

Mapping Sustainable Development Goals Topics and News Values: Citizen Journalism on Instagram

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ABSTRACT

Background: Citizen journalism is an alternative form of media that voices marginalized issues in society. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are studied as a representation of regional development, supported by news-value elements in citizen-journalism reporting on Instagram. **Purpose:** This research analyzed the trend of citizen journalism reporting that represents SDGs by measuring frequency based on topic and news value. **Methods:** This study used quantitative content analysis. The citizen journalism Instagram accounts studied were @hay.kalimantan and @seputarbanjarbaru. The data collection period spanned five months, namely December 2025 and January through April 2026. The five months were selected because they present the diversity of current events related to development issues, such as social, economic, and legal matters, as well as adequate housing and so on. The selected news samples must be posts by ordinary citizens (not institutions). A total of 455 news posts meeting the criteria were selected as samples. Data collection techniques included documentation and literature review. **Results:** The highest frequency of citizen journalism news on SDGs was SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) at 40%; non-SDGs at 32.5%; and SDG 3 (healthy and prosperous life) at 9.9%. Meanwhile, the news values were dominated by bad news at 50.1%. Meanwhile, the news values were dominated by bad news at 50.1%. **Conclusion:** Citizen journalism news on the Instagram accounts @hay.kalimantan and @seputarbanjarbaru is dominated by SDG 11 with a news value of bad news. **Implications:** Mapping citizen journalism reporting on both Instagram accounts shows that citizens are actively voicing SDG 11 in the form of information about residential fires, month-long flooding, fallen trees, and road accidents. Instagram has become a channel for democratic public participation in the digital space, as anyone can become a journalist producing news.

Keywords: citizen journalism; Instagram; marginal issues; news values; SDGS

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INTRODUCTION

Citizen journalism is the journalistic activity of reporting news by ordinary citizens. In Indonesia, it became increasingly popular after the 2004 Aceh tsunami. A citizen named Cut Putri documented the tsunami disaster, and her video was later rebroadcast by national television stations. Citizen journalism became an alternative medium that spoke to marginalized issues in society.

Citizen journalism is more than just a tool for obtaining information; it is also a platform for exchanging information among diverse users. Some view citizen journalism as a form of resistance against dominance in the processes of formulating and interpreting truth. In this context, citizen journalism is seen as an effort to give voice to groups whose interests are typically not represented in mainstream media. It is also a means of exploring alternative perspectives in reporting and interpreting the truth. It emerged as a form of resistance against the dominance of information originating from societal elites (Bustami et al., 2023, p. 34).

Social media platforms like Instagram are widely used for citizen journalism. Data from We Are Social indicate that Instagram ranks second among the most-used social media platforms in Indonesia. A phenomenon on Instagram has emerged, with several citizen journalism accounts reporting on events in South Kalimantan. Marginal issues, such as floods that occurred within a month, residential fires, and infrastructure problems, have been posted on these accounts.

News value theory refers to a set of implicit standards that journalists rely on and that social media users have since adopted to determine whether a given event deserves coverage. These standards include the presence of celebrities, magnitude of impact, relevance to the audience, follow-up potential, drama, entertainment value, shareability, audio-visual elements, surprise, conflict, negative news, exclusivity, the involvement of powerful figures, positive news, and alignment with a news organization's own agenda (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017, p. 1482). According to McCombs (2018, p. 2) to the media, they hold significant power in shaping what the public perceives as important at a given moment, effectively steering collective attention toward particular issues. Their influence does not stop there; they also guide audiences toward certain perspectives or angles of those issues. This role shapes public focus and provides them with information on interesting and important issues. Therefore, it contributes to the media's agenda-setting function.

News values indicate how content is selected, while agenda-setting illustrates how content can influence public attention. From these two elements, it is revealed what information citizens report and how these news stories become development issues widely discussed by the public. A study conducted by Assidiq et al. (2026, p. 132) states that on the news portal AnalisisNews.co.id, citizen journalists predominantly rely on official press releases rather than producing original investigative reports. Nevertheless, citizen journalists continue to play a strategic and important role. They serve as partners in spreading content driven by a moral commitment to spreading reliable and beneficial information to the public. The results of this research indicate that citizen journalism is useful for accelerating the spread of information and ensuring the timeliness of news coverage. This is achieved through a rapid publication process and an integrated reporting system that prioritizes quality and editorial standards. Challenges in the practice of citizen journalism include inadequate writing skills among citizen journalists, a lack of journalistic training, and a limited understanding of basic journalistic principles. Given these challenges, the editorial team plays a crucial role as gatekeepers, maintaining the quality of the editing process and guiding citizen contributors.

This study aims to examine and map 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) topics

and 15 types of news values in citizen journalism news content on Instagram platform. The purpose of this study is to measure the emergence of SDGs topics and news values using the theoretical framework of agenda setting and news values, through quantitative content analysis. Mapping the occurrence of SDG topics and news values in citizen journalism content is important for understanding sustainable development issues frequently discussed by the public in digital spaces. The novelty of this study lies in integrating SDGs news topics, as a global development framework, with news value analysis to evaluate citizen journalism content on Instagram, an area that has received little attention in previous research.

Although the study of citizen journalism continues to grow, a systematic literature review reveals a research gap. It is particularly related to the dominance of geographic contexts in developed countries, which overlooks the dynamics of local journalism, such as in Indonesia. Furthermore, most current research remains limited to citizen journalism platforms within mainstream media. This leaves a gap in the analysis of the ecology of participatory social media such as Instagram. Also, there is a lack of mapping of citizen journalism topics using a structured global framework like the SDGs. There is also a lack of in-depth evaluation of news values of non-professional content. This creates gaps in understanding the quality and real contribution of citizens in disseminating sustainable development issues in the digital era.

The research done by Tse (2026) applied a mixed-methods approach to explore news values and journalistic identity within citizen journalism communities. The findings of this study reveal that the PeoPo community in Taiwan adheres to alternative news values that prioritize narratives about ordinary people, local issues, and positive news stories largely overlooked by mainstream media. This strengthens the view that citizen journalism not only mimics the practices of professional journalism but also shapes a distinct understanding of news that is more oriented toward community interests and citizens' social experiences. Citizen journalism also employs news values similar to those of the mainstream media (Tse & Spiezio, 2024).

Moreover, Zhou (2025, p. 1) describes citizen journalism as producing news that is timely, uncensored, and socially impactful. However, it faces challenges to public trust due to disinformation and informational bias. The results of this study highlight the importance of improving media literacy skills among the public, implementing information verification, and ensuring compliance with online media ethics standards. These measures are crucial for maintaining public trust in citizen journalism for shaping a full democratic space.

Citizen journalism is considered to have a strong influence on the formation of media channels. It can create media channels that are interconnected with one another. It can also steer public opinion in various directions, whether positive or negative. The media channels can be established through blogs or podcasts, which are currently trending among young people. These findings demonstrate that the public is embracing a culture of participation in the media (Srikandi & Budiharjo, 2023, p. 35).

Currently, social media is increasingly becoming the primary channel people choose to obtain information. In line with this, Prawira et al. (2025, p. 698) find that consuming news through social media channels can positively influence the way users express their political opinions, although the effect is still relatively small, accounting for only 7.3%. Nevertheless, this finding confirms a real relationship between news consumption on social media and an individual's political expression. However, the limited strength of this effect suggests a fundamental discrepancy that requires further study. Several factors may explain these limitations, including the presence of the ITE Law governing information technology use, levels of political efficacy, communication competence, the surrounding social environment, and individual motivation, all of which can shape the way political expression is formed.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study used a quantitative approach. Data collection techniques included documentation and literature reviews. The news population comprised all posts from the Instagram accounts @hay.kalimantan and @seputarbanjarbaru. The @hay.kalimantan account is a citizen-journalism account affiliated with an online media portal covering news in South Kalimantan. Meanwhile, @seputarbanjarbaru account is an independent citizen-journalism account that primarily reports on events in Banjarbaru, the capital of South Kalimantan Province. A sample of 455 news items was obtained from a five-month period, from December 2025 to April 2026. This period was chosen because flooding occurred in South Kalimantan for a month at the end of 2025, as well as for the commemoration of a prominent religious figure in South Kalimantan and various events relevant to the SDGs. The criteria for the news sample were that the source was an ordinary citizen, not an institution. The research variables were SDGs topics, divided into 17 SDGs points, and news values in digital media, divided into 15 types.

The data analysis technique used quantitative content analysis. Riffe, Lacy, Fico define quantitative content analysis as a systematic and repeated examination of communication symbols, which have been assigned numerical values according to valid measurement rules, and an analysis of the relationships involving these values using statistical methods, to describe communication, draw conclusions about its meaning, or infer from the communication to its context, both production and consumption (Neuendorf, 2002, p. 10). A reliability test was conducted in quantitative content analysis using Cohen's Kappa intercoder reliability, with 30 news samples.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

SDGs Topic of Citizen Journalism News

Based on the United Nations Development Programme (2026), SDGs, commonly referred to as the Global Goals, represent a set of objectives adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as part of a worldwide commitment to end poverty, protect the environment, and guarantee that, by the year 2030, all individuals can experience peace and prosperity. The 17 SDGs are fundamentally interconnected and reflect the understanding that progress in one area will affect outcomes in other areas. SDGs also require a balanced approach that includes economic, social, and environmental dimensions. The 17 SDGs consist of no poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, affordable and clean energy, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure, reduce inequalities, sustainable cities and communities, sustainable consumption and production, climate action, life below water, life on land, peace, justice and strong institutions and partnerships for the goals.

Table 1 shows the results of quantitative content analysis of citizen journalism news posts on @hay.kalimantan and @seputarbanjarbaru accounts for five months. It was found that the most frequent SDGs topics appeared on SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) at 40%, non-SDGs news at 32.5%, and SDG 3 (good health and well-being) at 9.9%.

Research findings indicate that the most dominant topic in citizen journalism coverage is SDG 11, primarily represented by fires, floods, fallen trees, and traffic accidents. The high frequency of this topic indicates that citizen journalism tends to prioritize issues directly related to people's lives and safety. This phenomenon is relevant to the fundamental characteristics of citizen journalism, which draws on individuals' direct experiences in their local environments. From an agenda-setting perspective, the frequency with which an issue appears reflects its priority within the public sphere, so issues that appear more frequently tend to be perceived as

Table 1. SDGs Topics in Citizen Journalism News

SDGs Topic	Frequency	Percentage
Non-SDGs	148	32.5%
SDG 1: No Poverty	1	0.2%
SDG 2: Zero Hunger	1	0.2%
SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being	45	9.9%
SDG 5: Gender Equality	1	0.2%
SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation	1	0.2%
SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth	4	0.9%
SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	26	5.7%
SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	182	40%
SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	1	0.2%
SDG 13: Climate Action	7	1.5%
SDG 15: Life on Land	3	0.7%
SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions	35	7.7%
Total	455	100

Source: Research data analysis, 2026

more important by audiences (McQuail, 2009).

Thus, the dominance of SDG 11 indicates that housing and safety issues are a key agenda item in citizen journalism practices on social media. The topic of SDG 11 in news reports is also closely related to the news value of these events. Fires, accidents, and natural disasters involve urgent situations, conflict, and clear impact, thus fulfilling news value criteria (e.g., bad news, relevance, and surprise) (Harcup & O'Neill, 2017). The appearance of SDGs topics in citizen journalism is not determined solely by social relevance and the logic of news selection that emphasizes dramatic, current events.

From an agenda-setting perspective, repeated coverage of these issues increases their significance in the public sphere. It encourages audiences to prioritize disasters, infrastructure, and public safety. Rather than determining what people should think, citizen journalism influences what people think through keeping local issues visible. These findings suggest that citizen journalism on Instagram functions as an alternative agenda-setting actor at the local level. It complements mainstream media in bringing communities to public attention.

The news posted by netizens on Instagram has implications for democracy in the digital space. Anyone can be a journalist and can voice marginalized issues that aren't always covered in mainstream media. Citizen journalism Instagram accounts are unique in that news publication must go through an editing process by the account manager, unlike personal social media accounts, which do not need permission. McQuail (2009) revealed that the media have several functions, namely information, correlation, sustainability, entertainment, and mobilization. Citizen journalism practices on Instagram largely fulfill an informational function, reporting current events such as floods, fires, fallen trees, traffic accidents, drownings, and road damage.

Figure 1 shows a citizen news report about flooding in Balangan Regency on December 27, 2025. The floodwaters inundated residential areas to a depth of approximately 1.4 meters. This news report reflects SDG 11. South Kalimantan has been experiencing flooding for nearly a month. The areas affected include Balangan, Banjar Regency, Banjarmasin, and Batulicin.

According to data from the South Kalimantan Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD), the flash floods were triggered by Tropical Cyclone Grant in the Indian Ocean and



Figure 1. Flooding in Balangan Regency, South Kalimantan
Source: Instagram @hay.kalimantan, 2025

Cyclone 96-S, which caused rain cloud convergence over South Kalimantan. The Indonesian Forum for the Environment (Walhi) South Kalimantan reported that flash floods are not merely extreme weather events. They are part of the impacts of the climate crisis, worsened by environmental degradation. Walhi data show that numerous concession permits currently burden South Kalimantan; approximately 51.57% of the province's total land area (about 3.7 million hectares) has been allocated through various forms of permits (Taufik, 2025).

Figure 2 shows a citizen news report about the rescue team searching for a person believed to have drowned in the river on December 10, 2025. This news represents the topic of SDG 3 about good health and well-being, as it focuses on victims who drowned in the river and the efforts of the rescue team to search for them. Drowning incidents are also frequently reported on citizen journalism platforms on Instagram. Rescue teams responded quickly, searching the river until they located the drowning victim. South Kalimantan is known as the "City of a Thousand Rivers," so drowning incidents are common in this region.

Furthermore, citizen reports news about people crowded the funeral home of Abuya KH Syukri Unus in Martapura on December 7, 2025. This news story concerns the death of an Islamic religious figure in Banjar Regency that represents a non-SDG topic. This is because it does not include SDG indicators and reports the death of a public figure. This event highlights the "power of the elite" as a news value, since the religious leader had the power to attract public attention, as evidenced by the large crowd that gathered at the funeral home.

Some topics related to SDGs that are rarely covered in citizen journalism Instagram posts include poverty eradication, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and responsible consumption and production. A few news topics on the SDGs do not appear, such as quality education, reducing inequalities, and institutions and partnerships for the goals.

Czvetkó (2021, p. 1) found that a global analysis of 60.8 million news stories revealed that only 2.5% of media coverage was related to the SDGs. Most sustainability news appeared in Africa and East and Southeast Asia. Coverage of climate change (SDG 13) was largely

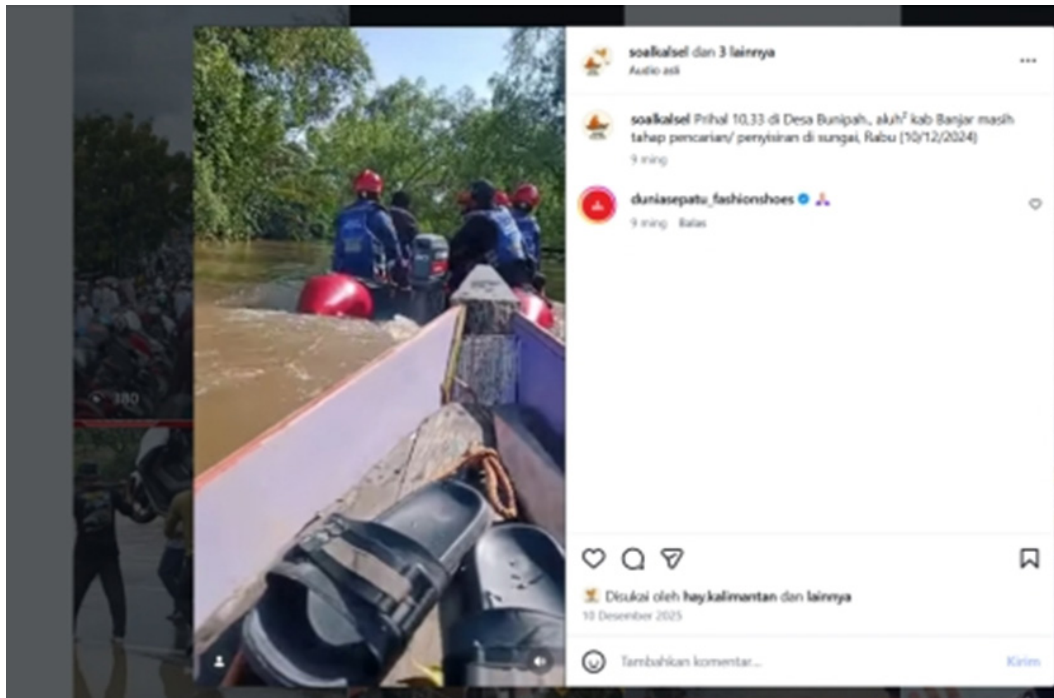


Figure 2. Search for Drowning Victims in the River by the Rescue Team

Source: Instagram @hay.kalimantan, 2025

negative, particularly in the United States. These findings indicate that media attention to the SDGs varies across countries and regions. Similarly, this study found that SDG 11 was the most dominant topic in citizen journalism on Instagram in South Kalimantan. This reflects local priorities related to public safety and community issues.

The vulnerability of citizen journalists to legal risks, particularly under the Electronic Information and Transactions (ITE) Law, is a significant challenge to the practice of digital democracy in Indonesia. According to sources, the ITE Law, which regulates the use of information technology, is a limiting factor that can influence and shape how people express their political views on social media. This vulnerability is further worsened by the absence of a strong legal basis for treating citizen journalists as professional journalists. Beyond legality, a lack of understanding of basic journalistic principles and ethics puts citizen journalists at significant risk of legal issues related to the accuracy and reliability of the information they convey. This journalistic practice, often carried out without formal training, risks spreading misinformation or disinformation that can trigger social unrest. Uploaders place themselves at high risk of legal entanglement if their content is found to violate ITE Law. Therefore, while citizen journalism offers speed and an alternative perspective, maintaining professionalism and verification remains a challenge. This is to ensure that the potential for democratizing information is not hampered by serious legal consequences.

The misuse of the ITE Law grants law enforcement agencies the authority to detain individuals simply for expressing opinions and other forms of expression. Furthermore, the complex, multi-interpretable articles in the ITE Law do not provide adequate justice and legal certainty for citizens, highlighting the need for further revision. The government must guarantee the protection of journalists as a demonstration of Indonesia's commitment to press freedom and democracy (Alhakim, 2022).

McCombs (2018, p. 2) explains agenda-setting theory as a theoretical metaphor that rests on three foundational concepts: a media agenda, a public agenda, and the mechanism by which

the importance attached to issues on the media agenda is reflected on the public agenda. Within agenda-setting theory, salience refers to how prominently an issue is covered and how its importance is assessed. Here, the word “agenda” is used purely as a neutral, descriptive term, in sharp contrast to its connotation in the expression “to have an agenda,” which implies a hidden or self-serving motive. Salience shifts from the media agenda to the public agenda naturally due to the limitation that news media can focus on only a few topics at a given time. Put differently, agenda-setting effects arise incidentally from the public’s routine news consumption, rather than from any purposeful attempt at influence. Nevertheless, as will become evident, the extent of these effects is not fixed and can differ from one context to another. The public, after all, is not a blank slate simply waiting to be shaped by the media.

News Values of Citizen Journalism News

News value theory outlines the non-explicit criteria used by editors and adapted by social media users to assess the newsworthiness of an event (e.g., proximity, impact, timeliness, conflict, human interest, and others) (Harcup & O’Neill, 2017). The main assumptions of this theory are: (1) Topic selection is driven not only by objective facts but also by editorial values and audience criteria. (2) On social media, these criteria are also influenced by platform metrics (e.g., engagement), so that news value becomes a mixture of editorial and network values.

Based on the analysis of content and the impact of social media, Harcup and O’Neill (2017) provide an updated list of news values for further discussion and research, namely: exclusivity, bad news, conflict, surprise, audiovisual, shareability, entertainment, drama, follow-up, the power elite, relevance, magnitude, celebrity, good news, and news organization’s agenda.

The classic journalistic adage that “bad news is good news” remains relevant today. Table 2 presents research showing that the news value of bad news was a dominant theme in citizen journalism posts on Instagram. The most frequent news values are bad news (50.1%), relevance (23.1%), and follow-up (9%). The dominance of bad news, relevance, and follow-up in news value indicates that citizen-generated content largely follows the logic of news values in digital media, consistent with Harcup and O’Neill’s (2017) identification. Events involving disasters, accidents, and public safety are considered highly newsworthy because they directly impact

Table 2. News Value in Citizen Journalism News

News Value	Frequency	Percentage
Bad News	228	50.1%
Conflict	1	0.2%
Surprise	12	2.6%
Audio Visuals	20	4.4%
Shareability	2	0.4%
Entertainment	7	1.5%
Drama	5	1.1%
Follow-up	41	9%
The Power Elite	7	1.5%
Relevance	105	23.1%
Magnitude	13	2.8%
Good News	14	3.1%
Total	455	100

Source: Research data analysis, 2026

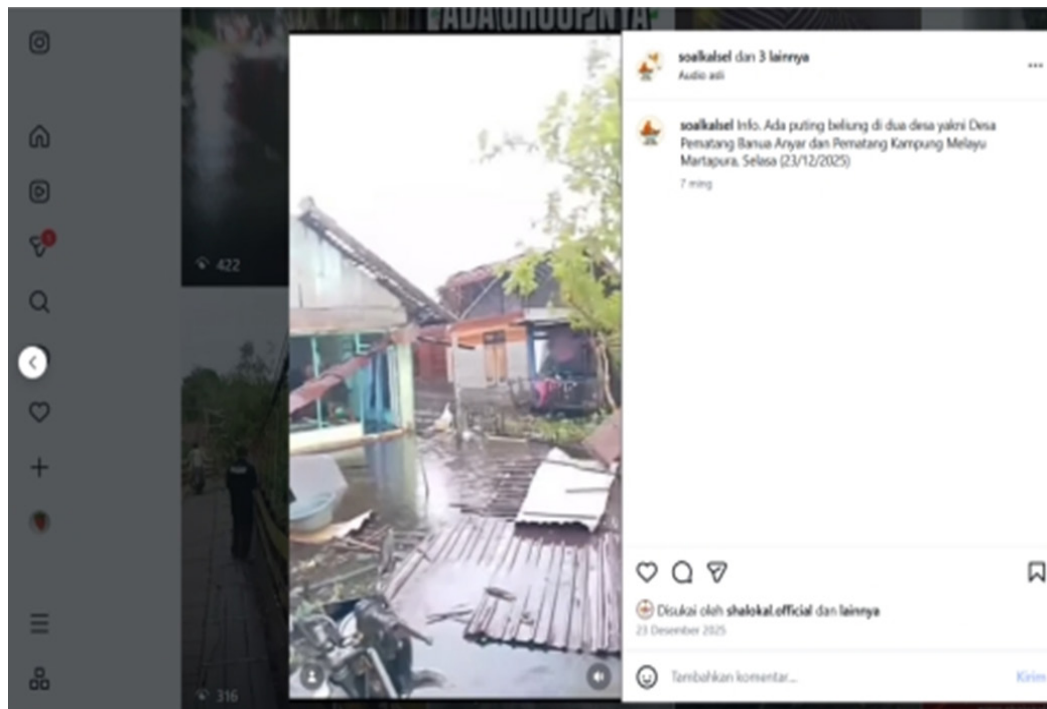


Figure 3. Tornado disaster in Martapura damaged residents' homes

Source: Instagram @hay.kalimantan, 2025

society, attract public attention, and encourage further reporting as the situation develops. Although the content originates from citizens rather than professional journalists, the selection of events still reflects conventional news values that prioritize significance, timeliness, and social impact.

Figure 3 shows a citizen news report about a tornado disaster in the regency on December 23, 2025. This news covers damage to residents' homes caused by a tornado in Martapura. Other reports from netizens regarding "bad news" include traffic accidents, residential fires, flooding, and fallen trees.

Figure 4 shows a citizen news report about citizens complaining about the poor condition of the roads at the Banjarbaru bus station on January 11, 2026. This news contains "relevance" news value because it relates to people's daily lives. The poor condition of the roads at the bus terminal compromises the comfort and safety of public transportation users because potholes fill with water when it rains. Other news stories that are considered "relevant" include reports on traffic congestion, road closures, crowds gathering for the 5 Rajab celebrations, and road obstructions caused by flooding.

Additionally, another citizen news report about the teenager who drowned in the Alalak River was found on March 21, 2026. This news is a "follow-up" news value category, as there had previously been reports of a person suspected of drowning in a river. Other news stories that fall into the follow-up category include reports of flooding in several areas of South Kalimantan. Flooding has affected several areas of South Kalimantan over the past month.

The research found that bad news dominated at 50.1%, while good news was only 3.1%. This phenomenon is seen from the perspective of media psychology, namely, that the dramatic appeal of bad news, such as forest fires, accidents, and floods, lies in its high element of surprise and relevance to public safety. When criticism of development is dominated by bad news, it shows that citizen journalism on Instagram functions more as a channel for public complaints



Figure 4. Citizens are complaining about the poor condition of the roads
Source: Instagram @seputarbanjarbaru, 2026

than as a means of promoting development achievements. This strengthens the media's role as a watchdog at the local level.

Burarak and Nilaphatama (2020) argue that professional journalists still assess the news value of citizen-generated materials using a conventional approach. On the contrary, only two values of citizen journalism are identified in this study. Citizen materials are mostly used in morning news programs. Most news staff tend to consider citizen-generated materials as soft news, which requires more caution. On this account, the news values of citizen materials are still under professional review.

Citizen Journalism in Social Media

Traditional and new media coexist as technology evolves in the digital age. These two forms of media overlap. However, they have the same impact or effect. These impacts emerge after a person is exposed to the media. McLuhan (2001, p. 7) states that the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium, or any extension of oneself, result from the new scale that is introduced into life by each extension of oneself or new technology.

According to Nasrullah (2017, p. 16), the characteristics of social media include networks, information, archives, interactions, social simulations, and user-generated content. Social media platforms serve as channels for conveying a variety of information, including citizen journalism. With the existence of smartphones and the internet, anyone can become a journalist by reporting events they see in their environment. Meanwhile, according to Peterson-Salahuddin (2024), both citizen and professional journalists are adapting to social media to convey important information.

These different focus areas across the articles highlight the unique aspects of social media journalism as experienced by journalists who produce news and by citizens who consume it, as well as the broader implications for journalism as a profession. With respect to journalists,

Molyneux and Nelson note that social media policies tend to prioritize institutional image and reputation. This suggests that newsroom leadership places greater weight on organizational perception than on journalists' autonomy in their public engagement on social media. Regarding the adaptation of news content for social media platforms, Verstappen and Opgenhaffen (2023) propose visual, textual, and intermedial remediation as three strategies to guide future research on how news is circulated and adapted.

This research found that citizen journalism in the digital space is characterized by netizens' participation, locally based information sharing, speed, and the use of Instagram account managers as gatekeepers. Meanwhile, Mare et al. (2018, p. 8) explains the characteristics of citizen journalism, namely participatory, based on decentralization and bottom-up, not profit-oriented, diverse points of view, emphasis on publication rather than information filtering (gatekeeper), journalism in the form of conversation, immediate, and emphasizes detail.

Citizen journalism faces challenges related to ethics and the accuracy of the news it reports. In line with the research by Soraya et al. (2023, p. 185), it indicates that all three informants have a good understanding of the ethical aspects of citizen journalism. They maintain proper decorum and uphold the quality of their news coverage. However, two of the three informants did not adhere to the ethics of citizen journalism by accepting gifts from sources, whether in the form of money or goods. Next, the research by Kartinawati and Wisudawanto (2020, p. 11) showed that citizen-contributed news on NETCJ frequently fell short of accuracy and neutrality standards. The study found inaccuracy affecting 55.17% of content and bias present in 42.92% of cases. Several factors contribute to these issues, including differences in the contributors' levels of education and experience, inconsistent views on the status of citizen journalists, and the fact that each newsroom implements its own specific editorial policies.

This is consistent with findings indicating that citizen journalism faces various challenges regarding ethics, legal issues, and the accuracy and reliability of information. Although citizen journalism has developed rapidly, professionalism and verification remain fundamental challenges (Nuswantari & Alyasuci, 2023). This aligns with Horoub (2023) asserting that citizen journalism must be practiced within a framework of ethics, credibility, objectivity, accuracy, professionalism, and regulation.

The history of citizen journalism in various forms, such as underground media and letters to the editor, dates back long before the digital revolution. Nevertheless, the widespread adoption of the internet has significantly expanded its role in journalism. Rapid technological changes have created both new opportunities and new challenges in the practice of citizen journalism (Min et al., 2025).

The research by Jeljeli et al. (2021) found that citizen journalism is a unique and evolving field of study. Citizen journalism has its own distinct characteristics, scope, and room for development. While it faces challenges, the main strength of citizen journalism lies in the freedom to access, publish, and distribute information through social media. This reflects a significant shift away from traditional journalism. Built on the principles of interaction and content sharing and driven by active and innovative users, citizen journalism has the potential to transform media practices. These practices encourage traditional media organizations to engage with this development in various ways, one of which is by utilizing content created by citizen journalists.

Moreover, a study by Masduki et al. (2024, p. 1) found that the business models underpinning digital news media have not yet taken on a standardized form, and the broader platform-based journalism ecosystem has not yet reached a healthy state. From the perspective of digital news consumption, expectations of free access to news, as well as challenges in

maintaining audience trust in news media, make it difficult for news organizations to sustain their operations.

Research by Deli and Dashi (2025, p. 25) state that the role of citizen journalists has expanded alongside the media's shift to online platforms. Therefore, it is crucial to examine the impact of citizen journalism practices on the professionalization of journalism, as well as the challenges in building mutually beneficial relationships. Citizen journalism challenges the legitimacy of professional journalism in three aspects: expertise, accountability, and autonomy. Professional journalists establish their credibility from institutions and ethics. In contrast, citizen journalists provide rapid information dissemination, on-the-ground reporting, and alternative perspectives, which are important in democratic contexts where traditional media face restrictions. Differing perceptions of their respective roles remain a major obstacle to collaboration: professional journalists emphasize interpretive and authoritative functions, while citizen journalists focus more on community mobilization and grassroots engagement.

Regardless of whether news sources come from traditional mass media or citizen journalism, bureaucratic mechanisms play a crucial role in the news reporting process. For example, *Pikiran Rakyat*, MNC News, and RRI use information provided by citizens as a starting point. Then the information must go through procedural steps, namely verification, confirmation, and follow-up, before qualifying as news material. Similarly, *Kumparan* and *Mojok* have opened various channels for citizen journalism but still operate within the standard framework of media bureaucracy. This approach aims to maintain the validity of news by ensuring codes of ethics and journalistic principles (Saleh et al., 2023, p. 219).

Several interrelated factors have contributed to the development of citizen journalism, particularly the rise of social media platforms alongside rapid technological advancements. Unlike professional journalists, citizen journalists typically lack formal training, which leads to limited understanding of the ethical standards that underpin traditional journalism. This gap is also caused by the fact that the sources of information used by citizen journalists are not always credible, thereby increasing the potential for the spread of misinformation, disinformation, and fake news, with little consideration of their impact on society (Idiong et al., 2023, p. 1501). This aligns with the study conducted by Hadiyanto (2023), which states that the phenomenon of citizen journalism in the age of social media presents unique opportunities and challenges in managing and consuming information. Although it encourages greater public participation in shaping news narratives, the sustainability and validity of information remain important.

Research done by Degen et al. (2024, p. 399) found that the literature first notes that media organizations and the journalists within them tend to adjust their routines, norms, and values to the specific context in which content is produced for social media. Because social media inherently supports many forms of communication, both journalists and news organizations are pressured to remain attentive to audience demands and to design strategies that foster engagement. A second key finding concerns the variability in journalistic social media practices. These differ depending on how individual journalists and organizations interpret and apply journalistic quality in these digital platforms. Given that these results offer only a limited insight into what quality journalism on social media truly entails, this study aims to encourage continued research in this area.

Then, the research by Chioma (2024, p. 2) indicates significant changes in how young people form their news preferences. They are increasingly turning to social media over traditional channels. This shift is accompanied by a growing perception that citizen journalism is more credible, which in turn affects levels of trust in mainstream media. This study recommends expanding media literacy initiatives among Nigerian youth to enhance their critical thinking

and fact-checking skills. This study contributes to the body of research on Nigeria's evolving media landscape. These findings also highlight the important role of social media and citizen journalism in shaping how the public assesses news credibility.

These findings are consistent with Hassan et al. (2024, p. 46), that journalists face significant occupational risks, ranging from threats to their physical safety to pressure stemming from political and corporate interests. In addition, they also face ethical challenges when covering sensitive issues. Meanwhile, sociopolitical conflicts can lead to media polarization, change how audiences consume news, and strengthen the influence of digital platforms on shaping public opinion. These issues are driven by the expanding role of citizen journalism, which challenges traditional media narratives and heightens concerns about the spread of misinformation.

A similar finding was reported by Wahyudi (2020, p. 84). Citizen involvement in journalism or news reporting is known as citizen journalism. Citizen journalism is expected to adhere to news reporting standards and professional journalistic practices. However, from a legal perspective, citizen journalism lacks a legal basis, unlike professional journalism.

This study identified three key findings. First, citizens are increasingly engaging in digital public spaces by sharing information and participating in discussions in the comments section. Each post generates an average of 75 to 120 comments. Meanwhile, the visibility and popularity of certain news narratives are heavily influenced by social media algorithms. Content that receives higher engagement rates receives approximately 3 times more exposure than less engaged content. Finally, the study's findings identify a collaborative pattern among citizens, media managers, and other stakeholders that operates through a four-stage information verification process. While citizen journalism contributes to enriching local news coverage and strengthening communication links with government stakeholders, concerns about accuracy and credibility have emerged, and there is a need to improve digital literacy and establish a more adaptive ethical framework (Istiani et al., 2025).

These findings are in agreement with Nusantara et al. (2024, p. 153) that a diverse community of IT experts, researchers, doctors, activists, journalists, students, and the general public is volunteering to manage KawalCOVID19 and LaporCovid-19. These volunteers are spread out geographically but operate independently, contributing based on their respective expertise and capacity. This initiative demonstrates a model for encouraging citizen participation in non-disaster contexts through digital technology and citizen resources. As media institutions and professional journalists face mounting threats, the model integrates participatory journalism with digital humanitarian practices. It also engaged citizens across digital platforms during the pandemic to support broader efforts to prevent future crises and limit the spread.

CONCLUSION

Citizen journalism on the Instagram accounts @hay.kalimantan and @seputarbanjarbaru was dominated by SDG 11 (sustainable cities and communities) at 40%, with a "bad news" rating of 50.1%. This dominance of SDG 11 was driven by a high number of citizen reports of events threatening local safety and infrastructure, such as residential fires, prolonged flooding, fallen trees, and traffic accidents. This suggests that citizen journalism on Instagram serves as a "*radar*" for emergency issues directly related to people's safety in South Kalimantan. On the other hand, several SDGs, such as poverty eradication, gender equality, clean water and sanitation, and responsible consumption and production, are rarely covered, and issues of quality education and reduced inequality are almost completely absent. This research also shows that citizen journalism practices on Instagram have a unique characteristic: account managers act as gatekeepers of information, editing content before it is approved for posting,

unlike on personal social media accounts. Despite serving as a channel for public participation and an alternative medium for voicing marginalized issues, citizen journalism still faces various challenges related to accuracy, bias, and violations of journalistic ethics. Furthermore, there are legal vulnerabilities, such as the Electronic Information and Transactions Law (UU ITE), which can limit citizens' freedom to express political views or criticism in the digital space.

The findings of this study contribute to the field of knowledge by expanding the body of research on citizen journalism coverage on social media as it relates to SDGs and news values. The researchers recommend that future studies examine citizen journalism management procedures on other social media platforms using qualitative research methods and exploring other areas. Furthermore, citizen journalism can be leveraged by local governments, NGOs, or educators to strengthen SDGs awareness and disaster preparedness.

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