

Netizen Opinion on Corruption News in Social Media: Sentiment and Issue Framing in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study examines netizen opinion on corruption-related news in Indonesian social media, focusing on how sentiment, issue framing, and engagement patterns shape digital public discourse. The research aims to analyze how users respond to corruption narratives and to identify dominant patterns of opinion expression in online environments. Using a quantitative content analysis approach combined with computational sentiment analysis, the study analyzes 149 social media mentions collected through an automated analytics platform. The methodology integrates sentiment classification, keyword mapping, and engagement metrics to provide a comprehensive understanding of discourse dynamics. The results indicate that negative sentiment dominates the discourse, accounting for more than half of the total mentions, followed by neutral and positive sentiments. Keyword analysis reveals that discussions are primarily framed around legal and economic issues, including prosecution processes, state financial losses, and institutional accountability. Engagement patterns show that emotionally charged content, particularly negative narratives, tends to generate higher levels of interaction across platforms such as Instagram and TikTok. These findings suggest that social media functions as a hybrid public sphere where informational and affective elements interact to shape public opinion. The study highlights the importance of digital platforms in influencing public perceptions of corruption and institutional trust. By combining computational analysis with theoretical insights, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of digital public opinion formation and offers implications for media, policymakers, and scholars interested in corruption communication.

Keywords: *Corruption discourse; netizen opinion; digital public sphere; journalism; content analysis.*

INTRODUCTION

The expansion of social media has transformed how public opinion on political and corruption-related issues is formed, expressed, and contested. Digital platforms enable citizens, journalists, and institutional actors to interact in real time, creating a hybrid public sphere in which information circulates through decentralized and participatory networks. In this environment, users do not merely consume news; they also interpret, evaluate, and reshape public narratives through comments, shares, reactions, and other forms of engagement. Prior studies show that social media accelerates the diffusion of frames, emotions, and political interpretations, particularly around contentious issues such as corruption (Sampedro et al., 2018; Salam-Salmaoui & Salam, 2023).

Corruption-related news often generates intense public responses because it involves questions of legality, morality, accountability, and institutional trust. On social media, corruption cases are frequently discussed not only as legal violations but also as indicators of governance failure and ethical decline. These discussions commonly include affective expressions such as anger, distrust, disappointment, and demands for justice, reflecting broader public concerns about institutional integrity (Pérez et al., 2021). The interaction between online discussion and news coverage also creates a feedback loop in which media reports stimulate public conversation, while public reactions may increase the visibility of certain issues in the broader agenda (Miskolci & Balieiro, 2023).

Although digital communication and political discourse have received growing scholarly attention, audience responses to corruption-related news remain insufficiently explored, especially in the Indonesian social media context. Existing studies have often focused on media framing, journalistic practices, institutional narratives, or elite political communication. Less attention has been given to how netizens themselves construct opinions in comment spaces, captions, posts, and mentions. These user-generated expressions are important because they reveal how audiences interpret corruption narratives, identify responsible actors, evaluate institutional credibility, and participate in public meaning-making. Therefore, examining netizen discourse can provide insight into how digital public opinion is formed around corruption-related issues.izen discourse can provide insight into the formation of digital public opinion around corruption issues.

A central issue in online political discourse is the role of sentiment and emotional expression. Empirical evidence suggests that negative sentiment frequently dominates political discussions on social media and tends to spread more widely than positive or neutral content (Wang & Fikis, 2017; G. Zhang et al., 2025). In corruption discourse, negative sentiment can function as a form of public criticism and symbolic accountability. However, the visibility of such criticism is shaped not only by the content of users' comments but also by platform affordances, including algorithmic ranking, interaction design, visibility mechanisms, and user anonymity (Marichal & Neve, 2019; Rossini, 2020). These conditions make it necessary to examine how sentiment, issue emphasis, and engagement patterns interact in digital communication environments.

Methodologically, sentiment analysis offers a useful approach for identifying the polarity of user-generated content, including positive, negative, and neutral expressions (Rambocas & Pacheco, 2018). When combined with keyword-based issue mapping and engagement analysis, sentiment analysis can help identify dominant topics, emotional tendencies, and interaction patterns within social media discourse. This approach is particularly relevant for studying corruption-related communication because corruption discourse often involves overlapping legal, political, economic, and moral dimensions. Theoretical perspectives such as framing theory, agenda-setting, and the digital public sphere further help explain how particular issues become visible, how public attention is shaped, and

how users collectively construct meaning online (Figueiras et al., 2014; C. Zhang et al., 2022). Research on digital activism also shows that social media can support awareness-raising, public mobilization, and advocacy, although not all online discussions develop into collective action (Jackson, 2024; McNutt, 2018).

This study focuses on social media discourse related to the Nadiem Makarim case, particularly discussions surrounding the alleged corruption case linked to the procurement of Chromebook devices in Indonesia's education digitalization program. The case concerns public procurement in the education sector and has been publicly discussed in relation to legal accountability, alleged state financial losses, and institutional trust. Prosecutors have linked the case to the procurement of Chromebook devices and digital education infrastructure under the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, while the defense has denied wrongdoing and disputed the allegations. This neutral wording is important because the case involves an ongoing legal process and contested claims. Official statements from the Indonesian Attorney General's Office and international reporting confirm that the case is connected to alleged corruption in Chromebook procurement, while also noting the existence of legal objections and defense arguments.

The Nadiem Makarim case was selected because it generated visible public discussion across social media and involved themes central to corruption discourse: public procurement, legal process, state loss narratives, institutional accountability, and public trust. The term "Chromebook" is important because it does not merely refer to a technology product. In the analyzed discourse, "Chromebook" functions as a case-specific keyword connected to a broader controversy over education procurement policy and alleged corruption. For readers unfamiliar with Indonesian news, this clarification is necessary because the appearance of "Chromebook" in the dataset reflects the central object of public debate rather than a general discussion about digital devices.

This study addresses the research gap by analyzing netizen opinions on corruption-related news through a data-driven approach that combines sentiment analysis, keyword-based issue mapping, and engagement metrics. Rather than claiming to represent Indonesian public opinion as a whole, this research offers an exploratory case-based analysis of a limited dataset. The dataset consists of 149 social media mentions related to the Nadiem Makarim case. The relatively small dataset should therefore be understood as a focused sample for identifying indicative discourse patterns, not as a basis for broad generalization.

The analysis examines three main aspects of the discourse. First, it identifies the distribution of sentiment across the dataset. Second, it maps dominant issues reflected in recurring keywords, including legal and economic terms such as "korupsi," "sidang," "tersangka," and "kerugian negara." Third, it examines how platform and engagement patterns contribute to the visibility of corruption-related

narratives. Accordingly, this study asks: How are sentiments distributed in social media mentions related to the Nadiem Makarim case? What dominant issues appear in netizen discourse on the case? How do platform and engagement patterns shape the visibility of corruption-related narratives? By addressing these questions, the study contributes to research on digital public opinion, political communication, media studies, and corruption discourse in Indonesia through an exploratory framework that integrates sentiment, issue emphasis, and engagement dynamics.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed an exploratory quantitative research design based on digital content analysis and computational sentiment analysis. The design was used to examine netizen responses to corruption-related news on social media, specifically in relation to the Nadiem Makarim case. The study did not aim to produce broad generalizations about Indonesian public opinion as a whole. Instead, it sought to identify indicative patterns of sentiment, issue-related keywords, platform distribution, and engagement within a limited case-specific dataset.

The methodological framework was informed by computational social science and communication studies. Computational social science is useful for examining digital trace data because social media discourse often develops rapidly and reflects real-time responses to socio-political issues (Babac & Podobnik, 2018). In this study, digital content analysis was applied to classify and interpret social media mentions based on measurable indicators, including sentiment category, recurring keywords, platform source, and engagement metrics. This approach is appropriate for exploratory research because it enables the identification of descriptive patterns in user-generated content while acknowledging the limitations of a small dataset.

Research Approach

The research approach combined automated data extraction with descriptive contextual interpretation. Data were obtained through the KawalData analytics dashboard, which provides structured information on social media mentions, sentiment classification, keyword frequency, platform distribution, and engagement indicators. The use of an analytics dashboard allowed the researcher to organize data from several platforms in a consistent format.

This study focused on three analytical dimensions. First, sentiment analysis was used to classify mentions into positive, negative, and neutral categories. Sentiment analysis is widely used in social media research because it helps identify opinion tendencies in user-generated content (Rambocas & Pacheco, 2018). Second, keyword-based issue mapping was used to identify dominant terms and issue

orientations in the discourse. Third, engagement analysis was used to examine user interaction through likes, comments, shares, and other available metrics. The study did not conduct qualitative thematic coding or full framing analysis. Therefore, the findings related to issues are presented as keyword-based patterns rather than systematically coded frames.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis consisted of publicly available user-generated social media content related to the Nadiem Makarim case and corruption-related discourse. The analyzed units included mentions, posts, captions, and comments containing relevant keywords associated with the case. These units were selected because user-generated content can show how audiences interpret, evaluate, and circulate public issues in digital spaces. In online political communication, social media users are not merely recipients of information but also active participants who shape public discourse through interaction, evaluation, and redistribution of content (Rossini, 2020).

Each mention was treated as an individual unit that could contain sentiment, issue-related terms, and engagement indicators. However, the data were treated as case-specific digital traces, not as representative evidence of all Indonesian netizens.

Data Source and Sampling

The data were collected from social media platforms monitored through the KawalData analytics dashboard, including Instagram, TikTok, X formerly Twitter, and Facebook. These platforms were selected because they are widely used for news circulation, public discussion, and political expression in Indonesia. The study focused only on publicly accessible posts and mentions related to the Nadiem Makarim case.

A purposive sampling strategy was applied. Data were selected based on three criteria: relevance to the case, association with corruption-related discourse, and availability in the dashboard during the observation period. Keywords used to identify relevant content included “korupsi,” “kasus,” “Nadiem Makarim,” “Chromebook,” and other case-related terms appearing in the dashboard.

The final dataset consisted of 149 mentions. This number reflects the focused scope of the research, the use of case-specific keywords, the restriction to publicly available social media content, and the data-cleaning process. Duplicate content, irrelevant posts, unrelated uses of keywords, and noisy entries were excluded. Therefore, the dataset should be understood as a focused exploratory sample rather than a statistically representative sample. The limited size of the dataset is acknowledged as a methodological constraint, and all findings are interpreted descriptively.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection was conducted using KawalData as an automated social media analytics platform. The platform was used to retrieve structured data on mentions, sentiment categories, dominant keywords, platform distribution, and engagement metrics. Automated tools are useful for organizing digital trace data, especially when research aims to identify patterns in online communication across platforms (Babac & Podobnik, 2018).

After the data were retrieved, manual verification was conducted to check whether the collected mentions were relevant to the research topic. This step was necessary because keyword-based retrieval can include ambiguous or unrelated content. The cleaning process involved removing duplicate entries, irrelevant mentions, spam-like content, and posts that did not refer to the corruption-related discourse under study. The remaining 149 mentions formed the final dataset for analysis.

Variables and Indicators

The study used three main variables: sentiment, issue-related keywords, and engagement. Sentiment was categorized into positive, negative, and neutral groups. This classification was used to identify the general polarity of netizen responses. Sentiment analysis is commonly applied in social media research because it helps detect patterns of opinion in user-generated content (Rambocas & Pacheco, 2018).

Issue-related keywords were used to map dominant topics in the dataset. Terms such as “korupsi,” “sidang,” “tersangka,” “kerugian negara,” “pengadaan,” “BPKP,” “jaksa,” and “Chromebook” were interpreted as indicators of legal, financial, procurement-related, and institutional issue orientations. These keywords were not treated as full framing categories because no systematic manual framing analysis was conducted. Framing theory explains that issue emphasis can influence public interpretation, but keyword frequency alone cannot establish interpretive frames without systematic coding procedures (Figueiras et al., 2014).

Engagement indicators included likes, comments, shares, and other interaction metrics available in the dashboard. These indicators were analyzed descriptively to assess the visibility and interaction level of the content. Engagement was interpreted in relation to platform affordances because interaction features and visibility mechanisms can shape how political discussion circulates online (Marichal & Neve, 2019; Rossini, 2020). The study did not test causal relationships between sentiment and engagement.

Data Analysis Technique

The analysis was conducted in three stages. First, sentiment analysis was used to calculate the proportion of positive, negative, and neutral mentions. Second, keyword-based issue mapping was conducted through word frequency analysis and word cloud visualization. Third, engagement analysis was used to identify platform-based interaction patterns.

The results were interpreted using descriptive statistics and contextual analysis. Automated sentiment classification may not fully capture sarcasm, irony, implicit political bias, or context-dependent meanings. For this reason, the findings were interpreted cautiously and supported by manual relevance checks. This cautious interpretation is important because online political discourse often contains emotional, ambiguous, and context-sensitive expressions (Marchal, 2021; Milhazes-Cunha & Oliveira, 2023).

Validity, Reliability, and Ethics

To improve validity and reliability, the researcher manually checked keyword relevance, removed duplicate and irrelevant data, and interpreted sentiment results alongside keyword and engagement patterns. This cross-checking helped reduce misinterpretation, although it did not eliminate the limitations of automated classification.

Ethically, the study used only publicly available social media data. No private accounts or confidential information were accessed. User identities were anonymized, and no personally identifiable information was reported. The analysis focused on aggregated patterns rather than individual users, following ethical principles of privacy protection and responsible digital research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Social Media Discourse on Corruption

The analysis of social media discourse related to the keyword “Nadiem Makarim” shows a predominantly critical public response within the limited dataset examined in this study. A total of 149 mentions were identified during the observation period. Because the dataset is relatively small and case-specific, the findings should be interpreted as indicative patterns rather than as representative evidence of Indonesian public opinion as a whole.

The sentiment distribution shows that negative discourse was the most dominant category, followed by neutral and positive expressions. This pattern suggests that the selected social media discussion was largely evaluative and accountability-oriented. Such a tendency is consistent with prior research showing that online political discussions, particularly those related to governance and

corruption, often contain strong negative sentiment because users use digital spaces to express criticism, distrust, and demands for accountability (Wang & Fikis, 2017; G. Zhang et al., 2025).

However, the dominance of negative sentiment should not be interpreted as a direct measure of national public opinion. Rather, it reflects the tone of the analyzed mentions within a specific case, platform environment, and observation period. In this sense, the findings provide a focused view of how corruption-related narratives surrounding the Nadiem Makarim case were discussed by netizens in the collected dataset.

Sentiment Distribution and Emotional Dynamics

The sentiment analysis results, as presented in Figure 1, show that 52% of the mentions were classified as negative, 29% as neutral, and 19% as positive. These values were derived from the KawalData analytics dashboard, which classifies textual data using automated sentiment classification techniques. The predominance of negative sentiment indicates that many netizens responded critically to the corruption-related discourse surrounding the case.

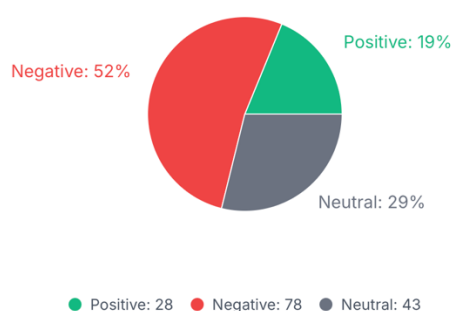


Figure 1. Distribution of Sentiment in Social Media Mentions Related to Corruption Issues
Source: Compiled by the researcher using KawalData

The negative category reflects expressions of criticism, disappointment, distrust, or concern regarding legal accountability and governance. Neutral sentiment, by contrast, appears to represent informational or descriptive mentions, such as posts sharing updates about the case without strong evaluative language. Positive sentiment formed the smallest category and may include expressions that defend certain actors, question the allegations, or focus on procedural aspects of the legal process.

The emotional distribution further supports this interpretation, with “normal” and “negative” emotional tones appearing as the most prominent categories. The “normal” category suggests that some mentions were primarily informational, while negative emotional tones indicate the presence of affective responses such as frustration, distrust, or disapproval. Emotion-based analysis can provide

additional insight into politically sensitive discussions because it captures not only what users say but also the intensity of their responses (Milhazes-Cunha & Oliveira, 2023).

These findings suggest that the discourse combines cognitive evaluation and emotional response. Netizens did not only circulate information about the case; they also expressed judgments about accountability, governance, and institutional credibility. This pattern supports the notion of a hybrid public sphere, where informational and affective elements coexist in online public discourse (Figueiras et al., 2014).

Temporal Patterns of Mentions

The temporal analysis of mentions, illustrated in Figure 2, indicates fluctuations in the volume of discussion over time. These fluctuations suggest that social media attention to the case was not constant but changed in response to the circulation of information, news updates, or platform-specific amplification.

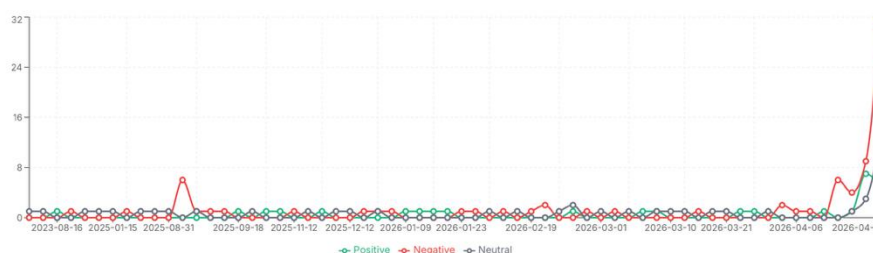


Figure 2. Volume of Mentions Over Time with Sentiment Breakdown
Source: Compiled by the researcher using KawalData

The timeline suggests that public discussion increased at certain points during the observation period. Such increases may be associated with media reports, legal developments, viral posts, or renewed public attention to the case. However, because this study does not provide a detailed event-by-event comparison, the relationship between timeline peaks and specific offline events should be interpreted cautiously. The data show temporal fluctuation, but they do not establish a causal link between particular legal developments and the volume of mentions.

The temporal dynamics also demonstrate the responsiveness of netizens to emerging information. As new information circulates, users can rapidly engage in discussion, share interpretations, and amplify narratives. This immediacy contributes to the rapid amplification of corruption-related discourse, allowing specific issues to gain visibility within a short period. This pattern is consistent with studies on digital activism and information diffusion, which emphasize the role of social media in facilitating rapid communication and collective awareness (McNutt, 2018).

Keyword Analysis and Issue Framing

The word cloud analysis provides an overview of the most frequently occurring terms in the dataset. As shown in Figure 3, dominant keywords include “korupsi,” “chromebook,” “kasus,”

are interpreted, although the present study only identifies issue emphasis at the keyword level (Bogoch & Holzman-Gazit, 2008; Echeverría & Mani, 2020).

Platform Distribution and Engagement Patterns

The distribution of mentions across platforms shows that Instagram was the primary source of discussion, followed by TikTok. This pattern indicates the importance of visual and short-form content platforms in circulating corruption-related narratives. Platform affordances, such as image-based posts, short videos, comment features, and algorithmic recommendation systems, may influence how information is presented, consumed, and discussed (Rossini, 2020).

Engagement analysis suggests that content with negative sentiment tended to attract visible interaction, including likes, comments, and shares. This pattern is consistent with the argument that emotionally charged content may draw more attention than neutral or purely informational content (Marchal, 2021). However, because this study uses a small dataset and descriptive engagement metrics, the relationship between negative sentiment and higher engagement should be interpreted cautiously. The analysis identifies an observed pattern of interaction, not a statistically tested causal relationship.

Influencer accounts and media organizations also appear to play a role in amplifying the discourse. Content posted or circulated by high-visibility accounts can reach broader audiences and encourage further interaction among users. This supports the view that social media discourse is shaped not only by ordinary users but also by platform visibility, account influence, and media circulation. The structure of engagement reflects the participatory nature of social media, where users consume, evaluate, and redistribute information within networked publics (C. Zhang et al., 2022).

AI-Based Content Insights

The AI Insights and Deep Analysis features from the analytics dashboard provide additional information on content characteristics. The analysis shows that many mentions were classified as “informative,” indicating that users often shared factual information, updates, or news-related content about the case. This finding suggests that the discourse was not purely emotional or accusatory; it also included informational content that helped circulate case-related developments.

Video content emerged as a dominant media type, reflecting the increasing importance of multimedia formats in digital communication. This finding is relevant because platforms such as Instagram and TikTok encourage the circulation of visual and short-form content. Such formats can make corruption-related information more accessible, but they may also simplify complex legal and institutional issues into short, emotionally engaging narratives.

The urgency analysis indicates that none of the mentions were categorized as high urgency. This suggests that although the case generated discussion, it did not appear in the dataset as an

immediate mobilization issue or crisis event. This differs from cases of digital activism in which social media is used to coordinate collective action, public protest, or urgent advocacy (Jackson, 2024). The absence of high-urgency content may be related to the nature of the case as an ongoing legal process rather than a sudden crisis requiring immediate public action.

Interpretive Discussion

Overall, the findings indicate that the analyzed social media discourse was dominated by negative sentiment, legal-economic keywords, and platform-based interaction. These patterns suggest that netizens discussed the Nadiem Makarim case primarily through concerns about accountability, legal process, procurement governance, and alleged state financial loss.

The dominance of negative sentiment is consistent with previous studies on political and corruption-related discourse, which show that online users often use social media to express criticism toward public officials and institutions (Wang & Fikis, 2017; G. Zhang et al., 2025). In this study, negative sentiment can be understood as a form of evaluative participation, where users express concern, dissatisfaction, or distrust in response to corruption-related news.

At the same time, the presence of neutral and informative content shows that social media also functions as an information-sharing space. Netizens did not only express emotional reactions; they also circulated news updates and case-related details. This dual role supports the concept of the hybrid public sphere, where information exchange and affective judgment interact in shaping public discourse (Figueiras et al., 2014).

The keyword-based issue mapping further shows that the discourse was shaped by specific legal and economic terms. The prominence of terms such as “sidang,” “tersangka,” “kerugian negara,” “pengadaan,” and “BPKP” indicates that netizens paid attention to legal procedures, procurement mechanisms, and state loss narratives. The keyword “Chromebook” anchors these broader corruption-related concerns to the specific case under discussion.

Nevertheless, the findings must be interpreted within the study’s methodological limitations. The dataset consists of only 149 mentions, which limits the generalizability of the results. Automated sentiment classification may also miss sarcasm, irony, and context-dependent political meanings. In addition, word cloud analysis can show dominant terms but cannot fully explain interpretive frames without systematic qualitative coding. Therefore, this study should be understood as an exploratory analysis of sentiment, keyword-based issue patterns, and engagement dynamics in a specific case of corruption-related social media discourse.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study shows that social media discourse surrounding the Nadiem Makarim case was mainly characterized by negative sentiment, legal-economic issue orientation, and visible public engagement. Within the analyzed dataset of 149 mentions, negative sentiment appeared as the dominant response, indicating that many netizens discussed the case through criticism, concern, distrust, and demands for accountability. The presence of neutral and informative mentions also shows that social media functioned not only as a space for emotional reaction but also as a channel for circulating updates and factual information.

Keyword-based issue mapping further indicates that the discourse was centered on legal process, public procurement, alleged state financial loss, and institutional accountability. Terms such as “korupsi,” “sidang,” “tersangka,” “kerugian negara,” “pengadaan,” “BPKP,” “jaksa,” and “Chromebook” suggest that netizens connected the case to both procedural and economic dimensions of corruption-related news. These findings imply that social media can increase the visibility of corruption narratives by combining informational exchange, affective judgment, and platform-based interaction.

The study contributes to research on digital communication, political discourse, and corruption-related public opinion by integrating sentiment analysis, keyword-based issue mapping, and engagement metrics within an exploratory framework. Its contribution lies in showing how a limited case-specific dataset can reveal indicative patterns of online public response. Future research should use larger datasets, longer observation periods, multi-case comparisons, and qualitative framing analysis to capture more nuanced meanings, including sarcasm, political bias, and implicit blame attribution.

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