

Bibliometric Analysis of Social Media in Government Public Communication Using CiteSpace Software

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the development of social media studies in government public communication using CiteSpace software. The method used in this study is qualitative with a literature review approach. Data sources were obtained from the Scopus database using the keywords "Social Media and Government Public Communication" from 2018 to 2023, resulting in 678 documents related to the research topic. The findings of this study indicate that social media studies as a means of government public communication in 2020 became a trending topic, as evidenced by the number of scientific publications in 2020 being the highest, namely 15 articles. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the government conducted a lot of coordination and provided information through social media. The United States contributed the most scientific publications, namely 25 articles. Meanwhile, social sciences were the most researched field related to social media and government public communication. Facebook served as a platform for the government to communicate and provide information regarding the handling and prevention of COVID-19. Meanwhile, Twitter was used by the government to open a dialogue space to receive ideas and input from the public. This study contributes to the government's understanding of how to build effective public communication for the community. This study has limitations in terms of the data sources analyzed, as it only uses data from the Scopus database to examine the

development of social media studies as a tool for government public communication.

Keyword: Social Media; Public Communications; Government.

Introduction

The digital transformation triggered by increasing internet penetration and mobile device accessibility has driven significant growth in social media users in Indonesia. As of February 2022, there were approximately 191.4 million active social media users in Indonesia, placing the country third in the Asia-Pacific region after China and India (Nurhayati-Wolff, 2023). This number is expected to continue growing between 2023 and 2028, with a projected increase of 17.05 percent or around 39 million new users, reaching an estimated 267.75 million users by 2028 (J. Degenhard, 2023).

Given this rapid growth, the Indonesian government is faced with the need to maximize social media as a strategic instrument in public communication, to convey information, programs, and government performance widely and effectively (Tenenboim, 2022). Accurate and efficient communication is key to ensuring that public messages are received by the community quickly and objectively (Šendelj, 2020). National policies such as Presidential Instruction No. 9 of 2015 on Public Communication Management and Law No. 14 of 2008 on Public Information Disclosure reinforce the government's commitment to transparency and public participation (Priyatna et al., 2020; Nababan, 2020; Dunan, 2020). In its implementation, a number of public officials have actively utilized social media as a direct communication channel. President Joko Widodo uses Instagram and Twitter to convey policy narratives and government performance directly to the public, while West Java Governor Ridwan Kamil is known for his interactive and innovative approach in bridging communication between local government and residents. At the ministerial level, the Ministry of Tourism utilizes social media accounts such as @Kemenpar_RI (Twitter) and @KementerianPariwisata (Instagram) to build public communication related to the promotion of national tourist destinations (Bhargava & Velasquez, 2021).

This phenomenon shows how social media has evolved into an important element in modern public communication management. As the use of social media by government institutions increases, a deep scientific understanding is needed to examine the patterns, trends, and impacts of such communication practices. In this context, bibliometric studies are a relevant and strategic method for evaluating academic literature on social

media and government public communication. By utilizing analysis tools such as CiteSpace, researchers can map knowledge domains, identify thematic clusters such as public sector technology adoption, interactivity in e-government, and digital participation of citizens in local government (Ahsan & Sterjo, 2023). CiteSpace also enables temporal analysis that reveals research dynamics and spikes in interest, for example, during periods of crisis or pandemic, as well as identifying the contributions of influential authors, institutions, and countries in the global knowledge network. Thus, bibliometric studies based on data visualization not only provide an overview of conceptual and methodological evolution in public communication studies but also present a strong scientific evidence base for formulating more effective, transparent, and participatory government communication strategies in the digital age.

The use of CiteSpace also highlights shifts in research activity, such as the surge in academic output in 2021, which coincided with increased attention to public communication during the crisis (Kholidin, 2023). In addition to showing the temporal dynamics of topics, bibliometrics with CiteSpace also maps the productive contributions of authors, institutions, and countries. Findings indicate that countries such as the United States and China dominate the publication landscape and form significant cross-national collaboration networks (Garrote-Quintana et al., 2025), (Baquee et al., 2023). Visualizing these collaboration networks is highly beneficial in identifying relationships between institutions, collaboration patterns among researchers, as well as the potential for interdisciplinary and international collaboration that can enhance research productivity (Zhu & Park, 2024), (Fares et al., 2021), (Chamazacoti & Langerudi, 2019).

In addition, thematic and temporal cluster analysis using CiteSpace facilitates a deep understanding of how certain topics experience continuity, shifts, and even innovative updates in line with technological developments and policies (Zhao, 2019; Shi et al., 2017). On the other hand, evaluating the impact of research through citations and the dissemination of publications, including those from conferences and academic networks, provides insight into the visibility and reach of such research (Woolley et al., 2022). Thus, bibliometric studies using CiteSpace are not merely quantitative analysis tools but also essential methodological approaches that assist researchers and policymakers in navigating the complexity and volume of knowledge related to the use of social media in government public communication. This approach also supports evidence-based decision-making and the development of more inclusive and responsive digital communication strategies tailored to societal needs.

In recent years, academic interest in the use of social media in public sector communication has increased significantly. Ahsan & Sterjo

(2023), through scientometric analysis, revealed a trend of increasing use of social media by local governments, with identification of several main thematic clusters such as adoption in the public sector, content on the Facebook platform, and aspects of interactivity in e-government. Meanwhile, Garrote-Quintana et al. (2025) explored emerging issues in the realm of e-government and e-participation, particularly in the context of crises, and highlighted the dominance of scientific contributions from the United States and China. Kholidin (2023) also contributed through a bibliometric study related to government social media innovation, emphasizing aspects of public service provision and sustainable development goals. A study by Moreno-Fernández & Fuentes-Lara (2019) highlighted the role of social media engagement in public relations practices, including issues such as corporate social responsibility and crisis communication. On the other hand, Liu & Zhang (2020) examined the role of opinion leaders in managing online public opinion using a bibliometric approach, as well as identifying central themes in this study. Finally, Hua et al. (2023) highlight the use of social media for CSR communication by identifying long-term research trends and contributing countries. This study highlights the evolution of key themes such as institutional theory and citizenship.

Although these studies have made important contributions to our understanding of this field, a number of research gaps can still be identified. First, many studies only highlight certain aspects, such as e-participation, public relations, or crisis communication, without looking at government public communication through social media as a whole as an integrated communication strategy. Second, most bibliometric studies are dominated by contributions from academics in developed countries, while the involvement of developing countries like Indonesia remains relatively limited and has not been a focus of research. Third, structural aspects of scientific collaboration, such as author networks, inter-institutional collaboration, and cross-disciplinary interactions, have not been thoroughly examined in this context. Finally, temporal analysis and burst detection approaches that can record the dynamics and shifts in issues over time are still rarely applied in previous studies.

In response to this gap, this study utilizes a bibliometric approach with the help of CiteSpace software to map the development of issues, patterns of scientific collaboration, and the dynamics of topic evolution in academic studies on government public communication through social media. By integrating intellectual structure visualization and citation network analysis, this study aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the scientific knowledge landscape and identify future research directions in this field. Therefore, based on the above, this study

aims to analyze the development of research on social media in government public communication using CiteSpace software.

Research Method

The research method used in this study is qualitative with a literature review approach. The Scopus database with a time range of 2018-2023, with the keywords “Social Media and Government Public Communication,” was used as the data source in this study. These documents were then filtered based on affiliation, documents from the past five years, documents related to the research subject, and documents of a specific region or country, or language. The data collection process was conducted in several stages. The first stage involved searching for previous research through Scopus using the keyword “Social Media and Government Public Communication,” followed by selection based on title, category, and abstract, resulting in 678 relevant documents. In the second stage, the 678 documents were rescreened based on the year of research, specifically from 2018 to 2023, to ensure that the documents were from recent studies related to “social media and public communication.” At this stage, 465 relevant documents were produced. In the third stage, the 465 documents were rescreened based on the country selected by the researcher, resulting in 242 documents. To find a match with the article desired by the researcher, the 242 documents were narrowed down based on the subject selected by the researcher, resulting in only 116 documents. Given the variety of languages used in previous studies, the researcher standardized the language to English, an international language. In the final stage, the researcher used 60 previous research documents as references to support the writing of this article.

The selection of documents in this study was designed to ensure the validity, relevance, and contextualization of the data. First, selection based on institutional affiliation aimed to ensure that the data sources came from institutions with reputable academic and scientific credentials, such as universities, research institutions, or government agencies closely related to the topic of study. Second, the six years (2018–2023) were set as the publication time limit to obtain literature that reflects the latest dynamics, particularly in the rapidly developing fields of digital communication and public policy. Third, screening based on scientific subjects was conducted to align the scope of the documents with the focus of the research, such as public communication studies, state administration, and social media, so that only literature with substantial relevance was analyzed. Fourth, selection based on geographical region or country was intended to limit the context of the study to a specific socio-political environment, in order to

gain a deeper understanding of issues within the local and regional spheres. Finally, the selection of publication language serves to maintain readability and accuracy of data interpretation. English is generally prioritized as it is the lingua franca in international scientific publications. By applying all these selection criteria, the research is expected to obtain a data set that is not only high-quality and focused but also capable of representing the complexity of the issue in a holistic and in-depth manner.

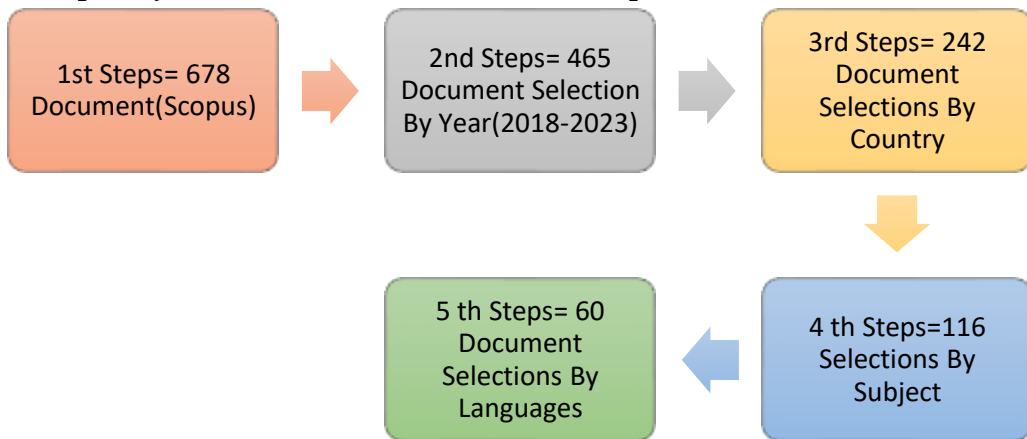


Figure 1. Data Meaning Step

This study uses CiteSpace software as a tool for data processing. CiteSpace is a Java-based software that implements keyword extraction, co-citation analysis, co-occurrence analysis, and other functions (Luo et al., 2022). The first step is to save the selected documents in the Ris file format for analysis. After that, the researcher opens CiteSpace and sets the project folder as the main workspace to store all analysis results. Next, the data is imported into the software, and the parameters are set within the range of 2018 to 2023. The researcher then selects the appropriate type of analysis, such as co-citation analysis, keyword co-occurrence, or institutional networks. After all settings are configured, the visualization process is run to generate a scientific network map showing connections between authors, concepts, or references. The visualization is then analyzed to identify patterns, research trends, and key themes emerging in the field of social media studies in government public communication.

Results and Discussion

Social Media Publications Based on Research Years

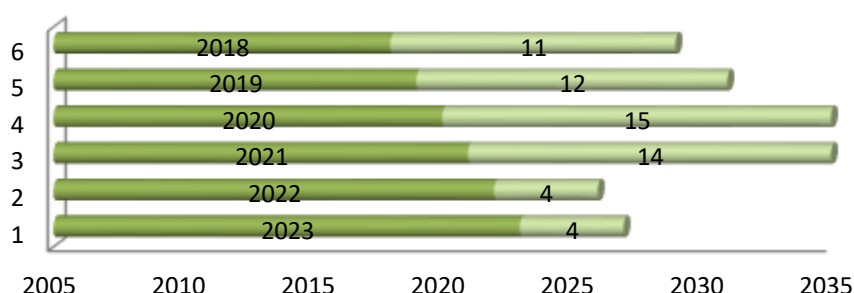


Figure 2. Publications By Year
Source: Scopus database

Figure 2 shows that social media publications in government public communications have increased significantly since 2018, in line with growing attention to transparency and citizen participation through digital platforms (Kholidin, 2023). Academic interest peaked in 2020, marking a crucial phase in the history of global public communications. The COVID-19 pandemic, officially declared by the WHO on March 11, 2020, created an urgent need for the rapid, accurate, and reliable dissemination of information, particularly from government authorities (Depoux et al., 2019). In this context, social media served as the primary strategic channel for conveying information related to health protocols, social restrictions, vaccination, and other emergency policies (van Dijck & Alinead, 2020).

Google Trends data from March to July 2020 shows an increase in searches related to COVID-19, the government, and social media. This significant increase in social media use and attention is also evident. Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook have become important platforms where governments and citizens can interact with one another. These platforms even functioned better than official websites for disseminating information (Cinelli et al., 2020). The increasing number of scientific publications investigating the role of social media in risk communication, infodemic mitigation, and the formation of public trust in state policies and health authorities also reflects this increase (Filho et al., 2020).

However, since 2021, the publication trend has begun to decline gradually. This decline has been influenced by the easing of the urgency of the pandemic and a shift in research focus to post-crisis issues such as social recovery and digital transformation of government (Garrote-Quintana et al., 2025). In addition, fatigue with crisis-related topics and increased

methodological specialization have led to studies that tend to be more technical and narrow in scope (Moreno-Fernández & Fuentes-Lara, 2019). The lack of contributions from developing countries, including Indonesia, has also limited the diversity of perspectives in the global discourse on digital public communication (Ahsan & Sterjo, 2023). Therefore, although 2020 marked an important turning point, future research efforts should be directed toward more inclusive, contextual, and interdisciplinary approaches to strengthen public communication in the post-crisis era.

Map of Social Media Publications by Country



Figure 3. Trend Publications By State
Source: Scopus Database

Based on Figure 3, the significant contributions from the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Australia demonstrate the dominance of scientific publications in the study of government public communication through social media worldwide. These countries not only have quantitative advantages but also set standards for digital communication research and policy. The United States, for example, has the most publications and serves as the primary reference for crisis communication strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The governments of the United States and Australia have widely adopted social media methods to disseminate public health information as a global model (Depoux PhD et al., 2020; van Dijck & Alinead, 2020), setting standards that may overlook countries in the Global South. Additionally, developed countries have ready digital infrastructure, strong political stability, and high information literacy, enabling strategic integration of social media in government communication (Filho et al., 2020). The ability to use technology, supported by advanced human resources, is a determining factor in the number of research publications in each country. Therefore, research on social media in government public

communication in developed countries is increasing, in line with the conditions and capabilities of those countries.

Conversely, the very limited contribution from Latin America, Africa, and Southeast Asia highlights structural inequalities in the global knowledge system (Ahsan & Sterjo, 2023). Developing countries face numerous challenges in creating or influencing evidence-based contextual policies. These include technological limitations, political fragmentation, lack of institutional research support, and limited access to public data. Additionally, academic collaboration patterns tend to be exclusive; institutions from the Global North dominate international research networks, while those from the Global South remain on the periphery (Garrote-Quintana et al., 2025). The epistemic bias resulting from this inequality makes many government digital communication models difficult to apply in the local context of developing countries. As a result, efforts are needed to diversify knowledge production and enhance cross-regional collaboration. These broader methods will not only enhance academic discourse worldwide but also improve public communication policies, particularly in addressing post-crisis challenges and the digital transformation of government in different parts of the world.

Social Media Based on Research Subject

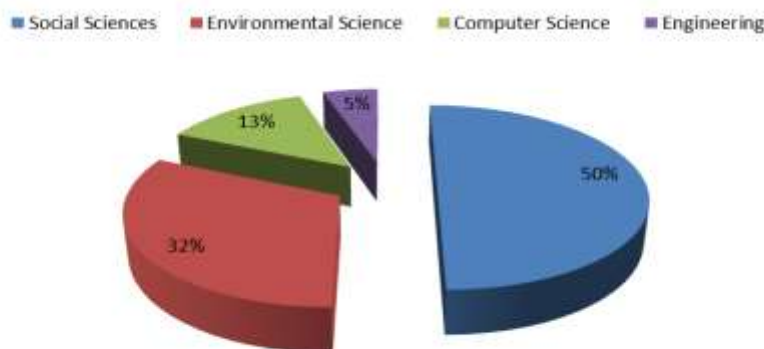


Figure 4. Highest Subject Presentations
Source: Scopus Database

The bibliometric data in Figure 4 shows that studies on the use of social media in government public communication were dominated by social sciences (50%) from 2018 to 2023, followed by computer science (13%), environmental science (32%), and engineering (5%). In the digital world, aspects of state-citizen relations, public participation, and policy legitimacy are highly prioritized. This aligns with numerous studies

emphasizing the role of social media in managing public opinion, disseminating policy information, and crisis communication, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic (van Dijck & Alinead, 2020). Conversely, according to Depoux et al. (2019), much environmental science research demonstrates the use of social media to promote climate change mitigation, reduce disasters, and disseminate ecological messages.

Nevertheless, the dominance of these two fields indicates significant disciplinary bias. While contributions from technical fields such as computer science and engineering remain limited, social and environmental perspectives tend to dominate government policy narratives and digital communication practices. However, computational methods such as sentiment analysis, data mining, and algorithmic modeling are crucial for identifying disinformation, creating data-driven messages, and evaluating the effectiveness of digital communication (Liu & Zhang, 2020). Public communication depends on message content and the availability of digital infrastructure and government information systems, so it is important to minimize the involvement of technical fields. Therefore, while the multidisciplinary nature of this research highlights the complexity of the issue, the disparity in contributions between fields underscores the importance of stronger integration between social sciences and humanities and technology-informatics approaches. Without this balance, the government's response to the challenges of digital public communication may not be in line with the growth of the information ecosystem, which is heavily influenced by technological advances. Going forward, it will be crucial to strengthen cross-disciplinary collaboration to develop more contextual, evidence-based, and crisis-resistant communication methods that can withstand global socio-political dynamics.

Social Media Publication Based on Author

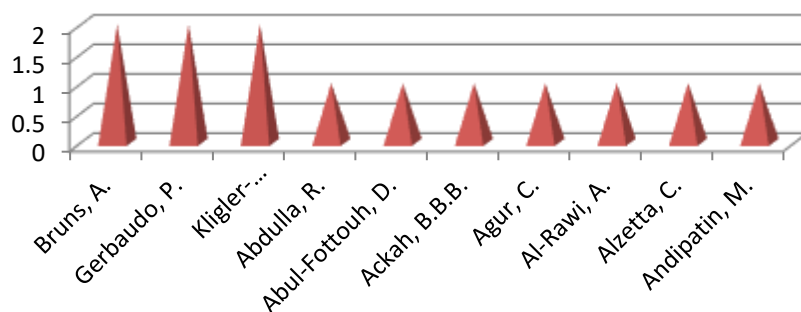


Figure 5. Publication By Author
Source: Scopus Database

The findings in Figure 5 illustrate the co-occurrence of authors in the field of social media as a means of public communication, which also illustrates that the relationship between authors is very important. Collaboration between authors on topics related to social media and public communication involved 159 researchers. In Figure 5, the core authors are Bruns, A., Gerbaudo, P., and Kligher. Vilendik contributed two articles. Additionally, Abdulla, R. Aboul Fottouh, D., Ackah, BBB, Agur, C, AlRawi, A., Alzeta, C, and Andipatin, C contributed one article each on the topic of social media in government public communication. The authors' contributions to this topic play a crucial role in advancing research. The increasing number of authors worldwide, particularly on social media, brings a new perspective to the research landscape and offers unique benefits for the authors themselves (Zielinski et al., 2014).

Publication Trends Based on Research Institutions

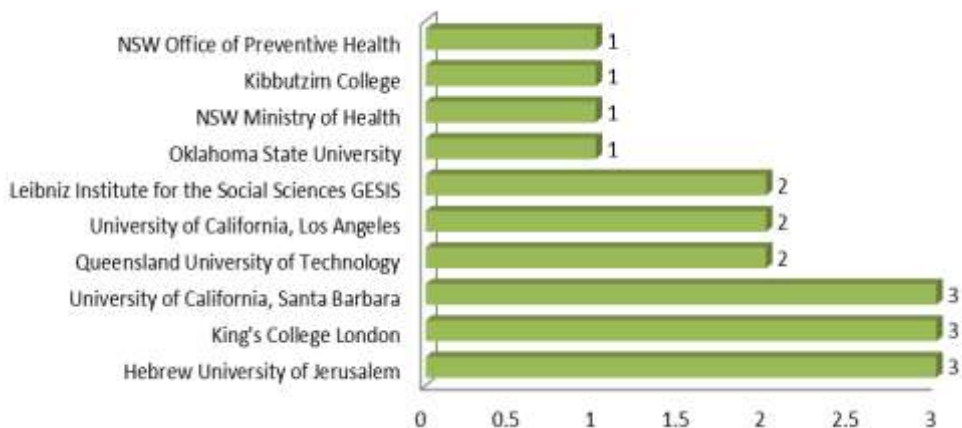


Figure 6. Publication by Affiliation
Source: Scopus Database

The findings above describe the institutions that contribute to research on the topic of social media in government public communications. Figure 6 shows the 10 research institutions that contributed the most to the total number of articles published out of a total of 93 research institutions. The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, King's College London, and the University of California, Santa Barbara are the top research institutions publishing articles on social media and public communication, with three articles each. Next, Queensland University of Technology, University of California, Los Angeles, and Leibniz Institute for Social Science are in second place with two articles published. Furthermore, Oklahoma University, NSW Ministry of Health, and other

research institutions all contribute to the publication of articles related to social media and public communication. The publications produced by these research institutions play a crucial role in enriching the understanding of the government and the public in building effective public communication.

Social Media in Government Public Communication Based On Keywords

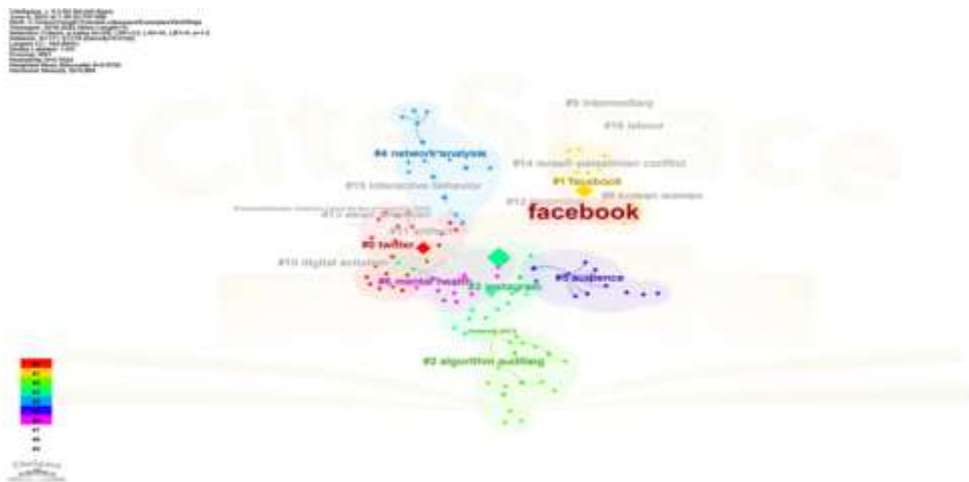


Figure 7. Network visualizations
Source: Keyword Citespace

Figure 7 shows a visualization of CiteSpace, cluster #1 Facebook, cluster #0 Twitter, cluster #3 Instagram, and cluster #6 Mental Health dominating social media research in government public communication. This shows that social media not only functions as a tool for providing information to the government but also as an interactive space for shaping public opinion and emotional responses. Other clusters, such as #10 Digital Activism and #11 Korean Women, show a tendency toward top-down institutional communication, but Facebook's dominance indicates that alternative narratives and citizen advocacy that help shape policy meaning are crucial. Meanwhile, peripheral clusters like Cluster #2 Algorithm Audit and Cluster #4 Network Analysis highlight the lack of integration of technical approaches in digital public communication studies. This highlights a disciplinary bias, where social aspects are prioritized over technological and algorithmic aspects, which form the foundation of social media activities. Therefore, an interdisciplinary approach is needed that views social media not only as an information

channel but also as a space for discussing complex meanings and power dynamics. To be more responsive to the ever-changing dynamics of digital public discourse, the government must develop more flexible, engaged, and data-driven communication strategies.

The keywords in the literature are a summary of the researchers' findings and generalizations from the research content. This study explores hot topics on the use of social media as a public communication tool by summarizing the existing keywords. The log LLR clustering algorithm was used to group keywords in cross-household education to illustrate the map. Each cluster displayed has different items and topics. Cluster #0 (23) items, Cluster #1 (22) items, Cluster #2 (19) items, Cluster #3 (19) items, Cluster #4 (18) items, Cluster #5 (12) items, Cluster #6 (11) items, Cluster #8 (5) items, Cluster #9 (5) items, Cluster #10 (5) items, Cluster #11 (5) items, Cluster #12 (4) items, Cluster #13 (4) items, Cluster #14 (4) items, Cluster #15 (4) items, and Cluster #16 (4) items. Figure 7 illustrates a cluster map containing 16 hot topics related to social media, namely Twitter, Facebook, Algorithm Audit, Instagram, Network Analysis, Audience, Mental Health, Korean Women, Intermediaries, Digital Activism, Artifacts, Mourning, Asian Americans, Israel-Palestine Conflict, Interactive Behavior, and Labor.

Table 1. Most Articles With High Citation

Cluster IDs	Label	Citations
Clusters #0	European public sphere	19 Twitter, one suicide ideation, one Europeanization
Clusters #1	presidentialelection	28 Facebook, one overweight and obesity, one longitudinal study
Clusters #2	curating quality	2 news, 2 Starbirds
Clusters #3	selfrepresentation	56 social media, 13 Instagram, two memories
Clusters #4	network	2 network analysis, two identities, two fake news
Clusters #5	different way	2 Israel, one engagement, one participation
Clusters #6	suicides	4 content analysis, two mental health, two elections
Clusters #8	peers	1 appearance comparison, one body image, one profile maintenance
Clusters #9	public perception	1 mps, one ethics, one ghostwriting
Clusters #10	Emergence of social movements	1 digital activism, one social movement, one origin
Clusters #11	postdigital condition	1 empowerment, one agency, one arab woman
Clusters #12	memories	1 mourning, one celebrity, one affect

Cluster IDs	Label	Citations
Clusters #13	asian american media	1 asian American, 1 #FeministAntibodies Tweetchat: Care in the time of coronavirus
Clusters #14	peace	1 Israeli–Palestinian conflict, one asymmetric conflict, one dialogue
Clusters #15	interactive behavior	1 Spain, one political communication, one election campaign
Clusters #16	UK election campaign	1 online campaigning, one labour, 1 2017 UK national elections

Source: Citespace Summary (2023)

Based on the keyword clustering results, Table 1 summarizes the co-occurrence network grouping presented in Figure 7. Each cluster (Fig. 7) corresponds to a specific keyword, and the size of each cluster indicates the number of keywords it contains. Bibliometric analysis was employed to examine the keywords used in each published article. In Table 1, the dominance of Cluster #0 (European public sphere) and Cluster #1 (presidential election) reflects that studies on social media in government public communication are closely related to the dynamics of digital democracy and political participation. The European public sphere cluster highlights the role of platforms such as Twitter in shaping public opinion, directing policy discourse, and bridging the relationship between citizens and government institutions within the context of European liberal democracy. The focus on issues such as Europeanization and suicide ideation within this cluster also suggests that the digital space is not only a medium for policy communication but also a site of identity conflicts and emotionally charged political and social pressures. Meanwhile, the prominence of Cluster #1 concerning the presidential election underscores how social media, particularly Facebook, is optimized for campaign strategies and electoral communication by governments. Facebook's algorithmic features, which enable large-scale information dissemination, make it an effective medium for constructing political images, conveying policy narratives, and capturing public opinion. The presence of themes such as obesity and longitudinal studies in this cluster further indicates a connection between digital communication and the construction of public perceptions on health issues, which has become increasingly relevant in the context of the politicization of social policy.

In addition to the two dominant clusters, the bibliometric findings also reveal a range of other clusters that reflect diverse dimensions of government public communication through social media. Clusters such as quality curation (Cluster #2), self-representation (Cluster #3), networks

(Cluster #4), and public perception (Cluster #9) highlight the significance of information credibility, content personalization, message dissemination dynamics, and opinion construction. Clusters such as digital activism (Cluster #10), collective memory (Cluster #12), as well as election campaigns in the United Kingdom and Spain (Clusters #15 and #16), further emphasize that social media functions not merely as a channel for government messaging, but also as a space for transnational, affective, and dynamic socio-political interaction

Table 2. Author, Title, and Sources

Authors & Year	Document Titles	Sources
(Unruh-Dawes et al., 2022)	Differing Relationships Between Instagram and Twitter on Suicidal Thinking: The Importance of Interpersonal Factors	Social Media+Society
(Sujon et al., 2018)	Domesticating Facebook: The Shift From Compulsive Connection to Personal Service Platform	Social Media+Society
(Bandy & Diakopoulos, 2021)	Curating Quality? How Twitter's Timeline Algorithm Treats Different Types of News.	Social Media+Society
(Hurleys, 2021)	#reimagining Arab Women's Social Media Empowerment and the Postdigital Condition	Social Media+Society
(Li & Su, 2020)	Real Talk About Fake News: Identity Language and Disconnected Networks of the US Public's "Fake News" Discourse on Twitter.	Social Media+Society
(Tenenboim, 2022)	Comments, Shares, or Likes: What Makes News Posts Engaging in Different Ways?	Social Media+Society
(Schlichthorst et al., 2019)	Using Social Media Networks to Engage Men in Conversations on Masculinity and Suicide: Content Analysis of <i>Man Up</i> Facebook Campaign Data	Social Media+Society
(Kim, 2018)	Facebook Use for Profile Maintenance and Social Grooming and Young Korean Women's Appearance Comparison With Peers and Body Image Concerns	Social Media+Society
(Sabag Ben-Porat & Lehman-Wilzig, 2019)	Political "Postwriting" on Facebook: Public Perceptions About Parliamentarians' (Un)Real SNS Involvement	Social Media+Society
(Schradi, 2018)	Moral Monday Is More Than a Hashtag: The Strong Ties of Social Movement Emergence in the Digital Era	Social Media+Society
(Hurleys, 2021)	#reimagining Arab Women's Social Media Empowerment and the Postdigital Condition	Social Media+Society

Authors & Year	Document Titles	Sources
(Klastrup, 2018)	Death and Communal Mass-Mourning: Vin Diesel and the Remembrance of Paul Walker.	Social Media+Society
(Kuo et al., 2020)	#FeministAntibodies: Asian American Media in the Time of Coronavirus.	Social Media+Society
(Ron et al., 2020)	Women for Peace: Promoting Dialogue and Peace through Facebook?	Social Media+Society
(Guerrero-Solé, 2018)	Interactive Behavior in Political Discussions on Twitter: Politicians, Media, and Citizens' Patterns of Interaction in the 2015 and 2016 Electoral Campaigns in Spain	Social Media+Society
(Gerbaudo et al., 2019)	When “Positive Posting” Attracts Voters: User Engagement and Emotions in the 2017 UK Election Campaign on Facebook	Social Media+Society

Source: Citespace Summary (2023)

This data reinforces the notion that social media is not merely a tool for disseminating information, but also a space where individuals interact, negotiate meanings, and shape public opinion. The use of platforms such as Facebook and Twitter has become essential for governments to convey policy messages, construct positive public images, and engage citizens in political, social, and health-related issues. For instance, research conducted by Sabag Ben-Porat and Lehman-Wilzig (2019) examines how the public perceives parliamentary communication on social media as an authentic issue that is crucial for building governmental legitimacy. In the context of government public communication, studies on social media must account for various dimensions, including broader social transformations, power structures, interpersonal dynamics, and platform algorithms. By employing a bibliometric approach through the CiteSpace software, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the strategic role of social media in contemporary public communication governance. This approach enables the identification of patterns, trends, and thematic relationships within the global body of literature.

Conclusion

This article presents the findings of a bibliometric study that analyzes the development of research on social media in government public communication using the CiteSpace software. The analysis reveals that the year 2020 marked a peak in publication activity, indicating an increased use of social media by governments, particularly during global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States emerged as the leading contributor to scholarly publications, followed by several developed

countries, including Canada, the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Australia. These findings reflect that both the practice and academic study of digital public communication are more advanced in countries with well-established democratic institutions and digital infrastructure. The research focus is predominantly within the social sciences, emphasizing the interaction between state and society within digital spaces. Prominent academic figures such as Bruns, A., Gerbaudo, P., and Klinger Vilendik, along with institutions like the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, King's College London, and the University of California, Santa Barbara, are identified as the most influential intellectual actors in this field. Facebook and Twitter are the primary platforms utilized in government public communication. Facebook is frequently used in the context of presidential elections as a strategic communication tool for conveying policy narratives, shaping political image, and reaching the public rapidly and broadly. In contrast, Twitter plays a crucial role in constructing the digital public sphere in Europe, characterized by more open and participatory communication, and serves as a bridge between citizens and government institutions within liberal democratic systems.

Therefore, social media functions not only as a one-way communication channel but also as a political arena that enables opinion formation, citizen participation, and the construction of policy legitimacy. Future research is encouraged to examine two-way communication between governments and the public, the influence of social media algorithms, and the involvement of marginalized groups in digital discourse. Governments are expected to develop communication approaches that are more inclusive, transparent, and responsive to the dynamics of digital media. For developing countries, it is essential to strengthen digital capacity within the bureaucracy, enhance public media literacy, and establish regulations that promote information openness while mitigating the spread of disinformation. This approach is believed to reinforce the role of social media as a tool for democratization and adaptive, responsive governance.

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