

Public Service Narratives in Local Government Instagram Caption in Indonesia

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Abstract

Digital transformation has encouraged local governments in Indonesia to use Instagram as a platform for public communication and service representation. This study examines how public service is narrated in the Instagram captions of provincial governments and how these narratives reflect the principles of good governance: transparency, accountability, participation, and accessibility. Using Corpus-Assisted Discourse Studies (CADS), this research combines corpus linguistics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Data were collected from the official Instagram accounts of six Indonesian provincial governments during the first six months after the inauguration of regional leaders in 2025. The corpus was analyzed through keyword, collocation, and concordance techniques using AntConc, followed by discourse interpretation based on Fairclough's framework. The findings show that Instagram captions are dominated by leadership representation, bureaucratic legitimacy, and the promotion of government programs. Keywords related to governors, government institutions, and development appear more frequently than words associated with transparency, accountability, and public participation. Collocation and concordance analyses indicate that citizens are mostly positioned as beneficiaries rather than active partners in governance. This study concludes that digital transformation has increased government visibility but has not fully shifted bureaucratic communication toward a participatory and citizen-centered model.

Keywords: Public service, digital governance, local government Instagram, corpus-assisted discourse studies, critical discourse analysis, public communication

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has driven a paradigm shift in public administration from a state-centered model toward a more citizen-oriented governance approach (Ramadhany et al., 2025; Sepriano et al., 2023). Under this new paradigm, citizens are no longer simply service recipients but stakeholders who should be involved in decision-making, information

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dissemination, and the evaluation of public services (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2014; Osborne, 2020). Digitalization is not only concerned with the adoption of technology within bureaucracy but also changes how governments interact, communicate, and build relationships with citizens (Janssen & Van Der Voort, 2016; Santoso, Nasyaya, Nengyanti, & Junaidi, 2021). Governments no longer function solely as public service providers but also as communication actors that build legitimacy, trust, and public support through various digital channels (Mergel, 2012, 2013).

This transformation in Indonesia has been supported through the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE), which promotes the digitalization of governance and public service delivery at both central and local levels (Dewi, 2025; Syafaat, Azhar, Aminah, & Zakiyabarsih, 2025). Local governments are encouraged to improve service quality, transparency, accountability, and public participation by using information and communication technologies (Wardana, Putri, & Fatati, 2025; Wirawan & Tjenreng, 2025). These developments have become increasingly relevant given the high level of internet and social media penetration in Indonesia. The We Are Social and Meltwater 2025 report indicates that Indonesia has more than 143 million active social media users, with Instagram among the most widely used platforms (Riyanto, 2025). This situation has encouraged local governments to manage official Instagram accounts as public communication platforms for disseminating development programs, public services, policy information, and regional leaders' activities to citizens (Nugraha, Sjoraida, Erdinaya, & Komariah, 2020).

Social media has become an important arena for forming modern bureaucratic image and communication (Nugraha et al., 2020; Supriyanto, Nuryanti, & Noegroho, 2024). Through social media, particularly Instagram as a visual platform, local governments can present activities, policies, development achievements, and public services quickly and interactively (Bertot, Jaeger, & Grimes, 2010; Musdalifah, Nasyaya, & Pratiwi, 2022; Sulisty, Sukmajatnika, & Syaputra, 2024). The platform delivers a new form of communication that combines visual elements, textual narratives, and symbolic interactions between government and citizens (Azmi & Budi, 2018; Lalancette & Raynauld, 2017; Raynauld & Lalancette, 2023).

This study views Instagram captions as official government narrations that can represent the principles of good governance (Paul T. Jaeger, 2012; Wukich & Mergel, 2016). Transparency refers to the openness of information about policies, programs, activities, and

the utilization of public resources that citizens can access. Accountability refers to the government's ability to explain and justify its actions and performance outcomes to the public. Participation reflects citizens' involvement in communication, consultation, and policy collaboration processes. Accessibility relates to citizens' ability to obtain information and services through digital media without spatial or temporal barriers (Bertot et al., 2010; Fitriani, Budiyan, Hardika, & Choerunissa, 2023; Mergel, 2015; Nurhakim, 2014; Paul T. Jaeger, 2012).

Previous studies have shown that government social media can enhance transparency, participation, and the quality of public communication (J Ignacio Criado, Sandoval-Almazan, & Gil-Garcia, 2013; Mergel, 2013). However, most studies also indicate that government social media accounts remain dominated by ceremonial content, officials' activities, and institutional image-building rather than substantive public service information (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017; Nasyaya, Musdalifah, & Yogsunandar, 2025; Peng, 2021; Raynauld & Lalancette, 2023). Social media can also function as a tool for the reproduction of power and symbolic bureaucratic image-making (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017; Nasyaya et al., 2025). Similar patterns are evident in Indonesia, where local government accounts regularly highlight regional leaders' activities, official visits, ceremonial events, commemorations, and development achievements (Effendi, Hendra, & Matondang, 2019; Nugraha et al., 2020).

Based on preliminary observations of several local government Instagram accounts, words such as *"together," "realizing," "activities," "proud," "attending,"* and *"achieving"* frequently appear across captions. For example, captions such as *"Together with the community to build a prosperous and advanced region," "Attending the inauguration of infrastructure development projects,"* or *"Proud of regional development achievements"* tend to emphasize leadership symbolism and government success rather than giving detailed information on service procedures, service access, complaint mechanisms, or program evaluations.

Most existing studies focus on descriptive analyses of government social media content, user participation, or digital political communication. Research explicitly examining the representation of public service through language in local government Instagram captions remains limited. Furthermore, few studies have connected digital bureaucratic narratives alongside good governance principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, and

availability. This gap illustrates the need for an approach capable of uncovering both language features and the societal meanings embedded in government digital messaging.

This study offers several elements of novelty. First, it focuses on local government Instagram captions, which have received less attention than visual analyses, social media engagement studies, or digital political communication research. Second, it uses a CADS approach, which remains rarely applied in Indonesian public administration research, especially in the study of government digital messaging. Third, the investigation not only identifies language features in the corpus but also links them to the principles of good governance, namely transparency, accountability, participation, and availability. In doing so, the study connects corpus linguistics, digital public communication, and public administration within an integrated analytical framework.

This study specifically selects provincial government Instagram accounts because provincial governments serve as strategic intermediaries between the central government and district/city governments. Provincial governments coordinate cross-regional development policies, manage larger resources, and reach larger audiences than district or city governments. Furthermore, provincial government social media accounts generally have higher follower counts and more intensive digital communication activities, enabling the creation of a larger and more representative corpus for analysis.

In this study, the substance of public service is understood as information directly related to government services provided to citizens, including service procedures, service access, citizens' rights and obligations, complaint mechanisms, program outcomes, and information that helps citizens benefit from public services. In contrast, symbolic captions refer to narratives focused on political leaders, ceremonial activities, institutional image-building, or symbolic expressions that do not directly explain public services.

Therefore, a study is needed that not only describes government messages on social media but also examines the discourse structures supporting the language used. This perspective aligns with CDA as developed by (Fairclough, 2023), which views language not merely as a tool of communication but also as a social practice closely connected to power relations and ideology. According to Fairclough, discourse plays a role in shaping, maintaining, and challenging social structures through the production and reproduction of meaning. In the context of local government digital communication, Instagram captions

function not only to disseminate information but also as instruments for constructing leadership images, reinforcing bureaucratic legitimacy, and forming public perceptions of government performance and public services.

From a social constructionist perspective, narratives continuously published by governments on social media can shape public understanding of what is considered important in governance. When captions primarily feature regional leaders' activities, official visits, awards, and ceremonies, citizens may come to perceive that governmental success is measured primarily by leadership symbolism and ceremonial activities. Conversely, if captions focus more on service procedures, complaint mechanisms, program outcomes, and policy evaluations, social media can serve to strengthen transparency, accountability, and public service delivery.

Based on the model, the study develops nine analytical categories: (1) bureaucratic image and legitimacy; (2) public service and responsiveness; (3) public participation and citizen engagement; (4) innovation and digital bureaucracy; (5) transparency, accountability, and governance; (6) public service values and ethics; (7) social symbols and cultural identity; (8) religious symbols; and (9) public issues. These categories serve as the basis for corpus coding and interpretation (Afrilia, Asy'Ary, Muhdiarta, Mayasari, & Anangkota, 2024; J Ignacio Criado et al., 2013; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2002; Mergel, 2013; Peeters, 2023).

The CADS approach provides an appropriate structure for analyzing this phenomenon, as it integrates quantitative linguistic analysis (keywords, collocations, and concordances) with qualitative critical discourse analysis to uncover underlying ideologies (Gillings, Mautner, & Baker, 2023; Partington, 2015; Partington, Taylor, & Duguid, 2013). This approach gives researchers not only the ability to identify dominant language forms in digital bureaucratic communication but also to explain how language is used to construct legitimacy, represent public services, and shape relationships between government and citizens. Accordingly, this study attempts to answer the following research question: How is public service represented in local government Instagram captions in Indonesia, and to what extent do these accounts reflect the principles of good governance (transparency, accountability, participation, and availability)?

This study offers theoretical, methodological, and empirical contributions in the field of digital public administration. Theoretically, it extends understanding of the relationship

between language, power, and bureaucratic legitimacy in the digital era. Empirically, it delivers a concrete picture of how local governments in Indonesia manage public narratives using Instagram, a platform that increasingly shapes citizens' perceptions of government performance. Beyond describing communication patterns, the study thoroughly examines forms of digital bureaucratic accounts that tend to focus on image-building. The findings are expected to encourage more participatory, informative, and inclusive public communication reforms, enabling social media to function as a substantive public service platform rather than merely a symbolic stage of power.

RESEARCH METHODS

The data source of this study consists of captions from the official Instagram accounts of six provincial governments in Indonesia, namely @pemprov_kaltim, @ntbprov, @dkijakarta, @lampungprov, @pemprov.papua, and @sulselprov. The selection of these accounts was based on three criteria. First, the accounts are official government accounts directly managed by provincial administrations. Second, the accounts exhibit high activity, as indicated by frequent posting during the study period. Third, the accounts have a substantial number of followers, with a minimum of 50,000, suggesting broad public reach and influence. These criteria were used to ensure that the selected accounts genuinely represent intensive and sustained digital communication practices among Indonesian provincial governments.

In addition, the six accounts represent diverse geographical, social, political, and cultural contexts in Indonesia, thereby providing a broader picture of local government digital communication practices. Jakarta represents a metropolitan region and the national administrative centre, East Kalimantan represents a strategic region as the future capital area of Indonesia (IKN), West Nusa Tenggara represents a tourism-oriented province experiencing rapid development, Papua and South Sulawesi represent eastern Indonesia with distinct social and cultural characteristics. Table 1 is a social media account profile for the February to August 2025 period.

Table 1. Social Media Account Profile for the February - August 2025 Period

Account	Followers	Post	Like	Comment	Share
@dkijakarta	778.000	9.748	1.010.390	52.181	182.140
@pemprov_kaltim	97.300	21.400	334.229	38.307	28.843
@ntbprov	18.300	9.586	58.590	1.035	2.482
@lampungprov	71.000	8.895	259.600	15.483	15.606

@sulselprov	70.200	4.012	60.275	872	4855
@pemprov.papua	22.800	5.263	46.277	252	2.235

Source: Instagram, 2025

The study focuses on the first six months following the inauguration of regional leaders in 2025, as this period marks a crucial stage in the formation of leadership image, policy orientation, and the initial communication strategy of newly elected administrations. The unit of analysis is the Instagram caption, defined as the textual narrative accompanying visual posts (photos and videos), which is treated as a representation of digital bureaucratic narratives concerning public service.

Data collection was conducted manually by downloading and documenting all captions published during the study period. A total of 2,025 posts were initially identified from the six selected accounts. Data cleaning procedures were then applied to ensure corpus quality. The exclusion criteria included: (1) posts containing only images without captions; (2) duplicated or reposted captions with identical content; (3) posts consisting solely of hashtags, mentions, or technical information without narrative content; and (4) posts unrelated to government activities or public communication. If a duplicated caption appeared in multiple posts with identical content, only one version was retained in the corpus to avoid frequency bias. After the cleaning process, the final corpus consisted of 3,991 captions, containing 475,103 tokens (words) and 21,310 word types (unique words). All captions were stored in plain text (.txt) format and compiled into a single corpus for analysis using AntConc version 4.3.0 (Anthony, 2019).

Data analysis was conducted in two complementary stages. The first stage involved corpus linguistics analysis, representing the quantitative component of the study. The corpus was analyzed using AntConc version 4.3.0 with several technical parameters. Frequency analysis was used to identify the most frequently occurring lexical items. Collocation analysis employed a window span of five words to the left and five words to the right (± 5) with a minimum frequency threshold of five occurrences. Concordance analysis was used to examine the contextual use of keywords in sentences. Keyword extraction was carried out using AntConc's keyword function by comparing the study corpus with a reference corpus of Indonesian public communication texts. During preprocessing, stop words such as prepositions, conjunctions, and common pronouns were removed to focus on substantively meaningful words.

The results of frequency, collocation, and concordance analyses were subsequently used as the basis for thematic coding. The coding process employed a hybrid approach, combining deductive and inductive strategies. Deductively, categories were developed from theories of good governance, digital governance, and New Public Service (J Ignacio Criado et al., 2013; Mergel, 2013). Inductively, categories emerged from recurrent lexical patterns identified in the corpus. Through several rounds of coding, keywords were grouped into nine major categories: (1) Bureaucratic Image and Legitimacy, (2) Public Service and Responsiveness, (3) Public Participation and Citizen Engagement, (4) Innovation and Digital Bureaucracy, (5) Transparency, Accountability, and Governance, (6) Public Service Values and Ethics, (7) Social Symbols and Cultural Identity, (8) Religious Symbols, and (9) Public Issues (Afrilia et al., 2024; J Ignacio Criado et al., 2013; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2002; Mergel, 2013; Peeters, 2023). The categorization process was conducted independently by two researchers. Each keyword appearing in the corpus was classified based on the context in which it was used in the concordance. If there were differences in interpretation, the final decision was made through discussion until a consensus was reached. This procedure was carried out to increase the consistency and reliability of the categorization.

The second stage involved CDA based on Fairclough's three-dimensional framework, encompassing text analysis, discursive practice, and social practice (Fairclough, 2023). At the textual level, the study examined lexical choices, modality, pronouns, evaluative language, collocations, and concordance patterns. At the level of discursive practice, the analysis focused on how local governments produced and circulated digital narratives on Instagram. At the level of social practice, the study interpreted how bureaucratic legitimacy, public service values, power relations, and governance principles were constructed and reproduced through digital communication.

To enhance validity and reliability, methodological triangulation was applied by integrating quantitative corpus findings with qualitative discourse interpretation. The coding scheme and category assignments were reviewed by two independent researchers with expertise in corpus linguistics and digital public administration. Any disagreements over categorization were discussed until consensus was reached, ensuring consistency and reducing subjective bias in interpreting the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings were obtained using the CL technique using the AntConc application. The results of keyword grouping, collation, and concordance are as follows:

Keywords

A corpus analysis conducted using the CADS approach on thousands of Instagram captions from provincial governments in Indonesia revealed discourse patterns that capture the dynamics of digital bureaucratic communication. From the keyword mapping, nine main thematic categories were identified that illustrate the narrative character of bureaucracy in the digital space. Table 2 shows the categories and keywords found.

Table 2. Keywords List

No	Category	Keywords (frequency)
1	Bureaucratic Image and Legitimacy (353 words)	Governor (6021), province (2875), region (2427), good reputation (2160), government (1782), becoming (1641), Vice Governor (1418), deputy (1331), provincial government (1314), regional secretary (1092), regency (955), photo (886), head (846), agency/office (630), visit (473), leadership ranks (292), regent (286), leaders (271), progress (262), success (241), held (231), apparatus (216), acting official (190), bureau (187), governance (187), conveying congratulations (154), leading (153), remarks (148), achieving (146), leadership (133), flagship (133), presence (111), superior (105), continuing (86), succeeded (75), ensuring success (72)
2	Public Service and Responsiveness (247 words)	program (1507), development (1041), work (1014), education (803), activities (749), office (667), providing (624), health (605), economy (542), attending (481), food security (481), building (459), environment (454), public services (393), receiving (390), general/public (365), school (357), services (311), infrastructure (248), working (220), needs (218), quality (209), helping (161), inclusive (123), open (123)
3	Public Participation and Citizen Engagement (158 words)	community (2192), we/us (2071), together (1414), entire/all (893), the (various) people (880), everyone (782), we (739), residents (608), the people/citizens (302), support (290), team (289), collaboration (277), public (246), coordination (215), representatives (213), movement (165), audience/meeting (160), empowerment (131), communication (121), unity (109), together colloquial (107), contribution (102), contributing (100), empowered (98)
4	Innovation and Digital Bureaucracy (72 words)	caption (571), development (238), website (228), media (196), digital (160), innovation (122), posts (122), application (109), link (108), technology (104), page (98), global city (94), video (90), quick wins (87), infographic (86), internet (86), digitalization (68), transformation (64)

5	Transparency, Accountability, and Governance (56 words)	budget (246), funds (171), clean (107), regional development plan/RPJMD (92), report (92), regulation (88), law (86), evidence (83), transparent (81), expenditure (77), money (52), rules (48), accountable (46), monitoring (43), effective (41), management (41), allocation (40)
6	Public Service Value and Ethics (84 words)	with integrity/"berakhlak" (1035), good (889), must (872), big (543), enthusiasm (514), welfare (251), firm (251), values (223), comfortable (140), strong (138), precise (136), correct (134), trustworthy/"amanah" (80)
7	Social Symbols and Cultural Identity (47 words)	city (1383), day (1320), Indonesia (1185), national (703), republic (RI) (614), culture (407), social (376), independence (143), custom/adat (99), culture (90), history (83), traditional (61), museum (59), Pancasila (56), flag (52), traditions (51)
8	Religious Symbols (57 words)	mosque (384), hajj title "Hj" (336), Ramadan (295), worship (267), prayer (204), Eid al-Fitr (193), Eid al-Fitr (variant) (169), humans (158), Muhammad (156), hajj (142), fasting (121), Hijri (118), Ramadan (alt.) (116), Eid (112), Islam (110), "alhamdulillah" (108), holy (105), religion (103), "fitri" (95), Allah (92), "insyaAllah" (90)
9	Public Problems (46 words)	flood (310), waste/garbage (232), challenges (129), poverty (108), stunting (101), inflation (97), problems (94), fire (92), illness (87), complex (74), nutrition (71), emergency (55), decline (52), extreme (51), drugs/narcotics (51), alert (49), victims (47), damaged (47), severe (46), corruption (43), arrears (43)

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

The corpus analysis revealed that the Bureaucratic Image and Legitimacy category was the most dominant, consisting of 353 keywords, followed by Public Service and Responsiveness (247 keywords), Public Participation and Citizen Engagement (158 keywords), and Transparency, Accountability, and Governance (56 keywords). This finding indicates that local government narratives on Instagram focus more on the representation of institutions and leadership figures than on governance information and public service delivery.

The dominance of words such as *governor* (6021), *government* (1782), *deputy governor* (1418), and *provincial government* (1314) demonstrates that regional leaders and bureaucratic institutions are positioned as the central actors in digital communication. From a digital governance perspective, social media should function not only as a channel for information dissemination but also as a platform for interaction, collaboration, and citizen engagement in governance processes (J Ignacio Criado et al., 2013; Mergel, 2013). However, the high frequency of words related to governmental positions and institutions suggests that digital communication remains dominated by efforts to build bureaucratic legitimacy and personalize leadership.

The Public Service and Responsiveness category ranked second, with dominant keywords such as *program* (1507), *development* (1041), *education* (803), *health* (605), and *service* (393). This finding indicates that public service issues remain an important component of local governments' digital communication. Nevertheless, compared to the prominence of bureaucratic legitimacy, public service narratives are more often framed as information about government programs and development achievements rather than explanations of service mechanisms, citizens' rights, or access to public services. This suggests that social media functions more as a showcase of government performance than as a citizen-oriented public service communication platform.

The Public Participation and Citizen Engagement category includes keywords such as *community* (2192), *we* (2071), *together* (1414), *citizens* (608), and *collaboration* (277). At first glance, these words suggest an effort to construct a participatory narrative. However, their lower frequency compared with the bureaucratic legitimacy category indicates that participation is not the primary focus of local government communication. From the perspective of the New Public Service, citizens should be positioned as partners in governance rather than merely as service recipients *layanan* (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2014). Therefore, these findings suggest that the participation portrayed in government social media remains largely symbolic.

The Digital Innovation and Bureaucracy category contains words such as *digital*, *website*, *application*, *technology*, and *digitalization*. This finding demonstrates that local governments have adopted narratives of digital transformation in their public communication. However, the frequency of this category remains relatively low compared with the categories of bureaucratic legitimacy and public service. This indicates that digital transformation is represented more as service modernization and a communication tool than as a fundamental transformation of governance processes.

Interesting findings can be seen in the Transparency, Accountability, and Governance categories, which only consist of 56 keywords. Words such as *budget*, *report*, *transparent*, *accountable*, and *monitoring* appear with relatively low frequency compared to other categories. Even though transparency and accountability are the main principles of good governance. The low frequency of this category shows that the issue of information disclosure and public accountability has not yet become the dominant narrative in local government

digital communications. The Public Service Values and Ethics category shows a relatively high frequency of words such as moral, good, trustworthy, firm, and enthusiastic. These findings show that the government is trying to build the moral image and integrity of the apparatus through social media. However, the higher frequency of the transparency and accountability categories indicates that moral legitimacy is expressed more through symbols and normative values than through publicly verifiable information about governance practices.

Meanwhile, the Social Symbols and Cultural Identity and Religious Symbols categories show the use of words such as Indonesia, culture, national, mosque, Ramadan, and worship. The presence of this category shows that local government social media is used not only to convey administrative information but also to build the social, cultural, and religious identity of the bureaucracy. In contrast, the Public Problems category, such as flooding, waste, poverty, stunting, and inflation, has the lowest frequency. These findings indicate that issues directly related to development challenges and community welfare have not received proportional space in local government digital narratives.

The distribution of keyword frequencies shows that local government digital communication in Indonesia remains more oriented toward bureaucratic legitimacy, leadership representation, and institutional image-building than toward strengthening transparency, accountability, and public participation. These findings reinforce previous studies suggesting that government social media is often used to promote organizational and political image (JI Criado, 2021; Peng, 2021; Raynauld & Lalancette, 2023). In the Indonesian context, this tendency is also influenced by a bureaucratic culture that continues to position political leaders as the primary symbols of governmental success (Dwiyanto, 2008).

Collacotion

In this section, we focus on the results of our collocation analysis, which reveals how keywords in local government Instagram captions form meaning patterns that reflect the orientation of bureaucratic communication. In general, the collocations reveal three main tendencies: Leadership image and bureaucratic legitimacy, representation of public service and citizen participation, and narratives of digitalization, ethics, and governance. Table 3 presents the collocations and their interpretations.

Table 3. Collocation List

No	Node Word	Collocation	Freq	Interpretation	Category
1	Governor	Deputy	1054	Indicates the hierarchical structure of regional bureaucracy and collective leadership.	Bureaucratic Image and Legitimacy
		Good Reputation/ Harum	1574	Symbolic image-building portraying the regional leader as a source of public pride.	Bureaucratic Image and Legitimacy
		Office	527	Emphasizes the institutional space as the center of bureaucratic legitimacy.	Bureaucratic Image and Legitimacy
		berakhlak	437	Describes the moral values of civil servants aligned with the national <i>BerAKHLAK</i> campaign	Bureaucratic Image and Legitimacy
2	Government	Province	1043	Vertical relationship across regional government levels	Institutional Government Relations
		Region	383	Reflects autonomy and the context of decentralization	Institutional Government Relations
		Community	143	Indicates top-down communication toward citizens.	Institutional Government Relations
		Program	129	Indicates a focus on efficiency and performance outcomes.	Institutional Government Relations
3	Program	Gratispol	286	A populist program that reinforces the legitimacy of regional leaders	Public Service and Performance
		Education	147	Human development initiatives through the education sector.	Public Service and Performance
		Development	123	Indicates physical and economic development orientation..	Public Service and Performance
		Work	103	Shows a productive bureaucratic work culture	Public Service and Performance
4	Service	Health	98	Basic services related to public welfare	Public Service and Performance
		Public	91	Core function of bureaucracy in delivering services	Public Service and Performance
		Community	67	Indicates that government-citizen relations remain passive.	Public Service and Performance
		Providing	45	Reinforces the role of bureaucracy as a service provider.	Public Service and Performance
5	Community	For	432	Citizens are positioned as beneficiaries of policies	Participation and Welfare
		All	176	Narratives of inclusivity and citizen representationwarga.	Participation and Welfare

		Welfare	127	Emphasizes social welfare orientation.	Participation and Welfare
		Inviting	87	Citizen participation that remains symbolic	Participation and Welfare
6	Digital	Samsat	26	Digitalization of public services toward e-government	Innovation and Digital Bureaucracy
		Thru	22	Integration of digital channels as service innovation.	Innovation and Digital Bureaucracy
		Services	20	Emphasizes efficiency in digital-based public services.	Innovation and Digital Bureaucracy
		Transformation	14	Institutional awareness of digital bureaucratic transformation.	Innovation and Digital Bureaucracy
7	Transparency	Accountability	8	Shows correlation between transparency and public accountability	Transparency and Governance
		Governance	4	Openness issues remain largely formalistic.	Transparency and Governance
		Publik	4	Symbolic communication regarding public openness.	Transparency and Governance
		Public Information	3	Recognition of citizens' right to access information.	Transparency and Governance
8	Berakhlak	Ethics	1	Connects civil servants' moral values with global ethics.	ASN Values and Ethics
		Public	1	Reinforces the link between morality and public service.	ASN Values and Ethics
		Integrity	1	Demonstrates personal accountability of public officials.	ASN Values and Ethics
		Service	1	Highlights the moral dimension of civil-service leadership.	ASN Values and Ethics

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

The collocation analysis results show that the word governor has strong collocations with the words deputy, pride, office, and BerAKHLAK. These collocations indicate that regional leaders are represented not only as administrative actors but also as symbols of leadership, regional pride, and moral values within the bureaucracy. This finding suggests that local government digital communication tends to position regional leaders as the central representation of institutional authority. From the perspective of bureaucratic legitimacy, this pattern indicates that social media is used to strengthen leadership identity and build public trust in government institutions through the leader's figure.

The word government frequently collocates with province, region, community, and program. Concordance analysis shows that these collocations generally appear in the context of communicating development programs, regional policies, and government achievements.

Although there is a relationship between government and community, the narratives mainly take the form of government-to-public information dissemination rather than communication that demonstrates consultation or citizen involvement in decision-making processes. This finding suggests that communication remains dominated by a one-way flow of information from government to citizens.

In the public service category, the word "program" collocates with *Gratispol*, education, development, and work. These collocations indicate that public service narratives are largely associated with government programs and development achievements. From a public administration perspective, this pattern reflects a bureaucratic orientation toward outputs and performance outcomes. However, concordance analysis shows that the information presented focuses more on promoting government programs than on explaining service mechanisms or citizens' experiences as users of public services.

The word *service* collocates with health, public, community, and providing. These collocations indicate that public services are primarily represented through basic service sectors, particularly health and administrative services. Nevertheless, concordance results reveal that citizens are more often portrayed as recipients of services than as active participants in evaluating or improving them. Thus, the concept of service in the corpus remains centered on the government's provision of services to citizens.

The category of community participation is represented through the collocations of the word *community* with *for*, *all*, *welfare*, and *inviting*. Concordance results include phrases such as "for community welfare," "inviting the community to support government programs," and "for the benefit of the community." These patterns indicate that citizens are primarily represented as beneficiaries of government policies and programs. Although words suggesting participation, such as *inviting* and *together*, appear in the corpus, their usage mostly reflects efforts to mobilize support for government agendas rather than citizen involvement in policy deliberation. This finding suggests that participation on government social media remains largely symbolic and communicative.

The category of digitalization is reflected in the collocations of the word *digital* with *Samsat*, *drive-thru*, *service*, and *transformation*. These collocations indicate that digitalization in local government narratives is primarily associated with the modernization of public services and easier access to services. This finding is consistent with the concept of digital governance,

which emphasizes the use of technology to improve the efficiency and quality of public services. However, the relatively low frequency of collocations related to digital transformation suggests that digitalization is positioned more as a service delivery instrument than as a broader transformation of governance processes.

Concordance

The third section focuses on corpus concordance. A concordance can express specific word associations within a sentence, allowing us to investigate specific discourses and the knowledge each corpus attempts to construct.

Table 4. Concordance List

No	Node Word	Concordance
1	Governor	carrying out the mandate, leading Lampung Province as Governor and Deputy Governor of Lampung for the 2025-2030 period,
		The residents congratulate and wish success to the newly inaugurated Governor and Deputy Governor of DKI Jakarta for the 2025-2030 period,
		This event was attended by the Minister of Transportation, the Governor and Deputy Governor of South Sulawesi, the Regional Secretary,
		amadan UMKM Gratispol Festival at the East Kalimantan Governor's Office Courtyard, Friday (14/3). The event involved 120
2	Government	This achievement follows the audit of the Regional Government Financial Report (LKPD) of DKI Jakarta Province for the year
		an award with high-performance status. Regional autonomy is intended for welfare and equity
		for the next five years, fulfilling public expectations and improving the welfare of NTB residents. However, the
		East Kalimantan Provincial Government remains focused on implementing priority development programs. "We prioritize infrastructure development,
		cities in Papua are urged to align proposed development programs with the five priorities set...
3	Program	for every village. Regional Secretary Sri Wahyuni explained that Gratispol is a flagship program of the East Kalimantan Governor
		intended for new students. Second, the Gratispol program provides free administration for home ownership documents
		The Transportation Office, Health Office, and Education and Culture Office must implement the 100-day program
		Free Nutritious Meals (MBG), progress on the Governor Regulation for Gratispol Programs in Education and Health, asset-related issues
		Optimistic, A Capital for Regional Development Success. Various development programs that have been launched

4	Service	improving public access to Samsat services, health services, and other services
		Infrastructure to support economic activities, public services, and health
		Encourage Lampung Provincial ASN to Improve Services to the Community to Realize the Lampung Vision
5	Community	more effectively, thus improving public services and comfort for all employees
		May their leadership bring progress and prosperity to the people of South Sulawesi. Thank you to
6	Digital	for residents who want to extend their vehicle registration (STNK). Location: Digital Drive-Thru Samsat for STNK Renewal, Telukbetung
		Promotion, all of it can now be done digitally to speed up services, expand reach, and
7	Transparency	and serves as a key instrument in creating transparency and accountability in regional financial management
		efforts to build a positive image and improve transparency in government performance, the Department of Communication and Informatics
8	Berakhlak	and accountable, he said. <i>Island of integrity</i> or <i>integrity zone</i> to demonstrate commitment

Source: Processed by Authors, 2025

Concordance analysis was used to examine how keywords are employed within sentence contexts and how meanings are constructed through discursive practices. Unlike frequency and collocation analyses, which focus on statistical patterns, concordance analysis enables researchers to understand relations of meaning, actor positioning, and communication strategies within digital bureaucratic narratives. In this study, concordance results were analyzed using Fairclough’s CDA framework (Fairclough, 2023), particularly at the levels of text, discursive practice, and social practice.

The findings show that local government Instagram captions function not only as a medium for information dissemination but also as a mechanism for constructing bureaucratic legitimacy through language. At the textual level, regional leaders are prominently represented through the repeated use of the word “governor” across various governmental contexts. Phrases such as “Governor and Deputy Governor of Lampung for the 2025-2030 Term,” “The event was attended by the Minister of Transportation, the Governor and Deputy Governor of South Sulawesi,” and “at the Governor’s Office of East Kalimantan” indicate that the presence of leaders occupies a central position in government narratives. From Fairclough’s

perspective this pattern demonstrates how discourse is used to construct and maintain institutional legitimacy through the symbolic representation of leaders.

At the level of discursive practice, the words “government” and “program” generally appear in the context of development, policy implementation, and performance achievements. Phrases such as “*The East Kalimantan Provincial Government remains focused on implementing priority development programs*” and “*the flagship program of the Governor of East Kalimantan*” position the government as the primary actor responsible for designing, directing, and implementing policies. In contrast, citizens are more frequently portrayed as beneficiaries of these programs. This finding suggests that digital narratives continue to be dominated by a one-way communication pattern from government to society.

Further analysis of pronoun usage shows that words such as *we*, *our*, and *community* are used to create a sense of symbolic closeness between the government and its citizens. However, concordance results reveal that *we* generally refer to government actors implementing policies, whereas the *community* is more often represented as a group receiving services or development benefits. Thus, pronoun usage does not fully reflect an equal relationship between government and citizens, as envisioned in the New Public Service paradigm (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2002, 2014).

From a modal perspective, recurring expressions such as *must*, *will*, *remain*, *continue*, and *focus* indicate governmental authority in setting priorities and directing development agendas. Phrases such as “*remain focused on implementing priority development programs*” and “*will realize the aspirations of society*” position the government as the actor with the power to determine goals and policy directions. In CDA, modality is an important indicator for understanding how power relations are represented through language (Fairclough, 2023). The frequent use of modality suggests that governments communicate more often as policy directors than as facilitators of public dialogue.

The analysis of imperative forms reveals the frequent use of expressions such as *inviting*, *let us*, *support*, and *improve*. Linguistically, these expressions indicate efforts to mobilize citizens to support government programs and initiatives. However, most of these invitations are symbolic and lack concrete mechanisms for participation. Consequently, the form of participation represented in the captions tends to emphasize public support for government agendas rather than active citizen involvement in policy formulation or service evaluation.

The concordance results also demonstrate the dominance of evaluative language, including words such as *proud, successful, excellent, advanced, achievement, and outstanding*. These expressions are frequently used to highlight development achievements, government performance, and institutional accomplishments. From a Critical Discourse Analysis perspective, evaluative language functions as a discursive strategy to shape positive public perceptions of government performance and strengthen bureaucratic legitimacy (Fairclough, 2023). The prevalence of such language suggests that social media serves not only as a medium for information dissemination but also as a tool for institutional image-building.

At the level of social practice, the overall concordance patterns indicate that local government digital communication continues to reproduce a bureaucratic model centered on institutions and political leaders. Although social media provides opportunities for more participatory and interactive communication, the dominant narratives remain focused on leadership representation, program promotion, and the celebration of governmental achievements. This finding suggests that digital transformation has not yet been fully accompanied by a transformation in bureaucratic communication practices toward a more transparent, participatory, accountable, and citizen-centered model of governance.

Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the digital transformation of bureaucracy does not automatically lead to more participatory public communication. Although local governments have actively utilized Instagram as a platform for public communication, the dominant discourse remains centered on leadership representation, the promotion of government programs, and institutional image-building. Digitalization appears to have transformed the communication medium rather than the bureaucratic communication paradigm itself. This finding supports the argument that the adoption of digital technologies in the public sector is not always accompanied by substantive changes in governance practices and government-citizen relationships (Dunleavy, Margetts, Bastow, & Tinkler, 2006; Haug, Dan, & Mergel, 2024).

The dominance of words such as *governor, deputy governor, government, and provincial government* indicates that regional leaders remain the primary symbolic representation of bureaucracy. This pattern suggests that government social media continues to function as an instrument for strengthening political and institutional legitimacy (Medaglia & Zheng, 2017; Peng, 2021; Van de Walle, 2004). According to the New Public Service

perspective, public leaders should be viewed not only as decision-makers but also as symbols of public values, morality, and a service orientation toward citizens (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2002, 2014). However, this pattern remains strong within the Indonesian bureaucratic culture, where image-building and loyalty to leaders often receive greater emphasis than performance-based public service delivery (Dwiyanto, 2008; Hamadi, 2024; Lubis & Rabbani, 2023).

At the same time, Instagram narratives reveal efforts to construct a moral image of public service. Words such as *BerAKHLAK*, *trustworthy*, and *integrity* reflect the national values promoted among civil servants. These values reinforce the moral dimension of public bureaucracy, as public ethics constitutes a crucial foundation for building citizens' trust in government institutions (Barberis, 2001; Feldheim & Wang, 2004; Vigoda-Gadot, 2007). Nevertheless, in this context, ethics appears to function more as a symbolic discourse used to strengthen a positive institutional image rather than as a reflection of values embedded in policy and bureaucratic practice.

Government Instagram narratives also contain social, cultural, and religious symbols, highlighting the role of social media in constructing national identity and the religious image of bureaucracy. This demonstrates how governments utilize cultural and religious values to strengthen social cohesion and reinforce moral legitimacy in governance (Gangopadhyay, 2023; Haggard & Haggard, 2010). However, the prominence of these symbols often overshadows more critical discussions of public issues such as poverty, flooding, and stunting, which occur relatively infrequently. This tendency suggests that governments prefer to emphasize achievements and positive activities rather than discuss policy challenges or shortcomings. Yet acknowledging public problems and presenting clear solutions can enhance public trust and strengthen governmental legitimacy (Chanley, Rudolph, & Rahn, 2000; Tanny & Al-Hossienie, 2019)..

From the perspective of digital governance, social media should function not only as a channel for information dissemination but also as a space for interaction, collaboration, and citizen engagement in governance processes (J Ignacio Criado et al., 2013; Mergel, 2013). However, the keyword, collocation, and concordance analyses indicate that local government digital communication remains oriented toward information delivery and the promotion of government activities rather than the creation of public dialogue. This finding reinforces

previous studies showing that government social media is often used as an instrument of legitimacy-building and organizational image management (J Ignacio Criado et al., 2013; Peng, 2021; Raynauld & Lalancette, 2023). In Indonesia, this tendency is also influenced by a bureaucratic culture that continues to position leaders as the primary symbols of governmental success.

The principle of participation in good governance emphasizes citizens' involvement in public decision-making. However, the findings reveal that citizens are more frequently represented as beneficiaries of government programs than as partners in governance. Words such as *community, together, we, and inviting* suggest attempts to create symbolic closeness between government and citizens. Nevertheless, concordance analysis shows that participation remains largely symbolic and communicative, encouraging citizens to support government programs rather than providing deliberative spaces for involvement in policy formulation and evaluation. Consequently, local government social media has not fully reflected the principle of citizen-centered governance advocated by the New Public Service paradigm (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2002, 2014).

The principles of transparency and accountability are also not prominent themes in local government digital communication. The frequencies of words such as *transparency, accountability, report, budget, monitoring, and public information* are relatively low compared to those associated with bureaucratic legitimacy and public service. Yet these principles constitute the core foundations of good governance, enabling citizens to access information, monitor government activities, and evaluate public performance ((Bovens, Goodin, & Schillemans, 2014; Johnston, 2006). The limited representation of transparency and accountability suggests that social media is used more often to showcase achievements, successful programs, and leadership activities than to provide information that supports open government ((J Ignacio Criado et al., 2013; Mergel, 2013).

Accessibility is reflected through words such as *digital, website, application, service, and digital Samsat*. These findings indicate that local governments have attempted to utilize digital technologies to expand access to public services. Such efforts align with the objectives of public-sector digital transformation, which emphasize efficiency, accessibility, and service quality improvement (Afrilia et al., 2024; Hong, Kim, & Kwon, 2022; Janowski, 2015). However, digitalization in government narratives primarily represents service modernization and

bureaucratic efficiency rather than broader transformations toward participatory and transparent governance. While digital technologies have increased service accessibility, they have not yet been fully leveraged to strengthen citizen engagement in governance processes.

The category of public participation and citizen engagement, represented by words such as *community*, *we*, *together*, and *collaboration*, reflects symbolic attempts to build relationships between government and citizens (Androniceanu, 2021; Sharmin & Chowdhury, 2025; Shenkoya, 2023). However, concordance analysis shows that citizens are more often positioned as objects of development than as active subjects in policymaking. This finding indicates that digital government communication continues to reproduce hierarchical bureaucratic relationships, in which the government acts as the primary actor and citizens as program beneficiaries. Such results are consistent with critiques of one-way government communication models that have yet to fully adopt collaborative approaches to public governance (Bovaird & Loeffler, 2012; Nabatchi, Sancino, & Sicilia, 2017).

The findings also reveal extensive use of evaluative language such as *proud*, *successful*, *excellent*, *advanced*, *achievement*, and *accomplishment*. From a CDA perspective, evaluative language serves as a discursive strategy to shape positive public perceptions and reinforce bureaucratic legitimacy (Fairclough, 2023). Through these expressions, governments do more than provide information; they construct a particular social reality regarding development success and governmental effectiveness. Social media thus becomes a site for the production and reproduction of meanings that position government as the central actor in development and citizens as beneficiaries. This interpretation aligns with the view that language in public communication plays a crucial role in shaping power relations and constructing institutional legitimacy (Wodak & Meyer, 2015).

This study extends the literature on government social media by demonstrating that the central challenge is not the lack of adoption of digital technologies but rather how these technologies are used within bureaucratic communication practices. Local governments have successfully established a strong digital presence, yet their communication remains institution- and leader-centered. Therefore, the key challenge of digital public communication in Indonesia is no longer solely technological transformation, but the transformation of bureaucratic communication culture toward a model that is more transparent, accountable, participatory, dialogic, and citizen-oriented. These findings complement previous studies

emphasizing that successful public-sector digital transformation depends not only on technological adoption but also on changes in organizational culture, governance arrangements, and patterns of interaction with citizens (Janssen & Van Der Voort, 2016; Mergel, 2013; Mergel, Edelmann, & Haug, 2019).

By integrating CADS, CDA, good governance, digital governance, and New Public Service perspectives, this study demonstrates that language in government social media is not neutral. Rather, it serves as an important instrument for constructing legitimacy, reproducing power relations, and shaping public perceptions of local government services and performance. This integrative approach strengthens the study's theoretical contribution by showing that corpus analysis can not only identify dominant linguistic patterns but also explain how those patterns reflect governance practices, power relations, and governmental communication orientations in the digital era (Baker, Gabrielatos, Khosravinik, Mcenery, & Wodak, 2008; Fairclough, 2023; Partington et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

This study shows that public service narratives in Instagram captions of local governments in Indonesia are still dominated by representations of leadership, bureaucratic legitimacy, and the promotion of government programs. Keyword, collocation, and concordance analyses reveal that the regional head is the central figure in digital communication, while the public is more often positioned as beneficiaries rather than as partners in the governance process. Although themes of public service, digital transformation, and public participation also appear in the corpus, their frequency remains below that of institutional accounts and leadership imagery. From a good governance perspective, the research findings show that local government digital communication does not fully reflect the principles of transparency, accountability, participation, and accessibility in a balanced manner. Social media has been used to disseminate information and modernize services, but has not yet fully developed as a space for public dialogue that enables citizen involvement in the governance process. The digital transformation that has occurred reflects more a change in communication media than a transformation in bureaucratic communication culture.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of digital public administration studies through integrating the approaches of CADS, CDA, digital governance, good

governance, and the New Public Service within a single analytical framework. The research findings show that language in government social media functions not only as a means of communication but also as an instrument for establishing bureaucratic legitimacy, reproducing power relations, and constructing public perceptions of government services and performance. This study has several limitations. First, the study focused only on provincial government Instagram captions, thus not encompassing the digital communication practices of district, city, and other government agencies. Second, the analysis focused on the caption text, excluding visual elements, user comments, and the level of public engagement, which also play a role in forming the meaning of digital communication. Third, the research period was limited to the first six months after the inauguration of regional heads in 2025, thus not depicting the dynamics of government communication over a longer period. Future research is advised to develop multimodal analysis by combining text, images, videos, and user participation on government social media. Furthermore, comparative studies across levels of government, across social networking sites, and across countries can be conducted to gain a more complete understanding of the transformation of digital bureaucratic communication. Future research can also examine the relationship between government digital discourses, levels of public participation, and public reliance on government to improve understanding of the function of social media in realizing more open, participatory, and citizen-oriented governance.

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