation: A Model of Innovation Diffusion for Community Empowerment in the Management of Alam Lestari Waste Banks in Serang City, Banten Province” used a descriptive qualitative approach with a focus on communication strategies in community empowerment through the Waste Bank program. The results of the study show that the implementation of communication strategies through media such as brochures and pamphlets has not been optimal due to a lack of ongoing communication with the wider community [7].

Third, research conducted by Caesarany, Roselina, and Karwur (2019) entitled “Diffusion of Innovation by the Public Relations Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia in Disseminating the E-Warong Program Innovation” used the Theory of Innovation Diffusion with a qualitative approach using the Miles and Huberman analysis model. This study analyzed public relations activities in disseminating the e-warong program through social media and found that the dissemination of information was carried out in several stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation [8].

Fourth, Sumarwan's (2024) study entitled “Instagram as a Medium for Government Development Communication: A Study of the 2022 Regional Development Award Winners” used a qualitative descriptive method with content analysis of posts on the @jabarprovgoind Instagram account. The results of the study show that Instagram is used to disseminate information on development programs, increase community participation, and develop the government's image [9].

Fifth, research conducted by Kusuma (2022) on “Aggressive Strategies through Social Media Enrichment in Improving the Quality of Promotion in Sarongge Tourism Village, Cianjur Regency” used qualitative methods with data collection techniques of documentation and interviews. This study analyzes the use of Instagram and TikTok @visitingjogja as government communication media for tourism promotion and community empowerment around tourist destinations [10].

Sixth, according to [11], In his research entitled “Innovation Diffusion in the Context of Community Empowerment,” he states that innovation diffusion is related to community empowerment in terms of the message conveyed. This message can become an innovation for a community or social system.

Based on a review of the above previous studies, there are similarities and differences with this study. The similarities lie in the use of the Innovation Diffusion Theory as a theoretical framework and a qualitative approach in the research methodology. However, this study has its own uniqueness, namely specifically analyzing the role of mass communication through Instagram social media in the context of youth organizations (Karang Taruna) for community empowerment at the local community level..

Unlike the study by Widaswara & Pramana (2022), which used a quantitative approach, this study used a qualitative method with a literature review. This study also differs from Suahya's (2017) research, which focused on environmental programs (waste banks), Caesarany et al.'s (2019) research, which examined central government programs (e-warong), and Sumarwan's (2024) and Kusuma's (2022) research, which analyzed local government communication.

This study specifically examines how community-level youth organizations utilize the Instagram platform @karangtaruna_sewet to diffuse empowerment innovations by comprehensively analyzing the five stages of innovation diffusion (knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation) in the context of social media in the digital era.

2.1 Literature Review

In implementing a communication strategy, a medium is needed to apply it. Instagram was chosen as the medium to build the brand image because it is the most widely used social media platform after YouTube. In addition, Instagram can also be considered a tool that can convey messages effectively and disseminate them to the audience through photos and videos [12].

2.2 Mass Communication

Mass communication is a type of communication that utilizes mass media as a means of conveying messages from communicators to audiences. Given that mass communication uses mass media as a tool for conveying messages, people need to have communication tools that they can access when needed. Mass media is divided into two categories, namely print media and electronic media. Print media is mass media that is presented in the form of writing, printing, and the like. Examples include newspapers, tabloids, magazines, etc. Meanwhile, electronic media are mass media presented in audio, visual, or audio-visual form. Examples include radio, television, and social media (such as Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube) [13].

2.3 Community Empowerment

Community empowerment is a process that aims to increase the capacity and potential of communities so that they can be independent in economic, social, cultural, and political aspects. According to Edi [14], Empowerment has two aspects, namely as a process and as a goal. As a process, empowerment consists of a series of activities aimed at strengthening the power and capabilities of vulnerable groups in society. Meanwhile, as a goal, empowerment refers to a condition in which the community has the power, knowledge, and ability to meet their daily needs.

Community empowerment plays an important role in changing individual behavior, enabling them to become independent and improve their quality of life and well-being. [15] explaining several aspects of community empowerment as follows:

- a. Institutional Improvement: Efforts to enhance activities are expected to improve institutions. Strong institutions will encourage community participation in various activities.
- b. Business Improvement: Through institutional improvements, it is hoped that business operations will improve, thereby benefiting members of the institution and the surrounding community.
- c. Improvement in Income: Improving the quality of the business is expected to increase the income of all members of the institution, including the community. Therefore, measures are needed to improve the financial income of the community.
- d. Environmental Improvement: With increased income, it is hoped that the physical and social conditions of the environment will also improve. Damage to the environment is often caused by poverty or lack of income.
- e. Improved Livelihoods: Better incomes and environments will help raise people's living standards. This can be seen through indicators of health, education, and purchasing power. Economic improvement will have a positive impact on people's daily lives.

- f. Community Improvement: If every family can improve their quality of life, then society as a whole will progress. Therefore, efforts to improve community conditions are very important.

2.4 Innovation Diffusion

Diffusion can be defined as the process by which innovations are spread through specific channels over a period of time to individuals within a social and cultural system. Innovation refers to ideas, activities, or products that are considered new by someone. The concept of novelty in innovation is measured personally, based on the perspective of the individual receiving it. Communication channels function as 'media for transferring innovation messages from senders to receivers' [16].

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory (DOI) is one of the most widely cited, summarized, and applied communication theories. This theory was introduced by Everett M. Rogers in 1983. The diffusion of innovations theory outlines the steps of how an innovation is disseminated (communicated) through certain channels over a period of time to a group of individuals in a social system.

According to Roger (1983: 165), There are several stages in the decision-making process regarding an innovation, namely:

- a. Knowledge: The stage at which individuals are exposed to innovation and gain a basic understanding of its functions and benefits. In the context of this study, the community learned about the empowerment program through content and information disseminated via Instagram.
- b. Persuasion: The stage where individuals form positive or negative attitudes toward innovation through further processing of information. The media and opinion leaders play an important role in shaping positive perceptions and attitudes among the public toward empowerment programs.
- c. Decision: The stage at which individuals engage in activities that lead to the acceptance or rejection of innovation. The community decides whether or not to participate in the empowerment program offered.
- d. Implementation: The stage where individuals apply innovations in their daily practices and adapt them to the local context. Empowerment programs are implemented and integrated by communities into their lives.
- e. Confirmation: The stage where individuals seek reinforcement for the decisions they have made and evaluate the results of adopting the innovation. The community assesses the results of the program's implementation and decides whether to continue, modify, or discontinue their participation (Rogers, 1983).

These five stages form a dynamic cycle that explains how innovations are absorbed and adopted within a community, and provide a relevant analytical framework for understanding the spread of information and ideas through social media.

3 Research Method

This study uses a qualitative approach. The research method applies a qualitative type through a literature study Darmalaksana, (2020). According to John W. Creswell, qualitative approaches are methods in which researchers often make claims to knowledge based on a constructive perspective (e.g., various meanings derived from individual experiences, as well as socially and historically constructed values, with the aim of developing specific theories or patterns) or a participatory perspective (e.g., oriented toward politics, issues, collaboration, or change), or even both (Creswell, 2003: 18). Thus, qualitative research can be understood as an approach to constructing statements of knowledge based on these perspectives [18].

To collect data for this study, a literature review technique was used. According to Khatibah (2011: 38), literature reviews play a very important role in research. Although some people distinguish between literature research and field research, both methods still require literature searches. The fundamental difference between literature research and field research lies in the purpose, function, or position of literature studies in each type of research. Field research often uses literature searches as a preliminary step to prepare a research framework aimed at obtaining additional information and deepening theoretical studies [19].

Literature review is a data collection technique that involves compiling and analyzing various documents, whether written, pictorial, or electronic. This data collection process involves several stages, beginning with editing, which involves rechecking the completeness, clarity of meaning, and coherence of the data obtained. Next, the data is organized by compiling and identifying relevant sources of information. The author also collects existing data, classifies it, and compares different data sources. The final stage is data analysis.

The value of a reference is determined by the novelty and breadth of the document's publication. The internet has made it easier to find information relevant to the research topic. Given that information is available in various formats, the selection of references must be done carefully in accordance with the research theme.

4 Results and Discussion

This study examines how the Instagram account @karangtaruna_sewet serves as a communication medium in empowering communities. In today's digital age, social media platforms such as Instagram have become effective channels for disseminating information and encouraging people to get involved in community empowerment. Karang Taruna, as an organization focused on youth social development, faces various challenges in communicating its programs and increasing community participation. The use of Instagram @karangtaruna_sewet is considered a communication innovation to address these issues. The purpose of this study is to determine how effective this account is in supporting community empowerment, as well as to analyze how information and program ideas are disseminated and received by the community using the Theory of Innovation Diffusion.

4.1 Knowledge

At the beginning of the dissemination process of the Diffusion of Innovations Theory, known as knowledge, Instagram proved to be one of the tools or mass media for conveying information about community empowerment, especially among young people, to obtain information about empowerment programs. The head of Karang Taruna noted that many people, especially those who are active on social media, first learned about this program through Instagram, in addition to announcements in village WhatsApp groups or through news conveyed directly after seeing posts on Instagram. The information posted on Instagram is diverse, covering announcements about the latest programs such as PHBI, PHBN, and other programs, the benefits that residents can get, as well as photos of activities that have been carried out previously.

The manager of the @karangtaruna_sewet Instagram account explained the methods used to increase the reach of posts, including the use of appropriate hashtags, collaboration with village accounts or community leaders, and posting at times when users are active. In addition, they actively ask residents to share posts on Instagram Stories. To ensure that information about the program can be understood by all levels of society, the manager uses simple and informal language. They also rely heavily on visual elements such as infographics, short videos with running text, and attractive images, with the aim of reducing long texts and making the content more visual. The most frequently used Instagram features are "Feed Post" for main information, "Instagram Stories" for daily updates and quick interactions, and "Reels" for short videos that are more interesting and have the potential to go viral. Sometimes, the "Live" feature is also used for question and answer sessions. From the community's perspective, respondents stated that they first learned about the empowerment program through information from family members and then immediately followed the Instagram account @karangtaruna_sewet. They feel that the videos and photos displayed on Instagram, as well as the posts on stories, help them as citizens to understand the information conveyed by the Karang Taruna account.

4.2 Persuasion

The persuasion stage is about creating a positive attitude towards innovation. After the community saw information about the program on Instagram, the Karang Taruna chairperson observed a change in attitude; many who were previously skeptical became more interested. Instagram content showing the success of the program in other villages or short testimonials from early participants proved effective in increasing their interest. In addition, visual content such as photos of enthusiastic residents or short videos about the real benefits of the program (e.g., assistance during natural disasters such as floods and the National Holiday Commemoration Program) were very influential in convincing the community that the program was appropriate and beneficial. Testimonials from community leaders or residents who had already participated also helped build trust.

The account administrators stated that they created content that emphasized the tangible benefits that the community would receive, rather than simply explaining the program. They used images that evoked emotion, such as photos of activities that showed togetherness or participants' smiles, as well as inspirational text narratives and direct calls to action. The most successful type of content in attracting interest and getting positive responses is testimonials from participants who have experienced the benefits of the program, either in the form of short videos or "before and after" photos, because the audience is more likely to believe in the real experiences of their neighbors. Responses to comments and direct messages are sent quickly, providing clear contact information and answering every question in a friendly and informative manner, which is considered very important for building trust. From the community's point of view, after following the Instagram account, they become interested in the photos and videos presented. Visuals such as videos and photos are considered attractive, easy to understand, and very useful for them and other residents to find out about the activities carried out by Karang Taruna. The community also discusses with friends or family about the activities disseminated

through Instagram, and they believe that these programs require support from local governments, BPD, and other institutions.

4.3 Decision

In the decision-making phase, where individuals choose to accept or reject innovation, Instagram plays an important role in encouraging engagement. The head of Karang Taruna noted an increase in the number of questions and interest in joining after residents became interested through Instagram. Many residents contacted Karang Taruna administrators directly or came to the village hall to seek further information, which shows that Instagram was very influential in encouraging them to decide to join or simply to seek further information. Elements such as contact information in the Instagram bio or posts that include the administrators' WhatsApp numbers play a significant role in this process. Short question and answer sessions via Instagram DM also help residents make decisions about joining the program.

Account managers routinely encourage action in every program post by including clear statements such as "Register Now!" or "For More Information, Contact Us." Links for registration or contact numbers are always placed in the Instagram profile bio so they are easy to find. Although Instagram does not provide a feature to track registrations directly, administrators utilize indirect methods such as trackable registration links (e.g., Google Forms with specific parameters) and identify participants who state that they learned about the program from Instagram when registering or during initial interviews. One resident stated emphatically that after following Instagram, the community decided to participate in the program because they obtained a lot of useful information.

4.4 Implementation

During the implementation phase, Instagram continues to support participants in the daily running of the program. The Karang Taruna leader explained that the platform is used to convey the latest information such as schedule changes, reminders, or additional material in the form of infographics containing tips and tricks about the program. Moments from ongoing activities are also frequently shared to inspire participants and maintain a sense of community. Community members are also seen sharing stories or challenges they face in the program on Instagram, either through personal stories or by mentioning the @karangtaruna_sewet account. These actions foster a sense of community and mutual support, and provide feedback for program managers to adjust the implementation process if common issues arise.

Account managers often hold short "Instagram Live" sessions to answer various general questions or provide encouragement during the program. They also encourage participants to mention the @karangtaruna_sewet account when sharing personal experiences, enabling direct interaction and support. Participants say they have received a lot of useful guidance through Instagram while participating in the program. Examples include guidance on how to save oneself or relocate during a flood disaster, information about religious programs such as PHBI, Mass Circumcision, and Social Service, as well as guidance on the requirements for participating in sports training such as the Soccer School (PORS team) initiated by Karang Taruna. Additionally, the community also uses Instagram to provide suggestions to Karang Taruna, such as recommendations to seek government programs (e.g., food security programs funded by village funds) or proposing collaborations with vocational training centers to enhance youth capacity and reduce unemployment rates.

4.5 Confirmation

The confirmation stage involves reinforcing the decision to adopt or evaluate the results of the innovation that has been implemented. Instagram is effectively used to showcase the results or impact of the program to the community, both those involved and those who are not. The head of Karang Taruna explained the use of "before and after" photos, program achievement charts, or video testimonials from participants who have experienced the benefits. The moment of presenting the work or certificates is also often posted as a form of appreciation. Content on Instagram that shows the success of the program greatly supports the community's decision to continue participating and even recommend it to others. This makes the community feel proud and convinced that the program really brings positive change.

Account administrators actively highlight the program's success by posting photos of participants' work, video testimonials, program achievement charts (such as the number of participants who have become self-sufficient), and award ceremonies, with the aim of showcasing individual success stories. They also actively encourage participants to share their experiences on Instagram after the program ends, either through short video testimonials or by sharing photos of their work, as this is considered the best way to show the real impact and encourage program sustainability. Respondents stated that the information they received from Instagram was

very helpful, and they hoped that the presentation of photos, videos, and stories could be improved to make them more interesting. The content displayed on Instagram about the activities of the community empowerment program was considered interesting, encouraging them to continue following it and inviting their families and friends to participate. To support the sustainability of the program, residents also stated that they would actively provide comments or DMs to the Instagram account admin and Karang Taruna administrators.

5 Conclusion

This study analyzes the role of the Instagram account @karangtaruna_sewet in community empowerment through the framework of Rogers' Innovation Diffusion Theory. The results of the analysis show that this social media platform has successfully supported the five stages of innovation adoption in a sustainable manner, from knowledge to confirmation.

Instagram has proven to be an effective primary communication channel for the community, especially the younger generation, to learn about the empowerment programs initiated by Karang Taruna for the first time. Engaging visual content—in the form of simple infographics, photos, and videos of activities—has successfully disseminated information about various programs such as Islamic Holidays (PHBI), National Holidays (PHBN), and other programs in an easy-to-understand manner. The right use of hashtags, collaboration with village accounts, and reposts by the community also contributed to expanding the reach of information. The community felt that the visual content presented was easy to understand and helped them become aware of these programs.

During the persuasion stage, content posted on Instagram proved effective in changing people's views from skeptical to enthusiastic. The most influential content elements included testimonials from program participants, images of activities that showcased community spirit and togetherness, and short videos illustrating the tangible benefits of the program, such as assistance during flood disasters.

The combination of attractive visual elements with inspiring narratives successfully fostered a sense of trust and confidence that these programs provide real benefits to the community. The responsiveness of account managers to comments and questions also strengthened public trust. The public stated that the attractive visual material made them interested and convinced that this program was beneficial to the wider community.

During the program, Instagram served as a very useful support tool. This social media platform was used to disseminate the latest news, including schedule updates, reminders, and practical instructions related to the program. For example, there were guidelines for dealing with floods and information related to soccer school registration requirements. In addition, Instagram also became a place for interaction where participants could share their experiences, which then became valuable input for the program organizers. The community was also active in providing ideas for the next program through Instagram, such as proposals for food security programs or collaboration with job training centers.

To support decisions on adopting innovations, the @karangtaruna_sewet account proactively displayed the results and positive impacts of the program. The uploaded content includes “before-and-after” photos, success testimonial videos from participants, and award moments such as certificate presentations, which have proven effective in increasing public confidence in the benefits of the program. This not only makes participants feel proud and continue to provide support but also encourages them to recommend it to others.

In general, this study reveals that Instagram @karangtaruna_sewet not only serves as an information channel, but has also become a comprehensive strategic tool in every phase of community empowerment. This account has successfully created two-way interactions, supported active engagement, and ultimately encouraged the acceptance and sustainability of empowerment programs at the community level.

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