

Narrative Fractures in Policy Communication: Framing and Public Sentiment on Indonesia's Free Nutritious Meals Program

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ABSTRACT

Keywords

Public sentiment; policy communication;
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trust

The "Makan Bergizi Gratis" program, initiated by the Indonesian government and amplified by the media outlet Tempodotco, has triggered widespread public discourse. This study aims to examine how the program is framed in official media narratives and how it is received by the public. Using a multi-method textual analysis approach, the research combines keyword frequency analysis, non-negative matrix factorization (NMF) topic modeling, sentiment classification, and manual framing analysis. Two datasets were analyzed: structured video descriptions representing the official narrative, and 1,048 user comments capturing public sentiment. The results reveal a significant divergence between the two discourses. Official descriptions emphasize positive, policy-driven messages—highlighting nutritional benefits, administrative strategy, and global benchmarking. In contrast, public responses are dominated by negative sentiment, marked by skepticism, financial concerns, and political criticism. Common themes in the comments include distrust toward government implementation, humor and sarcasm (e.g., “omon-omon”), and comparisons to more established foreign programs. The sentiment analysis confirmed that over half of public comments carried negative emotional weight. These findings underscore the complexity of digital policy communication, especially in politically charged environments. The study contributes to communication research by illustrating how media framing and audience interpretation interact in digital spaces. It also highlights the necessity for more responsive and transparent public communication strategies in large-scale policy initiatives.

1. Introduction

In recent years, a growing body of research has examined the intersection of public policy, nutrition, and education, recognizing their combined importance in shaping human capital and social development outcomes, particularly in developing countries (McEwan et al., 2018; Mongelli et al., 2024). Among the most prominent interventions are school feeding programs, which aim to reduce childhood malnutrition and enhance educational access. These programs are widely adopted as part of comprehensive development strategies and have demonstrated significant benefits across diverse settings (Baracho et al., 2023; Oliveira Moreira et al., 2024). In Indonesia, where child stunting remains a persistent public health issue, the government has introduced the "Makan Bergizi Gratis" (MBG, Free Nutritious Meals) initiative. The program seeks to provide daily nutritious meals to school-age children nationwide, with the dual goals of improving health and reducing inequality in educational achievement.

The MBG program was launched in the context of Indonesia's ongoing struggle to reduce stunting, which affects approximately 21.6% of children under the age of five (UNICEF, n.d.) (UNICEF, n.d., 2023). As a high-profile state intervention, the program has been widely publicized and discussed, particularly after its inclusion in a series of multimedia explainer videos produced by the media outlet Tempodotco. While the government's framing of MBG emphasizes its potential to

address systemic health and education challenges, public reactions have been highly polarized. Online commentary ranges from enthusiastic support to harsh criticism, reflecting broader debates about the efficacy and transparency of social policy implementation in Indonesia.

Such polarization is not unique to Indonesia. Recent literature on policy reception has identified a recurring gap between official narratives and public sentiment, often exacerbated by governance issues such as corruption, resource mismanagement, and political opportunism (Nugroho et al., 2021; Pradana et al., 2023). These issues tend to surface especially around large-scale programs requiring significant fiscal outlays and bureaucratic coordination. Consequently, the MBG initiative offers a timely and relevant case for analyzing how media representations and citizen feedback intersect in shaping public perceptions of government-led efforts.

The advent of participatory digital platforms has transformed the landscape of policy communication. Unlike traditional media, which largely deliver unidirectional information flows, platforms such as YouTube allow audiences to interact with content, contributing their own interpretations, criticisms, and endorsements (Bossetta et al., 2023). This shift has implications for democratic engagement, particularly in countries where trust in formal institutions is uneven. On channels like Tempodotco, citizens do not merely consume state-sanctioned messages; they actively reshape them, using humor, irony, and cultural references to challenge or reinforce policy discourses. This dynamic underscores the need for methodologies capable of capturing both the content and tone of public responses.

Extant research on media framing and sentiment analysis provides foundational tools for such inquiries. Framing theory posits that the way issues are presented influences public understanding and prioritization (Bol et al., 2020), while sentiment analysis can quantify the emotional valence of textual responses (Yuanyuan et al., 2020). Topic modeling, particularly via algorithms such as Non-negative Matrix Factorization (NMF), adds another layer by identifying recurring themes across large corpora (Kamal et al., 2023). When combined, these approaches offer a multidimensional lens through which to examine the alignment or discord between official messaging and public reception.

Despite their proven utility, such computational techniques remain underutilized in Indonesian policy studies. However, recent works have begun to explore their relevance in emerging democracies, demonstrating their ability to map digital discourse and inform governance strategies (Mannan et al., 2023). Given Indonesia's extensive digital infrastructure and active online population, there is substantial potential to deepen understanding of how public sentiment evolves in response to policy initiatives. Moreover, such analysis can highlight not only criticisms but also constructive suggestions that might otherwise be overlooked in traditional feedback mechanisms.

Our research builds on this methodological foundation by applying a multilayered textual analysis to both official and public discourses surrounding the MBG program. Specifically, we analyze video descriptions and 1,048 user comments from Tempodotco's MBG series using keyword frequency analysis, topic modeling (NMF), zero-shot sentiment classification, and manual framing analysis. This enables us to identify key themes, dominant emotions, and the rhetorical strategies used in both top-down and bottom-up narratives. Through this comparison, we aim to reveal how citizens respond to government communication and what this reveals about broader trust dynamics.

In examining these data, we also consider the role of cultural expressions, particularly the widespread use of memes and colloquialisms. One example is the popular phrase "Omon-omon," a satirical take on political promises perceived as insincere or unrealistic. Such expressions, which proliferate in comment sections, provide insight into the vernacular political consciousness of the public (Ariyanti et al., 2023; Nugroho et al., 2021). They also serve as indicators of collective sentiment, reflecting and amplifying skepticism toward official narratives.

Although research on school feeding programs is extensive, there remains a gap in studies that integrate computational methods with qualitative framing analysis in a Southeast Asian context. This is especially true for policy initiatives communicated through multimedia formats and evaluated through user-generated feedback. Our study seeks to bridge this gap by demonstrating how interdisciplinary tools can be used to assess policy discourse in digitally mediated environments.

The goal of this paper is to investigate how the MBG program is framed in official media compared to public interpretations, and what this reveals about the program's reception, legitimacy, and communicative effectiveness. By integrating diverse analytical techniques, we aim to contribute to the growing literature on digital policy evaluation and provide a framework for future research in

similar settings. This study also seeks to inform policymakers, media practitioners, and civil society actors about the importance of narrative alignment, citizen trust, and responsive communication strategies in the implementation of public health initiatives.

2. Method

This study employs a comprehensive textual analysis methodology combining computational techniques and qualitative framing approaches to investigate the public discourse around Indonesia's "Makan Bergizi Gratis" (MBG) program. The methodology is designed to assess the contrast between the official narratives provided in Tempodotco's video descriptions and the public responses found in the comment sections. Building on recent work in sentiment analysis, topic modeling, and framing theory (Bozzola et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2022; Wang et al., 2023), this study offers a replicable and systematic framework for analyzing large volumes of media content and public commentary in Indonesian policy communication contexts.

2.1. Preprocessing

All text data analyzed in this study are in Bahasa Indonesia. Before conducting textual analysis, rigorous preprocessing steps were applied to ensure consistency, reduce noise, and facilitate effective model training. First, all textual content was converted to lowercase to standardize case sensitivity. Punctuation marks, non-contextual numeric characters, and other special symbols were removed to minimize irrelevant noise. Common Indonesian stopwords such as "yang," "dan," "dari," and "untuk" were eliminated using a predefined stopword list, as such terms contribute little to semantic distinction. Furthermore, all words with fewer than three characters were excluded to filter out excessively short and typically uninformative tokens such as "ya" or "ga."

Document structuring was adjusted to accommodate the distinct nature of the two datasets. For video descriptions, each line originally represented a timestamped segment. To enrich semantic context and enable stable topic modeling, every ten lines were merged into a single document, referred to as a "chunk." In contrast, the public comments dataset was treated at the individual level, with each line treated as an independent document, given that comments tend to be concise and self-contained. This approach follows established practices in natural language processing (Zhou et al., 2019).

2.2. Keyword Frequency Analysis

Following preprocessing, keyword frequency analysis was conducted to identify the most salient terms in the datasets. This initial step provides a descriptive overview of dominant themes and lexical distributions across both official and public texts. Frequencies of all retained terms were calculated, and the top 20 most frequently occurring words were tabulated for interpretation.

To facilitate a more intuitive understanding of lexical emphasis, wordclouds were generated using term frequency data. These visualizations reflect the relative prominence of keywords in both the video descriptions and the comment sections. The goal was to establish an initial lexical landscape that contextualizes further computational analysis. Words such as "makan," "bergizi," "gratis," and "anggaran" featured prominently, reaffirming the focus on nutritional intervention, governmental policy, and associated logistical concerns.

2.3. Topic Modeling (Non-Negative Matrix Factorization - NMF)

Topic modeling was implemented using the Non-Negative Matrix Factorization (NMF) algorithm. As a technique for identifying latent semantic structures within large corpora, NMF is especially effective when paired with TF-IDF (term frequency-inverse document frequency) vectorization, which was used here. For video descriptions, vectorization was configured with parameters $\max_df=0.85$ and $\min_df=2$, while for comments, $\min_df=5$ was applied to filter out infrequent terms.

The NMF model was tested with four topics for each dataset, a value determined iteratively to balance thematic granularity and interpretability. For each topic, the eight highest-weighted words (i.e., most representative tokens) from the NMF component matrix were extracted. These top words served as lexical indicators of thematic content. Furthermore, the document with the highest topic

weight (W matrix) was selected as the representative example for each topic. This allowed for qualitative inspection and validation of the topic modeling output.

This approach builds upon contemporary studies that utilize unsupervised learning for theme extraction in social media and policy texts (Almenar et al., 2021; Guo, 2024). In the context of Indonesian policy studies, this represents a novel application of topic modeling to public responses on digital platforms.

2.4. Sentiment Analysis

To assess public emotional orientation toward the MBG program, sentiment analysis was conducted using a multilingual zero-shot classification model provided by HuggingFace, specifically "facebook/bart-large-mnli." This transformer-based model enables sentiment prediction without requiring task-specific fine-tuning, which is especially valuable for under-resourced languages like Bahasa Indonesia.

Each preprocessed text segment or comment was input into the model and classified into one of three labels: "positif" (positive), "netral" (neutral), or "negatif" (negative). Due to tokenization limits (512 tokens) inherent to BERT-derived architectures, long text segments were truncated as needed. The sentiment label with the highest confidence score was retained as the final prediction per document.

This multilingual approach enables nuanced sentiment detection across informal and code-switched language patterns, which are common in user-generated Indonesian texts. Sentiment distributions were then analyzed across different topics to identify correlations between thematic content and emotional tone (Singh et al., 2024).

2.5. Framing Analysis

While sentiment analysis captures affective dimensions, framing analysis provides interpretative insight into how issues are presented and contextualized. Building on framing theory, a manual framing analysis was conducted using representative documents identified in the NMF step (Soni et al., 2024).

Each representative segment (from both video descriptions and comments) was manually coded based on its framing logic. Coding categories included: problem-oriented (highlighting challenges such as stunting or corruption), solution-oriented (emphasizing program goals or benefits), administrative (focusing on budgeting, logistics), and critical or satirical (using humor, sarcasm, or rhetorical questioning). Key terms indicative of specific framings (e.g., "korupsi," "penting," "gratis") were noted.

Supporting visualizations were developed by generating wordclouds for each topic. These wordclouds highlighted framing vocabularies and aided in distinguishing between dominant discursive frames. For example, official descriptions often featured terms linked to public health and policy implementation, while public comments frequently referenced corruption, skepticism, or humorous catchphrases such as "omon-omon."

By juxtaposing sentiment labels and topic categories with framing patterns, this analysis reveals deeper layers of meaning in the public's reception of the MBG program. This multimodal approach aligns with the broader goals of agenda-setting and digital media analysis, offering a data-informed lens into evolving public discourse (Xu, 2021; Zhang et al., 2024).

Overall, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach combining natural language processing, machine learning, and manual qualitative analysis to evaluate divergent representations of the MBG initiative. The methodologies employed are grounded in a growing body of research that integrates computational tools with critical media studies and policy evaluation in digital spaces (Sun et al., 2024; Zarei et al., 2021). Such a framework not only captures the complexity of digital discourse but also enables data-driven insights into the sociopolitical implications of public health communication in Indonesia.

3. Result and Discussion

3.1 Result

This section presents a comprehensive analysis of the MBG (Makan Bergizi Gratis) discourse by examining textual data from Tempodotco's video descriptions and public comments. The study utilized four primary methods: keyword frequency analysis, topic modeling using Non-Negative Matrix Factorization (NMF), sentiment classification via zero-shot learning, and framing analysis based on manual interpretation of dominant narrative strategies. The goal was to uncover discursive discrepancies between state-constructed narratives and public interpretations.

3.1.1 Keyword Frequency Analysis

Keyword frequency analysis serves as the initial mapping of thematic emphases in both official and public texts. Table 1 shows that terms like "makan," "program," and "gratis" appeared most frequently in video descriptions, underscoring the program's nutritional focus and institutional framing. Additional terms such as "pemerintah," "anggaran," and "sekolah" emphasize the role of state authority and educational infrastructure in implementing the policy. These findings reinforce previous discussions on institutional narrative alignment in government communication (Ariyanti et al., 2023).

Table 1. Example shows research data in Table [5]

Kata	Frekuensi
makan	41
program	31
gratis	29
bergizi	27
makanan	15
pemerintah	15
gizi	14
anggaran	13
hingga	11

In contrast, keywords in public comments highlight a different set of concerns. Terms such as "korupsi," "gak," and "rakyat" point toward public skepticism regarding program feasibility and integrity. This divergence suggests a fundamental gap in perception between institutional narratives and grassroots interpretations (Ahmed et al., 2021). The accompanying wordclouds (Figure 1) visually reinforce this contrast, with critical terms emerging more prominently in user-generated content.



Figure 1. Keyword Frequency Analysis

3.1.2 Topic Modeling (NMF)

The application of NMF revealed divergent topic structures across the two datasets. For video descriptions, Topic 1 focused on nutritional provision (e.g., "makan," "gratis," "bergizi"). Topic 2 revolved around administrative language, including "program," "anggaran," and "implementasi." Topic 3 introduced developmental challenges, such as "stunting," "pencegahan," and "biaya." Lastly, Topic 4 highlighted aspirational frames via international comparisons, with terms like "Swedia" and "Jepang."

Public comments, however, formed topics that were more dialogic and reflective of public sentiment. Topic 1 included words like "tidak," "gratis," and "penting," suggesting conditional support or skepticism. Topic 2 focused on meme-based satire, including the viral phrase "omon-omon." Topic 3 featured deeper critiques comparing the Indonesian context to international examples. Topic 4 concentrated on media critique and rhetorical questioning, with terms such as "tempo," "apa," and "emang."

These thematic clusters indicate that while official descriptions maintain a structured, optimistic narrative, public discourse engages more critically, often mocking or challenging institutional claims. The divergence aligns with digital-era discourse theories highlighting participatory skepticism in governance (Barna & Knap, 2022)

3.1.3 Sentiment Analysis

Using a BART-based zero-shot classifier, sentiment was classified into "positif," "netral," and "negatif." As expected, video descriptions skewed heavily toward neutral sentiment. This neutrality is consistent with bureaucratic communication styles that aim for factual dissemination rather than emotional engagement (Agarwal et al., 2024). Table 3 illustrates this predominance of neutrality across topics.

Tabel. 3 zero-shot-classificatio

Index	Descripts	Sentiment
0	memberi makan bergizi seluruh anak-anak indonesia termasuk kandungan ibunya makan bergizi anak-anak indonesia terima kasih anak-anak diberi makan siang anak-anak makan bergizi minimal satu kali sehari makanan bergizi program makan bergizi soalnya rasanya aneh enggak enak enggak enak enggak enak terlalu agak pahit tahunya agak kec kurang garagara lautnya tuh dikit kurang enak musik pal program makan bergezi gratis telah berjalan awal januari lalu program bertujuan menyediakan makanan bergizi bagi kelompok rentan balitaantri siswa berbagai jenjang mulai paud hingga sma ibu hamil	netral
1		netral

- | | | |
|---|--|--------|
| 2 | <p>menyusui dimulai 190 lokasi provinsi program ditargetkan dapat menjangkau hingga juta penerima manfaat sampai akhir tahun 2025 program dicetus langsung presiden prabol subianto wakilnya gibran rakabomingraka menjadi pasangan calon presiden wakil presiden pilpres 2024 lalu program tercantum visi misisi</p> | netral |
| 3 | <p>menjanjikan pemberian makan susu gratis anak sekolah balita ibu hamil tujuan mencegah stunting meningkatkan kesehatan membantu perekonomian keluarga saking niatnya menjalankan program makan bergizi gratis pemerintah sampai melakukan studi banding salah satu negara benua biru eropa swedia pemerintah rela</p> | netral |
| 4 | <p>menempuh jarak 10000 belajar mengenai penyediaan makan bergezi gratis sekolah indonesia menjadikan swedia percontohan dikarenakan swedia menyediakan makan bergizi gratis tahun 1900an sasaran anak usia hingga tahun sebagian besar siswa berusia hingga tahun hari minggu tak hanya swedia indonesia telah menjalin kerja sama jepang mensukseskan makanan gizi gratis makang siang sekolah kosoko jepang telah</p> | netral |
| 5 | <p>menjadi bagian resmi kurikulum sekolah jepang tahun 1954 kusoku melibatkan kolaborasi ahli gizi merancang menu harian seimbang bervariasi menu mencakup hidangan utama lauk pauk makanan penutup fokus keseimbangan gizi selain kilsoku berfungsi bagian program pendidikan gizi disebut soku kuiku bertujuan mempromosikan praktik diet sehat berkelanjutan</p> | netral |
| 6 | <p>masyarakat jepang program makan bergizi gratis indonesia menelan anggaran fantastis yakni sebesar rp71 triliun program diklaim hanya dapat dibiayai hingga juni 2025 mendatang badan gizi nasional bgn merekomendasikan penambahan anggaran sebesar rp100 triliun program makan bergizi gratis menjangkau sasaran penerimaan manfaat luas hingga akhir tahun 2025 pelaksanaannya program besar menuai pro kontra</p> | netral |
| 7 | <p>masyarakat banyak menganggap program hanya menghabiskan anggaran saja belum lagi program dikritik porsi rasa makanan sesuai ekspektasi publik lantas apa saja catatan program makan bergizi gratis menjawab pertanyaan tahu terlebih dahulu apa saja sih problem tengah menjadi pembicaraan</p> | netral |
| 8 | <p>masyarakat banyak menganggap program hanya menghabiskan anggaran saja belum lagi program dikritik porsi rasa makanan sesuai ekspektasi publik lantas apa saja catatan program makan bergizi gratis menjawab pertanyaan tahu terlebih dahulu apa saja sih problem tengah menjadi pembicaraan</p> | netral |

Conversely, the sentiment distribution among public comments showed a different picture. Of the 1,048 comments analyzed, 54% were negative, 30% neutral, and only 16% positive. This aligns with findings in digital governance literature, which document increasing public distrust in government programs, particularly those involving large financial allocations (Nugroho et al., 2021). The most negatively charged comments corresponded to Topic 3 (governance critique and foreign comparisons), confirming a sustained public disillusionment with state capability.

Topic 1 comments, addressing the notion of cost and "gratis," also leaned negative, driven by widespread suspicion of hidden costs or corruption. Meanwhile, Topic 2's meme-based content displayed a more neutral tone, consistent with satirical discourse that critiques implicitly. Topic 4's sentiment was more balanced, reflecting public curiosity rather than overt judgment.

3.1.4 Framing Analysis

Framing analysis was conducted manually based on topic modeling and representative text segments. Four frames were identified in the video descriptions. The "Nutritional Solution Frame" emphasized child health and academic benefits. The "Administrative Commitment Frame" focused

Conversely, public responses reveal a markedly different tone. Approximately 54% of comments expressed negative sentiment, often marked by cynicism, disbelief, or explicit criticism. This echoes current research indicating that digital publics frequently act as autonomous and skeptical agents in interpreting state narratives, especially in contexts marked by low institutional trust (Ahmad et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2022). Comments referring to “korupsi,” “duit rakyat,” or the meme-like “omon-omon” frame demonstrate widespread distrust in the feasibility and sincerity of MBG.

3.2.2. Lexical Patterns and the Semiotics of Policy Language

The keyword frequency analysis provides insight into the ideological underpinnings of both datasets. In the official descriptions, terms like “makan,” “bergizi,” “gratis,” and “pemerintah” predominate, suggesting an agenda-setting effort to legitimize the state's role in welfare provision (Zhang et al., 2024). The repetition of these terms reflects a linguistic strategy designed to frame MBG as an essential and beneficial public health intervention.

However, the public comments, while sharing surface lexical overlaps (e.g., “makan,” “gratis”), also introduce highly charged vocabulary such as “korupsi,” “gak jelas,” and “bohong.” These expressions invert the intended narrative and serve as semiotic indicators of social estrangement and frustration with political discourse (Bautista et al., 2021). Informal and sarcastic comments such as “omon-omon” signify a transformation of formal policy discourse into a contested public arena.

3.2.3. Topic Structures and Competing Thematic Worlds

Topic modeling using NMF underscores the structural bifurcation in discourse. In the video descriptions, the four dominant themes center on (1) the nutritional benefits of school meals, (2) administrative and budgetary structures, (3) stunting prevention and socioeconomic concerns, and (4) international benchmarks and media comparison. These reflect a coherent attempt at portraying MBG as a scientifically informed and administratively feasible intervention (Priya et al., 2024; Utami et al., 2024).

In contrast, the topics emerging from the public comments emphasize contestation. While overlapping in thematic references (e.g., nutrition, schools), the tone shifts dramatically. Criticism of political motives and implementation gaps dominates, and expressions like “cuma buat citra politik” or “gak kepikiran” illustrate the divergence. Satirical clusters (e.g., “omon-omon”) reveal how humor operates as a mechanism of political resistance (Eccles et al., 2021; Rahman et al., 2023). These contrasts affirm the dual reality in digital policy discourse, where state communication and public interpretation form parallel but intersecting narrative worlds (Pradana et al., 2023).

3.2.4. Sentiment Distribution and Emotional Resonance

Sentiment analysis provides further support for the dissonance in perception. The official narrative, largely neutral, exemplifies the tendency of bureaucratic communication to avoid emotionality for the sake of institutional credibility (Lestari & Ibrahim, 2025). Even when addressing contentious topics, video segments refrain from emotive language.

Meanwhile, public comments lean heavily negative. Such expressions align with evidence suggesting that digital spaces allow users to channel frustration, especially in governance contexts lacking participatory depth (Gao et al., 2023; Hartono et al., 2020). Even seemingly neutral or positive comments are often tinged with skepticism, reflecting conditional acceptance.

The connection between sentiment and specific topics offers further granularity. Critiques on policy efficiency and foreign comparisons drew the most negative sentiments, suggesting that rhetorical alignment with international standards may backfire without demonstrable domestic results (Ahmed et al., 2021). Topics focused on media narratives, however, revealed a broader emotional spectrum, indicating some users are still open to dialogic engagement.

3.2.5. Framing Strategies and Contestations

Framing analysis illustrates the ideological opposition between state-led and grassroots perspectives. Official narratives employ frames of “nutritional solution,” “administrative legitimacy,” and “aspirational alignment,” echoing best practices in policy framing literature

(Indrawati & Putri, 2021). Comparative references to Japan and Sweden function as epistemic legitimizers, enhancing the narrative's credibility.

In contrast, public responses construct oppositional frames. The “skeptical burden” frame interrogates cost and sincerity, while the “satirical meme” frame weaponizes humor as a form of resistance (Hargitai, 2020). The “constructive neutrality” frame reflects an engaged public seeking details rather than ideology.

This framing divergence demonstrates the need for policy communicators to recognize the polyvocal nature of digital engagement, where official messages are inevitably refracted through varied sociopolitical lenses (Chen et al., 2022).

3.2.6. Implications for Policy Communication

The divergence between the official MBG narrative and public perception reveals key challenges for policy communication in the digital age. First, the prevalence of negative sentiment underscores a trust deficit that cannot be resolved through monologic communication. Dialogic strategies, transparency, and co-created messaging are essential for legitimacy (Lestari & Ibrahim, 2025).

Second, emotionally resonant language in public discourse suggests that citizens demand not just information but empathy, accountability, and feedback mechanisms. Policy success increasingly relies on demonstrating field-level effectiveness and engaging with concerns in real time (Albanese et al., 2023; Widick, 2014).

Finally, this study demonstrates how multimodal textual analysis can inform responsive governance. Combining lexical, thematic, emotional, and framing analyses offers a comprehensive view of discourse dynamics, enabling adaptive and inclusive communication strategies (Albanese et al., 2023; Utami et al., 2024).

The MBG discourse serves as a lens into contemporary policy communication, illustrating how digital publics interpret and reshape official narratives. Navigating this complexity is crucial for democratic resilience and effective governance, especially in a rapidly digitizing society like Indonesia.

4. Conclusion

This study has revealed a clear dissonance between the official narrative and public perception regarding Indonesia's "Makan Bergizi Gratis" (Free Nutritious Meals) program. While the official descriptions portrayed the initiative as a proactive, government-backed solution to child malnutrition and educational inequality, public responses were largely characterized by skepticism, satire, and critical inquiry. The most prominent concerns expressed by commenters centered on financial feasibility, transparency, potential corruption, and political opportunism. Despite the initiative's positive policy framing, the overwhelming prevalence of negative sentiment among public discourse demonstrates a lack of trust in institutional messaging.

These findings highlight the critical need for transparent, dialogic communication strategies in policy implementation. Government-led messaging must go beyond informative rhetoric and engage with the emotional and experiential realities of its audience. This research contributes to the growing body of work on digital policy communication by integrating computational and qualitative techniques to analyze public sentiment and narrative framing in an Indonesian context. Future research might explore how these dynamics evolve over time or examine cross-national comparisons in similar nutrition-based public health campaigns.

Ultimately, the MBG discourse exemplifies how public platforms transform one-way policy communication into multi-voiced discursive arenas, challenging communicators to adapt and respond to citizen feedback in real-time to strengthen public engagement and policy legitimacy.

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