



PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES OF THE SEMARANG CITY DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AGENCY (BAPPEDA) IN THE "KITA TANI MUDA" PROGRAM

Rahma Yudianisa¹, Yanuar Luqman²

^{1,2}Magister Ilmu Komunikasi, Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Facing a decline in farmers and limited agricultural land, the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Kota Semarang) launched "Kita Tani Muda," a business incubation program to attract young generation's participation to agriculture. Although Bappeda Kota Semarang promoted the program through various channels, it failed to meet its target number of participant. The main objective of this study is to understand the persuasive communication carried out by Bappeda Kota Semarang in promoting the Kita Tani Muda program by analyzing the communication elements contained within it. This study also identifies factors that hinder the community from participating in Kita Tani Muda. This study used a qualitative method with a case study approach. The results show that Bappeda Kota Semarang has carried out persuasive communication in promoting Kita Tani Muda by establishing source credibility, designing attractive messages, and selecting relevant channels. However, participants were hesitant to join due to their unfamiliarity with the concept of business incubation and its benefits. The study concludes that Bappeda Kota Semarang needs to enhance public awareness of business incubation and create more effective promotional strategies to boost participation in similar programs in the future.

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Corresponding Author:

Rahma Yudianisa
Magister Ilmu Komunikasi
Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia
yudianisarahma@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Semarang City represents a unique urban context as the only metropolitan area in Indonesia that still possesses relatively extensive agricultural land with a substantial level of production. In addition to remaining a rice-producing region, Semarang City also cultivates a variety of horticultural commodities, including durian, crystal guava, longan, rambutan, and other crops. Nevertheless, only approximately 11% of the total land area of Semarang City is currently suitable for agricultural use. This limited land availability is sufficient to meet merely about 15% of the total food demand of the city's population. This condition has prompted the Semarang City Government to initiate a range of programs aimed at strengthening food security, particularly within the agricultural sector, such as the large-scale promotion of urban farming across all segments of society, including neighborhood communities, government offices, and educational institutions.

However, public engagement in the agricultural sector in Semarang City remains largely ceremonial in nature. The sustainability of urban farming outputs has not yet been systematically designed or institutionalized. Community participation in urban farming has largely been driven by the personal commitment of the incumbent

mayor rather than by an intrinsic motivation to pursue the economic and social benefits of agricultural activities. The decline in interest and participation in agriculture is influenced by negative perceptions of farming, urbanization and modernization processes, limited access to resources, economic uncertainty, educational background, and shifting social values [1]. The perception of agriculture as a physically demanding, dirty, and financially unrewarding occupation remains deeply rooted, particularly among millennials and Generation Z, who are more exposed to career opportunities in the technology and creative sectors. These challenges are multidimensional, encompassing limited access to capital, shrinking land availability, inadequate incentives, and persistent social stigma.

To attract greater interest and participation of young people in the agricultural sector, the Semarang City Government has launched a program aimed at preparing youth-based agricultural entrepreneurs across the entire value chain, known as *Kita Tani Muda*. *Kita Tani Muda* is a business incubation program for local young entrepreneurs in Semarang City. Mentored by founders of both local and national start-up companies, the program is expected to generate a new cohort of young agripreneurs grounded in agricultural innovation. For the successful implementation of the *Kita Tani Muda* program, the active participation of young people aged 19–39 years identified as millennial farmers is essential. The Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) has therefore undertaken various promotional initiatives to disseminate information about the *Kita Tani Muda* program to the wider community.

Efforts to introduce the *Kita Tani Muda* program involve persuasive communication strategies implemented by the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) to attract young people's interest and encourage their participation as program beneficiaries. Communication plays a crucial role in openly conveying issues through public forums, enabling the identification of effective solutions. However, agricultural themes and issues have not yet received sufficient attention in community forums [2].

Previous studies have examined the application of persuasive communication to foster youth participation. One such study explored the persuasive communication practices of young people in the Ciptagelar Indigenous Village in agroforestry activities within the Kasepuhan Ciptagelar community, Simaresmi, Sukabumi Regency, West Java Province. A distinctive persuasive communication model grounded in local wisdom and traditional values was developed in Ciptagelar Indigenous Village, empowering youth to influence surrounding communities to engage in forest conservation efforts [3]. In addition, education and information on the importance of forest conservation, internalized from an early age through guidance by traditional elders, provide youth with a profound understanding of their role as persuasive communicators. Beyond direct verbal communication, young people in Ciptagelar Indigenous Village also utilize social media to convey messages to external audiences regarding their forest conservation and village environmental initiatives.

According to the findings of Bachtiar et al. (2025), communication strategies that successfully persuade women farmer groups to adopt agricultural innovations are those that integrate personal approaches, engaging visual content, and two-way online interactions [4]. Such strategies help to build strong trust and motivation. Other studies indicate that attracting young people to the agricultural sector requires persuasive communication focused on three main approaches: early-age education, the creation of a supportive agribusiness climate, and the utilization of social media [5]. Early-age education is essential for cultivating interest in agriculture. A conducive agribusiness environment that emphasizes profitability and opportunity is likely to appeal to today's youth, who tend to be more pragmatic. The use of social media to engage and inform young people about modern agricultural practices and the success stories of agricultural entrepreneurs is also necessary, given that social media has become a primary information source for the younger generation. Collectively, these strategies can reshape perceptions and encourage active participation in agriculture.

It is expected that these various strategies can serve as solutions to address the declining interest of younger generations in the agricultural sector. In addition, to attract young people to agriculture, persuasive communication should highlight the sector's potential as a creative, profitable, and respectable profession [6]. In the context of young farmer regeneration, effective business communication through mentoring has proven to be a key factor in enhancing the capacity and motivation of young entrepreneurs in livestock farming, which is also part of integrated agriculture [7]. Communication can inspire young people to become job creators and agents of change in the agricultural sector by demonstrating that agriculture represents a viable pathway toward food security and sustainability.

The Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Semarang City has developed promotional materials for the *Kita Tani Muda* program in an appealing manner, including showcasing success stories of agricultural entrepreneurs and offering prizes of considerable value. Bappeda Semarang City has conducted both direct and media-based communication to introduce the *Kita Tani Muda* program. However, in practice, the program has not yet succeeded in achieving its targeted number of participants, although it continues to be implemented. Several obstacles may have emerged and reduced the effectiveness of the persuasive communication carried out by Bappeda Semarang City to attract public participation. Factors such as limited

understanding of program benefits, lack of trust in government institutions, and inadequate access to information potentially hinder community participation [8]. Therefore, the implementation of more inclusive and transparent communication strategies is required to identify and address these barriers.

It is essential to ensure the achievement of participant targets for the Kita Tani Muda program so that more young people become aware of the urgency of agricultural sustainability and recognize the existing potential of agriculture, thereby motivating them to engage directly in the sector. The involvement of young people, as the future generation of the nation, is crucial for strengthening food security, which begins with the stability of the agricultural sector. Unfortunately, the sustainability of Indonesian agriculture is currently under threat. The number of farmers has continued to decline significantly from year to year.

According to the First Phase Release of the 2023 Agricultural Census Results, the number of Individual Agricultural Enterprises (Usaha Pertanian Perorangan/UTP) amounted to 29,342,202 units, representing a decrease of 7.45% compared to 31,705,295 units in 2013 [9]. A decline was observed in the number of farmers aged between 15 and 54 years, while, conversely, the number of farmers aged 55 years and above increased. Furthermore, based on the 2023 Agricultural Census, the distribution of farmers by generational classification following William H. Frey's framework shows that 0% belong to the post-Generation Z cohort, 2.14% to Generation Z, 25.61% to Millennials, 42.39% to Generation X, 27.61% to Baby Boomers, and 2.24% to the Pre-Boomer generation.

The level of farmer regeneration can be assessed through indicators such as the number of millennial farmers. The proportion of millennial farmers also reflects the adoption of digital technology, which is expected to support the development of modern, productive, and sustainable agriculture. In accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of Agriculture of the Republic of Indonesia Number 4 of 2019 on the Guidelines for the Agricultural Human Resources Development Movement toward a Global Food Barn 2045, millennial farmers are defined as farmers aged 19 to 39 years and/or farmers who are adaptive to digital technology [10]. At present, numerous agricultural programs have been initiated by the government, the private sector, and community-based initiatives to attract young people to engage in the agricultural sector. These efforts are expected to increase the number of millennial farmers (farmer regeneration), thereby ensuring the sustainability of the agricultural sector and securing national food availability.

Farmer regeneration refers to the succession and transfer of agricultural enterprises aimed at creating new actors in the agricultural sector. Farmer regeneration may take the form of family-based and non-family-based regeneration [11]. Family regeneration involves the transfer of farm management from parents to their children or other family members. In contrast, non-family regeneration refers to the transfer of agricultural enterprises to individuals outside the family relationship or to pioneering farmers who do not originate from farming families.

There are two main approaches to farmer regeneration, namely the adoption type and the adaptation type [12]. The adoption type refers to regeneration driven by external actors such as facilitators, counselors, consultants, and extension officers from government, private, or community-based institutions. This type of regeneration can be categorized as planned regeneration (base succession). In contrast, the adaptation type is driven by community actors themselves, including land developers, agribusiness entrepreneurs, traders, and collectors. The adaptation type represents unplanned regeneration (no succession plan).

Young people are the primary target of farmer regeneration programs. Transforming the public image of agriculture, livestock, and fisheries as sectors with high economic value is one strategy to attract Indonesian youth to engage in farming [13]. Another important measure is the dissemination of agricultural information through various media channels. In addition, it is essential to emphasize that employment in the agricultural sector is not limited to on-farm activities such as crop cultivation, but also includes off-farm activities in pre-harvest and post-harvest stages, such as processing, product quality improvement, and agricultural product marketing.

The development of an agricultural industry supported by innovation and technology that integrates upstream and downstream processes offers significant potential to generate high-value agricultural products [13]. Therefore, adopting a bio-industrial agricultural approach is a strategic pathway to achieve this objective. This approach represents an important value proposition for young people, conveyed through information dissemination and the utilization of modern technologies.

The transformation of agrarian societies into information societies has stimulated the emergence of digital agriculture applications [14]. In particular, the integration of digital applications into smartphones has made them easily accessible and highly practical for users. Digital agriculture applications vary widely, ranging from weather forecasting and cultivation management to pest and disease control, post-harvest handling, and agribusiness management.

In response to this phenomenon, governments, universities, private sector actors, and community-based organizations have implemented various programs to enhance public interest and skills in agriculture, especially among younger generations. One notable example is the Palu City Government, which deployed hydroponics experts with strong public communication competencies to encourage community participation in hydroponic farming. In addition, social media platforms have been optimally utilized to promote agricultural community

activities and products on a broader scale, thereby attracting both hydroponic product consumers and new farmers [15].

Furthermore, the Ministry of Agriculture has launched the Youth Entrepreneurship and Employment Support Services (YESS) program to foster resilient and high-quality millennial agripreneurs. Similarly, the West Java Provincial Government has implemented its Farmer Regeneration Program, which inaugurated 1,249 participants in 2022 and expanded to 4,095 participants in 2023.

The outcomes of these programs can be considered notably positive, as evidenced by the increasing number of training participants from one cohort to the next. According to the study by Bakri et al. (2023), the number of nationally certified internship participants in the 2021 YESS Program at PPIU South Sulawesi reached 105 individuals, exceeding the target of 80 participants [16]. The implementation of this internship program has been proven to motivate rural youth to engage in the agricultural sector and to help anticipate the shortage of young labor in agriculture. Accordingly, this internship model is recommended for wider adoption across more regions.

Community service activities conducted by the Student Organization Capacity Strengthening Program (PPK ORMAWA) Team of the Plant Clinic, Universitas Padjadjaran, also demonstrated positive outcomes, as reported by Kholifah et al. (2024) [17]. The program, entitled “Sasarengan Ngariung Patani Muda” (SaUng TaMu), which translates into Indonesian as “gathering together with young farmers,” aimed to provide training for youth aged 20–35 years in Genteng Village. Based on questionnaire results, improvements in training scores were observed sequentially, with percentage increases of 11.11%, 15.7%, 58.73%, and 122.22%. The main factors contributing to the program’s success included the availability of equipment, adequate facilities, community support, and the active involvement of SaUng TaMu members. The outcomes achieved were reflected in the participants’ enhanced capacity to design crop-based farming enterprises in Genteng Village.

Based on the foregoing discussion on the importance of youth interest and participation in farmer regeneration efforts, the research question is formulated as follows: How does persuasive communication conducted by the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) in promoting the Kita Tani Muda program attract participants? The primary objective of this study is to examine the persuasive communication strategies employed by Bappeda of Semarang City in promoting the Kita Tani Muda program by analyzing the communication elements involved. In addition, this study seeks to identify the factors that hinder community participation in the Kita Tani Muda program in order to further support the elaboration of the main research objective.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts an interpretive paradigm and employs a qualitative research approach. Qualitative research emphasizes the understanding and interpretation of meanings and participants’ experiences through inductive analysis [18]. The research design is a case study approach. In case study research, the researcher explores a single case or multiple cases over a period of time through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (such as observations, interviews, audiovisual materials, documents, and reports), and reports a comprehensive case description as well as emerging case themes [19]. The unit of analysis in this study is a single case (single-case study).

This research focuses on the communication elements of promotional activities conducted by the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Kota Semarang) in introducing the Kita Tani Muda program, from its initial launch in January 2024 until the completion of all program activities in May 2024. The data used in this study consist of both primary and secondary data. Primary data comprise verbal narratives obtained through in-depth interviews with key informants. Secondary data include literature reviews drawn from books, academic journals, research manuscripts, and other written information sources available online.

Additional data were obtained from the Terms of Reference (ToR) and the official social media platforms of the Kita Tani Muda program. The selected informant was the Sub-Coordinator for Economic Production Planning at Bappeda Kota Semarang, who served as the Person in Charge (PIC) of the Kita Tani Muda program. The informant was chosen based on their direct involvement and professional experience in implementing the program. The research site was Semarang City Hall, which houses the offices of Bappeda Kota Semarang. Data collection and analysis were conducted from September 2024 to March 2025.

3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

Persuasive communication encourages the adoption of innovation and technology practices, which ultimately leads to holistic development in welfare and sustainable agricultural practices that preserve natural resources for future generations [20]. The Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Semarang City implements persuasive communication strategies in its efforts to promote the Kita Tani Muda program. This initiative aims to attract prospective participants to join Kita Tani Muda. DeVito (2018) defines persuasive

communication as an effort to change or reinforce the audience's beliefs and attitudes, motivating them to take specific actions or adopt the expected behaviors [21].

Bappeda of Semarang City also conducts publication and promotional activities to inform the wider community about various agricultural development programs initiated by the agency. The objective is to stimulate public interest and encourage community participation in these agricultural sector development programs. The promotional strategies employed include the use of diverse publication media, ranging from social media platforms, large-scale program launches, collaboration with public figures, online and offline outreach activities, to official correspondence with schools across Semarang City.

Instagram as a Social Media Platform

In an era in which the internet plays a significant role in shaping public perceptions, social media has become an important medium for promoting government programs and activities. This also applies to the Kita Tani Muda program. The Semarang City Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) has established a dedicated Instagram account, @kitatanimuda.semarang, as the program's official social media platform. As of December 1, 2024, the Kita Tani Muda Instagram account had 936 followers and actively published program-related information from January to May 2024, as well as subsequent related activities [22]. In total, the account had uploaded 115 feed posts and featured three highlight stories.

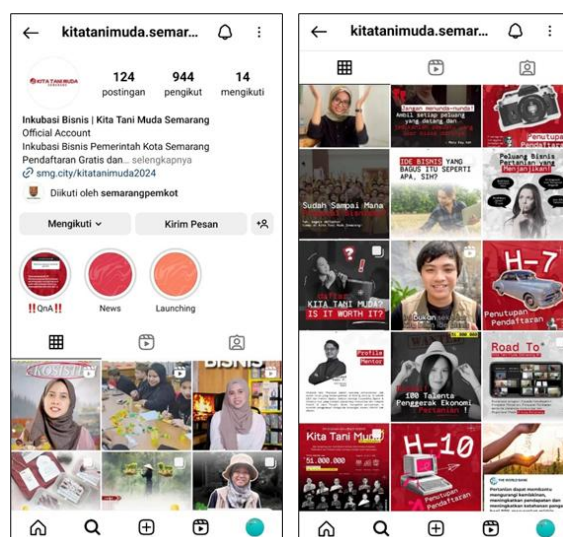


Figure 1. Kita Tani Muda Instagram Account (Instagram, 2025)

The content shared on the Kita Tani Muda Instagram account includes information on program stages, timelines, basic business concepts, success stories of agripreneurs, mentor profiles and testimonials, activity summaries, and official announcements. Ultimately, the account serves not only as a promotional tool to attract prospective participants but also as a documentation platform for program implementation. This enables the wider public to follow the entire Kita Tani Muda program series. Public engagement is also facilitated through interactive features such as likes and comments, allowing users to express their responses and feedback on the program.

Engaging High-Profile Figures for Program Promotion

Another strategy adopted by the Semarang Municipal Government to introduce the Kita Tani Muda program to a wider audience was to launch the program concurrently with the inauguration of a rice mill, an event attended by the then Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI), Puan Maharani [23]. The presence of a prominent national figure at the program launch was expected to attract greater public attention and enhance media exposure, as activities involving high-ranking state officials are typically covered by national journalists.

The involvement of well-known public figures can generate emotional engagement, as political identity is often associated with public interest. The participation of prominent members of parliament may also stimulate public sentiment [24]. Consequently, this approach was expected to broaden the dissemination of information regarding the Kita Tani Muda program.

“The mayor wanted a launch event attended by Mrs. Puan, the Speaker of the DPR RI, who was present at the rice mill inauguration. The challenge was how to bring in 500 young people. Alhamdulillah, we were very pleased to receive support in helping campaign for this program.” (KNS, personal interview, 23 October 2024).

Online and Offline Outreach

Promotion of the Kita Tani Muda program is conducted through both online and offline outreach strategies. Online socialization is carried out via Zoom meetings to reach participants from the university student population. In the previous incubation program, namely the Food Start-Up Challenge (FSC), the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Kota Semarang) collaborated with university lecturers to encourage their students to participate in the FSC program series. In line with the Kampus Merdeka policy, students' participation in the incubation program was subsequently converted into several academic credits (Satuan Kredit Semester), allowing it to be formally recognized as part of their academic assessment. However, such collaboration with lecturers is no longer implemented in the Kita Tani Muda program, as it was considered less effective and was feared to encourage participation motivated merely by academic credit attainment.

In addition to online outreach targeting university students, offline socialization is conducted through sub-district heads (camat) and village heads (lurah) across Semarang City to mobilize prospective participants from community-based organizations, such as youth associations (Karang Taruna). The encouragement provided by lurah and camat to local communities to participate in the Kita Tani Muda program reflects a form of institutional solidarity and support among civil servants of the Semarang City Government for Bappeda Kota Semarang as the program organizer. Furthermore, Bappeda Kota Semarang also engages in formal correspondence with several senior and vocational high schools (SMA and SMK) throughout Semarang City to attract potential participants from the student population. Program posters and flyers are displayed on school bulletin boards. Although limited in scale, this approach has proven effective in attracting community members to participate in the Kita Tani Muda program.

Factors Constraining Participation

Several factors have been identified as barriers to participation in government programs, including limited access to information, inadequate resources, weak coordination among stakeholders, and time constraints or scheduling mismatches between program activities and the target community [25]. Despite extensive promotional efforts, the Kita Tani Muda program ultimately succeeded in recruiting 156 groups to register as participants. These participants were drawn not only from Semarang City but also from Kendal Regency and Ungaran (Semarang Regency).

The Kita Tani Muda program coordinator (PIC) acknowledged that recruiting 156 groups was a considerable challenge. The primary reason was that many prospective participants, although interested, were hesitant to enroll because they only had business ideas and had not yet established an agricultural enterprise. This occurred despite the program's promotional communications clearly stating that applicants without an existing business were eligible to participate, provided they had a viable agricultural business idea to develop. Fundamentally, Kita Tani Muda aims to foster an entrepreneurial mindset among workers in the agricultural sector, enabling them to enhance the economic value added of their agricultural products.

The emergence of misconceptions among prospective participants who assume that Kita Tani Muda is exclusively intended for individuals with already-established businesses represents an irony, considering that the primary objective of incubation programs is precisely to nurture early-stage ideas into viable business ventures. This misconception also indicates the presence of substantial semantic noise in the communication of Kita Tani Muda's promotional materials. The term "business incubation" appears to be insufficiently familiar to a large proportion of the target audience, particularly those who are new to entrepreneurship and lack exposure to the technology startup ecosystem.

In addition, a prevailing perception of government programs as rigid, overly bureaucratic, and largely procedural further reinforces skepticism among potential participants. Limited literacy regarding the incubation process, the benefits of mentoring, access to business networks, and the potential funding opportunities offered through such programs constitutes a major barrier to participation. In fact, incubation programs are designed to provide comprehensive support, ranging from concept development and business model formulation to facilitation of market access and investor engagement.

The difficulty in recruiting participants for Kita Tani Muda is also experienced by similar business incubation programs. Jagoan Indonesia, a business incubation program based in East Java, faces comparable challenges, despite offering substantial incentives and benefits to participants [26]. This situation highlights the need for incubation program organizers to intensify outreach efforts within youth networks in order to enhance public awareness and increase participation in business incubation initiatives.

Beyond the clarity of program information, other factors such as insufficient start-up capital, limited access to land (particularly in urban areas), and market uncertainty constitute significant barriers that discourage young people from engaging in agricultural entrepreneurship. Therefore, the communication strategy of agricultural business incubation programs must explicitly address these concerns and clearly demonstrate how participation

in such programs can help overcome these structural constraints. “In fact, our target was more ambitious. We aimed to recruit 200 participants, but the outcome did not meet our expectations (we only reached 156 participants). Nevertheless, this figure is still better than that of last year’s FSC incubation program,” (KNS, personal communication, October 23, 2024).

Based on observation and evaluation, the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Semarang City found that the involvement of well-known public figures or high-profile personalities ranging from national leaders (in this case, the Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives) to successful entrepreneurs does not necessarily function as an effective attraction for public participation in incubation programs. This is primarily because business incubation itself remains a relatively unfamiliar concept among the general public. Many community members still lack a clear understanding of the tangible benefits offered by business incubation programs.

“In fact, if people were more aware of what incubation really entails, they would realize that such training programs can cost up to three million rupiah per person. This year alone, each participant received training worth 3.5 million rupiah, including certification. Moreover, beyond that, participants may also receive awards or other incentives,” (KNS, personal communication, October 23, 2024).

Elements of Communication in the Promotional Materials of the Kita Tani Muda Program

The primary objective of persuasive communication is to influence audiences to change their value preferences and behaviors [21]. According to DeVito (2016), the elements of communication consist of communication context, source–receiver, message, channel, noise, and effects [27].

Communication Context

DeVito (2016) argues that all communication takes place within a context comprising at least four dimensions: physical context, social-psychological context, temporal context, and cultural context. Physically, Kita Tani Muda utilizes virtual spaces such as Instagram, as well as physical spaces through school outreach activities and program launch events, reflecting efforts to engage young people through multiple relevant channels. From a social-psychological perspective, the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Semarang City seeks to establish source credibility by involving national figures, emphasizing the relationship between the government and young people, and considering the degree of formality and informality in message delivery, including the appeal of the prizes offered. The temporal context also constitutes an important factor in this promotion, as the use of social media and program launches featuring national figures demonstrate adaptation to current trends and youth preferences. Cultural context likewise plays a significant role in efforts to reshape negative perceptions of agriculture among young people and to instill entrepreneurial values through business incubation initiatives.

Source Receiver

According to Derin et al. (2020), the credibility and reputation of the communicator or source have a direct implication for message acceptance by the receiver [28]. Persuasive impact tends to be low when the message source is perceived as lacking credibility or reliability. In the Kita Tani Muda program, the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Kota Semarang), as the message source, builds credibility, among others, by displaying the official emblem of the City of Semarang to signal that the message is formally issued by the municipal government. In addition, Bappeda Kota Semarang manages representative social media channels and organizes a program launching event involving prominent public figures, such as the Mayor of Semarang and the Speaker of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). The program’s credibility is further reinforced through the involvement of successful young agripreneurs as mentors. As for the main appeal, Kita Tani Muda offers a cash prize of IDR 51 million and various training benefits to attract young people to participate in the program.

DeVito emphasizes that audience characteristics significantly influence the effectiveness of persuasion. Factors such as age, gender, education, culture, values, and the audience’s initial attitudes toward the persuasive topic must be taken into account in designing persuasive messages. Understanding the characteristics of young people as the target audience of Kita Tani Muda is therefore crucial for the success of its promotion. The target participants are youth aged 19–35 years. In practice, participants include individuals who already run agricultural businesses and seek to expand them, as well as those who do not yet have an agricultural business and are still at the idea stage.

Message

According to Harianto (2022), persuasive communication as an activity of message delivery is primarily reflected in message design, which can be identified by the presence of invitational or persuasive wording, rather than being analyzed solely from the communicator’s intent [29]. Persuasive communication is an activity of conveying messages that is evident through the use of textual expressions carrying invitational meaning. In the

promotional materials of Kita Tani Muda on Instagram, Bappeda Kota Semarang incorporates persuasive calls to action within the message structure. For instance, in the announcement of the registration extension on 16 February 2024, the content caption reads: “Ayoo, what are you waiting for?! Don’t miss this opportunity and register your business before the registration is officially closed. See you, young agri-preneurs!” The promotional content of Kita Tani Muda also draws on data from credible sources, such as the World Bank, to strengthen the arguments conveyed in the message. In addition, the campaign frequently features testimonials from young agricultural entrepreneurs to enhance message credibility and audience appeal.



Figure 2. Persuasive caption in the Instagram posts of Kita Tani Muda (Instagram, 2025)

Channel

The communication channel used to deliver persuasive messages is equally important. DeVito (2016) argues that communication rarely occurs through a single channel; rather, it typically takes place simultaneously across two, three, or even four different channels [27]. Successful communication strategies therefore involve a multi-channel approach, integrating traditional, interpersonal, and mass media to reach diverse farmer demographics [30]. This approach is also evident in the Kita Tani Muda promotion. Selecting appropriate promotional channels to engage younger generations is crucial. Social media serves as a key tool for encouraging participation, while also presenting challenges such as misinformation and the need for transparency [31]. Accordingly, Bappeda Kota Semarang employs Instagram as its primary social media platform, complemented by direct communication through program launch events attended by key stakeholders, online and offline socialization activities, and formal outreach to schools through official correspondence.

Noise

According to DeVito (2016), noise distorts part of a message as it is transmitted from the sender to the receiver [27]. Communication may be affected by several types of noise, namely physical noise, physiological noise, psychological noise, and semantic noise. Based on the factors inhibiting participation discussed earlier, semantic noise appears to be the most prominent during the promotion process of Kita Tani Muda. This is evident from the audience’s perception that the program is intended only for those who already operate an agricultural business.

In fact, it has been clearly stated that prospective participants who only have a business idea and have not yet run an agricultural enterprise are also eligible to apply. This misunderstanding may stem from ambiguous interpretations of the message as formulated. For instance, in the Instagram promotional content (January 16, 2024), the text and caption read: “Seeking 100 Creative Agribusinesses!!,” which could be revised to “Seeking 100 Creative Agribusiness Ideas!” The inclusion of the word ideas is intended to clarify that individuals who only possess a business idea are likewise encouraged to participate in Kita Tani Muda.

Effects

The primary objective of persuasive communication is to generate effects on message recipients in the form of changes in attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors. Persuasive communication can effectively influence attitudes and behaviors through mechanisms such as elaboration and validation [32]. In this study, the effect under investigation is youth participation in the agricultural sector through the Kita Tani Muda Program. This effect is reflected in the number of participants involved and their consistency in completing all stages of the program.

According to DeVito (2016), there are generally three types of effects: cognitive effects, affective effects, and behavioral effects [27]. Cognitive effects refer to the awareness and knowledge of audiences or prospective participants regarding the potential of agricultural business and government support for agricultural sector development through various programs, including Kita Tani Muda. Affective effects are manifested in the emergence of interest in pursuing careers and business opportunities in agriculture. Meanwhile, behavioral effects

are indicated by audiences registering as participants in the Kita Tani Muda Program as a concrete step toward direct engagement in the agricultural sector.

Optimizing the Communication Strategy of the Agricultural Business Incubation Program

Considering that business incubation has been designated by the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Kota Semarang) as an annual flagship program (with different thematic focuses each year), several strategic measures can be undertaken to optimize persuasive communication in order to achieve the intended targets. These measures are derived from an analysis of the factors constraining participation and are informed by the implementation of the Kita Tani Muda promotion and other comparable programs.

First, Bappeda Kota Semarang should provide a clear and comprehensive illustration of the business incubation concept. Continuous education is required to explain what business incubation is, how the process operates, and what tangible benefits participants can obtain. As the program primarily targets the general public, information should be delivered using simple and accessible language. Communication materials such as infographics, alumni testimonial videos, and interactive question-and-answer sessions with mentors or resource persons can enhance program visibility and attractiveness. It is also important to emphasize that the incubation program essentially constitutes a training initiative that is open to and intended for beginners, rather than exclusively for experienced practitioners or professionals.

Furthermore, message segmentation and the diversification of communication channels are also necessary. Although young people are often perceived as a homogeneous group, their preferences and levels of understanding vary considerably. Audience segmentation can be conducted, for instance, by categorizing university students, fresh graduates, youth community organizations (karang taruna), and agricultural hobbyist communities, and then tailoring both messages and communication channels accordingly. For university students, messages disseminated through partnerships with higher education institutions and student organizations may be more effective. In contrast, for community groups, direct engagement and the involvement of local community leaders are likely to yield stronger resonance.

Engaging the surrounding environment of prospective participants or target audiences can help foster a sense of familiarity and increase public awareness of the program being promoted. Social media content strategies should also be tailored to the platforms most frequently used by the target segment. For example, for university students, content can be disseminated through social media platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. In contrast, for youth groups such as Karang Taruna or community organizations within residential neighborhoods, message delivery is more commonly conducted through WhatsApp.

As a representative of the local government, the Semarang City Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Kota Semarang) plays a crucial role in promoting the narrative that agriculture is a prospective and profitable business sector. These efforts can be further optimized through strategic and sustainable partnerships with relevant micro-influencers and nano-influencers in the fields of agriculture, agritech, and youth entrepreneurship, particularly those who demonstrate high levels of engagement with the target audience.

Such collaborations should not be limited solely to the duration of the incubation program, as the credibility and close relationship between influencers and their audiences can generate a more substantial persuasive impact. Furthermore, after the completion of the program, the establishment of a strong alumni community should be facilitated. This community serves as a platform for experience sharing and collaborative development, and more importantly, as an effective instrument for organic promotion of future program initiatives through testimonials and word-of-mouth communication. Ultimately, the success of incubation program alumni represents the strongest validation of the program's overall effectiveness.

To enhance the credibility of the incubation program, the Semarang City Development Planning Agency (Bappeda Kota Semarang) should transparently disseminate information regarding the selection process and program outcomes. Feedback and suggestions from program participants can also serve as important inputs for improving the quality of future incubation initiatives. In addition, Bappeda Kota Semarang may publish post-program support activities to demonstrate that the incubation program represents a sustained effort to develop the targeted sector (in this study, the agricultural sector).

These measures would further strengthen the program's attractiveness by signaling long-term commitment and strong governmental engagement. It is expected that by implementing a more focused, educational, and youth-oriented communication strategy that aligns with the needs and aspirations of young generations, future incubation programs such as Kita Tani Muda will achieve higher participation rates and generate more substantial impacts on food security and economic development in the City of Semarang

4. CONCLUSION

Although Semarang is a metropolitan city, it possesses substantial agricultural potential while simultaneously facing a decline in the number of young farmers. To address this challenge and support food security, the Government of Semarang City initiated the Kita Tani Muda program, which aims to attract young people (aged 19–39 years) to the agricultural sector through a business incubation scheme. The Semarang City Development

Planning Agency (Bappeda) has implemented various promotional strategies, including the use of Instagram, a program launch involving national figures, online and offline outreach activities, and information dissemination to schools. The promotional approach emphasizes source credibility represented by Bappeda and prominent public figures persuasive messages such as the provision of cash incentives and training, and the use of diverse communication channels to stimulate young people's interest in participating in the program.

Despite these promotional efforts, the target number of Kita Tani Muda participants has not yet been fully achieved. The main barrier is the limited public understanding, particularly among young people, of the concept of business incubation and the benefits it offers, even though the program provides high-value training and attractive incentives. An analysis of the communication elements in the promotional materials based on DeVito's communication framework indicates that Bappeda has established source credibility, designed appealing messages, and selected relevant channels. However, the unfamiliarity of the business incubation concept and the presence of semantic noise remain significant challenges in influencing the audience's attitudes and beliefs toward participation. These findings highlight the need for further efforts to educate the public about business incubation and its benefits, as well as the development of more effective promotional strategies to enhance participation in similar programs in the future.

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