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## The Impact of the Post-Truth Era on Transparency and Accountability in Public Administration: Systematic Literature Review

Andi Rasyid Pananrangi<sup>1</sup>, Imran Ismail<sup>2</sup>, Wahyuddin Hamid<sup>3</sup>, Andi M Rusdi Maidin<sup>4</sup>, Zaenuddin Mustapa<sup>5</sup>, Andi Rizal<sup>6</sup>

### Abstract

The post-truth era presents challenges to the transparency and accountability of public administration due to the rise of disinformation, social polarization, and ideological bias. This study analyzed the impact of fake news on transparency and explored the role of technology in improving information disclosure and counteracting disagreements. The method used was Systematic Literature Review (SLR) with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) approach to select and analyze relevant literature. The results of the study show that effective transparency depends not only on the availability of information, but also on the communication strategies used. People who already distrust the government tend to reject official information if they do not communicate using an appropriate approach. Technologies, such as blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI), have great potential for increasing transparency and warding disinformation. Blockchain can ensure the security and accuracy of government data, whereas AI can help to detect and eliminate fake news. However, regulatory challenges, privacy protection, and infrastructure readiness remain as obstacles to its implementation. This study recommends strengthening evidence-based communication strategies, increasing media literacy, and developing policies to support technology-based transparency. Further studies are needed to explore the effectiveness of technology in increasing transparency and to assess the impact of communication strategies on public acceptance. With a more adaptive and comprehensive approach, the transparency and accountability of public administration can be improved to rebuild public trust in government institutions.

**Keywords:** Transparency, Accountability, Disinformation, Post-truth, Blockchain, Artificial Intelligence, PRISMA.

### Introduction

The post-truth era, defined by Oxford Dictionaries as a state in which objective facts become less influential in shaping public opinion than personal emotions and beliefs (Oxford Languages, 2016), reflects a shift in the way society interacts with information (McIntyre, 2018). This phenomenon describes this phenomenon as a rejection of objectivity and standards of common truth that threatens the foundations of knowledge and rational discussion. The characteristics of

<sup>1</sup> Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Bosowa University Makassar, 90231, Indonesia, Email: [ar.pananrangi@universitasbosowa.ac.id](mailto:ar.pananrangi@universitasbosowa.ac.id), (Corresponding Author), Orcid Id : <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-0379-6556>.

<sup>2</sup> Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Bosowa University Makassar, 90231, Indonesia, Email: [imran.ismail@universitasbosowa.ac.id](mailto:imran.ismail@universitasbosowa.ac.id), Orcid Id : <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-6607-6170>

<sup>3</sup> Postgraduate Lecturer, University of East Indonesia Makassar, 90231, Indonesia, Email: [wahyuddinhamid159@gmail.com](mailto:wahyuddinhamid159@gmail.com), Orcid Id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6815-1858>.

<sup>4</sup> Department of Sociology, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Bosowa University Makassar, 90231, Indonesia, Email: [rusdi.maidin@universitasbosowa.ac.id](mailto:rusdi.maidin@universitasbosowa.ac.id), Orcid Id <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6663-8459>.

<sup>5</sup> Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Bosowa University Makassar, 90231, Indonesia, Email: [zainuddinmustapa5@gmail.com](mailto:zainuddinmustapa5@gmail.com), Orcid Id : <https://orcid.org/0009-0007-0346-9452>.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Pancasila and Citizenship Education, Faculty of Education and Literature, Bosowa University Makassar, 90231, Indonesia, Email: [a.rizal@Universitasbosowa.ac.id](mailto:a.rizal@Universitasbosowa.ac.id), Orcid Id <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-9729-0066>.



this era include the dominance of emotions and personal beliefs in shaping views (Higgins, 2016), information polarization where individuals only trust information that is in line with their political affiliation (Lewandowsky et al., 2017), as well as the rise of disinformation and fake news that spreads through social media. Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making Information Disorder: Toward an interdisciplinary framework for research and policy making (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017). Digital technologies, such as social media algorithms, reinforce bias through filter bubbles and echo chambers (Sunstein, 2001), while trust in institutions, such as the media and government, is declining because they are considered biased (Habermas, 1984). In addition, popular narratives often trump objective facts, as seen in the use of "alternative facts" (Kakutani, 2018), and the line between fact and opinion becomes blurred, where factual information is often treated as an opinion (Keyes, 2004).

The post-truth phenomenon has significant relevance in public administration because it affects policymaking, transparency, legitimacy, and the government's relationship with the community. In this era, policies are often influenced by the pressure of public opinion based on emotions or populist narratives, rather than scientific facts (Fischer, 2003); (McIntyre, 2018). Information polarization exacerbates the situation in which people trust only the information that suits their political views, thus hindering consensus in policy implementation (Lewandowsky et al., 2017). The rise of disinformation on social media undermines the credibility of government, making it difficult to deliver official information (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017). Technologies, such as social media algorithms, create filter bubbles that block people from objective data (Sunstein, 2001). Additionally, declining trust in public institutions threatens the legitimacy of the government (Habermas, 1984), and the use of "alternative facts" in policy communication creates an ethical dilemma (Kakutani, 2018). In crisis management, such as that during the COVID-19 pandemic, disinformation further weakens the effectiveness of public health policies (van der Linden et al., 2020). Therefore, information literacy, transparency, and evidence-based policies are crucial for overcoming the challenges of the post-truth era in public administration.

Transparency and accountability are fundamental principles in good governance (*good governance*) which plays an important role in ensuring the effectiveness, efficiency, and integrity of public administration. Transparency refers to the disclosure of accurate and publicly accessible information so that the public can understand the decision-making process and encourage greater participation in public policy (UNDP, 1997; Transparency International, 2006). Meanwhile, accountability ensures that the government is responsible for actions and decisions taken through reporting, evaluation, and sanctions mechanisms in the event of irregularities (Bovens, 2007); (World Bank, 2000). These two principles support each other in preventing corruption, improving the efficiency of resource use, and strengthening the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the public (*Trust and Public Policy*, 2017); Habermas, 1984). Public trust in the government increases with transparency and accountability; public participation is strengthened; and public governance can operate in a clean, responsive, and sustainable manner.

Transparency and accountability are the main pillars of public trust in the government. Transparency ensures accurate and publicly accessible information disclosure, enabling the public to understand and monitor the decision-making process and management of public resources (Transparency International 2006; (*Trust and Public Policy*, 2017). Accountability complements this by holding the government accountable for actions and decisions taken through reporting and evaluation mechanisms (Bovens, 2007). Together, they prevent

corruption, increase public participation, and strengthen the government's legitimacy in the eyes of the public (World Bank, 2000); (Grindle, 2007)). In addition, these two principles are important in fighting disinformation in the post-truth era by providing credible data that can mitigate public skepticism (Lewandowsky et al., 2017). With transparency and accountability, the public sees the government as a clean, fair, and responsive institution, so that trust in it can be firmly built (Grindle, 2007).

The post-truth era has had a significant impact on the relationship between government and society, especially in terms of trust, legitimacy, and public participation. Public trust in the government is declining owing to the prevalence of disinformation that spreads faster than facts, creating the perception that the government is biased or not transparent (Ball, 2017); (D'Ancona, 2017). Social polarization is also on the rise due to "filter bubbles" and "echo chambers," where people are only exposed to information that aligns with their beliefs, making it difficult for governments to build consensus (Pariser, 2011); (Mounk, 2018). In addition, the spread of fake news undermines the legitimacy of the government and makes public communication difficult because emotional narratives are more acceptable than facts (Benkler et al., 2018); (Vosoughi et al., 2018). As a result, public apathy increases and political participation and support for policies decrease (Nagle, 2017). However, this era has also increased the demand for the transparency and accountability of the government, which is crucial in rebuilding public trust (Sunstein, 2001). Using a fact-based approach and open dialogue, governments must respond to these challenges to maintain stability and strengthen their relationships with communities.

The government faces major challenges in maintaining transparency and accountability during the emergence of fake news and data manipulation. One of the main challenges is the decline in public trust in government institutions, as fake news designed to attack policies or public figures is often more readily accepted by the public than facts, especially when supported by emotional narratives (Tambini, 2017); Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017). In addition, data manipulation through technologies, such as deepfakes and misleading statistics, makes it increasingly difficult for the public to distinguish facts from lies, thus undermining the credibility of official government data (Chesney and Citron, 2018). Social media algorithms that prioritize viral content also reinforce polarization through "echo chambers," which hampers the effectiveness of government public communication (Sunstein, 2001). The lack of technology and resources to quickly verify information adds complexity because responses to disinformation are often delayed, amplifying its impact (Lazer et al., 2018).

This study highlights the significant impact of the post-truth era on transparency and accountability in public administrations. Transparency alone is not sufficient to ensure accountability because of ideological biases, polarization, and the complexity of the relationship between visibility and ethical violations (Schnell, 2022); (Thorne et al., 2012). The post-truth era challenges traditional transparency mechanisms, as seen in a study of government transparency under the Trump administration, which uncovers a paradox in the transparency-accountability dynamic. (Guindani, 2019). Empirical research shows a moderate level of transparency in public reporting and a need for increased compliance and voluntary disclosure (da Costa Bairral, Coutinho, & dos Santos Alves, 2015); (Cardillo, 2020). Fake news exacerbates these challenges by undermining public trust and making transparent communication difficult during crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Osadola et al., 2024); (Vasconcellos-Silva and Castiel, 2020); (Erhan and Sivış, 2023); (Subedi and Subedi, 2022). In an environment with high levels of corruption, increased transparency may fail to drive accountability, thus emphasizing the need for a more thoughtful approach (Bauhr and Grimes, 2014). Studies on media

transparency and public trust highlight the importance of media transparency mechanisms to counter polarization and disinformation (Renedo-Farpón et al., 2022). Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive strategy combining improved communication, media literacy, technological solutions, and robust transparency mechanisms (Osadola et al., 2024); (Fox, 2007).

This study used a six-step approach to formulate the following problems: (1) identification of the main topic, (2) initial literature review, (3) identification of research gaps, (4) formulation of temporary problems, (5) validation of problem relevance, and (6) contextualization with research objectives (Creswell and Creswell, 2017). The literature shows that transparency often fails to ensure accountability, especially in the midst of rampant disinformation (Schnell, 2022); (Thorne et al., 2012). However, empirical data on how transparency can remain relevant and effective in this context are still limited. The literature also shows that ideological bias and polarization affect public perceptions of transparency (Schnell, 2022), but there has been no in-depth discussion on how to measure or manage these impacts. In addition, fake news has been shown to reduce public trust in government institutions (Osadola et al., 2024), concrete strategies to counter its impact, including the role of media literacy, are still poorly discussed. The paradox of transparency, which does not always result in accountability (Thorne et al., 2012), requires further exploration of the conditions of its failure and how to improve accountability through process reform. Although technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence are said to have the potential to increase transparency (Osadola et al., 2024), the literature related to their implementation in public administration is still minimal. Existing research also tends to focus on specific cases, such as the Trump administration (Guindani, 2019), so that cross-country comparative studies can provide a broader perspective on transparency policies in various contexts. Finally, in countries with high levels of corruption, transparency often results in apathy rather than accountability (Bauhr and Grimes, 2014), which indicates the need for specific solutions to increase trust and accountability in this kind of environment. Thus, the objectives of this study were as follows:

1. Identify and analyze *best practices* from the literature related to the effectiveness of transparency in the post-truth era, especially in situations with high levels of disinformation and polarization.
2. Explore strategies in the literature to reduce the impact of ideological bias and polarization on the public perception of transparency, including communication approaches that can increase trust.
3. Review the literature on the impact of fake news on transparency and accountability and evaluate the effectiveness of media literacy and government interventions in addressing these challenges.
4. Literature on the potential of technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI) to improve the transparency of public administration and counteract disinformation.

## **Research Methodology**

This study used a *Systematic Literature Review* (SLR) to answer the research questions in a systematic, transparent, and reproducible manner. The SLR approach was chosen because it ensures that research results are bias-free, systematic, and include relevant literature related to the era *post-truth*, disinformation, transparency, accountability, and public governance (Pluye et al., 2009). This approach has been used extensively in social sciences to evaluate research trends

and identify research gaps (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009). This study followed a protocol based on the SPIDER framework (*Sample, Phenomenon of Interest, Design, Evaluation, Research Type*) that is suitable for research in the social field (Cooke et al., 2012). This framework is used to identify a sample of literature that addresses related issues *post-truth*, the phenomenon of disinformation, transparency, accountability, and governance, with a focus on articles that are based on literature or empirical research, evaluated based on public governance practices, and include qualitative and quantitative research (Gough et al., 2012). A literature search was carried out using the Scopus database, which is a credible academic database with a wide scope is wide (Briner and Denyer, 2012)

The quality of the articles was evaluated using the *Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP)* framework, which is designed to assess the validity, reliability, and relevance of the literature (Thomas and Harden, 2008). This evaluation considers the validity of the research design, the consistency of the method, and the relevance of the results to the research question (Liberati et al., 2009);(Moher et al., 2009). Data from articles that passed the evaluation were synthesized using a qualitative approach without additional analysis tools. Synthesis is performed manually using thematic analysis methods to identify patterns and trends in relevant literature (Thomas and Harden, 2008). The results were reported using the for and *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA)* guidelines, including a flowchart depicting the article selection process. The *Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses* method was used to ensure systematic, transparent, and reproducible literature selection. The process begins with the identification of studies through searches of academic databases using relevant keywords related to post-truth, transparency, accountability, and disinformation (Liberati et al., 2009). The studies were then filtered based on inclusion and exclusion criteria, such as the year of publication, type of document, and relevance to the research topic (Moher et al., 2009). Articles that passed the initial screening stage were further checked to ensure their suitability for the research question, whereas those that did not meet the criteria were eliminated for obvious reasons. The selected literature was analyzed using a thematic approach to identify key patterns in previous studies. By applying the PRISMA method, this study ensures that only relevant and high-quality studies are used in the analysis so that the results can provide a more comprehensive and valid picture of the challenges and solutions of transparency in the post-truth era. The findings are presented in the form of a narrative equipped with a table to present the main information from the included articles, thus providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the eras *post-truth*, disinformation, and public governance (Denyer and Tranfield, 2009).

## Results and Discussion

This study uses the systematic literature review (SLR) approach by analyzing research documents related to the theme raised. The literature search was conducted on February 21, 2025, using a combination of Boolean terms: (post-truth OR posttruth OR disinformation) AND (transparency OR openness) AND (accountability OR responsibility) AND (public administration OR governance). There are no restrictions on location or country and the search terms were designed to cover a wide range of perspectives in governance-related research in the era *post-truth* (Booth et al., 2016). The literature screening process was conducted based on the inclusion criteria, which included the year of publication starting in 2016, the type of article in the form of reviews and research articles, social science subjects, and English. From the initial search, which resulted in 10,424 articles, gradual screening was performed that reduced the number of articles to 300. Screening was carried out according to the publication year (5,098

articles remaining), article type (3,873 articles remaining), social science subjects (1,929 articles remaining), English (1,927 articles remaining), and publication titles relevant to public administration.

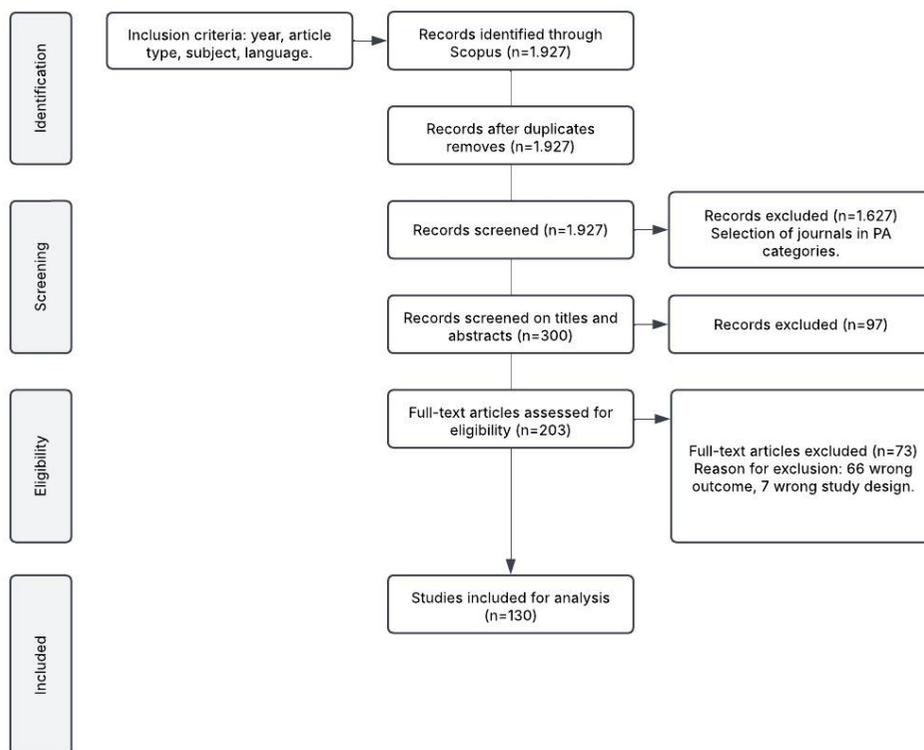


Figure 1 Results of Article Screening Using the PRISMA Method

Based on the results of the screening above, 300 documents were obtained, which were then subjected to the title and abstract screening stage, with the results of screening 97 excluded documents and 203 including documents for full-text screening. In the full-text screening stage, 73 excluded documents were obtained and 130 documents were included in this study. After the screening process, data visualization was carried out using the VOS viewer to measure the most-talked themes in these 130 studies and found the novelty of this research. The following is an image from the VOS Viewer as a result of document screening using the prism method:

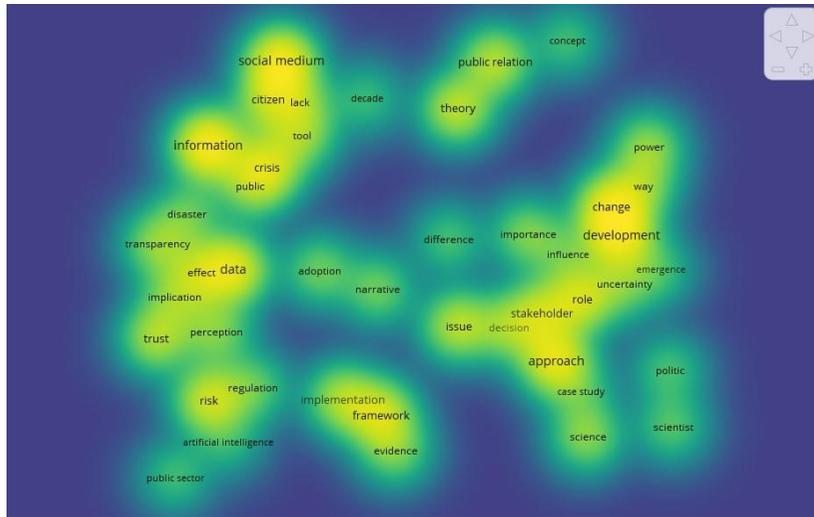


Figure 2 Density Visualization from Literature Screening Results

From the results of the visualization using the viewer in the density visualization section, it was found that the yellow color shows areas with high density, indicating that these terms often appear and are interrelated. In the results of this screening, several main keywords that stand out are "information," "data," "development," "approach," "risk," "trust," "stakeholder," and "framework". Some of these keywords show that the topics of transparency and accountability in the *post-truth* era have been widely studied in the context of data, public trust, social media, and decision-making.

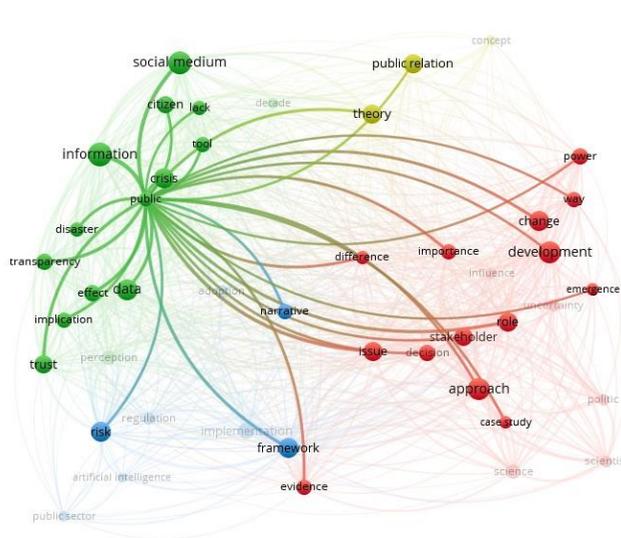


Figure 3 Network Visualization from Literature Screening Results

In addition to being reviewed from the density visualization, the visualization is also observed from the network visualization, as shown above. Several different-colored clusters indicate the relationships between the keywords. The green cluster focuses on *information* and *social media*

related to transparency, data, and public perceptions. This indicates that social media play an important role in the dissemination of information and misinformation. The red cluster is related to *development, approach, and stakeholders*, indicating that policy changes and decision-making in public administration are influenced by *post-truth* challenges. The blue cluster is related to *risk and framework*, which shows that regulatory risks and policy frameworks are also a concern in maintaining accountability.

Some of the keywords with the most raised themes in this relationship were also examined further, including stakeholders. In the image below, there is a relationship between stakeholder keywords and other keywords. The figure shows a clear relationship between stakeholders, roles, approaches, development, and changes in the red cluster. This indicates that research on Scopus has discussed how stakeholders adapt to the challenges of *the post-truth* era using various approaches and policy changes. The strong relationship between trust, data, and transparency shows that public trust is significantly influenced by how data are presented and used in the public administration.

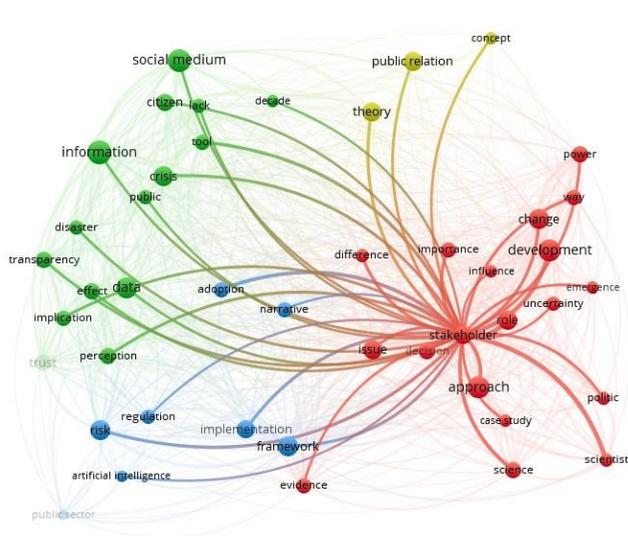


Figure 4 Network Visualization from Literature Screening Results

Subsequently, a study was conducted on network visualization with a focus on the relationship between public relations and development, as shown in the figure below. The results show the relationship between public relations, theory, and social media, indicating that this research also addresses communication and public relations theory when facing the challenges of transparency and accountability. The close connection between framework, implementation, and risk indicates that the main challenge in public administration is the implementation of policies that remain accountable for information uncertainty.



more active and interactive communication strategies, including the use of social media and digital technology, to ensure that the right information can reach a wider community (Mergel et al., 2019).

The factors that affect the effectiveness of transparency in situations with high levels of disinformation and polarization are diverse. First, public trust in institutions is the key to determining the extent to which transparency is acceptable and impactful. According to research from (Dunleavy et al., 2011), when trust in government is low, high transparency can be mistaken for propaganda or manipulation. Second, adequate communication infrastructure plays an important role in the effectiveness of transparency, particularly in ensuring that true information can be spread more widely than hoaxes or misinformation (Kashwan et al., 2019). Third, regulations and policies regarding access to information determine the effectiveness of transparency. Research conducted by (Lee-Geiller and Lee, 2019) showed that countries with strict information disclosure regulations and clear accountability mechanisms tend to be more effective in dealing with post-truth challenges. Media literacy and digital literacy were also found to be significant factors. Studies by (Caballero-Anthony et al., 2021) emphasize that individuals with higher levels of digital literacy are better able to distinguish credible information from misleading information so that transparency provided by governments or institutions can be more effective in building accurate understanding.

a) The Use of Social Media for Transparency

Social media are the primary tool used to increase government transparency. Study conducted by (Dobija et al., 2023);(Higgins, 2008) showed that social media-based communication allows the government to disseminate information more quickly and interactively. With more open communication, the public can easily access policy information and question the government(Dobija et al., 2023). The United States has leveraged social media as a tool for transparency through official government accounts on Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. For example, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services actively uses social media to disseminate information related to health policies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. This implementation allows the government to quickly convey accurate information to the public and to suppress the spread of hoaxes (Mergel et al., 2019);(Davies et al., 2019).

At the local level, many U.S. cities, such as New York and Los Angeles, use social media to provide updates on transportation, development, and other public service policies. Transparency increases public trust and encourages active participation in the decision-making processes. Other countries, such as the United Kingdom and Canada, have adopted a similar strategy by ensuring that all official information is easily accessible through social media. This proves that the digitization of public information is key to increasing accountability in the post-truth era (Davies et al., 2019);(Wirtz et al., 2022).

b) An Evidence-Based Approach to Policymaking

Many governments have begun to implement evidence-based policies to address the challenge of uncertainty in decision making in the post-truth era. (Wirtz et al., 2022) developed an integrative framework based on risk and guidance to improve policy governance, particularly in the application of artificial intelligence (AI) technology. The model aims to ensure that every policy has a strong scientific basis before it is implemented (Wirtz et al., 2022);(Neyazi et al., 2024).

The UK government has implemented an evidence-based approach to policymaking through the

"What Works Network," an initiative that collects data from different sectors to ensure more effective public policy. For example, in education policy, the UK uses evidence-based data to improve the effectiveness of learning systems, ensuring that decisions taken have a real impact on society (Davies et al., 2019);(Wirtz et al., 2022). Other implementations can be seen in the UK's health policy through the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). The organization ensures that all health policy recommendations are based on scientific research and rigorous clinical trials. Thus, the government can better manage uncertainty in policymaking (Davies et al., 2019). Through this evidence-based approach, the UK succeeded in building public trust in the government by demonstrating that every implemented policy had a strong scientific foundation.

c) Public Trust and Information Transparency

Public trust in the government is the main factor for the success of transparency. (Neyazi et al., 2024) His research shows that the level of public trust in the government can moderate their perception of misinformation and deepfakes spread in digital media (Neyazi et al., 2024).

Sweden has one of the highest levels of transparency worldwide. The Swedish Information Access Act has been in place since 1766, making it the first country to have public information-access regulations. The Swedish government actively ensures that all information related to public policy is accessible to the public (Mutimukwe et al., 2020). The implementation of transparency is clearly observed in the management of state budget. Every year, the Swedish government publishes detailed financial reports accessible to all citizens. This approach increases government accountability and reduces the potential for corruption (Mutimukwe et al., 2020).

Sweden uses digital platforms to provide open access to public data, allowing people to verify the information independently. Thus, Sweden's transparency has helped build public trust in the government (Mutimukwe et al., 2020)

d) Technology and Data in Government Transparency

In the digital era, the use of technology and data has proven to be one of the best strategies for increasing transparency. (Lumbroso et al., 2019)His study shows that satellite data can be used to reduce infrastructure risks such as sewage dams (Lumbroso et al., 2019). Estonia is one of the most advanced countries in terms of the application of technology for government transparency. Through e-government initiatives, Estonia has implemented a digital government system that allows citizens access to almost all public services online. From business registration to tax data access, everything can be accomplished through the e-Estonia platform (Dunleavy et al., 2011). Estonia uses blockchain technology to manage government data. This technology ensures that not all public information can be manipulated, thus increasing security and transparency. This approach helped Estonia build a more open and efficient government (Dunleavy et al., 2011). The Estonian government is also implementing a digital voting system that allows citizens to safely vote online. This system reduces the potential for electoral fraud and ensures that the democratic process remains transparent (Dunleavy et al., 2011).

**A. Strategies to Reduce the Impact of Ideological Bias and Polarization on Public Perception of Transparency**

Strategies to reduce the impact of ideological bias and polarization on the public perception of transparency are becoming increasingly relevant in the post-truth era, where information is often

influenced by ideological preferences and political pressures. To understand effective strategies, it is necessary to analyze the theory and concept of ideological bias, factors that influence polarization, and communication approaches that can build trust in transparent information.

Ideological bias refers to an individual's tendency to interpret information based on their previously embraced political beliefs or values. According to research conducted by (Scupola and Zanfei, 2016);(Relly et al., 2020), ideological bias causes people to be more likely to accept information that aligns with their views and reject conflicting information, even if the information is evidence-based. This bias can affect the perception of transparency because people who have different views from the government or institutions tend to be skeptical of the information provided, even if it is conveyed openly and accurately. Other studies by (Veisi et al., 2022) suggest that ideological bias also contributes to the spread of misinformation as individuals are more likely to share information that reinforces their beliefs than neutral or objective information.

Factors that influence polarization also play a role in determining how society receives transparent information. One of the main factors is social media, which, according to research by (Kashwan et al., 2019), creates a filter bubble and echo chamber effect where individuals are only exposed to information that supports their own point of view. This reinforces polarization and inhibits the acceptance of different or more objective information. Another factor that influences polarization is political rhetoric and media framing, which can affect how the public interprets the information provided by governments or institutions. Study by (Dunleavy et al., 2011) found that in a highly polarized environment, transparency intended to increase accountability can be interpreted as an attempt at manipulation or propaganda, especially if the information is not presented with the right communication strategy.

To address these challenges, an effective communication approach is crucial to build public trust in transparency. One strategy that has proven effective is framing, in which information is conveyed in a manner relevant to a diverse audience. According to research by (Lee-Geiller and Lee, 2019), the use of framing based on universal values such as justice and public interest can reduce ideological bias in the reception of transparent information. Another approach that has proven successful is the use of a counter-narrative, which aims to challenge misinformation with strong evidence, and a nonconfrontational approach. (Reed and Meagher, 2022)) found that evidence-based counter-narrative strategies are more effective than simply disabling misinformation as they can build a deeper understanding. In addition, deliberative dialogue is an important method for overcoming polarization. According to (Guenduez and Mettler, 2023), discussion forums involving various community groups in public policy discussions can help to create a common understanding and increase trust in government transparency.

The evaluation of communication campaigns and educational initiatives is an important step in measuring the effectiveness of these strategies. Study conducted by (Dunleavy et al., 2011) show that digital literacy and public education programs that focus on understanding transparency can improve people's ability to recognize credible information. They found that individuals who participated in this type of education program were better able to objectively evaluate government policies and less vulnerable to information manipulation. In addition, research by (Dunleavy et al., 2011) showed that community-based education initiatives, in which the community is actively involved in discussion and learning, are more effective in increasing acceptance of transparency than one-way approaches, such as media campaigns.

Based on a review of the literature, the ideal strategy to reduce the impact of ideological bias

and polarization on transparency involves a multidimensional approach. First, increasing media and digital literacy helps people to recognize credible information and understand how ideological biases affect how they receive information. The second is a communication strategy based on framing and counternarrative and deliberative dialogue to ensure that transparent information can be accepted by various groups of people without triggering resistance. Third, public involvement in decision making and policy formulation should be strengthened to create a sense of ownership of the policies implemented. By combining these strategies, government transparency can be more effective in building public trust, even in highly polarized situations.

### **B. The Impact of Fake News on Transparency and Accountability**

The spread of fake news is closely related to its transparency and accountability. In many cases, fake news or disinformation is used to undermine public trust in government institutions (Gaozhao, 2021). Fake news often exploits the opacity of official information, causing people to doubt the transparency of government. As trust in the information provided by the government declines, institutional accountability is also affected, as people become more skeptical of public policies and decision-making processes. Other studies by (Gaozhao, 2021); (Stachofsky et al., 2023); (van der Linden et al., 2020) show that the systematic spread of fake news can hamper government efforts to maintain transparency, as clarification efforts are often ignored or considered part of political propaganda.

The impact of disinformation on public institutions' credibility has been a major concern in various studies. (Stachofsky et al., 2023) highlighted how repeatedly spreading fake news can create an effect *illusory truth*, where incorrect information is considered a fact simply because it is often heard or seen by the public. This worsens the perception of transparency and weakens the credibility of the government institutions. Research conducted by (Gaozhao, 2021); (Au et al., 2021) also shows that when governments fail to provide prompt and effective clarification of fake news, public trust in official institutions tends to decline. In addition, according to (Gaozhao, 2021), disinformation affects not only government institutions but also other public sectors, such as health and education systems, which ultimately impacts the effectiveness of public policies and services.

Discussions about the impact of fake news on transparency and accountability can be analyzed through several theoretical approaches. One relevant theory is *agenda-setting theory*, which explains how the media has the ability to shape public perception of an issue by highlighting certain information and ignoring others (Stachofsky et al., 2023). In the context of fake news, this theory shows how disinformation can manipulate public perceptions by emphasizing certain narratives that undermine the credibility of governments or public institutions. According to research (Gaozhao, 2021), fake news often leverages the agenda-setting principle to instill distrust in government transparency, whereby certain issues are disproportionately magnified to create a negative perception of the public policy.

Moreover, the *Theory of motivated reasoning* is the foundation for understanding how individuals process the information circulating in society. This theory explains that people tend to accept information that supports their beliefs and reject information that contradicts their ideological preferences (Kunda, 1990). In a study by (Gaozhao, 2021); (Au et al., 2021), it was found that people who already had low trust in the government were more likely to accept fake news, reinforcing their distrust. This further exacerbates the challenge of increasing transparency and accountability, as even correct information can be rejected if it goes against biases already embedded in people's minds. In other words, fake news not only spreads misinformation but also

reinforces social polarization, which ultimately hinders openness and trust in public institutions.

From the perspective *Public sphere theory* introduced by (Au et al., 2021), government transparency can only be effective if there is a healthy public space for rationality-based discussion and information exchange that is free from manipulation. However, in today's digital era, public space is dominated by unverified information and is often influenced by social media algorithms that reinforce polarization. Studies by (Au et al., 2021) show that when public spaces are filled with fake news and disinformation, transparency becomes ineffective because the public loses the ability to distinguish valid information from what is not. Thus, transparency not only depends on the availability of information from the government, but also on the capacity of the community to sort and understand the information presented.

In the face of the threat of fake news, media literacy is considered to be one of the most effective solutions for increasing public awareness of disinformation. A study by (Au et al., 2021) affirmed that a comprehensive media literacy program can help individuals recognize fake news and understand how information is produced and disseminated on various digital platforms. When widely implemented, these programmes can increase public resilience to misinformation and strengthen government transparency. (Wirtz et al., 2022) In their study, they found that countries with strong media literacy education policies showed higher levels of trust in public institutions compared to countries that did not have similar policies. In addition, research from (DeMartino et al., 2024) showed that a combination of media literacy education and strict social media regulations could significantly reduce the spread of fake news and increase public awareness of the importance of credible information.

Government policy interventions also play a role in tackling the spread of fake news and in increasing transparency. According to research by (Dunleavy et al., 2011), some countries have adopted strict legal policies to address disinformation, such as imposing sanctions on disinformation spreaders and establishing independent bodies tasked with verifying public information. Study by (Caballero-Anthony et al., 2021) found that balanced regulation, which not only focuses on information control but also increases transparency in government communications, is more effective in reducing the impact of fake news without restricting freedom of speech. Moreover (Dunleavy et al., 2011) emphasized that collaboration between governments, social media platforms, and civil society is needed to create a more transparent and accountable information ecosystem.

Based on this literature review, the impact of fake news on transparency and accountability is significant, especially in undermining public trust in governmental institutions. However, an effective approach to dealing with this problem must include several aspects, namely, increasing media literacy to strengthen public criticism of disinformation, improving the government's communication strategy in dealing with fake news, and implementing policies that can balance regulation and transparency. With this holistic approach, the spread of fake news can be minimized and the transparency and accountability of public institutions can be maintained.

### **C. The Role of Technology in Increasing Transparency and Countering Disinformation**

Technology has great potential to increase transparency in public administration and to counteract disinformation. Several studies have highlighted how digital technology can be used to improve information disclosure, accelerate public access to government data, and increase public participation in the decision-making processes. Study conducted by (Lee et al.,

2021);(Guenduez and Mettler, 2023);(Saylam and Yıldız, 2022) show that the digitization of public administration through the e-government system can increase transparency by providing real-time access to public policy and financial information. With this system, the public can access data related to government spending, policies implemented, and decisions taken in an open and accountable manner. In addition, research by (Dunleavy et al., 2011);(Wirtz et al., 2022) highlighted that government data disclosure platforms (*Open Government Data Platforms*) have been used by various countries to strengthen transparency and increase public trust in the policies made.

One of the technologies that is gaining more attention for improving the transparency of government data and information is the blockchain. This technology allows for the recording of transactions or data that cannot be changed; therefore, it can be used to create a more transparent and resistant public administration system for manipulation. According to a study by (Wamba et al., 2024), (Dunleavy et al., 2011) used blockchain in a variety of government applications, including the recording of public financial transactions, electronic election systems, and the management of administrative documents that require a high level of security. Using blockchain, recorded data become difficult to manipulate, thereby increasing public trust in the information provided by the government. Other research by (Dunleavy et al., 2011) showed that the implementation of blockchain technology in the government procurement system of goods and services can reduce the risk of corruption and increase the efficiency of the administrative process.

In addition to blockchains, artificial intelligence (AI) plays an important role in detecting and counteracting disinformation that can hinder public transparency. AI has been used in a variety of applications, including social media analysis, fake news monitoring, and the identification of suspicious patterns in the spread of information. According to research conducted by (Madan and Ashok, 2023), AI can be used to develop automated systems capable of identifying and removing content that contains disinformation before it becomes widespread. In addition, research by (Neyazi et al., 2024) found that machine learning-based algorithms can help verify the authenticity of news by analyzing information sources and detecting language patterns used in fake news. With AI systems integrated with social media platforms and news portals, the spread of disinformation can be significantly suppressed (Neyazi et al., 2024).

Although technology offers many opportunities to increase transparency and counteract disinformation, various ethical and technical challenges must be considered. One of the main challenges is the privacy and security of data. According to a study conducted by (Bowen, 2024), the application of technologies such as blockchain and AI in public administration can pose a risk of privacy violations if not properly regulated. In addition, research by (Madan and Ashok, 2023) highlighting that AI algorithms used to detect fake news often face challenges in distinguishing between legitimate opinions and deliberate disinformation, potentially creating bias in the content moderation process. In addition, studies by (Liu et al., 2025); (Guenduez and Mettler, 2023); (Wirtz et al., 2022) revealed that the success of technology implementation for transparency is highly dependent on the readiness of a country's digital infrastructure, where countries with limited internet access and technological resources often face obstacles in adopting digital-based systems.

Several countries have implemented technology to increase transparency and build public trust with significant results. For example, Estonia has been one of the leading countries in the implementation of e-government, leveraging blockchain technology to protect government data

and improve the efficiency of public administration (Misra et al., 2024). This system allows citizens to access government services digitally with high security, thereby reducing the possibility of data manipulation and increasing transparency in various aspects of public services. Another case study conducted by (Guenduez and Mettler, 2023) showed that South Korea used artificial intelligence to detect and counteract disinformation through a social media analytics system that can identify fake news trends and inform the public about invalid information. In addition, research by (Madan and Ashok, 2023) highlighting how the Brazilian government has used data disclosure platforms to increase public participation in the public policy oversight process, directly contributing to increased transparency and accountability of the government.

Technology in public administration can be analyzed from various theoretical perspectives, one of which is the theory of transparency, which emphasizes the importance of access to information as a key element in democracy and good governance. (Ingrams, 2018) categorized transparency into four dimensions: information transparency, accountability transparency, policy transparency, and process transparency. In the digital context, information transparency is becoming more relevant as technology allows for wider and faster access to data. For example, blockchain supports transparency by creating an immutable system of records and reducing the potential for manipulation or misuse of information by interested parties. However, this theory also suggests that excessive transparency can pose other risks, such as privacy breaches and chilling effects, where individuals or organizations become reluctant to engage in policy discussions for fear of their data being exposed (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020).

In the context of countering disinformation, mass communication theory, especially model *agenda-setting* and *Framing*, is relevant for explaining how AI and big data analytics can play a role in identifying and correcting fake news. According to McCombs and Shaw (1972), media has the power to shape public perception by determining important topics. Using artificial intelligence-based algorithms, governments and media organizations can identify patterns of disinformation dissemination and implement counter-narrative counternarrative strategies *counter-narrative* to balance information bias. However, the effectiveness of this approach is still debated, as AI itself can have inherent biases, depending on the data used to train the model (Neyazi et al., 2024). In this case, a deliberative approach that emphasizes public discussion and media literacy education is an additional solution to ensure that people recognize and criticize the information they consume.

Additionally, the theory of digital governance (*Digital Governance*) provides a conceptual framework for understanding how technology can improve government accountability. (Dunleavy et al., 2011) state that the era of *Digital-era governance* changes the way governments interact with their citizens, especially in terms of the transparency and accessibility of information. AI- and blockchain-based e-government systems enable the real-time tracking of public policies and spending, which is in line with the principles of accountability and openness (Fukuyama, 2013). However, the main challenge of this approach is the readiness of the digital infrastructure and level of technological literacy of the community. In developing countries, a significant digital divide hinders the effectiveness of technology adoption in increasing transparency (Dunleavy et al., 2011). Therefore, government technology strategies must consider social and economic factors to ensure inclusive and sustainable implementation (Fukuyama, 2013).

According to the literature review, technology plays a significant role in increasing transparency

and countering disinformation. Technologies, such as blockchain and AI, offer innovative solutions to improve information disclosure, reduce corruption, and counteract the spread of fake news. However, challenges in terms of ethics, privacy, and readiness for digital infrastructure remain factors that must be considered in its implementation. With a balanced approach between technological innovation and appropriate regulation, governments can effectively utilize technology to strengthen transparency and increase public trust in government institutions.

## Discussion

The post-truth era has brought about significant challenges to the principles of transparency and accountability in public administration. Although transparency is a key element in good governance, the results of this study suggest that factors such as ideological bias, social polarization, and disinformation can hinder its effectiveness. High transparency does not always translate into increased accountability, especially when the public is already suspicious of government institutions or when the information presented is considered part of political propaganda. Consistent with these findings (Dunleavy et al., 2011) and (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020), transparency not accompanied by public trust can become ineffective, or even cause negative reactions from the public. Therefore, a more adaptive approach to transparency, including evidence-based communication and community participation in the decision-making process, is required.

Disinformation is a major factor that exacerbates transparency and accountability crises. The results of the study show that the spread of fake news not only damages the credibility of the government, but also creates obstacles in conveying correct information to the public. Previous studies (Yang and Qi, 2023)(Khan et al., 2022) show that during the COVID-19 pandemic, fake news undermined the effectiveness of public health policies, indicating that disinformation can directly affect the success of policy implementation. This underscores the importance of media literacy policies and a more responsive communication approach to dealing with disinformation. In addition, the theory *agenda-setting* and *motivated reasoning* The analysis in this study shows that people tend to receive information that supports their beliefs, so government communication strategies must be more contextual and based on open dialogue to build trust.

In the context of communication theory and government transparency, *Public sphere theory* from (Habermas, 1984) public sphere theory is relevant in explaining how effective transparency requires a healthy public space and is free from information manipulation. However, in practice, social media, which is supposed to be an open space for discussion, often reinforces polarization through algorithms that encourage users to access only the information that suits their preferences. A study conducted by (Mergel et al., 2019) showed that the effect *echo chamber* exacerbates the challenge of transparency, as individuals only accept information that reinforces their beliefs and rejects conflicting, albeit evidence-based, information. In addition to increasing transparency, it is important for governments and public institutions to actively build fact-based public discourses and encourage dialogue across ideological groups.

Theory, *Governance and accountability* also provide insights into how transparency must be balanced with effective accountability to ensure that public trust is maintained (Mulgan, 2000). According to (Bovens, 2007), effective accountability relies not only on the availability of information but also on control and evaluation mechanisms that allow the public to assess and follow up on government performance. In the digital age, accountability can be strengthened through a more responsive public feedback system, in which the public can provide direct responses to the policies implemented. Study by (Irani et al., 2023) show that digital participation

platforms that allow the public to provide input and monitor government policies can increase transparency while strengthening the legitimacy of public institutions. However, the challenge in the implementation of this system is to ensure that public feedback truly represents broader public interest and is not only influenced by certain groups with specific political agendas (Mulgan, 2000).

In response to these challenges, technology has proven to play a significant role in increasing transparency and counteracting disinformation. The literature review conducted in this study identifies various technology-based solutions, such as blockchain to increase transparency in public administration and artificial intelligence (AI) to detect and eliminate fake news (Wirtz et al., 2022); (Dunleavy et al., 2011). Case studies in Estonia and South Korea show how technology can be applied to build a more transparent and credible government system, although ethical and technical challenges remain in its implementation. Additionally, this study highlights that digital infrastructure and community technology literacy play important roles in the successful adoption of technology in public administration. Therefore, technology implementation must be accompanied by policies focusing on regulatory aspects, privacy protection, and infrastructure readiness.

Overall, the discussion of the results of this study shows that transparency and accountability in the post-truth era cannot be separated from the challenges of disinformation and sociopolitical dynamics that affect the public acceptance of information. An ideal approach to improving transparency and accountability includes a combination of evidence-based communication strategies, increased media literacy, and appropriate use of technology. With a more comprehensive and adaptive strategy, the government can increase the effectiveness of transparency in dealing with post-truth challenges and can rebuild public trust in government institutions.

## **Conclusion**

This study shows that transparency and accountability in public administration in the post-truth era face significant challenges due to disinformation, social polarization, and ideological bias. The spread of fake news can damage the credibility of public institutions and hinder transparency if it is not balanced by an appropriate communication strategy. In addition, high transparency does not necessarily increase accountability if the public already has a distrust of government institutions.

The results of this study also revealed that the use of technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI) plays an important role in increasing transparency and countering disinformation. Blockchain can be used to ensure the accuracy and security of government data, whereas AI can detect and eliminate fake news circulating on social media. However, the implementation of this technology faces challenges including immature regulations, privacy protection, and uneven digital infrastructure readiness in various countries.

In addition, effective transparency must be accompanied by strong accountability mechanisms and public participation in decision-making. The provision of open information must be accompanied by community involvement in the policy-evaluation process and responsive feedback mechanisms. Therefore, a strategy that includes evidence-based communication, increasing media literacy, and strengthening policies to support information disclosure and to rebuild public trust in government institutions is required.

## Recommendations

This study recommends three main steps for improving transparency and accountability in public administration in the post-truth era. First, an evidence-based communication strategy with *a framing and counter-narrative approach* is required to overcome ideological bias and strengthen deliberative dialogue to build public trust. Second, increasing media and digital literacy must be a long-term priority through formal education and public campaigns, so that people are better able to recognize fake news. Governments can also cooperate with social media platforms to verify and reduce the spread of information. Third, clear regulations related to public information disclosure and privacy protection in the application of transparent technologies such as blockchain and artificial intelligence (AI). Although this technology has great potential to counteract disinformation, the ethical and technical aspects of its implementation must be considered to avoid posing new risks to the government.

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