The Role of Press Media in Strengthening Public Service in Local Governments: A Structural Causal Analysis of Three Local Governments in Malang Raya Area

Kurniawan Muhammad[1*], Muhammad Nuh[2], Mujibur Rahman Khairul Muluk[3], Bambang Supriyono[4]

[*]ibnuisrofam@gmail.com
ORCID: 0009-0008-3236-7233

Universitas Brawijaya, Malang, Indonesia[1,2,3,4]

Abstract. This research aims to delve into the significant role of mass media in enhancing the quality of public services. In the ever-evolving era of information, mass media holds significant influence in shaping the public's perception and satisfaction with the services provided by government institutions. The press media is one of the independent and credible mass media that aligns with the good governance concept. This research employs interview and observation methods to understand the relationship between the press and public services in institutions within the Malang Regency, Malang City, and Batu City regions. Interviews and observations are conducted with stakeholders through focus group discussions, including government institutions and community groups. The results indicate that the press is used to evaluate public services. Furthermore, the press plays a key role in exposing issues related to public services and enhancing government accountability through the frequency of reporting. The press media can influence and mobilize the masses, with its primary influence lying in agenda setting. Therefore, the findings of this research provide a deeper understanding of how the press media can impact and strengthen the quality of public services. These findings are a foundation for enhancing collaborative governance between government institutions and mass media to improve transparency, accountability, and public service quality.

Keywords: collaborative governance, good governance, media, public service, the press

1. Introduction

In the continuously developing era of information, mass media functions as the principal medium for distributing information to the general population. Mass media covers various channels, including television, radio, newspapers, and social media, which serve as conduits for disseminating news and a vast array of information to individuals [1]. The information landscape has undergone significant changes due to rapid technological improvements and the proliferation of mass media content. These developments have facilitated faster and wider access to various news and perspectives [2]. Boasting over 276 million individuals, Indonesia is the fourth most populated nation globally. Indonesian society exhibits significant levels of engagement in various aspects of internet usage, particularly in the domains of online commerce and social networking. The proportion of individuals utilizing social media platforms accounts

for 60% of the overall population, indicating a ratio of 3 social media users for every five people (We are Social, 2022).

In addition, the mass media has a substantial role in shaping the public's perception and assessment of government services. Disseminating information through the mass media assumes a distinct function in shaping perspectives, opinions, and social interactions within a given culture [4]. The mass media has undergone significant transformation, emerging as a potent means of communication that influences and molds societal and political narratives. The impact of the media is readily apparent in the public's perception of issues, governance evaluations, and society's dynamics [5]. Hence, it may be argued that mass media plays a crucial role in influencing public sentiment and facilitating public comprehension of governmental measures. The press media is key in bolstering the notion of "good governance." The press media is a guardian of the government's social control and functions as a conduit for disseminating information. Additionally, it operates as a mechanism for monitoring and scrutinizing government programs [6].

The press media is one of the mass media, being a prominent medium of mass communication, and plays a crucial role in influencing public perceptions and attitudes. One of the principal strategies the press media employs to accomplish this objective is "agenda setting." Within this theoretical framework, the press media possesses the authority to exercise control over the selection of subjects they opt to report on and subsequently bring to the forefront of public attention [7]. The press media fulfills a crucial function in promoting transparency and accountability by uncovering corruption, human rights infringements, and non-adherence to legal standards by governmental bodies or public organizations [8]. Through investigative journalism and in-depth reporting, the press media helps reveal aberrations and hold the government and its officials accountable. This encourages improvements in governance by pressuring the government to take actions more aligned with the public interest [9].

The press media can significantly influence what becomes the primary focus of public attention. The press media can raise particular issues, highlight important problems, and even help shift the course of social discourse. Beyond merely providing information, the press has great potential to influence and facilitate essential aspects of the governance system [10]. Furthermore, the press media also plays a crucial role in providing information to the public about public policies, citizens' rights and responsibilities, and the services offered by the government. It is an intermediary between the government and the public, helping citizens understand existing policies, make better decisions, and participate in the political process [11]. The press media can also help create space for various perspectives and opinions in society, a vital element of democracy. Thus, the role of press media in good governance not only ensures government accountability but also facilitates more active citizen participation in the decision-making process, which, in turn, strengthens democracy and better governance [12].

The press plays a crucial role in shaping good governance and improving public services, distinct from other mass media outlets. While mass media often focus on popular and sensational news that tends to overlook issues related to good governance and effective public services, the press, particularly independent media with strong investigative journalism, tends to concentrate more on scrutinizing government policies, exposing corruption cases, and providing in-depth reports on issues affecting the quality of public services [13]. By offering critical and balanced coverage, the press can play a significant role in monitoring government actions, promoting transparency, and motivating the government to enhance the quality of services provided to the public. Therefore, the study of the role of the press in creating a healthy and balanced information environment is crucial in the context of good governance and effective public participation.

2. Methods

The research methodology employed in this study adopts a qualitative descriptive approach, incorporating interview and observation techniques as a means of data collection during the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) procedure. The participants in the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) encompass a diverse range of stakeholder groups, such as the media outlet Radar Malang Jawa Pos, community organizations, ombudsmen, and multiple government entities representing Malang Regency, Malang City, and Batu City. Government agencies in these three domains encompass various public service organizations, including but not limited to the health department, education department, transportation department, environmental department, labor department, public works department, and regional police agency.

The qualitative descriptive approach is designed to gather comprehensive data and information, emphasizing comprehending and interpreting the significance and circumstances that arise from the interactions of the research participants[14]. By conducting interviews and making observations throughout the focus group discussions (FGDs), researchers can systematically document and analyze the diverse elements and dynamics that unfold inside the discussion group. This approach enables a thorough understanding of the phenomenon under study [15].

3. Results

The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) maintains its focus on the significance of ensuring the accuracy of information disseminated through social media platforms. A substantial 92.40% of diverse news items are classified as hoaxes and contain hate speech, posing a potential threat to the well-being of the next generation and impeding the growth and development of governance in Indonesia. The exponential growth of technology and information has become an inherent aspect of the contemporary environment, posing challenges in terms of regulation and governance. Based on data provided by the Ministry of Communication and Information, a comprehensive total of 11,357 instances of hoax concerns have been detected. From August 2018 onwards, a total of 2,075 instances of hoax concerns have been identified within the realm of governance. The prevalence of these deceptive practices can be primarily attributed to the utilization of counterfeit online profiles that assume the identities of governmental authorities operating at national and local administrative tiers. Furthermore, it is worth noting that incorrect information is prevalent about the most recent governmental legislation. In addition, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (Kominfo) has successfully recognized 1,823 instances of fraudulent activities, encompassing phishing links and scams. The dissemination of hoax news through mass media represents a potential threat to society and its perceptions of the government, leading to the potential deception of the public with invalid information [16].

The mass media functions as a communication tool and source of information for the community. In contrast to mass media in general, the press is an entity that assumes the risk of compromising its reputation and integrity when disseminating news. Radar Malang is a frequently utilized media platform in the Malang Regency, Malang City, and Batu City. Radar Malang is a local media organization operating in emerging regions, and it is affiliated with the Jawa Pos media network. Radar Malang assumes a pivotal role in fostering communication between the local population and governmental entities. This media platform facilitates citizen participation in governance by providing dedicated columns for the public to submit grievances.

Concurrently, it affords the government enhanced opportunities to gain insight into the multifaceted goals, complaints, and opinions of the populace.

Based on the investigation by Radar Malang Jawa Pos, various public complaints regarding government services have been received from 2018 to 2022. Radar Malang Jawa Pos provides a dedicated column for the public to submit complaints, serving as a communication medium between the public and the government. The results of these complaints show that various sectors of public service have received feedback from the public. The investigation reveals that the fields of public works and transportation received the highest number of complaints, totaling 365 and 296 cases, respectively. The Malang City Government also received the highest number of complaints compared to the other two regions (Table 1).

Public services related to transportation under the Department of Transportation often receive complaints from the public regarding the presence of unauthorized parking in inappropriate locations. As reported in the Malang Watch column in the January 2020 editions 16 and 20, residents of Malang Regency complained about illegal parking retribution on the highways, while the residents of Malang City expressed concerns about the behavior of parking attendants (*juru parkir -- jukir*) who were acting arbitrarily. Concerning public services related to public works it involves regional infrastructure. Most public complaints shared through Radar Malang are about the quality of roads in the Malang Raya region. For instance, in the January 7, 2021 edition, residents expressed their concerns through the Malang Watch column on the front page of the Radar Malang newspaper. Following this, in the January 30, 2021 edition, the Public Works Department had already initiated improvements to the road sections that the public had previously complained about.

Table 1: Public complaints in the Jawa Pos Radar Malang's section based on field type

No.	Field Type	Public Complaints			TOTAL
		Malang	Malang City	Batu City	
1	Education	1	8	0	9
2	Public employment	68	294	3	365
3	Health	3	50	0	53
4	Environmental protection	8	51	1	60
5	Spatial planning	1	23	0	24
6	Population and civil registration	17	1	0	18
7	Employment	1	2	0	3
8	Transportation	28	267	1	296
9	Regional autonomy, public governance, financial administration	1	14	0	15
10	Regional devices	3	20	0	23
11	Personnel and encryption	36	181	1	218

Source: Primary data

Moreover, the findings from the Focus Group Discussion (FGD) indicate that Radar Malang is crucial in facilitating communication between the government and the general population, serving as an intermediary platform. The platform offers a designated section for individuals to express public grievances while also serving as a means for the government to

disseminate information and policy. Radar Malang, being an autonomous entity, possesses the capacity to provide precise information and maintains the confidence and integrity of the local populace. Additionally, the news disseminated by Radar Malang has the potential to garner attention and influence the responses and priorities within the realm of public service.

Some participants feel that the reporting by Radar Malang has a significant impact on efforts to improve the quality of public services through the responsiveness of public service agencies in the Malang Raya region. This aligns with the statement made by Participant Y.

"Regarding the role of mass media, it's extremely remarkable. This serves as a very effective form of social control, even very precise. In our institution, to keep track of the news that circulates, we've formed a cyber troop team. Its members are carefully selected not just based on their social media usage but also their reading habits and other factors. We've created this team to monitor if there are any complaints or positive news stories trending, and we promptly follow up on those. Regarding positive news, it goes straight to our HR department, and the same applies to negative news – we address it with several improvements," expressed Participant Y.

In contrast to Participant Y, Participant S expressed that the reporting published in Radar Malang acts as a filter for news that is not accurate regarding public services in the Malang Raya region.

"Radar Malang is expected to act as a filter for various information on social media that may not necessarily be true," stated Participant S.

This sentiment is corroborated by Participant F, who expressed that the choice of language and words used in Radar Malang's news can make public service agencies feel intimidated.

"What disturbs us the most about a news article is reading the headlines," Participant F stated.

This statement is also supported by Participant A.

"What is written by the media reflects the views of the community. If the local leaders respond to that, then regional development will align with what the community truly desires, as conveyed through the grievances expressed in the media today," Participant A stated.

The statement above indicates the positive role of mass media in terms of public service responsiveness. The public's response to public services signifies that media reporting influences public service responsiveness. For example, certain reports published in Radar Malang emphasized the need for the local government to take prompt action, as expressed by Participant N.

"When reporting on road damage, there is an immediate response. Once, when we reported on damaged roads in Malang Regency, it was quickly responded to by the relevant authorities. When they were about to repair it, they encountered a problem because they found out that there was a water pipe underneath the damaged road. Several times, when we reported on damaged school buildings, the response came directly from the Regent of Malang within days. News about the controversy

regarding school uniform purchases was also promptly responded to, and this led Mayor Sutiaji of Malang to consider providing school uniforms for free. News about COVID volunteers whose allowances were cut led to the hospital director immediately coming to respond," Participant N revealed.

Furthermore, this FGD found that people currently prefer news accessed through social media, aligning with the statement made by Participant D.

"Mass media is very helpful for us in promoting our services, permits, and new regulations to the public, so mass media is very beneficial for us. However, we have a small criticism – when readers notice something lacking or incorrect in the newspaper, they may not accept it directly. But when we post it on social media, the response is greater, and the feedback is better," Participant D expressed.

The provided statement elucidates the presence of media convergence, which arises from the advancement of information and communication technology, facilitating the amalgamation of diverse media outlets into a cohesive system. This phenomenon has had a substantial influence on how we get and consume media information. In the past, distinct divisions existed between various forms of mass media, including print, electronic, and digital media. Nevertheless, the progression of technology has facilitated the integration and mutual reinforcement of various gadgets and platforms. Furthermore, media convergence has provided the ability to explore various types of content in various formats in real-time. It has also created new spaces for digital platforms. In general, the phenomenon of media convergence has brought about significant transformations in our interactions with media material, facilitating enhanced opportunities for accessibility, integration, and the proliferation of diverse media sources. The press's existence is regarded as a mechanism of societal regulation over governmental policies and functions as an informational conduit for the general public concerning governmental policies.

4.   Discussion

The mass media, exemplified by Radar Malang, is a notable example of media that is pivotal in promoting the connection between the general population and the government. This media source plays a significant role in facilitating citizen engagement in governance matters. It provides as a platform for the government to get insight into the many ambitions, grievances, and perspectives of the public through the provision of dedicated complaint sections. The community complaint area, which is under the ownership of Media Radar Malang, serves as a platform for citizens to express their concerns, frustrations, or ambitions. This technology plays a crucial role in facilitating public engagement in decision-making processes and government initiatives that are designed to benefit the community [17].

The inclusion of a community complaint column in Media Radar Malang serves as a concrete embodiment of the concepts behind good governance. The general populace can readily disseminate their own experiences, knowledge, and encountered difficulties, enabling their active engagement in the formulation of policies, a fundamental aspect of effective government. Within this particular setting, the media's creation and management of interactions assume a pivotal role in upholding the fundamental tenets of effective governance, encompassing public engagement, openness, and governmental responsibility [18]. Moreover,

the media can deliver incisive journalism that has the potential to shape public sentiment and prompt governmental reactions.

Critical and balanced media reporting is one of the key elements in maintaining the integrity of government in conducting governance and providing effective public services [19]. In a democracy, the media serves as an independent watchdog that plays a crucial role in exposing deviations, providing in-depth information to the public, and ensuring that the government is accountable for its actions and policies. Well-functioning media helps create a more balanced and democratic environment where the public has access to the necessary information to understand, assess, and influence government policies [20]. Furthermore, media reporting triggers healthy dialogue and interaction between the government, media, and the public. When the media critically reviews government policies and actions, it creates pressure on the government to ensure transparency and accountability in their actions. Errors or shortcomings in public policies and service programs become evident and can be rectified through government responses. Consequently, a more responsive government is more likely to meet better the demands and expectations of the public [21].

A more responsive government is a key element in maintaining the quality of democracy and good public service. Government responsiveness is closely related to the quality of public services, which refers to the government's ability and willingness to better respond to the demands, needs, and expectations of the public [22]. A government that demonstrates a higher level of responsiveness is a crucial factor in preserving the quality of democracy and the provision of high-quality public services. Government responsiveness reflects the extent to which the government is capable and willing to better respond to the demands, needs, and aspirations of the public. In particular, government responsiveness significantly impacts how the public evaluates the government's performance. A responsive government not only enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of public service delivery but also makes a positive contribution to the foundation of a strong democracy and greater civic engagement in the political process [23].

The presence of the media plays a crucial role in society as a form of social control over government policies and as a source of information for the public regarding government policies. Critical reporting on issues in public service helps identify errors or shortcomings in policies and implementation. This can trigger government responsiveness to make changes and improvements to the quality of public service provided [24]. The media also serves as a tool for the government to disseminate information more widely, clarify evolving issues, and help the public understand the implications of government policies. This information also assists the public in identifying areas where public service policies need improvement. The role of the media in bridging the government and the public encourages the presence of independent and ethical media as a key element in effectively fulfilling this role while also supporting the implementation of good governance. Media reporting helps create a more balanced and democratic environment where government policies can be critically evaluated [25].

5. Conclusion

The existence of media outlets like Media Radar Malang plays a crucial role in facilitating interaction between the public and the government. The column dedicated to public complaints in Media Radar Malang is a tangible manifestation of the principles of good governance, enabling the public to share their experiences and information to participate actively in the policy-making process. Furthermore, critical media reporting is a key element in preserving the government's integrity and the quality of public services. Therefore, the media can be seen as a

new frontier in government collaboration to achieve good governance. However, in-depth studies are required to fully understand the role of the media in the collaboration for good governance.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare there is no conflict of interest.

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