

ADAPTIVE GOVERNANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY INFORMATION GROUPS AS A MEDIUM FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION AND TRANSPARENCY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS OF SOPPENG REGENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the implementation of adaptive governance in the development of Community Information Groups as a medium for public information and information disclosure in Soppeng Regency, Indonesia. Adaptive governance emphasizes collaboration, learning, flexibility, and resilience in responding to complex governance challenges. Although normatively Community Information Groups has a mandate to function as a community based communication platform, its implementation in practice remains fragmented and has yet to be optimally utilized. This research employs a qualitative design, utilizing data collection techniques and in depth interviews with officials from the Communication and Informatics Office of Soppeng Regency, Community Information Groups managers, and community representatives, complemented by documentation and observation. The findings reveal that although initial steps have been taken to integrate KIM into the regional digital governance agenda through the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE) framework, significant implementation gaps persist. First, collaboration between KIM, government agencies, and local communities remains sporadic. Second, capacity-building efforts through digital literacy training have not been conducted sustainably. Third, flexibility in adapting digital innovations to local contexts remains constrained by infrastructure limitations. Fourth, institutional resilience is weakened due to funding constraints, human resource limitations, and intergenerational participation gaps. This study emphasizes: 1) the importance of establishing institutionalized collaborative forums; 2) the need for sustainable mentorship systems; 3) the equitable distribution of digital infrastructure; and 4) the strengthening of organizational resilience to optimize the role of Community Information Groups. Through the application of adaptive governance, Community Information Groups has the potential to become a more effective participatory communication medium in promoting transparency and inclusive development. This research contributes both to the development of theoretical discourse on adaptive governance and to practical recommendations for local government governance reform.

Keywords: Adaptive governance, Community Information Groups, public communication.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi *adaptive governance* dalam pengembangan Komunitas Informasi Masyarakat (KIM) sebagai media informasi publik dan keterbukaan informasi di Kabupaten Soppeng, Indonesia. *Adaptive governance* menekankan kolaborasi, pembelajaran, fleksibilitas, dan ketahanan dalam merespons tantangan tata kelola yang kompleks. Meskipun secara normatif KIM memiliki mandat yang berfungsi sebagai platform komunikasi berbasis masyarakat, implementasinya dalam praktik masih bersifat terfragmentasi dan belum dimanfaatkan secara optimal. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data dan wawancara mendalam dengan pejabat Dinas Komunikasi dan Informatika Kabupaten Soppeng, pengelola KIM, serta perwakilan masyarakat yang dilengkapi dengan dokumentasi dan observasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun langkah awal telah

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dilakukan untuk mengintegrasikan KIM ke dalam agenda tata kelola digital daerah melalui kerangka Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik (SPBE), masih terdapat kesenjangan yang signifikan dalam implementasinya. Pertama, kolaborasi antara KIM, instansi pemerintah, dan masyarakat lokal masih bersifat sporadis. Kedua, upaya peningkatan kapasitas melalui pelatihan literasi digital belum berlangsung secara berkelanjutan. Ketiga, fleksibilitas dalam mengadaptasi inovasi digital dengan konteks lokal masih terhambat oleh keterbatasan infrastruktur. Keempat, ketahanan kelembagaan melemah akibat keterbatasan pendanaan, sumber daya manusia, serta kesenjangan partisipasi antargenerasi. Penelitian ini menekankan 1) pentingnya pembentukan forum kolaborasi yang terinstitusionalisasi, 2) sistem pendampingan yang berkelanjutan, 3) pemerataan infrastruktur digital, dan 4) penguatan ketahanan organisasi guna mengoptimalkan peran KIM. Melalui penerapan *adaptive governance*, KIM berpotensi menjadi media komunikasi partisipatif yang lebih efektif dalam mendorong transparansi dan pembangunan yang inklusif. Penelitian ini juga memberikan kontribusi baik pada pengembangan diskursus teoretis mengenai *adaptive governance* maupun rekomendasi praktis bagi reformasi tata kelola pemerintahan daerah.

Kata kunci: Adaptive governance, Komunitas Informasi Masyarakat (KIM), Komunikasi publik.

INTRODUCTION

Public service is a key indicator in assessing government performance. Governments are required not only to provide services that are fast, accurate, and accountable, but also to build mechanisms that are responsive to the dynamic needs of society. In this context, adaptive human resources (HR) and effective institutional systems are crucial in ensuring good governance. Moreover, public participation plays a vital role in strengthening governance. Through citizen engagement, local governments can obtain relevant feedback, accurately map societal needs, and secure social support for policy implementation (Putri & Mutiarin, 2018; Parjaman, Soedarmo, & Enas, 2019).

In line with this, the concept of *adaptive governance* has emerged as a new approach in modern governance. *Adaptive governance* emphasizes flexibility, innovation, collaboration, and institutional capacity to respond to complex external environments (van Assche, Valentinov, & Verschraegen, 2021). This approach requires governments not only to rely on top-down regulations but also to create wider participatory spaces, encourage digital innovation, and develop reflexive mechanisms for policy evaluation (Karpouzoglou, Dewulf, & Clark, 2016). Hence, *adaptive governance* is highly relevant as a response to bureaucratic challenges in the digital era, which is characterized by technological acceleration and increasing complexity of public problems.

The advancement of information and communication technology (ICT) further reinforces the urgency of adaptive governance. Digital innovations through the implementation of *e-Government* have proven effective in enhancing transparency, accountability, and public participation (Muallidin, 2014; Kholik, 2020). In Soppeng Regency, the digital transformation initiative was marked by the issuance of Regent Regulation No. 30 of 2022 on Electronic-Based Government Systems (SPBE), which provides a legal framework for integrating technology into government administration. In addition, the launch of the SRIKANDI application in November 2023 represented a strategic step in modernizing archival management and public services (republiknews.co.id, 2023). The local government also established the Soppeng Command Center (SCC) as a digital service and regional information control hub.

Nevertheless the implementation of SPBE in Soppeng still faces considerable challenges. Results of self-assessment indicated that the achievement of digital governance indicators requires significant improvement, particularly in system integration and consistency across local government units. Infrastructure limitations have also delayed the adoption of the Electronic Signature (TTE), a prerequisite for the digitalization of official documents (kominfo.sulselprov.go.id, 2022; daerah.sindonews.com, 2022). Furthermore, despite the operation of the SCC, service integration across government agencies remains partial, thus limiting its effectiveness in supporting public communication (journal.unismuh.ac.id,

2021). These conditions highlight that the principles of adaptive governance in Soppeng have yet to be optimally implemented.

Within the framework of public information governance, Community Information Groups serve as a strategic instrument regulated by Ministerial Regulation of the Ministry of Communication and Information No. 08/2010. Community Information Groups functions as a community based public service institution responsible for information dissemination, public education, and two way communication between government and citizens. The existence of Community Information Groups is essential, as it is normatively positioned as the frontline in supporting public information transparency, as mandated by Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure, and in strengthening public participation as stipulated in Law No. 23 of 2014 on Local Government. Empirically, as of November 2023, there were approximately 50 officially registered Community Information Groups in Soppeng Regency, yet only 20 had active digital platforms such as websites or social media accounts. Moreover, the management of these digital platforms remains suboptimal and has not been fully utilized as channels for public communication or community promotion (radarselatan.fajar.co.id, 2023). Meanwhile, in March 2022, the Soppeng Communication and Information Office organized a socialization program on PPID roles, SP4N-LAPOR usage, and Community Information Groups empowerment at the regency level, which was attended by 172 participants from government units and village/ward level Community Information Groups (kilassulawesi.com, 2022; beritabersatu.com, 2022). Despite these formal initiatives, Community Information Groups still faces major challenges such as limited digital literacy among members, lack of operational funding, and insufficient integration with the SPBE system managed by the Communication and Information Office.

This situation reveals a significant gap between normative expectations (government regulations and policies) and empirical conditions in practice. Normatively, Community Information Groups is expected to serve as an inclusive, adaptive, and participatory public communication bridge. Empirically, however, its implementation remains sporadic, inconsistent, and unable to fully meet the information needs of society. This highlights the necessity of adopting an *adaptive governance* approach to strengthen KIM, particularly in aspects of cross-actor collaboration, technological integration, and community capacity building.

Based on these conditions, this study carries both strong urgency and clear novelty. Its urgency lies in the growing societal demand for public information transparency in the digital era, while communication governance in Soppeng still encounters structural and cultural constraints. Its novelty lies in the analytical focus on integrating the concept of *adaptive governance* into the development of Community Information Groups, an approach that has rarely been explored in academic literature. Previous studies have predominantly focused on institutional evaluations or general *e-Government* implementation, whereas the study of *adaptive governance* in the context of public communication through KIM remains limited.

This research aims to examine the implementation of adaptive governance in the development of Community Information Groups in Soppeng Regency, with a particular emphasis on the extent to which Community Information Groups can function as adaptive, participatory, and collaborative public communication channels. In addition to providing theoretical contributions to the development of *adaptive governance* at the local level, this study is also expected to offer strategic recommendations for the Soppeng Government in strengthening the role of KIM as an effective, inclusive, and sustainable medium of public information disclosure.

METHOD

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach to examine the implementation of *adaptive governance* in the development of Community Information Groups in Soppeng Regency. Soppeng was purposively selected as the research site because the local government has formally established Community Information Groups under the Ministry of Communication and Informatics Regulation No.

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08/2010 and integrated it into the regional *Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE)*. The performance of Community Information Groups remains suboptimal, making Soppeng a relevant case to analyze. Research participants were determined using purposive sampling, consisting of officials from the Department of Communication and Informatics of Soppeng, Community Information Groups managers from several districts, community members who use Community Information Groups services, and local media practitioners. Data were gathered through in depth interviews, participant observations, and document analysis of relevant regulations, reports, and media publications. The data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) interactive model, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. To ensure validity, the study applied triangulation of sources and methods, member checking, and peer debriefing, allowing for credible and trustworthy findings regarding the adaptive governance of Community Information Groups in Soppeng.

DISCUSSION

This study examines the implementation of adaptive governance in the development of the Community Information Group in Soppeng Regency by applying the framework of Brunner et al. (2005), which emphasizes four main dimensions: Collaboration, Learning, Flexibility, and Resilience. The analysis reveals significant gaps between normative expectations and empirical conditions, while also highlighting opportunities and challenges in strengthening public information governance in the digital era.

1. Collaboration

Collaboration is a fundamental dimension of adaptive governance that emphasizes the involvement of cross sectoral actors. The Soppeng District Government, through Diskominfo, has attempted to engage Community Information Groups, public information officers, village administrations, and community organizations in public communication forums. For example, in mid-2025, training sessions and SPBE (Electronic-Based Government System) socialization were conducted. However, the findings indicate that collaboration remains largely instructional. Diskominfo often positions Community Information Groups as policy implementers rather than equal partners in policy formulation. This aligns with Ansell & Gash (2017), who argue that collaboration limited to formalities fails to build sustainable trust. As expressed by a Community Information Groups manager from Donri-Donri Subdistrict:

"We are invited to socialization events, but we are rarely asked for our input. Yet, people in the village trust us more for everyday information." (Interview, July 15, 2025).

Similarly, a Community Information Groups member from Laringgi Village stated:

"When there is a government program, we implement it. But we are rarely involved from the beginning in deciding how the program should be designed." (Interview, July 25, 2025).

Recent literature stresses that adaptive governance requires deliberative collaboration, emphasizing dialogue, co-production, and trust-building (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Nabatchi & Leighninger, 2020; Emerson et al., 2022). Thus, Soppeng needs to shift from formal coordination toward genuine strategic partnerships.

2. Learning

The learning dimension highlights continuous and iterative processes of reflection, experimentation, and improvement. Diskominfo has organized digital literacy training, website management workshops, and the use of the SRIKANDI application to improve the capacity of Community Information Groups managers. Nevertheless, empirical evidence shows that learning practices remain largely top-down. There are limited opportunities for feedback or reflective discussions to capture local challenges faced by Community Information Groups. As explained by a Community Information Groups member from Lalabata Village:

"The training in July was useful, but after that, there was no follow-up. When we encountered

technical issues, like when the website didn't work, we didn't know whom to contact." (Interview, July 20, 2025).

A Community Information Groups representative from Marioriawa Subdistrict added:

"We were trained to create digital content, but many people here still struggle to access it. Sometimes the information stops with us and doesn't reach the community." (Interview, August 3, 2025).

Contemporary scholarship emphasizes the importance of double-loop learning not only correcting technical errors but also revising underlying norms and institutional mindsets (Chaffin et al., 2016; Carayannis et al., 2021). Therefore, Diskominfo needs to establish feedback loops between KIM and government to ensure that learning evolves beyond simple knowledge transfer.

3. Flexibility

Flexibility reflects the ability of institutions and communities to adapt to changing environments, whether technological or social. Soppeng has made progress through SPBE implementation, the launch of SRIKANDI, and the operation of the Soppeng Command Center (SCC). Yet, implementation faces serious obstacles, particularly in terms of internet infrastructure, digital literacy, and human resource readiness.

A Diskominfo official noted:

"The biggest problem is internet access. In some villages, the signal is still very weak. As a result, the digital applications we prepared cannot be fully used." (Interview, August 5, 2025).

Consequently, some Community Information Groups units revert to traditional methods such as village meetings, public announcements at mosques, or bulletin boards. This contrasts with adaptive governance principles, which require inclusive infrastructure and rapid local innovation (Folke, 2021; Turnhout et al., 2022).

As expressed by a Community Information Groups leader from Panincong Village:

"We want to use social media to promote village activities, but because the network is unstable, we still rely more on mosque loudspeakers for announcements." (Interview, August 7, 2025).

Thus, while policy innovations exist, their practical flexibility remains constrained by structural barriers.

4. Resilience

Resilience reflects the capacity of institutions such as Community Information Groups to survive and function despite challenges. Some Community Information Groups units show resilience by independently utilizing personal resources, such as members' social media accounts, to disseminate information. However, in general Community Information Groups resilience in Soppeng remains fragile. The lack of permanent operational funding, limited youth involvement, and heavy dependence on government programs hinder long-term sustainability.

As noted by a community leader from Maroriwawo Subdistrict:

"When there is funding or a program from the government, Community Information Groups is active. But without it, activities stop, because we have no fixed operational budget." (Interview, August 10, 2025).

A Community Information Groups manager from Citta Subdistrict added:

"Most of our members are older. It's difficult to get young people involved. Without regeneration, I worry that Community Information Groups will gradually fade away." (Interview, August 18, 2025).

Recent research emphasizes that resilience requires diversified resources, strong social networks, and youth regeneration (Baird et al., 2019; Djalante et al., 2020). Therefore, strengthening Community Information Groups in Soppeng must prioritize sustainable financing, integration with SPBE, and youth engagement.

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CONCLUSION

This study has examined the implementation of adaptive governance in the development of Community Information Groups in Soppeng Regency using the framework proposed by Brunner et al. (2005), which emphasizes the dimensions of collaboration, learning, flexibility, and resilience. The findings indicate a clear gap between normative expectations, as outlined in national policies and local regulations, and empirical realities in the field.

First, the dimension of collaboration shows that while the Soppeng District Government has attempted to involve Community Information Groups in forums and programs, the engagement remains largely top-down. Community Information Groups are still treated as implementers rather than co-creators of policy, limiting the potential for building trust and co-production. Second, the learning process, although supported by training programs and digital literacy initiatives, is still fragmented and lacks iterative feedback loops. Without mechanisms for continuous reflection, adaptive learning is reduced to mere technical knowledge transfer, which fails to address the deeper institutional and cultural barriers faced by Community Information Groups.

Third, the flexibility dimension demonstrates partial progress through innovations such as SPBE, the SRIKANDI application, and the Soppeng Command Center. However, these initiatives face significant infrastructural challenges, particularly in rural areas with limited internet access and digital literacy gaps. This hinders the practical adaptability of Community Information Groups in responding to changing societal and technological environments. Finally, the resilience of Community Information Groups remains fragile. Although some groups have shown creativity in sustaining their activities with minimal resources, most Community Information Groups are highly dependent on government support and lack financial sustainability, youth regeneration, and diversified resources. These factors threaten their long-term viability as instruments of participatory public information governance.

Taken together, these findings reinforce the theoretical insights of recent adaptive governance scholarship (Emerson & Nabatchi, 2015; Chaffin et al., 2016; Folke, 2021; Emerson et al., 2022), which stress that adaptive governance is not achieved through formal compliance alone but requires deliberative collaboration, iterative learning, inclusive flexibility, and institutional resilience. From a practical perspective, this study suggests several strategic directions for strengthening Community Information Groups in Soppeng: (1) institutionalizing dialogue forums between Diskominfo, Community Information Groups, and civil society; (2) establishing continuous mentoring systems to support post-training practices; (3) accelerating digital infrastructure development to ensure inclusive access; and (4) enhancing resilience by providing sustainable operational funding, encouraging youth involvement, and integrating Community Information Groups more effectively into SPBE ecosystems. In conclusion, Community Information Groups in Soppeng represent a crucial yet underutilized channel for public communication and information disclosure. Strengthening them through the lens of adaptive governance not only improves local transparency and accountability but also enhances community empowerment and democratic participation in the digital era.

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