

ANALYSIS OF PUBLIC SENTIMENT TOWARDS #INDONESIADARK HASHTAG ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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ABSTRAK

Tagar #IndonesiaGelap menjadi topik utama di media sosial sebagai salah satu bentuk ekspresi politik dan refleksi ketidakpuasan masyarakat terhadap situasi sosial, politik, dan ekonomi di Indonesia. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis sentimen masyarakat terhadap tagar tersebut menggunakan pendekatan analisis sentimen berbasis machine learning dengan menggunakan algoritma Naïve Bayes, didukung dengan analisis kualitatif untuk mengkaji konteks diskursif yang muncul. Data dikumpulkan melalui web crawling dari platform media sosial X (Twitter) dalam rentang waktu tertentu, kemudian dianalisis dan divisualisasikan menggunakan Word Cloud dan barchart. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa sentimen masyarakat terhadap #IndonesiaGelap didominasi oleh sentimen positif sebesar 29,1%. Namun, dominasi sentimen positif ini belum sepenuhnya mencerminkan sikap autentik masyarakat, karena terdapat indikasi kuat keterlibatan akun buzzer dalam membentuk opini publik yang lebih positif terhadap isu tersebut. Sementara itu, meskipun secara kuantitatif jumlahnya sedikit, sentimen negatif belum sepenuhnya mencerminkan sikap autentik masyarakat, karena terdapat indikasi kuat keterlibatan akun buzzer dalam membentuk opini publik yang lebih positif terhadap isu tersebut. Sementara itu, meskipun secara kuantitatif jumlahnya sedikit, sentimen negatif mengandung kritik substansial yang menyasar isu struktural, seperti krisis transparansi, kegagalan kebijakan, dan dampak terhadap masyarakat. Sentimen netral diisi dengan narasi yang cenderung deskriptif dan tidak memihak secara emosional. Studi ini menunjukkan bahwa tagar #IndonesiaGelap tidak hanya menjadi wadah ekspresi publik, tetapi juga arena kontestasi wacana dalam komunikasi politik digital. Analisis ini mengungkap bagaimana ruang digital dimanfaatkan baik untuk menyuarakan kritik maupun untuk secara strategis membentuk persepsi publik, yang pada gilirannya memengaruhi dinamika komunikasi politik di Indonesia.

Kata Kunci: Analisis Sentimen, Media Sosial, Tagar #IndonesiaGelap.

ABSTRACT

The hashtag #IndonesiaGelap has become a prominent topic on social media as a form of political expression and a reflection of public dissatisfaction with the social, political and economic situation in Indonesia. This study aims to analyze public sentiment towards the hashtag using a machine learning-based sentiment analysis approach using the Naïve Bayes algorithm, supported by qualitative analysis to examine the emerging discursive context. Data was collected through web crawling from social media platform X (Twitter) within a certain time span, then analyzed and visualized using Word Cloud and barcharts. The analysis showed that public sentiment towards #IndonesiaGelap was dominated by positive sentiment at 29.1%. However, this dominance of positive sentiment does not fully reflect the authentic attitude of public, as there are strong indications of the involvement of buzzer accounts in shaping a more positive public opinion on the issue. Meanwhile, although quantitatively in the minority, negative sentiments does not fully reflect the authentic attitude of public, as there are strong indications of the involvement of buzzer accounts in shaping a more positive public opinion on the issue. Meanwhile, although quantitatively in the minority, negative sentiments contain substantial criticism targeting structural issues, such as the transparency crisis, policy failures, and impacts on the people. Neutral sentiments are filled with narratives that tend to be descriptive and emotionally impartial. This study shows that the #IndonesiaGelap hashtag is not only a forum for public expression, but also an arena for discourse contestation in digital political communication. This analysis reveals how the digital space is utilized both to voice criticism and to strategically shape public perception, which in turn influences the dynamics of political communication in Indonesia.

Keywords: Analisis Sentimen, Media Sosial, Tagar #IndonesiaGelap

A. INTRODUCTION

The emergence of the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap is a reaction to controversial government policies, particularly those related to budget cuts in the education and health sectors to fund the Free Nutritious Food (MBG) program. The decision has drawn sharp criticism, especially from students and the public who feel this policy has a negative impact on access to education and health services. The hashtag first went viral on social media X (formerly Twitter) with more than 760,000 tweets in a short period of time. This number continued to increase until it reached 14 million tweets a day (Reuters, 2025). Satria Naufal, Coordinator of the Indonesian Student Executive Board (BEM SI), stated that this hashtag illustrates people's concern about their future due to government policies that are considered not in favor of public welfare (Financial Times, 2025).

Some of the main issues raised in this movement included rejection of Presidential Instruction No. 1 of 2025, calls for an increase in the education budget, and demands for transparency and accountability in state financial management. The wave of protests began on 17 February 2025 and spread various regions in Indonesia, led by BEM SI and a number of other student organizations (Reuters, 2025). The #IndonesiaGel Dark phenomenon reflects that social media is now the main means for people to voice criticism of government policies. The decision to cut the budget, which was considered detrimental to the education and health sectors, triggered widespread reactions, which were then realized in the form of digital protests. A study of social media trends shows the dominance of negative sentiment in conversations related to this hashtag, with many users criticizing government policies and calling for openness and social justice (Podme, 2025). The magnitude of public response in this discourse proves that social media not only functions as a communication tool, but also has a significant role in shaping public opinion and mobilizing social action (Reuters, 2025).

A study by Danaditya (2021) shows that digital activism in Indonesia is highly vulnerable to manipulation, such as hashtag hijacking by bots that can shift the focus of issues and weaken the influence of organic movements. These manipulative actions not only obscure the authentic voices of the community, but also have the potential to create an illusion of consensus or conflict that does not accurately represent public opinion. In the context of the #IndonesiaGelap hashtag, this kind of potential intervention can be used to dampen the momentum of protests or spread misleading disinformation. In a follow-up study, Danaditya, Ng, and Carley (2022) also revealed that coordinated campaigns on Twitter can trigger polarization of discourse and spread narratives tailored to the interests of certain political actors, both from the government and the opposition. This shows that digital discussion spaces are often not neutral, but rather become arenas of complex symbolic and narrative battles, where actors with greater digital resources have an advantage in shaping public opinion.

On the other hand, a report by Amnesty International (2022) noted that the Indonesian government is still exercising restraint on freedom of expression through repression against journalists, activists, and monitoring of digital activities. This reinforces the assumption that the state not only acts as an object of criticism in the digital space, but also as an active actor trying to control and direct the flow of public discourse.

Practices such as site blocking, activist account reporting, and the use of surveillance software against dissidents, create an atmosphere of fear that inhibits freedom of expression online. Thus, the use of hashtags like #IndonesiaGelap not only demonstrates the power of social media as a mobilization tool, but also opens a discussion about the limits of free speech in an increasingly surveilled digital age. This phenomenon shows the importance of protecting the digital space as a democratic realm that is equal and safe for every citizen to voice their views.

Therefore, although this topic has become a widespread conversation on social media, academic studies that deeply analyze the development patterns of public sentiment towards a policy are still very limited. Therefore, this study has an urgency in understanding how the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap is used as a form of political expression, and how it impacts the dynamics of political communication in Indonesia. Using a sentiment analysis approach, this study is expected to reveal how digital discourse can shape public views on government policies.

B. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a quantitative approach using descriptive sentiment analysis to examine how the public responds to government policies that have been highlighted through the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap. The main focus of this research is to look at the distribution of public sentiment and the trends of chatter that are growing on social media.

The research information was collected through social media X (Twitter) using the website scraping method, which allows the extraction of information from tweets using the hashtag #IndonesiaGelap. This method was used to obtain tweet reads, number of retweets, number of likes, and number of opinions to master the level of public engagement in this dialog. Referring to Liu in Hanifah & Nurhasanah(2018), information crawling is an automated process to explore websites and collect data from various sources. Information crawling has been widely used in social media research to observe chat trends and public sentiment patterns (Gupta et ., 2021). However, since Elon Musk's new policy on information access limits on X, only 300 tweets can be collected at a time. Therefore, to get an idea of how the #DarkIndonesia is growing, research can only examine 206 Tweets that are collected from February 17, 2025 to February 20, 2025.

When before entering the analysis session, the reading information is first cleaned using the spoken cleaning process. In this session, various constraints such as idiosyncratic personalities, numbers, punctuation marks, large spaces, and singular personalities are removed from the reading passage. However, there is a special exception for the letter "Z" because this letter is closely related to the main focus of the research, which is Generation Z. After the readings are clean, the next step is *tokenizing*. Here, the readings are broken down into small parts in the form of words or tokens. The goal is to facilitate the processing of information and the level of accuracy in the analysis to be attempted. This process continues into *normalization*, where an Excel file of more than 17,000 words is used to compare ambiguous, synonyms, or slang that often occurs in the information. The words are compared and adjusted with notes to make them unambiguous and easy to understand. After that, it is implemented through *stemming* using the Sastrawi library. This process changes each word from its basic form by removing affixes or suffixes, so that word alterations that have the same meaning can be unified and do not cause confusion. Finally, the *filtering* session is tried by removing universal words or *stopwords* that often occur in Indonesian reading such as "as well as", "yang", or "di". Because these words do not share meaningful data, they are set aside so that the analysis can focus more on words that are truly relevant.

This analysis was carried out using *Natural Language Processing (NLP)* using TextBlob software features to classify public sentiment into positive, negative, or neutral types. According to Loria (2018), TextBlob is one of the NLP tools often used in sentiment analysis because of its ability to automatically classify readings based on sentiment polarity. This analysis aims to recognize patterns of public sentiment towards criticized government policies. The results of the analysis will be visualized in the form of WordCloud, graphs, or tables to share a reflection of the distribution of sentiment and changes in sentiment trends over a certain period. Visualization in the form of WordCloud has been proven efficient in displaying the frequency of dominant words in social media chats (Heimerl et navy (AL)., 2014).

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



Visualization of #IndonesiaDark Sentiment WordCloud

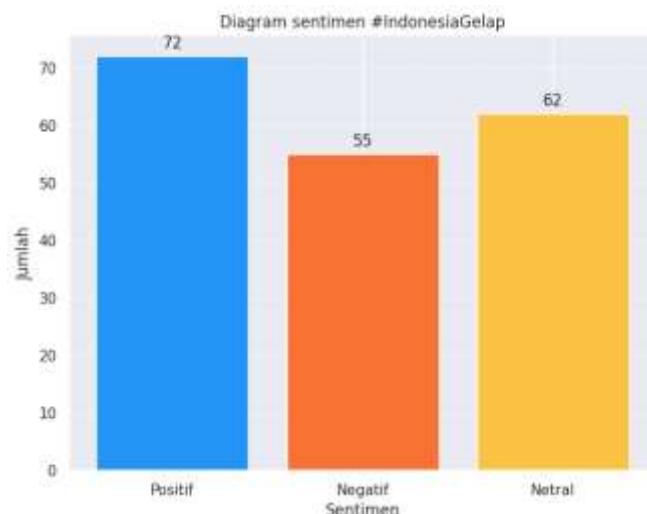


Figure 2. #IndonesiaDark Sentiment Diagram

The results of the analysis show that the tendency of public sentiment towards the *IndonesiaGelap* issue is dominated by positive at 38.1%, followed by neutral sentiment at 32.8%, and negative sentiment at 29.1%. Although the *IndonesiaGelap* issue semantically has a critical connotation of the national socio-political atmosphere, the dominance of this positive sentiment requires further investigation. Based on early polling of the patterns of narrative dissemination and the characteristics of accounts, there is a strong symptom that most of the positive sentiment comes from the activities of

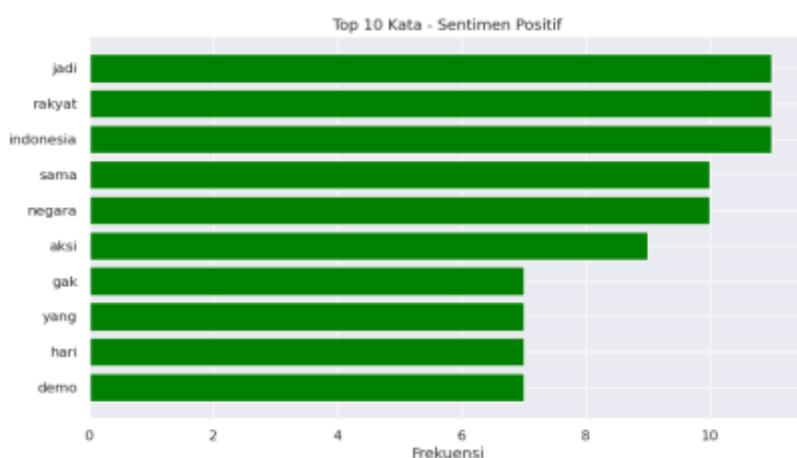
buzzers, namely accounts that are organized to shape public opinion through the distribution of certain hegemonic messages.

This phenomenon reflects the possibility of a deliberate construction to produce a more conducive public perception of the issue, actually requires attention and critical assessment. In this context, the dominance of positive sentiment does not always reflect authentic public behavior, but can be the result of strategic interventions oriented towards controlling discourse in the digital space.

As such, this analysis not only shares a quantitative reflection of sentiment distribution, but also opens up space for debate on the authenticity of public opinion, the application of data engineering, and balancing discourse in the social media ecosystem. A visualization of the sentiment distribution can be seen in Photo 1, which is presented in the form of a barchart to display the proportion of each type in a representative manner.



WordCloud Visualization of Positive Sentiment of #IndonesiaDarkness



Top 10 positive sentiment words #IndonesiaDark

Analysis of the positive sentiment cluster revealed five highly dominant words: "so", "rakyat", "Indonesia", "sama", and "negera". At first glance, the appearance of these words seems to represent a positive and nationality-oriented discourse. However, the meaning of these words needs to be placed within a more critical linguistic and socio-political analysis framework.

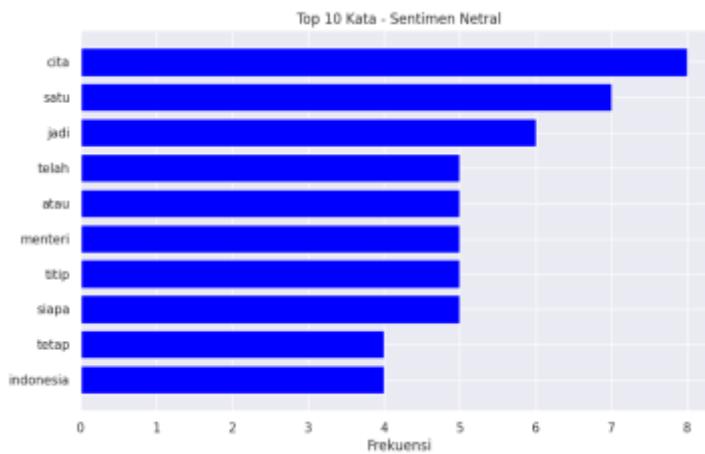
The words "so" and "sama", for example, although occurring with great frequency, reflect more of a syntactical use in sentences. They do not have substantive meanings that can represent behavior or public opinion on the *IndonesiaGelap* issue. In other words, the arrival of these 2 words is more technical in language structure than it has narrative weight.

It is different with words like "*rakyat*", "*Indonesia*", and "*negara*". All three are symbolic entities that are often found in national narratives, especially when strategic issues are prominent in the public sphere. The use of these words can reflect efforts to build an impression of collective optimism or affirmation of national self-evidence. However, in the context of the dominance of positive sentiments that have been identified as possible products of buzzer activities, the meaning behind the appearance of these words is problematic.

Considering the distribution patterns and the context in which narratives are disseminated, there is a tendency for these nationalistic terms to be used not to authentically voice public opinion, but to reinforce hegemonic discourses that support the symbolic stability of the nation. In such an atmosphere, positive sentiment can become an instrument to mask more fundamental problems, such as legitimacy crises or governance failures.



WordCloud Visualization of Neutral Sentiment #IndonesiaGel Darkness



Top 10 Neutral Sentiment Words #IndonesiaDark

In the neutral sentiment cluster, there are several words with a large frequency of occurrence, including: *ideals, one, so, already, or, minister, leave, who, always, and Indonesia*. The lexical features in this cluster show that the narratives created tend to be informative, descriptive, or speculative without strong emotional expression, either in the form of affirmation or rejection.

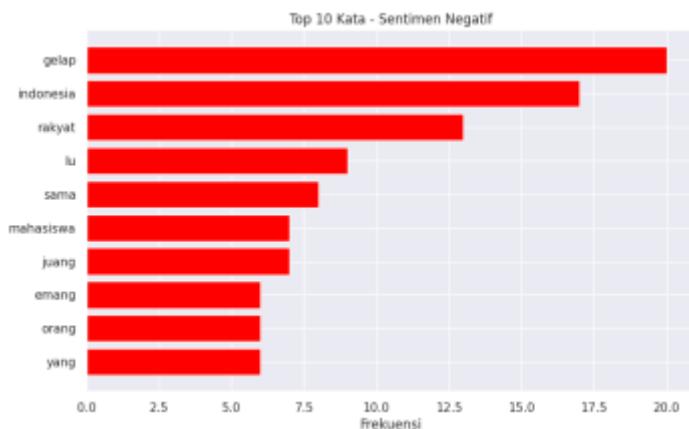
Words such as *so, already, and or* are listed in the types of conjunctions or time indicators that often occur in sentence construction, but have low semantic meaning when analyzed alone. Similarly, the words *one* and *who* represent structural factors in the sentence rather than conveying a particular behavioral position or judgment.

Meanwhile, the presence of the words *ideals, minister, and Indonesia* indicates that some of the narratives are related to institutional discourses and future orientations, such as expectations of leaders, public policies, or national visions. However, due to the neutral context in which they appear, these words do not display a clear emotional affiliation to the *IndonesiaGelap* issue, but rather convey opinions or discourses that are universal and normative in nature.

This phenomenon shows that the neutral sentiment cluster plays a position as a mediating space between the polarization of public opinion. On the one hand, it provides a platform for non-confrontational expressions; on the other hand, it records narratives that might have ability to lead to positive or negative behavior, depending on the context of the communication.



Visualization of #IndonesiaDark Negative Sentiment WordCloud



Top 10 Negative Sentiment Words #IndonesiaDark

In the digital communication landscape, negative sentiment is often positioned as an expression of collective discontent that reflects public anxiety about socio-political circumstances. In the context of the *IndonesiaGelap* issue, negative sentiment does not only arise for emotional responses, but also functions as a form of expression of criticism that contains elements of reflection on the dynamics of nationality.

Analysis of the negative sentiment cluster revealed that there were three words that were particularly prominent in the corpus of information, namely "*Dark*", "*Indonesia*", and "*people*". Each of these words contains a meaning that reflects the direction and core of the criticism. developing. The word "*Dark*" semantically implies not only a pessimistic atmosphere, but also a representation of a crisis of transparency, a loss of policy direction,

or closed access to data that should be a public right. As such, it reflects a structural situation that some citizens find problematic.

Meanwhile, the appearance of the word "*Indonesia*" shows that the issue being discussed is not personal or sectoral, but is closely related to the macro size of the nation as a political, administrative, and symbolic entity. "*Indonesia*" here becomes the locus of criticism of government systems, institutions, or policies that are considered not to meet public expectations.

The word "*people*" emphasizes that the narratives formed in the negative sentiments are rooted in the social experiences of citizens. This shows that the criticism does not end at the elite or system level, but also highlights the direct impact on the lives of the people of the country. By linking the state of the nation with the suffering of the people, this narrative shows a more substantial quality of criticism and targets fundamental aspects of national life.

Although quantitatively negative sentiments are in the minority compared to positive and neutral sentiments, the substance contained in them is much sharper and reflective. Negative sentiment in this case serves to open space for discourse contestation and urge critical understanding amidst the flow of data that tends to be controlled

D. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of sentiment analysis on the *IndonesiaGelap* issue, it can be concluded that while positive sentiment emerges as a quantitatively dominant type (38.1%), this dominance does not necessarily represent authentic public collective optimism. The symptom of buzzer involvement in the creation of positive narratives shows that some of the scattered opinions may be the result of organized construction to focus citizens' opinions.

On the other hand, while negative sentiments only accounted for 29.1% of the data, the content of the criticism contained therein seemed to be more reflective and targeted structural issues that had a direct impact on society. The occurrence of words such as "dark", "Indonesia", and "people" indicate that the criticism is closely related to national conditions, transparency, and public welfare.

As such, this finding confirms that the numerical proportion of sentiment does not necessarily reflect the strength or depth of substance. Negative sentiment is precisely

plays an important role in shaping the space for discourse resistance and reviving people's critical awareness of crucial national issues.

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