

CONSTRUCTING BUDGET EFFICIENCY DISCOURSE: A VAN DIJK CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOUTH KALIMANTAN LOCAL MEDIA COVERAGE IN FEBRUARY 2025

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ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana tiga media lokal Kalimantan Selatan mengonstruksi wacana kebijakan efisiensi anggaran pemerintahan Prabowo Subianto yang diterapkan pada awal tahun 2025. Menyusul instruksi presiden tentang konsolidasi fiskal kepada seluruh kementerian dan pemerintah daerah, media lokal memainkan peran penting dalam membingkai pemahaman publik terhadap kebijakan ini. Menggunakan analisis wacana kritis Teun van Dijk, penelitian ini menganalisis 30 artikel berita dari Banjarmasin Post (15 artikel), Radar Banjarmasin (10 artikel), dan Kalimantan Post (5 artikel) yang dipublikasikan pada Februari 2025. Analisis mencakup struktur tekstual, kognisi sosial, dan konteks sosial. Temuan mengungkapkan pola pembingkai yang berbeda: Banjarmasin Post menekankan dampak negatif terhadap pendidikan dan pembangunan daerah melalui narasi emosional; Radar Banjarmasin menyoroti pemotongan anggaran konkret dan kritik kebijakan menggunakan data faktual; sementara Kalimantan Post berfokus pada respons pemerintah dan upaya mitigasi dengan nada optimistis. Variasi ini mencerminkan perbedaan pemilihan narasumber, posisi ideologis, dan hubungan dengan struktur kekuasaan. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada pemahaman bagaimana media lokal membentuk wacana kebijakan publik dan memengaruhi implementasi kebijakan di tingkat daerah.

Kata kunci

Analisis Wacana Kritis, Efisiensi Anggaran, Kalimantan Selatan, Kebijakan Publik, Media Lokal

ABSTRACT

This study examines how three South Kalimantan local media outlets construct discourse on the Prabowo Subianto administration's budget efficiency policy implemented in early 2025. Following the presidential instruction on fiscal consolidation to all ministries and regional governments, local media played a crucial role in framing public understanding of this policy. Using Teun van Dijk's critical discourse analysis, this research analyzes 30 news articles from Banjarmasin Post (15 articles), Radar Banjarmasin (10 articles), and Kalimantan Post (5 articles) published in February 2025. The analysis covers textual structures, social cognition, and social contexts. Findings reveal distinct framing patterns: Banjarmasin Post emphasizes negative impacts on education and regional development through emotional narratives; Radar Banjarmasin highlights concrete budget cuts and policy criticism using factual data; while Kalimantan Post focuses on government responses and mitigation efforts with optimistic tones. These variations reflect differences in source selection, ideological positioning, and relationships with power structures. This study contributes to understanding how local media shapes public policy discourse and influences regional policy implementation.

Keywords

Budget Efficiency, Critical Discourse Analysis, Local Media, Public Policy, South Kalimantan

Introduction

The budget efficiency policy instructed by President Prabowo Subianto in early 2025 to all ministries, state institutions, and regional governments represents a strategic fiscal consolidation effort amid global economic uncertainty. This policy emerged following the expansive fiscal impact of Indonesia's COVID-19 pandemic response and aims to ensure sustainable national financial management (Ristyawati, 2020). In South Kalimantan, the implementation of this policy has generated multivalent responses from local governments, academics, business actors, and civil society, particularly concerning its potential impact on regional development, education programs, and public services.

The correlation between efficiency policies and public policy implementation performance is a critical theme in public administration studies. Research demonstrates that efficiency policies significantly affect organizational performance through enhanced managerial capacity, accountability, and transparency (Sudewo, Meilifa, & Christiana, 2022). However, the implementation of such policies often creates tensions between fiscal rationalization goals and the need to maintain service quality, particularly at the regional level where budgetary constraints directly affect community welfare.

Local media plays a crucial role in framing public understanding of budget policies and influencing policy implementation at the regional level. As information intermediaries, local media not only transmit factual information but also construct narratives that shape public opinion and political orientation (Entman, 2021; Wicitra, Murtiningsih, & Catharina, 2023). Research indicates that media framing through word choice, source selection, and emphasis placement significantly affects public perception and support for government policies (Prasetyo, Rahmanto, & Sudarmo, 2024). In the context of budget efficiency, how local media construct this discourse becomes particularly important as it can influence public acceptance, policy legitimacy, and implementation effectiveness in the region.

Previous studies on media discourse and public policy have primarily focused on national media coverage or single-case analyses. Research on policy framing has demonstrated that media representations vary based on ownership structures, political affiliations, and audience segmentation (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). Studies of local media in Indonesia have highlighted their role in facilitating public communication and participation (Maryani, Priyadharma, Janitra, & Rahmawan, 2020), yet often reveal tensions between journalistic independence and local political elite interests (Guntur, Unde, & Hasrullah, 2023). Critical discourse analysis has been widely applied to examine power relations in media texts, including government policy communication (Setiani, Dahlya, & Baehaqie, 2023), political speeches (Pratiwi & Rahmawati, 2023), and public health campaigns (Sukarismanti, Rustono, Mardikantoro, & Samsudin, 2024). However, comparative studies analyzing how multiple local media with different ownership structures construct discourse on the same policy issue remain limited, particularly in regional contexts outside Java.

Despite extensive research on media framing and policy discourse, there is a lack of systematic comparative analysis examining how local media outlets with different affiliations construct budget efficiency discourse in regional settings. Specifically, no studies have analyzed the discursive differences among locally-affiliated, national network-affiliated, and independent local media in covering fiscal policies that directly impact regional development. This gap is particularly significant in South Kalimantan, where regional development disparities (HDI ranging from 64.8 to 78.3 across

districts/cities according to BPS South Kalimantan 2024) make budget efficiency discourse especially consequential for public welfare and development trajectories.

This study employs Teun van Dijk's critical discourse analysis (CDA) framework, which enables examination of not only textual aspects but also social cognition and social contexts underlying media text production (Eriyanto, 2012). Van Dijk's model is particularly suitable for analyzing media discourse as it reveals how power relations and ideological structures shape language use and meaning construction (Dzarna, Hima, Rahmawati, & Asmy, 2022). The three-dimensional analysis text structure, social cognition, and social context allows researchers to identify forces and interests operating behind media discourse, including how media build ideologies that support or oppose certain power paradigms (Anam, Rasyid, & Anwar, 2023).

This study aims to critically analyze how three leading local media outlets in South Kalimantan Banjarmasin Post (affiliated with Kompas Gramedia), Radar Banjarmasin (part of Jawa Pos Group), and Kalimantan Post (independent local media) construct discourses related to President Prabowo Subianto's budget efficiency policy during its initial implementation in February 2025. Specifically, this research seeks to: (1) identify textual differences in news structures, semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetoric across the three media; (2) analyze social cognition processes that influence journalistic framing; and (3) examine social contexts including power relations and ideological positioning that shape discourse construction. The findings are expected to contribute to understanding the interrelation between local media, budget policy politics, and governance dynamics at the subnational level, providing empirical insights for journalism practitioners, public policy stakeholders, and civil society in contextualizing public policy discourse more critically and responsibly.

Method

This study employs a qualitative approach within a critical paradigm, operationalized through Teun A. van Dijk's Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) model. This approach is grounded in the epistemological premise that media discourse is not merely factual representation but a social construction shaped by power relations and ideological structures (Eriyanto, 2012). The research corpus consists of 30 news articles concerning the budget efficiency policy of the Prabowo Subianto administration, published during February 2025. Three major local media outlets in South Kalimantan were purposively selected: Banjarmasin Post (15 articles), affiliated with Kompas Gramedia representing mainstream professional journalism with national network resources; Radar Banjarmasin (10 articles), part of Jawa Pos Group network known for populist approach and regional political engagement; and Kalimantan Post (5 articles), an independent local media representing purely local ownership and editorial autonomy.

These three outlets represent distinct ownership structures (national conglomerate, national network, and local independent), which theoretically influence editorial policies and discourse construction (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). The variation in article numbers reflects each media's actual publication frequency and coverage intensity during the observation period. While this creates numerical imbalance, it authentically represents the media's differential attention to the policy issue and does not compromise the qualitative discourse analysis, which prioritizes depth of textual examination over quantitative representation. February 2025 was selected as the

temporal frame because it represents the initial policy implementation phase, when media framing tends to establish foundational discourse patterns that influence subsequent public perception (Vladislavljević & Voltmer, 2017).

Data were collected through systematic digital documentation using keyword searches with Boolean operators on official media portals. Articles were selected based on inclusion criteria including direct discussion of budget efficiency policy, publication in February 2025, and substantive policy analysis of minimum 300 words, while excluding opinion columns, editorials, advertorials, and reader letters. Selected articles were archived with publication metadata in PDF format to maintain data traceability. Source triangulation was conducted by cross-verifying print and online versions where available to ensure content consistency. Formal member checking with editorial teams was not conducted, as this is uncommon in media discourse research where published texts constitute the primary analyzable reality.

Analysis operationalized van Dijk's three-dimensional CDA framework (Eriyanto, 2012) covering textual analysis (macrostructure examining themes and topics, superstructure analyzing news schema, and microstructure exploring semantics, syntax, stylistics, and rhetoric), social cognition analysis (examining journalist and media cognitive schemas including person schema, self-schema, role schema, and event schema), and social context analysis (investigating socio-political background, power dynamics, and ideological positioning). The analytical procedure followed six systematic steps: corpus familiarization through close reading of all articles, textual coding of discourse elements using color-coding to identify patterns, comparative analysis across media to identify similarities and differences, social cognition interpretation to infer journalist perspectives, contextual integration linking textual patterns to broader socio-political contexts, and synthesis with iterative refinement validated through peer debriefing with communication scholars. ATLAS.ti version 9.0 software was utilized to enhance analytical transparency and traceability through systematic code management, visual network mapping, and frequency analysis (Martins & Scherer, 2023). However, the software served as an organizational tool while interpretive analysis remained researcher-driven following CDA principles. All analyzed articles are publicly available publications, with media outlets explicitly named as they constitute institutional actors in public discourse, consistent with media studies research ethics.

Result and Discussion

The critical discourse analysis conducted on the coverage of the budget efficiency policy under Prabowo Subianto's administration reveals that this policy is not a monolithic reality but a contested arena of meaning. The media do not operate in a vacuum; rather, as argued by (Yunanto, Nazalatus Sa'adiyah Sy, & Kasanova, 2024), political discourse in the Indonesian media space is rarely neutral. It is actively constructed through rhetorical strategies that reflect the media's entanglement with specific political and economic interests. The three local media outlets analyzed Banjarmasin Post, Radar Banjarmasin, and Kalimantan Post do not merely transmit policy information, but actively reconstruct reality through distinct framing strategies that reflect their ideological stances and political-economic entanglements.

Textual Dimension Analysis

Macrostructure (Themes/Topics)

The analysis of the macrostructure across news reports from the three major local media outlets in South Kalimantan identifies several dominant themes related to the discourse on the Prabowo administration's budget efficiency policy. Table 1 outlines the key themes found in the coverage across the three media platforms.

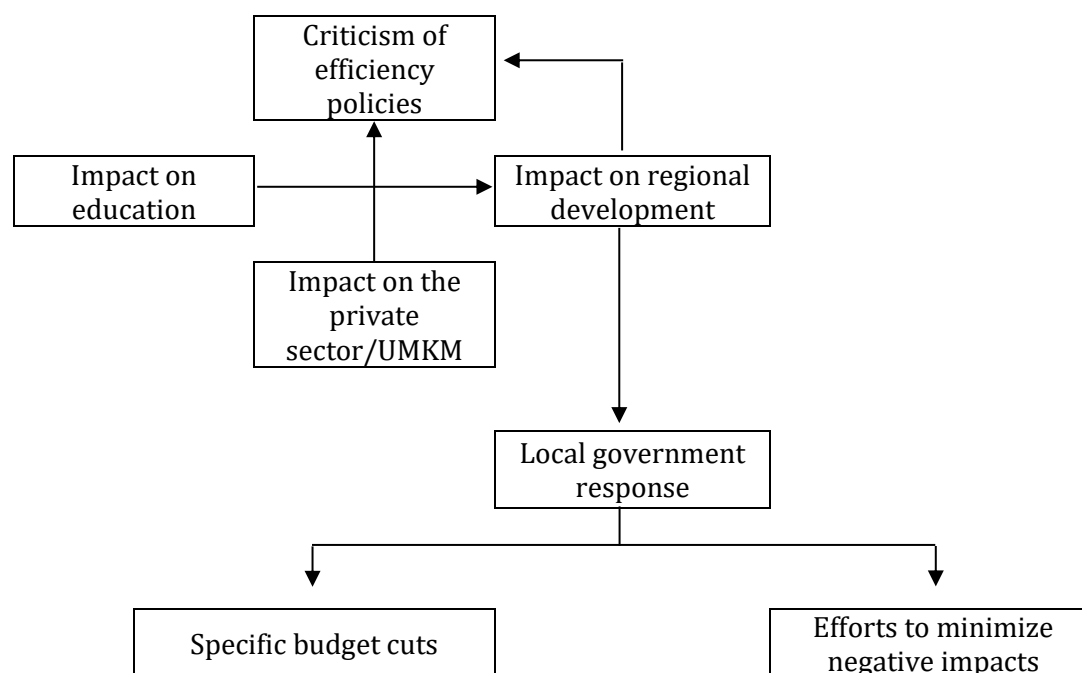
Table 1. Macrostructure (Theme) of Budget Efficiency News

Theme	Banjarmasin Post	Radar Banjarmasin	Kalimantan Post
Impact on educational programs	√ (4 news)	-	-
Impact on regional development	√ (3 news)	√ (4 news)	√ (1 news)
Local government response	√ (3 news)	√ (2 news)	√ (2 news)
Criticism of efficiency policies	√ (2 news)	√ (2 news)	-
Efforts to minimize negative impacts	√ (2 news)	-	√ (2 news)
Impact on the private sector/UMKM	√ (1 news)	√ (1 news)	-
Specific budget cuts	-	√ (1 news)	-

Source: Author's analysis of 30 articles (2025)

The results of the systematic coding of ATLAS.ti 9.0 found seven key macro themes that emerged in the research corpus. Visualization of the semantic networks of these themes shows that "impact on regional development" is the central theme that has the highest connectivity with other themes (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Semantic Network Visualization of Macro Themes in Budget Efficiency Reporting



Source: Author's analysis of 30 articles (2025)

The divergence in macrostructures (themes) indicates a deliberate agenda-setting process employed by each media outlet. Banjarmasin Post prioritizes the "Social Impact" theme, dedicating the majority of its coverage to the struggles of scholarship recipients and SMEs. This aligns with the tradition of Kompas Gramedia's humanism, where journalism is positioned to defend the powerless (Heryanto, 2018). In contrast, Radar Banjarmasin (Jawa Pos Group) anchors its theme on "Physical Development," reflecting a developmentalist ideology that equates progress with infrastructure a legacy of New Order journalism that remains prevalent in the regional press. Meanwhile, Kalimantan Post marginalizes critical themes, focusing instead on "Government Responsiveness," effectively functioning as an extension of state public relations.

Superstructure (Schema)

Superstructure analysis shows a pattern of information arrangement in the news of the three media that generally follows the standard format of news structures, but with variations in information placement and emphasis on certain aspects.

Table 2. Analysis of the News Superstructure in All Three Media

Schematic Elements	Banjarmasin Post	Radar Banjarmasin	Kalimantan Post
Heading	Provocative; emphasizing " <i>terdampak</i> (affected)", " <i>dikurangi</i> (reduced)", " <i>terancam</i> (threatened)"	Getting to the heart of the matter, e.g. " <i>dipangkas</i> (cut)", " <i>ditunda</i> (postponed)"	Neutral; emphasizing efforts and solutions
Lead	Focus on negative impacts	Emphasizing the facts of the cut and the value of the budget	Present the context and efforts of the government
News Body	Elaboration of impacts, responses, quotes of resource persons	Details of budget and policy cuts	Explanation of policies and impact minimization efforts
Tail	Resource person's expectations or follow-up plan	Criticism or further consequences	Optimistic quotes regarding service guarantees

Source: Author's analysis of 30 articles (2025)

This news structure differences in Tabel 2 reflects the difference in perspective in constructing a narrative about budget efficiency. Banjarmasin Post tends to adopt a more dramatic and emotional approach, the Radar Banjarmasin is more factual and concrete, while the Kalimantan Post emphasizes more on the government's efforts and the solutions offered.

Semantic Microstructures

The analysis of semantic microstructures shows how media constructs meaning through background, detail, intent, and pre-preparation, as summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Semantic Microstructure Analysis

Semantic Elements	Banjarmasin Post	Radar Banjarmasin	Kalimantan Post
Background	Policies in response to national economic conditions	Policies as the cause of regional development	Policy as a challenge that must be carefully managed
Detail	Elaboration of impacts on education, public services, and the private sector	Details of the value of the budget cut and the deferred program	Details of the government's efforts to respond to efficiency and maintain public services
Intention	Implicitly criticizing policies through negative impact narratives	Explicitly shows the concrete consequences of the policy	Implicitly supports policy by emphasizing government commitment
Presumption	Harming communities and regions	Hindering development programs	Challenges that can be overcome with good management

Source: Author's analysis of 30 articles (2025)

The analysis of semantic microstructures reveals a distinct divergence in how the media construct meaning around the budget efficiency policy. Banjarmasin Post frames the policy against a national economic backdrop while emphasizing community loss and specific negative impacts on education. It implicitly criticizes the policy based on the presumption that it harms the region. Conversely, Radar Banjarmasin positions the policy as an obstacle to regional development by focusing on numerical details of budget cuts to explicitly demonstrate concrete consequences. This establishes a clear presumption that development programs are being hindered. In contrast, Kalimantan Post constructs a positive discourse by framing the policy as a manageable challenge and prioritizing government efforts to maintain public services. It implicitly supports the administration with the presumption that efficiency can be successfully achieved through good management.

Syntactic Microstructure

The analysis of syntactic microstructures shows how the three media construct reality through sentence forms, coherence, and pronouns. Table 4 presents the results of syntactic microstructure analysis in the news of the three media.

Table 4. Syntactic Microstructure Analysis

Syntactic Elements	Banjarmasin Post	Radar Banjarmasin	Kalimantan Post
Sentence Forms	Active-passive sentence combination, with passive sentence emphasizing "terdampak (affected)"	Active sentences are dominant, policy as a subject that "memangkas (cut)"	The dominant active sentence, the official as the subject who "memastikan (ensures)" and "mengupayakan (strives)"

Coherence	Causal relationship between policy and negative impact	Elaborative relationships detailing aspects of pruning	The contrasting relationship between efficiency challenges and government efforts
Pronouns	"masyarakat (community)", "mahasiswa (students)", "pengusaha (entrepreneurs)" as affected parties	"anggaran (budget)", "dana (funds)", "program (programs)" as affected objects	"pemerintah (government)", "pejabat (official)", "kementerian (ministry)" as the actor who manages

Source: Author's analysis of 30 articles (2025)

The syntactic analysis reveals divergent discursive strategies: Banjarmasin Post establishes a causal coherence using predominantly passive sentences and victim-centric pronouns to emphasize the negative impacts on affected parties, whereas Radar Banjarmasin prioritizes elaborative coherence through active structures that position the policy as an agent of resource cutting. Conversely, Kalimantan Post employs a contrasting coherence with high active voice usage to highlight the agency of government officials as proactive managers addressing efficiency challenges, shifting focus away from victims or objectified cuts.

Structure Micro Stylistics

The analysis of stylistic microstructures reveals how the three media choose a particular lexicon to construct reality, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Analysis of Stylistic Microstructures

Word Choice (Lexicon)	Banjarmasin Post	Radar Banjarmasin	Kalimantan Post
Regarding Policies	" <i>terdampak</i> (affected)", " <i>terimbas</i> (impacted)", " <i>terancam</i> (threatened)", " <i>tersendat</i> (stuttered)"	" <i>dipangkas</i> (cut)", " <i>ditunda</i> (postponed)", " <i>direm</i> (halted)", "backfire"	" <i>cermat</i> (careful)", " <i>teliti</i> (meticulous)", " <i>optimal</i> (optimal)", " <i>upayakan</i> (effort)"
Related Conditions	" <i>mengkhawatirkan</i> (worrisome)", " <i>terpukul</i> (struck)", " <i>cemas</i> (anxious)"	" <i>kritik</i> (criticism)", " <i>terhambat</i> (hampered)", " <i>ditunda</i> (postponed)"	" <i>tantangan</i> (challenge)", " <i>tetap</i> (stay)", " <i>optimal</i> (optimal)", " <i>pastikan</i> (make sure)"
Related Actors	" <i>mahasiswa</i> (student)", " <i>pengusaha</i> (entrepreneur)", " <i>warga</i> (citizen)"	" <i>anggaran</i> (budget)", " <i>program</i> (program)", " <i>dana</i> (funds)"	" <i>pejabat</i> (official)", " <i>pemerintah</i> (government)", " <i>menteri</i> (minister)"

Source: Author's analysis of 30 articles (2025)

Banjarmasin Post uses a lexicon that tends to be dramatic and emotional to describe the condition of a certain community or sector due to the policy. Radar Banjarmasin uses a more concrete and direct lexicon to describe the conditions resulting from the policy. Kalimantan Post uses a constructive and positive lexicon to describe the approach to efficiency policy, as well as to affirm an optimistic narrative. This difference

in word choice reflects the difference in perspective and narrative frame built by each media.

Rhetorical Microstructure

The analysis of rhetorical microstructures reveals how the three media utilize graphic elements, metaphors, and expressions to reinforce messages in the news, as summarized in Table 6.

Table 6. Rhetorical Microstructure Analysis

Rhetorical Elements	Banjarmasin Post	Radar Banjarmasin	Kalimantan Post
Graphic	Student protests	Photos of the stalled project, the cut budget	Photo of officials giving statements, coordination meetings
Metaphor	"Indonesia jadi (Indonesia Becomes (Anxious))", "terpukul (hit)", "tersendat (stuttered)"	Emas Cemas Emas Cemas "dipangkas (cut)", "direm (halted)", "backfire"	"cermat dan teliti (careful and thorough)", "tetap optimal (stay optimal)"
Express	Emotional quotes from students, entrepreneurs, citizens	Critical quotes from the DPRD and activists	Optimistic quotes from government officials

Source: Author’s analysis of 30 articles (2025)

The analysis of rhetorical microstructures highlights distinct strategies in how the media visually and metaphorically package their narratives. Banjarmasin Post reinforces its critical stance by predominantly displaying graphics of social unrest and employing emotional metaphors. Radar Banjarmasin adopts a more factual but critical approach, utilizing visuals of physical projects alongside direct metaphors. In contrast, Kalimantan Post supports a constructive narrative by featuring visuals of official coordination and employing metaphors to frame the government’s approach.

Semantic Engineering and the "Ideological Square"

At the micro-level, the media utilize semantic moves to construct an "Ideological Square" (Van Dijk, 2015), emphasizing "Our" virtues against "Their" vices, which aligns with the Narrative Policy Framework (NPF) where characters are cast as heroes, villains, and victims to drive emotional engagement (Apriliyanti, Utomo, & Purwanto, 2022). Banjarmasin Post employs a "Victimization Narrative," utilizing emotive lexicons like *terancam* (threatened) and *cemas* (anxious) to frame the central government as the Villain and students/SMEs as Victims within this NPF framework (Apriliyanti et al., 2022). Syntactically, the heavy use of passive voice obscures the specific actor while highlighting suffering, functioning as a "moral evaluation" that implicitly judges the policy as unjust toward the poor (Entman, 2021).

In contrast, Radar Banjarmasin adopts a strategy of "Quantification of Loss and Regional Interests," using precision rhetoric and specific figures to measure impact. Metaphors like *dipangkas* (pruned) suggest a forced deceleration of progress, shifting

the focus from individual suffering to "regional loss" amid center-periphery tensions. By highlighting cancelled physical projects, the outlet constructs a collective "Us" of regional stakeholders united against the "Them" of inefficient central policy, reflecting a tendency where media protect local interests against perceived external threats (Jamil et al., 2021).

Meanwhile, Kalimantan Post utilizes the "Euphemism of Power" to manufacture consent, replacing harsh terms with words like *penyesuaian* (adjustment) or *tantangan* (challenge). The syntax favors active verbs attributed to officials, such as *memastikan* (ensuring), to legitimize local authority and minimize panic. This strategy mirrors "manufacturing consent," where reality is subordinated to elite interests (Herman & Chomsky, 2010), and confirms observations that government-supportive narratives often frame controversial policies as necessary for stability, thereby marginalizing democratic counter-narratives (Syukri, Al-Hamdi, Suswanta, & Kurniawan, 2023).

Social Cognition and Social Context Dimension Analysis

The integration of social cognition and social context analyses within Van Dijk's framework reveals how internal media ideologies and external power relations shape the construction of budget efficiency discourse in South Kalimantan. Quantitatively, this is evident in sentiment variations: Banjarmasin Post employs a predominantly negative lexicon (67%) to build a dramatic frame, Radar Banjarmasin adopts a critical stance (52%), while Kalimantan Post constructs a positive, optimistic discourse (47%). These cognitive frames manifest in distinct self-schemas: Banjarmasin Post positions itself as a "defender of the people," Radar Banjarmasin as a data-driven "fact-teller," and Kalimantan Post as a government-aligned "policy supporter".

These cognitive orientations are structurally influenced by institutional backgrounds. Banjarmasin Post, affiliated with Kompas Gramedia, maintains independence; Radar Banjarmasin (Jawa Pos Group) focuses on concrete metrics; and Kalimantan Post aligns with local elite interests. This diversity reflects a fragmented media ecology where budget policy serves as a litmus test for democratic maturity.

In the broader social context, Banjarmasin Post fulfills the democratic watchdog function by amplifying marginalized voices to counter state dominance. Conversely, the technocratic and supportive narratives of the other outlets risk a "refeudalization" of the public sphere, where media becomes a platform for power display rather than critical debate. This polarization exacerbates an "Us" vs. "Them" dichotomy, suggesting a hegemonic consensus within a "developmental journalism" paradigm that prioritizes stability over accountability. Ultimately, this dynamic limit the public's ability to critically evaluate state performance and demand substantive fiscal responsibility.

Overall, this section critically dissects these discursive constructions utilizing Van Dijk's three-dimensional framework, effectively integrating textual analysis with the dimensions of social cognition and contextual macro-analysis. To provide a clear comparative overview of the findings and framing strategies, a synthesis is presented in Table 7 below.

Table 7. Comparative Matrix of Media Framing and Ideological Stance

Dimension	Banjarmasin Post	Radar Banjarmasin	Kalimantan Post
Dominant Frame	Humanitarian Crisis Frame	Technocratic/Developmental Frame	Bureaucratic Stability Frame

Core Narrative	Policy as a threat to vulnerable groups (students, SMEs)	Policy as an obstacle to infrastructure and regional growth	Policy as a managerial challenge requiring wisdom
Main Sources	Civil society, students, affected citizens (Bottom-up)	DPRD members, contractors, budget data (Data-driven)	High-ranking officials, Mayors, Bureaucrats (Top-down)
Ideological Square	Us: The suffering public Them: Insensitive central government	Us: Regional stakeholders Them: Inefficient central policy	Us: The capable local government Them: Pessimists/Critics
Journalistic Role	Watchdog (Advocacy Journalism)	Monitorial (Precision Journalism)	Lapdog/Collaborator (Development Journalism)

Source: Author’s Analysis (2025)

The comparative matrix in Table 7 illustrates a sharp divergence in how the three media outlets construct the reality of the budget efficiency policy. This variation is not merely stylistic but deeply ideological. As Yunanto et al., (2024) observe, media discourse in Indonesia is often shaped by political and economic interests that reinforce specific framings to serve particular agendas. Banjarmasin Post, by adopting a 'Humanitarian Crisis' frame, actively resists the state's dominant narrative, effectively positioning itself as a watchdog that amplifies the voices of the marginalized. Conversely, Kalimantan Post and Radar Banjarmasin tend to stabilize the status quo. This mirrors the 'Government Support Group' dynamics identified by (Syukri et al., 2023) in their analysis of presidential term discourse, where narratives are often crafted to minimize conflict and project an image of bureaucratic control. Consequently, the polarization between those who amplify the 'victims' (students, SMEs) and those who amplify the 'elite' (bureaucrats) results in a fragmented public sphere, where the audience's understanding of the policy is contingent upon their media consumption habits

Conclusion

This study concludes that the coverage of the Prabowo Subianto administration's budget efficiency policy by South Kalimantan’s local press is characterized by a "fragmented reality." While all media reported the same policy event, the discursive construction varied significantly: Banjarmasin Post framed it as a humanitarian concern (watchdog), Radar Banjarmasin as a regional development obstacle (monitorial), and Kalimantan Post as a managerial challenge (collaborator). The theoretical implication of this research reinforces Van Dijk’s premise that news is a reconstruction of reality based on the ideological squares of the producers. The study demonstrates that in the context of local Indonesian media, these ideologies are heavily influenced by media ownership and their proximity to local political power. The media does not merely reflect the policy; they actively shape the public's political imagination regarding state austerity. This study also validates the arguments presented in existing literature that media ideology is often

a reflection of the owner's political affiliation, which results in the marginalization of opposing voices.

This study is limited to a one month textual analysis and does not empirically measure the audience's reception of these frames. Consistent with other research on media policy narratives, this research highlights how policy narratives are strategic tools used to contest or legitimize government agendas. In the case of budget efficiency, the narrative battle is between "fiscal responsibility" and "social protection," a contest that will ultimately shape the implementation of the policy on the ground. Furthermore, it focuses solely on print/text-based media, excluding the dynamic discourse on social media platforms. For further research, it is recommended to explore how the construction of media discourse affects public perceptions and attitudes towards public policy, as well as how readers' reception of the news, also the role of social media "citizen journalism" in challenging the mainstream narratives of budget efficiency.

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