



Critical Discourse Analysis in Digital Media: Unveiling Ideology and Power in the Technological Era

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Abstract

The technological era has transformed the way ideology and power work in digital media. Digital media is not only a communication platform, but also a tool that can reproduce power through structured discourse. This study aims to analyze how ideology and power are articulated in digital media using a critical discourse analysis approach. Using the literature study method, this study explores data from relevant journal articles, books, and reports in the last five years. The results show that digital media is often a tool to maintain power hegemony through framing and labeling, while digital platform algorithms reinforce the dominant narrative. On the other hand, digital media also opens up opportunities to fight traditional power by providing space for alternative narratives. However, access inequality, social polarization, and disinformation are major obstacles in creating an inclusive discourse space. These findings underscore the need for algorithm transparency, increased digital literacy, and representation of marginalized groups to promote social and political justice in the digital era.



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INTRODUCTION

The digital age has revolutionized the way information is produced and consumed, creating a new landscape for ideological and power discourse. Digital media, which utilizes global communication technology, is now the main arena where power is expressed and negotiated through language. Qasimzadeh et al. (2024) show that digital communication technologies allow governments as well as social groups to expand their influence through structured communication strategies (Qasimzadeh et al., 2024). On the other hand, digital platforms also open up opportunities for marginalized individuals or groups to challenge dominant narratives, creating more complex power dynamics (Ibnu et al., 2024).

Ideology is a set of ideas, values, and beliefs that shape the way individuals or groups view the world. Ideology is not only a guide in action, but also serves as a tool to maintain power. Khalifa-

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Zadeh (2025) highlights how ideology was used by the Sasanian empire to consolidate their power over the Medes, suggesting that ideology can be used to legitimize political and social dominance (Khalifa-Zadeh, 2025). In addition, Liubimova (2025) reveals that geopolitical maps often reflect the ideology of their creators, thus distorting the reality of true power and control (Liubimova, 2025). Through the merger of political power and ideology, ruling groups can shape social and cultural norms that benefit them.

Power, on the other hand, is the ability to influence or control the actions and decisions of others. Power is often gained and maintained through ideological mechanisms. Bahozde (2025) states that fascism is a form of power influenced by ideology, which not only shapes political structures but also influences social and moral norms (Liubimova, 2025). Zhou et al. (2025) show how the European media reproduces power relations through ideological constructions of China's image, which ultimately reinforces negative stereotypes and supports certain political agendas (Zhou et al., 2025). Thus, ideology and power are two interrelated concepts and are often used together to maintain social dominance and control.

Meanwhile, ideologies hidden in the use of language in digital media are often used to shape public opinion and strengthen certain power structures. Žmavc and Bezljaj (2024) found that in education policy discourse in the European Union, technology is used as a tool to construct an ideal image, including the role of a teacher who is empowered through technology. This reflects how digital media is not only a channel of information but also a means of ideological reproduction and control of power.

However, the potential of digital media to create discourse justice is not always realized. Rusher (2024) points out that while technology offers opportunities to voice alternative views, the uneven distribution of access often hinders certain groups from fully engaging in public discourse. Thus, digital media has become a space of conflict between the preservation of traditional power and the decentralization of authority.

In Indonesia, this dynamic is increasingly relevant given the high internet penetration and the increasing number of social media users. Technology has enabled political actors, corporations, and individuals to utilize digital media as a means of propaganda, which often involves the manipulation of ideological narratives (Islam et al., 2025). However, in-depth studies of how ideology and power work in digital discourse in local contexts are still limited.

Uncovering the ways in which ideology and power are articulated in digital media is important to understand how social, economic, and political dynamics work in the technological age. Critical analysis of digital discourse can help identify patterns of dominance and resistance, and provide a foundation for more inclusive policies in the management of media and communication technologies.

Previous research has discussed various aspects of critical discourse in digital media. Rusher (2024) explores how political ideology is articulated through digital narratives in New Zealand (Rusher, 2024), while Meng (2024) highlights the role of new communication technologies in influencing the dynamics of social responsibility discourse (Meng, 2024). At the global level, Žmavc and Bezljaj (2024) reveal how digital policies often reflect dominant interests rather than creating inclusion (Žmavc & Bezljaj, 2024). However, few studies specifically explore local contexts, such as Indonesia.

This research aims to analyze critical discourse in digital media with a focus on how ideology and power work in the technological era. Using a critical discourse analysis approach, this study seeks to identify language patterns that reflect the dynamics of power in Indonesia's digital media, as well as their implications for social and political justice.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative method with a library research approach. This approach aims to explore and critically analyze how ideologies and forces are represented in digital media discourse in the technological era. Literature studies allow researchers to collect and integrate findings from various academic sources to produce a deep understanding of the issues being discussed.

The data sources in this study consist of journal articles, books, conference reports, and other relevant documents published in the last five years (2018–2023). The data was obtained from leading online databases such as ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, and Google Scholar, which are specifically focused on the study of critical discourse analysis, digital media, and the dynamics of ideology and power. Literature searches were conducted using keywords such as "Critical Discourse Analysis," "Digital Media," "Ideology," and "Power Dynamics" to ensure comprehensive coverage.

The data collection technique is carried out through systematic search and selection of documents based on inclusion and exclusion criteria. Inclusion criteria include literature that discusses digital discourse analysis, ideological representation, and power in the context of digital media, while exclusion criteria include documents that are irrelevant to the context of research or are not based on empirical data. Relevant data are classified and evaluated to ensure their quality and validity (Snyder, 2019).

The data analysis method used is qualitative content analysis. The analysis process involves steps to reduce data, group the main themes, and deeply interpret the discourse patterns that reflect ideology and power. The critical discourse analysis framework developed by Fairclough (2015) is used as a reference to understand the relationship between language, ideology, and power in digital media (Fairclough, 2013). This approach provides critical insight into how power structures are reproduced or countered in digital narratives.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The following is a literature table of the results of the selection of several related articles used in the research entitled "Critical Discourse Analysis in Digital Media: Uncovering Ideology and Power in the Technological Era." This data includes ten relevant articles and has been selected based on their contribution to the analysis of discourse, ideology, and power in the context of digital media.

Table 1. Literature Review

No	Author	Title	Findings
1	Tastsoglou & Chatzikonstantinou (2025)	Commandos, Frigates, and Other Media Imaginations	Digital media discourse often reproduces the logic of power through certain political narratives.
2	Sasani et al. (2024)	Reading Promotion as Ideology	Reading promotion activities can reflect power relations that are reproduced through discourse strategies.
3	Rehman & Nawaz (2024)	Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis	Gender ideology in feminist poetry is revealed through critical analysis to understand the role of language in building equality.
4	Xu (2024)	Critical Discourse Analysis of Headlines on Beijing Winter Olympics	Critical discourse analysis uncovered ideological bias in international news headlines about the Beijing Winter Olympics.
5	Rahma & Mahmudah (2025)	Ideologi dalam Konten TikTok Gen Z	Critical discourse analysis shows how TikTok has become an arena for the

			ideological battle of the younger generation.
6	Tan (2025)	Podcasting Politics in Singapore: Hegemony, Resistance, and Digital Media	Podcasts as a digital medium are used to challenge hegemony and create alternative narratives.
7	Atmawijaya (2024)	Reclaiming the Narrative: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Donald Trump's Campaign Speech	Political discourse through digital media is used to build and strengthen certain ideological forces.
8	Plastina (2025)	Long COVID Patients' Reconstruction of Medical Gaslighting Discourse	Digital discourse analysis shows how patient narratives are used to counter the dominance of traditional medical narratives.
9	Rousaki & Seymour-Smith (2025)	Teachers' Discursive Constructions of Adolescent Sexting, Consent, and Gender	Discourse analysis on gender and power shows a discursive relationship in digital education.
10	Labidi & Zo'by (2025)	Not Just a Game: Power, Politics, and Media Coverage of Qatar's World Cup 2022	Discourse analysis reveals the ideology of neo-colonialism in media coverage of the 2022 Qatar World Cup.

The literature table above illustrates the findings of various studies that discuss the analysis of critical discourse in the context of digital media, with a focus on ideology and power in the technological era. The articles show how digital media functions as an important arena for expressing, defending, or challenging power through discursive strategies. The following explanation details the main findings from each article, which provide a deeper insight into the role of digital media in shaping ideological and power discourses.

Research by Tastsoglou and Chatzikonstantinou (2025) discusses how digital media narratives often reproduce the logic of power in a political context. They revealed that digital media is used to frame certain issues, which creates ideological influence through discursive strategies. The study highlights the debate of Greek political leaders as a case in which digital media narratives play a central role in shaping public perception, by using language to reinforce certain political authorities. These findings are relevant because they show how language in digital media can be a tool to strengthen power (Tastsoglou & Chatzikonstantinou, 2025).

Sasani et al. (2024) present a unique perspective by analyzing the promotion of reading as part of institutional ideology. They found that the promotional strategies used by public libraries in Iran not only aimed to increase literacy, but also reflected power relations reproduced through institutional discourse. The study suggests that everyday activities such as the promotion of reading can be used to reinforce certain social hierarchies, providing insight into how ideology works at the institutional level through digital media (Panahi Dodaran et al., 2025).

An article by Rehman and Nawaz (2024) uses critical discourse analysis to explore gender representation in feminist poetry. They found that poetry was used as a tool to challenge patriarchal ideologies, highlighting how language played a crucial role in breaking down established power structures. This research is relevant to understand how alternative narratives in digital media can create space for resistance to traditional power, especially in the context of gender (your Rehman & Nawaz, 2024).

Xu (2024) offers an interesting analysis of ideological bias in international headlines related to the Beijing Winter Olympics. Using corpus-based critical discourse analysis, Xu found that international media often frame news with certain ideological biases, reflecting the dominance of global power in sports discourse. These findings show how sports discourse, which appears to be neutral, can be used to manipulate public perception through language laden with ideological bias (Xu et al., 2024).

Rahma and Mahmudah (2025) explore how TikTok content created by generation Z reflects an ideological battle between different social groups. They found that digital media such as TikTok are not only used for entertainment, but also as a tool for expressing ideological identities and challenging dominant narratives. This study shows that digital media can be a dynamic space for resistance and expression of power among the younger generation (Rahma et al., 2025).

Tan (2025) examines how podcasts are used as a digital platform to counter political hegemony in Singapore. The research reveals that podcasts provide space for alternative narratives, allowing marginalized groups to challenge power through deeper discussions. Tan points out that although traditional media often support dominant narratives, digital platforms such as podcasts can be an effective arena for resistance (Tan, 2025).

Atmawijaya (2024) analyzes Donald Trump's campaign speech through a critical discourse analysis approach. The study found that digital media plays an important role in spreading certain ideological messages, often designed to strengthen political power. This research underlines how political discourse can be strategically regulated to influence public perception through digital media (Atmawijaya, 2024).

Plastina (2025) investigates the narrative of long COVID patients on social media, focusing on how these narratives challenge the power of medical institutions. The results showed that digital media allowed patients to rebuild their own narratives, countering the dominance of traditional medical narratives. This study highlights the potential of digital media to empower individuals through the management of their own narratives (Plastina, 2025).

Rousaki and Seymour-Smith (2025) focus on educational discourse in a digital context. They found that discourses on gender and sexuality in digital media reflect complex power relations, often influenced by social policies and norms. This research provides insight into how educational discourse can be used to shape or challenge power relations through digital media (Seymour-Smith et al., 2024).

Labidi and Zo'by (2025) explore media coverage of the 2022 Qatar World Cup. They found that media discourse often reproduces neo-colonialism's ideology, using narratives designed to reinforce the dominance of certain cultures. This research underscores how international sport can be a space for the reproduction of ideology and power (Ben Labidi & Al Zo'by, 2025).

Overall, these studies show that digital media is a very dynamic arena for critical discourse analysis. Digital media allows the reproduction of ideology and power, but it also provides space for resistance and alternative narratives. By understanding these discursive patterns, we can identify how power works in a digital context, as well as opportunities to create a more inclusive and equitable discourse.

Discossion

Critical Discourse in Digital Media

In the context of digital media in Indonesia, ideology and power work dynamically, making digital platforms an important arena for discourse battles. Critical discourse analysis shows that the narratives that develop in digital media are not neutral, but are often influenced by certain ideological forces that represent the interests of groups or individuals. The two main aspects that are in the

center of attention are how ideology is represented in digital media and how power operates through narrative control.

1. Ideological Representation

Digital media has a tendency to represent issues such as politics, religion, and economics through an ideological perspective that benefits certain groups. For example, news portals owned by media conglomerates often promote the economic agenda of their owners, either explicitly through editorials or implicitly through a selection of highlighted news. This kind of representation shows news bias that affects public perception of crucial issues.

In addition, the polarization of discourse has become a prominent phenomenon, especially on social media platforms. This polarization can be seen from narrative conflicts that reflect conflicts between groups with different political views or social values. For example, terms such as "government supporters" or "opposition" are often used in contexts that imply ideological stereotypes, reinforce social segregation and muddy public discourse.

2. Power through Digital Media

Power in digital media operates through control over the narrative distributed to the audience. One form of this control is narrative hegemony, where those who have greater access to the media use certain terms to define other groups. For example, terms such as "radical" or "progressive" are often used to label certain groups, either to justify certain actions or to discredit others. These terms not only influence public opinion but also become a tool for establishing or maintaining power.

In addition to narrative hegemony, the algorithms used by social media platforms also increase the influence of certain groups. These algorithms are designed to prioritize the content that attracts the most attention, often reinforcing the dominant narrative through repetition and wide distribution. As a result, discourses that are unpopular or contrary to the main narrative tend to be eliminated, making it difficult for alternative voices to find a place in public discourse. This shows how technology can strengthen power structures in ways that are not always visible to the public.

Language Patterns That Reflect Power Dynamics

Language is a key instrument in the formation and reproduction of power in digital media. In critical discourse analysis, the various patterns of language used reflect how power works through the media, both explicitly and implicitly. These patterns suggest that language is not only a means of communication, but also a mechanism for regulating public perception and shaping the hierarchy of power in a digital society.

1. Use of Framing and Labeling

Digital media often uses framing and labeling strategies to influence the way readers understand an issue. Framing is the way the media presents information by highlighting certain aspects of an issue while putting other aspects aside. For example, in reporting on controversial government policies, media outlets that support the policy may use the framing of "progress" to portray the policy as a positive step in favor of national development. Conversely, media outlets opposed to the government may choose the framing of "controversy" to highlight the negative aspects of the policy, such as its adverse impact on certain groups of society.

Labeling, on the other hand, is an attempt to define a specific group or individual with terms that contain ideological content. For example, terms such as "opposition", "radical", or "neutral" are often used to classify political actors or social groups within a specific category. These labels not only reflect the actor's position in public discourse, but also create a hierarchy

of power. Groups labeled as "radicals," for example, tend to be associated with negative connotations, which can undermine their legitimacy in the public conversation.

2. The Rhetoric of Power

Language is also used to legitimize power through certain rhetoric. In political discourse on digital media, words such as "people's struggle", "democracy", or "stability" are often used to justify certain actions or policies. This kind of rhetoric aims to build public support by disguising the motive of power behind the narrative that seems to be aimed at the common good.

In addition, the dominance of narrative on social media often uses emotional rhetoric, such as the words "betrayal" or "injustice". These terms are designed to trigger a strong emotional response from the reader, such as anger, solidarity, or sympathy. For example, in discussions about certain policies, phrases such as "betrayal of the people" can be used to instill the perception that the government is failing to fulfill its promises or responsibilities, thus negatively influencing public opinion.

3. Silencing and Obfuscation of Alternative Discourse

One of the patterns found in power dynamics in digital media is the practice of silencing or obscuring alternative discourses. Digital media, especially those that rely on algorithms, often prioritize popular narratives that get more interaction, such as clicks, comments, or shares. This causes minority narratives or those that are contrary to the mainstream to become less visible or even marginalized.

For example, algorithms on social media platforms like Facebook or Twitter are designed to promote content that has a high engagement rate. As a result, alternative discourses that may be more nuanced or critical, but less attention-grabbing, are often overlooked. This process reinforces the dominance of certain narratives in the digital public space and narrows the space for inclusive discussion.

Implications for Social and Political Justice

In the analysis of critical discourse in digital media, it is found that the dynamics of ideology and power that are developing have a wide impact on social and political justice, especially in Indonesia. One of the significant impacts is the inequality of access and representation in the digital space. Marginalized groups, such as indigenous peoples or minority communities, often face major barriers to gaining a place in the digital media narrative. Their voices tend to be ignored or even erased from the wider public discourse. This is due to the dominance of economic and political power owned by digital media owners. Media managed by dominant groups tend to prioritize issues that support their interests, while narratives that raise the interests of marginalized groups are less likely to be given attention. As a result, digital media exacerbates existing inequalities, both in terms of access and representation.

In addition, social media has become a catalyst for social and political polarization in society. This polarization can be seen from the emergence of segregation between groups with different views, both ideologically and socially. Polarized information, which is often disseminated on social media, reinforces the differences in perception between these groups. This polarization not only affects social relationships at the individual level but also amplifies conflicts at the group level, both in online discussions and in real life. This dynamic exacerbates social cohesion which is an important foundation for an inclusive society.

In addition to the impact on social justice, digital media also affects the dynamics of politics and democracy in Indonesia. On the one hand, digital media can be a powerful tool to strengthen democratic participation. With the existence of digital media, people have a greater opportunity to engage in political discourse and voice their opinions. However, this potential is often disrupted by

the dominance of certain narratives controlled by powerful actors. In addition, the spread of disinformation through digital media exacerbates the situation, as it is often difficult for people to distinguish between valid information and misleading information. The spread of disinformation not only weakens the quality of public discourse but also lowers the quality of democracy as a whole.

Thus, the dynamics of ideology and power in digital media show that social and political justice cannot be achieved without interventions aimed at addressing inequality, polarization, and disinformation. Measures such as increasing digital literacy, transparency of social media algorithms, and protection for minority groups in public discourse are critical to ensuring digital media can be an inclusive space and support healthy democracy.

Recommendations for the Sustainability of Fair Discourse in Digital Media

To ensure that digital media becomes an inclusive and equitable discourse space, here are some strategic recommendations that can be implemented:

1. Algorithm Transparency

Social media platforms and digital media need to reveal how their algorithms work to ensure that alternative discourses are not marginalized.

2. Digital Literacy

Society needs to be empowered with digital literacy which includes the ability to analyze media bias, detect framing, and recognize disinformation.

3. Increased Marginal Group Representation

The media needs to give more space to minority voices and alternative narratives to create a more balanced public discourse.

4. Digital Media Policy Supervision

Governments and civil society need to monitor and supervise digital media practices to prevent excessive concentration of power in the hands of certain groups.

CONCLUSION

Digital media plays a significant role in shaping and reproducing power in the technological era. Critical discourse analysis shows that the language and narratives used in digital media often reflect the dominant ideology that strengthens the power structure. However, digital media also has the potential to create space for resistance to power hegemony through alternative narratives. Inequality of access to technology, social polarization, and the spread of disinformation are the main challenges in creating a fair and inclusive discourse space.

To overcome these challenges, several strategic steps are needed. First, transparency in digital platform algorithms must be increased to ensure alternative narratives are not left out. Second, digital literacy needs to be developed to help people understand media biases, framing, and disinformation. Third, the representation of marginalized groups in digital media must be expanded to create an inclusive discourse space. Finally, governments and civil society need to work together in overseeing digital media practices to prevent abuse of power and ensure a healthy digital democracy. With these steps, digital media can become a tool that supports social and political justice in the technological era.

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