

Strategic Communication of Traditional Village Leaders and Regional Council Members to Enhance Community Participation in Infrastructure Development in Sanur

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Article Info	Abstract
Dates: Accepted: 3-08-2025 Revised: 8-09-2025 Published: 21-5-2026 Keywords: Communication Strategy, Participatory Communication, Infrastructure Development, Community Participation, Customary Village	This study examines the communication strategies used by the leaders of Sanur Traditional Village and a regional council member of the Denpasar City DPRD (Municipal House of Representatives) to encourage community participation in infrastructure development in Sanur Kaja, Bali. The research is significant as most previous studies have focused solely on either village authorities or legislative members, leaving a gap in assessing communication strategies from both perspectives. A qualitative descriptive method with a single-case study design was employed, involving 11 purposively selected informants, including traditional village leaders, DPRD members, and community representatives. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis, and analysed thematically in five stages. Credibility was ensured through triangulation of data sources and member checking. The findings show that strategies combined dialogical approaches, such as meetings, hearings, and socialisation, with monological approaches, such as announcements of final decisions, supported by digital media including WhatsApp and social platforms. Community participation largely remained at the stage of consultation, shaped by barriers such as unequal access to information, economic and psychosocial constraints, time limitations, structural challenges, and policies beyond village awareness. The study recommends expanding integrated communication channels that adapt to community routines, ensuring transparency, and strengthening MSME (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) programmes. Its key contribution is the proposal of a communication strategy model rooted in the context of Bali's traditional villages, which may serve as a reference for fostering inclusive participation in local development.

Introduction

Infrastructure development in Sanur has intensified in line with the

growing demand for improved supporting facilities for both tourists and local communities. Suyanto (2024, as cited in Pulungan et al., 2024) found that infrastructure development plays a role in stimulating economic growth and regional development. Various projects such as the Sanur Port, Bali International Hospital, Icon Mall Bali, and the development of the Sanur Special Economic Zone (SEZ) have become the main drivers of the area's transformation.

Although development aims to enhance tourism value, healthcare services, and accessibility, the local community has faced numerous challenges in adapting to these changes. In 2023, more than 500 property developers were registered in Bali (Saputra, 2024). This figure is relatively high and may pose a threat to the Balinese property market if developers fail to fully understand the local market, including regulations, culture, and the actual cost of construction per square metre. From an economic perspective, there has been a shift in the target market for businesses in fashion and handicrafts in the Matahari Terbit Beach to Pengastian Beach area, following the establishment of Sanur Port. The market has shifted from foreign tourists to domestic visitors (PDG Informant, personal communication, 2024). Social impacts have also been evident, such as the conflict between online transport drivers and conventional transport groups in Sanur Village on 12 December 2024 (Tsa, 2024). Furthermore, infrastructure development in Sanur has had environmental implications. According to a report by Suharnanto (2024), the Magnum Residence Sanur Hotel project has not resumed due to alleged construction activities that began in May 2023. The project is suspected of proceeding without an adequate Environmental Impact Assessment (AMDAL) and overlapping 3,692 m²—or 37 ares—with the coastal setback zone, as stipulated in Presidential Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia Number 51 of 2016 on Coastal Setback Boundaries. This suggests that large-scale investment may not necessarily yield benefits for local communities.

Ideally, infrastructure development should involve effective communication among the government, investors, and local communities to mitigate adverse impacts. Furthermore, factors contributing to the effectiveness of social communication in development include human, technical, organisational, cultural, and environmental dimensions (Gamage, 2022). A lack of transparent communication can lead to misunderstandings and widen social disparities. This assumption is confirmed in a study conducted by Wijanarko et al. (2024), which concluded that in the decision-making process for the Sanur Port development project, project owners held the highest priority weight (0.5467), followed by Planning and Contract Consultants (0.2567), Construction Management Consultants (0.1566), Local Government (0.0900), and Affected Communities (0.0400). This reflects that the greatest authority lies in the hands of project owners and management consultants. Nevertheless, although the weights assigned to local government and affected communities are lower, both

stakeholders still hold crucial roles that must not be disregarded, particularly concerning regulation and social acceptance. This imbalance of authority underscores that the success of infrastructure development is not determined solely by project owners but also by the effectiveness of communication strategies capable of bridging the interests of all stakeholders.

Previous studies have discussed the role of communication in village development and in enhancing community participation (Amin, 2022; Sahid et al., 2025; Siswanto et al., 2025). However, these studies generally focused only on the communication strategies employed by a single actor, either the village or the city government, without comprehensively examining the differences and similarities between the strategies of different actors. Bali has a unique feature in the form of the legally recognised role of the “traditional village” (*desa adat*). As stipulated in Bali Provincial Regulation Number 4 of 2019 on Balinese Traditional Villages, *desa adat* holds the status of a legal entity within Bali’s provincial governance system and also carries out additional duties delegated by national or regional government. This is also recognised in Law Number 6 of 2014 on Villages, which acknowledges that *desa adat* strongly influences local governance systems, local resource management, and the socio-cultural life of communities (Heryanda et al., 2023). Nevertheless, there is still a need for research specifically examining communication strategies in infrastructure development from the perspectives of traditional village leaders and regional council members as a means of increasing community participation, with Bali serving as the research context. Thus, this study is necessary to fill this research gap by exploring the communication strategies applied by the leaders of Sanur Traditional Village and regional council members, identifying the challenges encountered, and analysing how these strategies affect the forms and levels of community participation. At the same time, the study provides practical contributions for stakeholders and enriches academic discourse on development communication grounded in Balinese local wisdom.

Literature Review

Previous Studies

In general, the function of previous studies, according to Barrios et al. (2024), is to reflect on the findings of research with similar topics, which are expected to serve as a comparison in subsequent research processes. Several studies have examined communication strategies employed by government to increase community participation in village development or to ensure the success of other government programmes. For instance, Amin (2022) found that the level of community participation in development activities increased alongside improvements in public knowledge, influenced by information and communication technology. The effectiveness of participatory communication

strategies can be achieved by involving each development actor in disseminating public messages from individuals or groups, with the aim of changing attitudes, opinions, and behaviours to achieve development success. This is reinforced by the findings of Sulaiman et al. (2024), who state that participatory communication is the embodiment of democratic practices through a bottom-up approach, inclusivity, and dialogue, resulting in agreements that can meet the needs and interests of all parties. Furthermore, through maximum community involvement in outreach activities encompassing social, economic, political, and environmental aspects within development programmes, the quality of life of those who work and reside in the area can be ensured (Rohman Kusmayad et al., 2024).

Government acts as an information provider and intermediary between the community and other relevant stakeholders in development. In practice, the government employs various communication media such as village consultation meetings (musdes/musrenbang), WhatsApp groups, household visits, and public posters (Sahid et al., 2025; Siswanto et al., 2025). Beyond these media, Sulaiman et al. (2024) note that the Karawang Kulon Sub-district Government also encouraged its community to actively participate in both physical development activities and the exchange of ideas, with the aim of fostering a sense of ownership. The government shapes messages that highlight the benefits the community and village will gain in the future once the development or government programme is implemented. This is intended to build public trust.

Participation and the Participatory Communication Model

Rogers (1976, as cited in Servaes, 2020, p. 4) defines development communication as a participatory process of social change aimed at achieving progress and improving the quality of life for the majority of the population, thereby enabling them to gain greater control over their environment. The participatory communication model enables stakeholders to engage actively in development. Thus, participatory communication in development communication strategies is an essential component of the development process of a region and will be most effective when applied from the very beginning of a development programme.

Surahmi and Farid (2018, as cited in Siswanto et al., 2025) classify community participation into two forms: physical participation, including the contribution of labour, materials, and attendance in development activities; and non-physical participation, such as the exchange of ideas. Furthermore, Pretty (1995, as cited in (O'Connor et al., 2024) identifies seven classifications of participation, as follows:

Table 1. Typology of Levels of Community Participation According to Pretty

(1995)

Level of Participation	Characteristics of Each Level
Manipulative participation	Communities appear to be formally involved; however, in practice, the so-called “representatives” sitting on official councils are not democratically elected and have no real authority in decision-making. In other words, representation exists only on paper and is merely symbolic, without genuinely reflecting the community.
Passive participation	Individuals or community groups are informed by management or stakeholders about what has been or will be done, but they are not involved beyond receiving the information.
Participation by consultation	Communities participate by expressing their views, yet they are excluded from the actual decision-making process.
Participation for material incentives	Communities participate by providing resources, such as labour or land, in exchange for food, cash, or other forms of assistance.
Functional participation	Communities participate by forming groups to achieve predetermined objectives related to projects, often linked to the development or promotion of externally initiated social organisations.
Interactive participation	Communities engage in joint analysis leading to action plans and the establishment of new local institutions. They have a vested interest in maintaining particular structures and practices and exercise control over local decision-making.
Self-mobilization	Communities participate by taking independent initiatives, sometimes with support from external institutions, to bring about change.

While they may seek resources and technical advice from outside actors, communities retain control over how these resources are utilised.

In participatory communication practice, the design of a communication strategy must be based on fundamental guidelines to facilitate the determination of its objectives. Tufte and Mefalopulos (2009, as cited in Subedi & Karki, 2022) emphasise the importance of dialogue mediated through communication channels, underpinned by three basic principles to maximise its outcomes: creating free and open dialogue, recognising power relations inherent in all human interactions as equally significant, and fostering empowerment oriented towards reflection on problems or the integration of action. Furthermore, according to Mefalopulos (2008, as cited in Odoom et al., 2024), the participatory communication approach can be implemented through both one-way (monologic) and two-way (dialogic) communication. Monologic communication may take the form of media campaigns, while dialogic communication is more open, exploring particular issues. Communication media applied may be community-based, mass media, or face-to-face communication.

In Bali, a public protest once took place in response to the government's reclamation policy in Benoa Bay. Research conducted by Suciati & Sofyan (2019) found that the Provincial Government of Bali employed both consultation-based participation and dialogic participation involving active communication between communities and government. However, final decision-making authority remained with the central government. The Provincial Government of Bali formulated communication planning in the form of situation analysis or environmental impact studies conducted with several universities in Indonesia through simakrama gatherings, the Free Speech Forum (FPA2AS), the Interfaith Harmony Forum, and local community associations.

Estriana & Ratu, (2024) conducted a case study on government efforts to build communication strategies in addressing online gambling, which is considered to disrupt Indonesia's economic development and public well-being. In responding to this issue, the government implemented awareness campaigns. However, in practice, the messages were deemed overly general and lacking in concrete solutions. Recommendations included diversifying and making media use more interactive, emphasising emotional and social impacts, fostering collaboration with third parties such as local communities or educational institutions, and strengthening measured law enforcement. Thus, participatory communication practices have in fact been widely implemented by the Indonesian government at different levels and scopes of governance, as highlighted by findings in previous studies (Amin, 2022; Putri & Priyanti, 2024;

Sahid et al., 2025; Siswanto et al., 2025; Sulaiman et al., 2024).

Barriers to Communication in Development Participation

Community participation in development processes is influenced by various factors, including political, cultural, economic, and informational dimensions. Political factors involve policies that do not support participation, as well as authoritarian tendencies in decision-making. Cultural factors may restrict open communication where norms or traditions discourage critical community expression. Economically, limited resources and income disparities often reduce the ability of communities to engage actively (Shetunyenga, 2023). In addition, unequal access to information may prevent some citizens from obtaining the knowledge necessary for meaningful participation. Research findings Yenti Jumas et al., (2025) reveal that barriers to development communication arise from limited experience in construction projects, poor leadership, and socio-cultural constraints.

Overall, most barriers to communication in development stem from a lack of transparency and monopolisation of information. Frequently, critical information regarding development projects is not disseminated widely, creating uncertainty and knowledge gaps between the government and community. Moreover, when information is controlled by a few actors, this results in monopolised knowledge that inhibits fair community participation.

Development Communication and the Diffusion of Innovation Theory

Techniques applied in development communication to achieve inclusive development include ensuring equal and transparent dissemination of information, providing education, promoting behavioural change, applying social marketing, encouraging social mobilisation, engaging in proactive media advocacy, seeking community participation, and targeting positive social transformation (Singh & Bharti, 2021).

One theoretical underpinning of development communication is the diffusion of innovation theory. Rogers (1995, as cited in Kumar & Reddy, 2023) defines diffusion as the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over a period of time among members of a social system. The four core elements—innovation, communication channels, time, and social system—form the foundation of diffusion. Rogers further explains that the spread of innovation occurs through four stages: invention, diffusion/communication through the social system, time, and consequences. He elaborates that information about innovation spreads through networks, and the characteristics of these networks, along with the role of opinion leaders within them, determine the extent to which an innovation is likely to be adopted by the community.

Research on innovation diffusion seeks to explain the factors influencing the adoption of innovations, such as the emergence of new information media (e.g., the Internet). Opinion leaders influence audience behaviour through personal contact, while additional intermediaries—such as change agents, who accelerate adoption by providing information, and gatekeepers, who regulate the flow of information and determine whether an innovation is accepted within a social system—also play a role. In other words, the linkage between diffusion theory and development communication lies in their shared emphasis on achieving social change through effective communication processes.

Method

Research Location and Period

The study was conducted in Sanur Kaja Village, one of the administrative areas within South Denpasar District, Denpasar City, Bali. In recent years, the area has become a focal point of government-led infrastructure development, including the construction of ports, shopping centres, and healthcare facilities. These physical and economic transformations have directly affected the local community's social dynamics, particularly in relation to civic engagement and the role of traditional institutions (*desa adat*) alongside local government in disseminating information and managing public participation. Sanur Kaja Village was therefore selected as the research site to examine development communication strategies undertaken by village customary leaders and members of the regional council. The fieldwork was conducted from May to July 2025.

Research Design

Qualitative research, according to Phillips et al. (2024), is a process of observing and examining a subject in depth, allowing researchers to capture perspectives and experiences derived from direct observation in order to address research questions. Moelong (2018, as cited in Furidha, 2023) further explains that qualitative research aims to explore phenomena or actions experienced by participants.

This study applies a descriptive qualitative method under a constructivist paradigm, emphasising an understanding of how Sanur customary village leaders and members of the Denpasar City council design communication strategies to enhance community participation in infrastructure development, while also considering community responses to such initiatives. The paradigm assumes that social interaction plays a crucial role in shaping collective understanding and responses to development policies.

Informant Selection Technique

The technique for selecting informants was based on purposive sampling, which establishes specific criteria for informant selection in accordance with the needs of the research (Surya & Wan Mahmud, 2025). The informants were

divided into three categories: key informants (RCM, BAS, and KB), main informants (PA, PD, OM, and PDG), and supporting informants (SUP). The details are presented as follows

Table 2. List of Research Informants and Rationale for Selection

No	Unique Code	Position/ Role	Rationale for Selection
1	RCM	Regional Council Member / Deputy Chair I of Denpasar City DPRD (2024–2029)	RCM is a politician elected in the 2024 election for Electoral District 5 of South Denpasar City. In his work as a regional legislative member, RCM is active in disseminating information through socialisation, maintaining records of working visits, conducting community discussions, and is trusted by the public for consultation. RCM can also provide information regarding his communication process with the community in relation to development in Sanur.
2	BAS	<i>Bendesa Adat</i> Sanur (2024–2029)	As a <i>bendesa adat</i> , BAS is responsible as a facilitator of communication between government agencies and the community. All government decisions and community aspirations are mediated by BAS together with his customary leadership.
3	KB	Kelihan of Banjar Buruwan, Sanur Kaja	This study requires an informant closer to the community in terms of customary communication to explore more deeply the communication strategies employed. In Bali, a kelihan desa is responsible for direct

			communication with the community in accordance with directives given by the <i>bendesa adat</i> .
4	PA1	Native resident of Banjar Buruwan and owner of Express Kitchen in Sanur	The purpose of selecting both native and migrant residents from several banjar in Sanur Village is to re-examine the
5	PA2	Native resident of Banjar Tegeh Selang	communication strategies carried out by the <i>desa adat</i> and
6	PA3	Native resident of Banjar Taman	council members. Moreover, by observing both groups (native
7	PD1	Registered migrant resident of Banjar Tegeh Selang	vs migrant residents), the findings are expected to reveal
8	PD2	Registered migrant resident of Banjar Batanpoh	similarities or differences in communication strategies and responses.
9	OM	Head of Fishermen's Group KUB Mina Sari Asih Sanur	This study also requires perspectives from community organisations and MSMEs for the same reason as PA1 to PD2.
10	PDG	MSME actor in the Sanur coastal area	
11	SUP1	Bali creative automotive economy practitioner in Sanur	SUP1 has extensive experience in the tourism sector and is also active in various economic and tourism organisations, thereby providing analytical insight into communication strategies as well as barriers encountered in practice.

Data Collection Techniques

Ugwu & Eze Val (2023) also classify data collection techniques into primary and secondary data. Primary data collection was conducted by reviewing literature to understand the concept of communication strategies in development, as well as government policies related to infrastructure development in Sanur. Subsequently, research instruments such as interview guides and observation formats were designed to ensure the relevance of the data collected. Finally, in-depth interviews were carried out with key informants to gather information on the planning, implementation, and challenges of the

communication strategies they applied. In addition, interviews with main informants provided insights into the effectiveness of these strategies in enhancing community participation. To complement the research data, interviews were also conducted with tourism practitioners engaged in the creative economy as supporting informants. Secondary data employed in this study included regulatory documents concerning village development, government reports, relevant books or academic publications, and online news coverage in national or regional portals on development in Bali, particularly in Sanur.

Data Analysis Techniques and Data Validity

Data analysis forms the core of the research process, aimed at answering the research questions (Coe et al., 2025, p. 36). Mason (2017, as cited in Coe et al., 2025, p. 36), recommends data analysis techniques by first stating the research questions, then matching them with the sources obtained; accordingly, this study employed a discussion sequence based on the research questions. Furthermore, drawing upon Braun & Clarke's (2006, as cited in Naeem et al., 2023) thematic data analysis technique, the research followed five stages: (1) Transcription of data from interviews with informants and participatory observation notes; (2) Initial coding of data relevant to keywords such as communication strategy, communication barriers, and community responses to communication strategies; (3) Identification and categorisation of themes, including aspects of communication strategies applied by *desa adat* leaders and regional council members, barriers encountered, community participation in development, and outcomes of the strategies; (4) Interpretation by linking findings with previous research, concepts of participation and participatory communication models, participation barriers, development communication, and innovation diffusion theory; (5) Preparation of the analytical report, preceded by data validation to ensure that conclusions align with secondary data sources.

The validity of data was ensured to strengthen the credibility of the research findings. Accordingly, this study employed triangulation supported by multiple primary and secondary sources derived from a literature review. The researcher also validated the research findings with each informant to confirm data accuracy and held discussions with academics to review the thematic analysis

Statement of Ethical Publication Guidelines

Ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the research process. All informants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives and procedures, and their participation was entirely voluntary. Informants who were unwilling had the right to decline. Their identities were anonymised by the use of unique codes to maintain confidentiality.

Results and Discussion

Implementation of Communication Strategies in Infrastructure Development in Desa Adat Sanur

This section analyses how the *desa adat* leaders and regional council members applied communication strategies in the context of infrastructure development. The main focus is on the forms of dialogical and monological communication, the media employed, and the roles of key actors in channelling community aspirations.

The communication strategy in the context of infrastructure development in Sanur Kaja represents the outcome of complex interactions between the central government, the regional/city government, the *desa adat*, and the community, carried out within both the hierarchical communication structure and the customary structure embedded in Sanur's social system. According to Informant RCM and Informant BAS, both share similar responsibilities in listening to and conveying community aspirations to the regional/city government, including matters related to village development. The difference lies in the greater authority held by Informant RCM, who participates in wider communication forums through parliamentary legislative meetings, compared to the position held by Informant BAS. Moreover, Informant RCM contributes to the formulation and decision-making of policies in collaboration with the executive body, in line with the duties of the regional legislative council (DPRD). In contrast, the *Bendesa Adat* is responsible for informing the community of the implementation of *desa adat* governance based on customary law known as *Awig-Awig* (Putra, 2025), and for assisting the government in executing governmental programmes, including development initiatives as directed. Each *Bendesa Adat* is also supported by the *Prajuru Adat* (customary apparatus), which includes the *Penyarikan* (customary secretary), *Petajuh* (assistant to the *Bendesa* in decision-making and conflict resolution), *Patengen* (responsible for maintaining order within the customary territory), *Juru Arah* (supervising religious ceremonies), and *Juru Pendet* (responsible for temple ceremonies). In addition, the *Kelihan Banjar* oversees the implementation of customary community activities at the *banjar* level.

Both the *Desa Adat* Sanur (Informants BAS and KB) and the regional council member (Informant RCM) employed two-way (dialogical) communication strategies through face-to-face socialisation with the community, public hearings, and field visits. However, final decisions were at times conveyed through one-way (monological) communication. In line with Siswanto et al. (2025), the communication media used in this study appear to have been adapted to technological developments and community needs, with efforts to facilitate access to information through WhatsApp.

Tabel 3. Findings on Communication Strategies and Media

Communication Strategy Applied	Actor(s) Applying the Communication Strategy	Description
Holding regular paruman adat meetings at the banjar or community deliberations	<i>Kelihan Banjar</i> (KB)	It was found that migrant residents were not continuously involved in development meetings, but only received information through the WhatsApp group regarding decisions already made.
Field visits to the community	Regional Council Member (RCM) and <i>Bendesa Adat</i> (BAS)	Informants PA1, OM, and PDG expressed differing responses. OM and PDG felt they were given the opportunity to express ideas or concerns regarding development, whereas PA1, who also owns a business in Sanur, felt that the communication was one-way, as they were only informed about kiosk price changes and registration procedures.
Real-time communication via telephone	Regional Council Member (RCM) and <i>Bendesa Adat</i> (BAS)	This communication was conducted when community members were unable to attend an official meeting invitation.
WhatsApp Groups	<i>Desa Adat</i> . The <i>Kelihan Banjar</i> (KB) was responsible for disseminating information to residents of their respective <i>banjar</i> , both natives and migrants.	The community benefited from easier access to information via WhatsApp Groups, further supported by the involvement of <i>Seka Teruna Teruni</i> (youth organisations) and the Family Welfare Movement (PKK) in each banjar.
Social Media	<i>Desa Adat</i> and Regional Council Member (RCM)	The <i>Desa Adat</i> Sanur used Facebook under the name " <i>Desa Adat Sanur</i> " and Instagram

@desa_adat_sanur, while the Regional Council Member used Instagram as their platform.

The research findings indicate that the level of community participation in development remains at the stage of participation by consultation, in accordance with Pretty's participation typology (1995, as cited in O'Connor et al., 2024), where the community is involved in expressing aspirations or grievances to the customary village authorities or council members without being included in the decision-making process.



Figure 1. Field Visit of the First Deputy Speaker of the Denpasar City Council to a Fishermen's Group in Sanur

The findings bear similarities with Suciati & Sofyan (2019), as both government and community are actively engaged in the process of interaction, yet decision-making remains in the hands of the government. Informant RCM, as a government official, sought to collaborate with the customary village to address questions and grievances regarding infrastructure development in Sanur. This was corroborated by Informant OM, who stated that both the *Bendesa Adat* and the Deputy Chair I of the Denpasar City DPRD frequently carried out working visits or face-to-face meetings, during which the community had also conveyed aspirations, including a request for the establishment of a fishermen's monitoring post.

Community involvement in post-development meetings is often facilitated by the *Bendesa Adat* Sanur, such as the convening of the *Paruman Agung* of the Sanur Customary Village regarding the establishment of an online taxi pick-up point within the Sanur customary territory. The meeting was attended by the *Bendesa Adat*, customary officials (*Prajuru Desa*), the *Kertha & Sabha Desa*, customary leaders (*Kelihan Adat*), BUPDA administrators, representatives of the

GKT drivers, and Grab representatives. The Sanur Customary Village firmly demanded the demolition of the shelter to prevent congestion and conflict with local drivers, in line with aspirations voiced in community forums. This strategy of involving the community in development reflects participatory communication, which seeks to employ an inclusive dialogic approach to achieve collective agreement (Sulaiman et al., 2024).



Figure 2. Grand Village Council Meeting on Online Taxi Pick-up Points with Stakeholders, 16 July 2025

Government efforts to enhance community participation are also evident in strategies for disseminating information on job opportunities required by local tourism operators in the Sanur area following development. This represents one of the government's strategies to foster opportunities for physical participation, as highlighted by Farid (2018) in Siswanto et al. (2025)

The customary village and regional council members, together with the relevant government, have made concerted efforts to involve the wider community from the outset of development, for instance by providing information regarding the planned construction of tenant kiosks along the beachfront. However, Informant PA1 argued:

Awalnya kita diberikan gambar 3D untuk melihat bagaimana rencana gambaran tenant itu dibangun, namun setelah itu tidak ada akses pemberian saran untuk pembangunan itu sendiri (Informan PA1). (Translation: Initially, we were given a 3D visualisation to see how the planned tenant kiosks would look, yet afterwards there was no opportunity to provide suggestions regarding the development itself (Informant PA1).)

In fact, customary villages (*desa adat*) hold the authority to manage resources and the social life of the community in accordance with Law No. 6 of

2014 on Villages. This highlights the potential of customary villages to play a greater role and open more participatory spaces in national development based on community needs. In this sense, the community should be provided with dialogic spaces to offer feedback on development plans. If such input is followed up through genuine involvement in management processes, the level of participation can shift from merely consultative to functional participation. Referring to the insights of Sahid et al. (2025) and Sulaiman et al. (2024), consistent efforts to open inclusive dialogic spaces for micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to discuss regulations and programmes concerning their operations may foster a sense of ownership and collective concern towards future development plans.

From the perspective of Rogers' (1995) Diffusion of Innovations theory (as cited in Kumar & Reddy, 2023), the customary village and regional council members may be positioned as opinion leaders as well as change agents. Socially active groups, such as customary leaders or formal business actors, tend to become early adopters who quickly receive and respond to innovations. In contrast, less socially active groups and migrant residents are more likely to fall into the categories of the late majority or laggards, who are relatively slower in receiving information and engaging in processes of change.

Barriers in the Development Communication Process

This section discusses the various challenges that arise in the development communication process, encompassing technical, socio-economic, and psychosocial aspects. These barriers are significant factors influencing the effectiveness of information dissemination and the level of community involvement.

The Magnum Residence Sanur project is one of the infrastructure projects that faced opposition from the environmental NGO WALHI Bali for not complying with Environmental Impact Assessment (AMDAL) regulations and for its potential environmental impact (Suharnanto, 2024; WALHI Bali, 2024). Informant RCM revealed that miscommunication occurred between the local government, the customary village (*desa adat*), and the project developers because the building permit obtained through the Online Single Submission (OSS) system was not communicated to the local government or *desa adat*. The project was also considered inconsistent with Balinese architectural principles. Informant RCM emphasised:

...kalau kita sebenarnya sudah menekankan jangan sampai OSS yang tujuannya bagus untuk mempermudah investasi, tapi lupa kalau di Bali ini ada aturan-aturan tidak tertulis yang harus diperhatikan. Kalau dulu kan investor harus ke dinas perizinan, ke dinas PUPR, dan lainnya yang mengurus itu. Tapi Magnum

Residence itu enggak, dia sudah dapat dari OSS untuk izin membangun. (Informan PA1). (Translations: "...we actually emphasised that OSS, which is intended to facilitate investment, should not overlook the unwritten rules in Bali. Previously, investors had to go through the licensing office, the PUPR office, and others who managed this. But Magnum Residence did not; it obtained the building permit directly via OSS" (Informant PA1).)

Another barrier emerged from community members being unable to attend "paruman adat" forums due to conflicts with their working hours. This is common among MSMEs, small traders, and daily wage workers, reflecting Shetunyenga's (2023) argument that communities must prioritise their economic activities. Consequently, they only receive meeting minutes shared on WhatsApp groups or information via neighbours.

Informant PD1 reported feeling unnecessary to participate, perceiving no need to be involved due to their status as a recent migrant resident. Such attitudes constitute psychosocial communication barriers, where participation is limited by personal perceptions of role and social status (Edelstein & Vanclay, 2024). According to Odoom et al. (2024), this indicates a low sense of ownership among the community regarding the outcomes of forthcoming development projects.

As a customary entity, *desa adat* does not hold authority in formulating policies for national strategic projects initiated by central or provincial governments. In the context of development, customary village leaders primarily play a facilitative and normative role, bridging information from the government to the community, maintaining customary security, and encouraging community participation to support development programmes according to prescribed directives. This limitation explains why some infrastructure projects in Sanur cannot involve the community in externally organised groups to achieve development objectives, such as taking part in development or promoting organisations, which are characteristics of functional participation.

Implications of Communication Strategies on Community Participation in Infrastructure Development

This section explores how the communication strategies employed influence the form and level of community participation in infrastructure development. The analysis focuses on whether participation remains consultative or progresses towards functional and interactive participation.

Community participation is influenced not only by government and customary village communication policies but also by internal community factors, such as social status, economic condition, and affiliation with customary structures. For instance, the *desa adat* and government officials facilitated

dialogue forums, such as an audience with the Mayor of Denpasar on 5 May 2025 alongside Prajuru and KSOP Benoa officials, and the Paruman Agung *Desa Adat Sanur* in July 2025, attended by Grab drivers and transport company representatives to discuss shelter locations and contributions to the village. Successful examples of communication strategies previously implemented can be seen in the renovation of the *tunon* (ceremonial equipment storage) at *Desa Adat Sanur*, which was well-executed as a result of consensus among all community components. Similarly, the ongoing “Sanur Culinary Centre” project reflects collective planning and agreement. MSMEs have also been invited for audiences at the village office to discuss the impact of development on their businesses. These examples demonstrate efforts by the *desa adat* and government officials to involve citizens in participatory development programmes through communication strategies.

The evidence above indicates that communication spaces between the government, *desa adat*, and the community are available, although community involvement remains situational, reactive, and primarily at the participation by consultation level (Pretty, 1995; O’Connor et al., 2024), where citizens can voice opinions but are not engaged in decision-making. Therefore, communication strategies need adjustment to promote functional and even interactive participation, where citizens act as contributors rather than passive recipients. This aligns with participatory communication models (Servaes, 2020; Sulaiman et al., 2024), emphasising equal dialogue, inclusivity, and a bottom-up approach to achieve more democratic joint decisions. Development communication in Sanur must therefore not only occur monologically through information dissemination but also dialogically, establishing open forums that involve MSMEs, migrant residents, and social groups such as Seka Teruna Teruni and PKK.

From the perspective of Rogers’ (1995; Kumar & Reddy, 2023) Diffusion of Innovations theory, *desa adat* and regional council members, acting as opinion leaders and change agents, should expand their communication reach beyond early adopters such as customary leaders or formal business actors to include the late majority and migrant residents, who often receive development information later. Consistent involvement of the community from the planning stage is crucial to mitigate psychosocial barriers and foster a sense of ownership.

Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion above, it can be concluded that the development communication strategy in Sanur Traditional Village combines a dialogical approach (such as face-to-face socialization, public hearings, and field visits) with a monological approach (formal announcement). The role of key actors is different, where council members hold decision-making authority, while

indigenous leaders act as facilitators and disseminators of information. Although communication mechanisms have been available, the level of community participation is still limited to consultative participation, where citizens can express their aspirations but have not been meaningfully involved in decision-making and the development process. The main obstacles to active participation include unequal access to information, time constraints, socio-psychological factors, structural barriers, and mis-communication between institutions.

In response to these findings, this study recommends strengthening communication strategies by expanding integrated communication channels, scheduling flexible participatory forums, increasing licensing transparency, and capacity building for MSMEs and migrants. The role of traditional leaders and council members as opinion leaders is very important to reach marginalized groups. Practically, this study provides input for customary village governments and DPRD to build a more inclusive participation mechanism, while academically, this study enriches the study of development communication based on Balinese local wisdom. Increasing community participation not only requires additional information channels, but also improving communication practices to be more transparent, empowering, and structured so that development decisions truly reflect the needs of the community and strengthen the legitimacy and sustainability of development results.

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