Model for Strengthening Citizen Journalism through Local Communities in Government

Rahmad Rafid*, Supriadi, Angelina Jesica Tefa

Universitas Kristen Cipta Wacana, Malang, Indonesia
*rahmadrafid@cwcu.ac.id

Abstract

This study develops a model for strengthening citizen journalism through local communities as a form of public participation in transparent and accountable governance. The research addresses the increasing public role in disseminating information amid rapid technological growth, which often lacks structured support and leads to misinformation. Using a qualitative descriptive case study approach, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and documentation, then analyzed thematically with triangulation for validity. The findings indicate that strengthening citizen journalism through local communities relies on three main pillars: (1) an inclusive and coordinated community organization, (2) an integrated two-way communication system between citizens and government (G2C), and (3) local government support through media literacy training, verification mechanisms, and legal protection. Case studies of Radio KDS 8 and Community Information Groups (KIM) in Malang demonstrate that empowered local communities effectively channel public aspirations, verify information, and serve as communicative bridges between citizens and government. The proposed model offers a strategic policy framework to promote participatory governance, enhance digital democracy resilience, and build public trust. Theoretically and practically, it contributes to improving information accountability, reducing misinformation, and strengthening citizen engagement in local governance.

Keywords: Citizen Journalism; Local Communities; Government Policy

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengembangkan model penguatan *citizen journalism* melalui komunitas lokal sebagai bentuk partisipasi masyarakat dalam tata kelola pemerintahan yang transparan dan akuntabel. Penelitian ini membahas meningkatnya peran publik dalam menyebarkan informasi di tengah pertumbuhan teknologi yang pesat, yang seringkali tidak memiliki dukungan terstruktur dan mengarah pada kesalahan informasi. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus deskriptif kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi terstruktur, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis secara tematis dengan triangulasi untuk validitas. Temuan tersebut menunjukkan bahwa penguatan citizen journalism melalui komunitas lokal bertumpu pada tiga pilar utama: (1) organisasi masyarakat yang inklusif dan terkoordinasi, (2) sistem komunikasi dua arah yang terintegrasi antara warga dan pemerintah (G2C), dan (3) dukungan pemerintah daerah melalui pelatihan literasi media, mekanisme verifikasi, dan perlindungan hukum. Studi kasus Radio KDS 8 dan Kelompok Informasi Masyarakat (KIM) di Malang menunjukkan bahwa pemberdayaan masyarakat lokal secara efektif menyalurkan aspirasi masyarakat, memverifikasi informasi, dan menjadi jembatan komunikatif antara warga dan pemerintah. Model yang diusulkan menawarkan kerangka kebijakan strategis untuk mempromosikan tata kelola partisipatif, meningkatkan ketahanan demokrasi digital, dan membangun kepercayaan publik. Secara teoritis dan praktis, ini berkontribusi untuk meningkatkan akuntabilitas informasi, mengurangi kesalahan informasi, dan memperkuat keterlibatan warga dalam pemerintahan daerah.

Kata Kunci: Citizen Journalism; Komunitas Lokal; Kebijakan Pemerintah

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of information and communication technology in the digital era has led to profound changes in various sectors, including governance and public participation in policy-making processes (Rafid, R, et. al., 2024). In the past, citizens' involvement in government processes was largely limited to formal mechanisms such as general elections, village meetings, and consultations. However, in today's digital age, the public has access to a diverse range of new channels through which they can play an active role in monitoring and advocating for public policies. This transformation has significantly altered the dynamics of public participation, shifting it from passive involvement to active, real-time engagement. Social media platforms, blogs, websites, and citizen-driven initiatives have empowered ordinary citizens to engage in conversations about politics, governance, and public life without depending on traditional mass media outlets (Kurniasih & Kurniawati, 2023)

One of the most notable phenomena to emerge alongside these developments is citizen journalism. Defined as the practice of collecting, reporting, and disseminating information by individuals or local communities outside the conventional mass media (Samsiah Nelly, 2024), citizen journalism has become an important tool for enabling the public to express their voices, share experiences, and hold governments accountable. The rise of citizen journalism represents an evolution in the way news is produced and consumed, as well as a reaction to the traditional media's limitations in covering fast-paced and dynamic issues in real-time. Local communities are considered important agents that can disseminate information in crisis situations by using folk media that are close to local culture and values (Andung et al., 2024)

Citizen journalism arose, in part, due to frustrations with the government's limited and often slow response to complex and rapidly changing social issues. For instance, during the handling of the Cianjur earthquake disaster in 2022 (Fauziah et al., 2022), the public witnessed delays in aid distribution, which sparked widespread criticism. Similarly, in 2023, the management of air pollution in Jakarta (Putri, Q. N., 2024) was deemed insufficient, and citizen journalists quickly stepped in to highlight these issues via social media platforms, amplifying their visibility. These events, among others, illustrate the increasing role of citizen journalism in influencing public opinion and pushing for government accountability. Furthermore, the viral case of honorary teacher Supriyani, which only gained significant attention through public pressure on social media in April 2024, underscores the growing importance of social media as a tool for social control (Hamirul et al., 2024).

However, while citizen journalism brings many benefits, it also presents several challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the widespread dissemination of false information, hoaxes, and sensationalist content that is not fact-based. This phenomenon can exacerbate social problems, reduce public trust in the government and mainstream media, and threaten the stability of democratic processes. According to data from the Ministry of Communication and Informatics (Kominfo), over 11,600 hoaxes were recorded between August 2018 and May 2023, indicating the urgent need for more responsible and systematic management of information (Kominfo, 2023). This data points to the necessity of developing strategies to regulate and enhance the quality of citizen-driven content while fostering a healthy information ecosystem.

The proliferation of misinformation further emphasizes the need for a structured model that strengthens citizen journalism through local communities. Such a model should not only rely on sporadic, individual participation but should also integrate local communities as credible, empowered socio-political actors. Local communities, when properly organized, can serve as vital forums for two-way communication (Government to Citizen - G2C), facilitating transparency, accountability, and the dissemination of fact-based information. They can bridge the gap between citizens and government, enabling more inclusive, accountable governance. This can be achieved through community participation that is supported by government regulations and budgets, empowering these communities to act as strategic partners in strengthening participatory democracy (Saylam & Yıldız, 2022).

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A structured model for strengthening citizen journalism is not just important for encouraging public participation; it also plays a critical role in building constructive, solution-oriented media practices that can help prevent the spread of hoaxes and misinformation. By offering a platform for local communities to engage in responsible journalism, such a model has the potential to improve the quality of governance by enhancing public participation and fostering a more responsive government. This aligns with the theory that media should remain relevant by fostering discussions that can evolve and have an impact. Therefore, constructive journalism can be articulated through organized citizen journalism within local communities, serving as a conduit for public opinions, concerns, and recommendations directed towards the government (Mäder, A., & Rinsdorf, L, 2022).

The need for a model that supports local communities in strengthening citizen journalism is also driven by the fact that without proper organizational structures and systems in place, citizen journalism could easily devolve into a source of misinformation. Without an effective framework, the activities of citizen journalists may unintentionally amplify the spread of rumors, contributing to public confusion and mistrust. This highlights the critical role that digital transformation must play in promoting media literacy, journalistic ethics, and the implementation of policies that support the constructive role of citizen journalism as a tool for social control and policy advocacy.

This research aims to fill this gap by developing a model to strengthen citizen journalism through local communities at the provincial, district/city, and village levels that can be adopted by local governments (Cholifah et al., 2024). Unlike previous studies, which focus more on the role of individuals or global platforms, this research places greater emphasis on integrating local communities as central actors in creating an effective communication system that supports sustainable public policy monitoring (Diah Handayani, 2017). Furthermore, this research emphasizes the local cultural and socio-political context as key variables that influence the practice of citizen journalism, ensuring that the resulting model is both adaptive and context-sensitive to the needs of developing regions like Indonesia (Tse, 2024)

The urgency of developing this model is underscored by the reality that without a systematic strengthening mechanism, citizen journalism may become a source of disinformation that undermines public trust in government institutions and mainstream media. This condition demands a holistic approach to media transformation that goes beyond technological advancements and includes efforts to improve media literacy, strengthen journalistic ethics, and establish a policy framework that supports citizen journalism as a tool for social control and advocacy. From this background, the research questions that will be explored in this study are: How are the roles and challenges of citizen journalism in Indonesia in the context of digital democracy? and How can the model of strengthening citizen journalism through local communities serve as an effective representation of public participation in an accountable government?

This research aims to provide both theoretical and practical contributions in strengthening the digital democracy ecosystem through the development of policy models that support citizen journalism based on local communities. The findings are expected to contribute to creating more transparent, responsive, and accountable governance and improving the quality of constructive public participation. As public participation becomes more inclusive and structured, the development of such a model is crucial in ensuring that governance remains accountable to the people it serves.

METHOD

In this study, researchers used a qualitative approach with the type of case study research (case study) and descriptive in nature. The case study method is used because this research focuses on contextual and unique phenomena in a local community unit that is active in citizen journalism. The case study method is used because this research focuses on contextual and unique phenomena in local community units that are active in citizen journalism. Case studies enable a thorough understanding of the practice of citizen journalism in a particular social context (Arikunto, 2006; Creswell, 2014).

Case study data can be obtained not only from the case under study but also from all parties who know and know the case well. According to Burhan Bungin, an interesting case study is the freedom of the researcher in examining the object of his research and the freedom to determine the domain he wants to develop (Djam'an, S.,& Komariah, A., 2014). While the nature of the research is a procedure that produces descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words from people and behaviour that can be observed. The focus of this research is on local communities in Malang who are active in citizen journalism, data collection is done by semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation.

A total of 4 informants were involved in this study. They are selected based on their involvement in policy and regulation and their experience in the practice of citizen journalism and community communication initiatives that bridge information between government and society. The informant consists of: a) 1 KDS 8 Radio media manager as a local community media that plays a role in delivering public aspirations through the media; b) 2 representatives of policy makers who provide guidance, facilitate, and coordinate in this case are the head of Pakis, Malang regency and Coordinator of KIM Pakis District; c) 1 representative of the policy makers who guide, facilitate, and coordinate in this regard is coordinator KIM in Kedungkandang village, Malang.

Data were collected through: a) Semi-structured interviews-to explore the experiences, perceptions, and challenges informants face in the practice of community-based journalism; b) Participatory observation-by attending KDS 8 Radio community meetings and Kim activity information through KIM's website and policy documents; c) Document analysis including policy documents, training materials, community archives, and online media outputs from local communities such as KDS 8 and KIM.

This research was conducted by following interview guidelines to direct researchers on research topics containing interview questions related to community structure and dynamics, citizen journalism practices and processes, communication with government (G2C System), Policy and regulatory support, challenges and opportunities, and reflection and expectations. while in the observations conducted by researchers, the format contains the purpose of observation (observing the activities of local communities in carrying out citizen journalism activities, interaction between members, and communication between communities and local governments), aspects observed (organizational structure, interaction between members, relationships with government, community response, impact of activities, etc.)

The research process includes literature study, problem identification of the negative impact of citizen journalism (hoax), formulation of strengthening models through local communities, empirical data collection, model analysis as local government policy material, as well as model evaluation and improvement. The research was conducted in Malang City and Malang Regency, focusing on Radio KDS 8 and several Community Information Groups (KIM) as representative cases of local community-based citizen journalism. The study took place over a six-month period (May-October 2025), covering data collection, validation, and model formulation.

The data analysis used was thematic analysis, with triangulation of sources and methods to ensure validity (Naeem et al., 2023). Data familiarization, initial coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and final report synthesis. Themes were developed inductively from the empirical data to construct the conceptual model of citizen journalism strengthening. Data validation techniques using triangulation of data sources (community members, government, and media practitioners) and methods (interviews, observations, documents).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research found that citizen journalism based on local communities, especially local media such as Radio KDS 8 in Malang City and Community Information Groups (KIM) in each region in Malang City, has great strategic potential to increase public participation in government processes while strengthening government transparency and accountability. The local community consisting of

community media managers, active volunteers, community leaders, and local government elements has proven to be able to act as an effective and trusted two-way communication bridge (Government to Citizen - G2C).

Local Community Structure

Observations and interviews revealed that a well-organised local community structure is the main foundation for successful citizen journalism. Communities that have clear management, systematic division of tasks, and collective work mechanisms allow for the dissemination of more verified and credible information. The active role of community members, including media managers, volunteers, and community leaders as local influencers, contributes to improving the quality of the content presented. In addition, the involvement of the local government in this structure provides legitimacy and support that strengthens the community's function as a constructive mediator of information.

Strengthening Local Community Organisational Structures

The model emphasises the establishment and strengthening of an inclusive and representative community organisation, involving various community actors as well as local government officials. This structure must be transparent, democratic, and have coordination mechanisms and regular evaluations to optimise the community's role in citizen journalism. Communities such as Radio KDS 8 and the Community Information Group (KIM) have been successful in verifying and disseminating information because of their organised structures with clear management and the active participation of community members.

Integrated G2C Communication System

The research shows that the success of strengthening citizen journalism depends on a transparent and responsive two-way communication mechanism between the community and the government. This communication system integrates digital platforms (social media, community websites) and conventional channels (citizen forums, community meetings) to reach various levels of society with different levels of technology access. The proposed communication model is able to accommodate citizens' aspirations, complaints and inputs in real-time and channel them to the government through official channels that can be accounted for. In turn, the government provides clear and open policy responses and information that builds trust and increases citizen involvement in public oversight.

Development of an Effective and Integrated Two-Way Communication System (G2C)

This communication system combines digital and face-to-face media to deliver and collect information simultaneously. This model facilitates more active public participation and responsiveness to local issues and government policies, while accelerating decision-making processes based on community aspirations. Community radio and Community Information Groups (KIM) utilise social media and community meetings to bridge two-way communication. They become effective channels for complaints and suggestions from citizens, which are then responded to by the government in a more open manner.

Government Policy and Regulation Support

The results confirm the importance of adequate policy support from the government in strengthening the role of local communities as citizen journalism actors. Local governments need to provide regulations that support the existence and operation of these communities, including accreditation mechanisms, monitoring of news quality, and legal protection for community members. In addition, sustainable budget allocations are needed to finance media literacy training, capacity building of community members in journalism techniques, use of digital technology, and

understanding of journalistic ethics. This training improves the community's ability to produce fact-based content that is ethical and professional, while reducing the risk of spreading hoaxes.

Policies that support the existence of Radio KDS 8 and Community Information Groups (KIM) including the allocation of training funds and operational legality encourage the sustainability of professional and ethical citizen journalism activities. This community information group (KIM) has been regulated in the decision of the mayor of Malang Number 188.45/332/35.73.112/2019 concerning the establishment of the community information group 'Lowokwaru' in Lowokwaru village, Lowokwaru District, Decision letter of the village head of Pucangsongo, Pakis District, Malang Regency, number 141/86/KEP/35.07.18.2003/2022 regarding the Management of the Community Information Group 'D'Pucma' in Pucungsongo Village, Pakis Sub-District, for the Period 2022/2026, and Decision Letter of the Village Head of Sumber Pasir, Pakis Sub-District, Malang Regency, No. 188.45/20/KEP/35.07.18.2005/2021 regarding the Management of the Community Information Group 'D'MAS' in Sumber Pasir Village, Pakis Sub-District, for the Period from 2022 to 2026. Community Information Groups (KIM) in Malang Regency are managed by villages, while KIMs in Malang City are managed by sub-districts.

Policy, Regulatory, and Government Capacity Support

This model requires a comprehensive government policy that includes technical regulations and a special budget for the development and sustainability of citizen journalism communities. In addition, the government must play an active role in providing training facilitation, information quality supervision, and legal protection so that the community can operate professionally and responsibly.

Table 1. Research Results for Strengthening Citizen Journalism through Local Communities

Model Aspects/Pillars	Description	Reference
1. Local Community Structure	Structured community organisation, involving clear management, systematic division of tasks, collective work mechanisms. Active role of media managers, volunteers, community leaders as local influencers. Local government support provides legitimacy and strengthens the function of information mediators..	Results of observations and interviews in the research; section Research Results, paragraph Local Community Structure
2. Integrated Two-Way Communication (G2C) System	Transparent and responsive communication mechanisms between communities and government. Integration of digital media (social media, community websites) and conventional channels (citizen forums, meetings). Accommodating real-time citizen aspirations, channelling them to the government, and government responses that build trust.	Research Results section, Integrated G2C Communication System
3. Research Results section, Integrated G2C Communication System Supported by Government Policies and Regulations	Research Results Section, Integrated G2C Communication SystemGovernment Policy and Regulatory SupportThe government provides regulations, accreditation mechanisms, news quality monitoring, legal protection, as well as ongoing budget allocations for media literacy training and community capacity building. Support factual and ethical content to reduce hoaxes.	Research Outcomes, Policy Support and Government Regulation Section

Source: Processed Data 2025

Table 1 summarizes the critical pillars needed to strengthen citizen journalism through local communities, with emphasis on structured community organization, effective two-way communication systems, and strong government support. The presented Model is seen as a strategic

framework for increasing public participation in government, ensuring transparency, and enhancing democratic resilience.

Table 2 Pillars of the Model for Strengthening Citizen Journalism through Local Communities

Citizen Journalism Strengthening Model	Explanation	Reference
Pillar 1: Strengthening the Organisational Structure	Establishment of an inclusive and representative community involving communities and local government officials. Transparent, democratic structures, coordination mechanisms and regular evaluation.	Citizen Journalism Strengthening Model Section
Pillar 2: Effective Two-Way Communication System	Integration of digital and face-to-face media for simultaneous information delivery and collection. Facilitate active and responsive public participation on local issues and government policies.	Citizen Journalism Strengthening Model Section
Pillar 3: Policy Support and Government Capacity	Comprehensive policies, technical regulations, specialised budgets, training, information quality monitoring, and legal protection for the sustainability of a professional and responsible citizen journalism community..	Citizen Journalism Strengthening Model Section

Source: Processed Data 2025

This table 2 summarises the main findings of the research along with the pillars of the conceptual model of strengthening citizen journalism based on local communities as a representation of public participation in government. Overall, this table illustrates that strengthening citizen journalism through local communities is not only a matter of increasing community capacity, but also building a collaborative ecosystem that involves the community, local communities and government in a synergistic manner to achieve meaningful public participation and transparent, accountable and responsive governance.

This model shows that strengthening citizen journalism is not just about community capacity building, but rather a collaborative ecosystem between the public, local communities and government that strengthens each other to realise meaningful public participation and transparent and accountable governance. This strengthening model provides practical implications for local governments to design policies that encourage the sustainability and effectiveness of local community-based citizen journalism. By applying this model, the government can optimise the social control function carried out by the community independently and systematically, while reducing the negative impact of hoaxes and disinformation. This model also supports the creation of a trusting relationship between the government and the community through transparent and participatory communication.

This figure 1 illustrates the conceptual flow of a model for strengthening citizen journalism developed through local communities as a representation of public participation in government. This model consists of three main pillars that are mutually sustainable and form the foundation of an effective public participation ecosystem and transparent, accountable and responsive governance.

These three pillars synergistically form an ecosystem for strengthening citizen journalism that not only increases the quantity and quality of public participation, but also strengthens governance that is transparent, accountable, and responsive to the needs of the community. Thus, this model is expected to be an effective strategic solution in overcoming the challenges of less constructive public participation and the spread of hoaxes that are detrimental to digital democracy at the local level.

The model of strengthening citizen journalism based on local communities produced in this research shows a significant ability to overcome two main problems that have been hampering effective public participation in governance, namely: the low level of constructive public participation and the rampant spread of hoaxes that damage the credibility of information. With local communities as key actors, the public is given a more reliable, systematic and organised space to express their aspirations, criticisms and inputs as well as to monitor public policies directly (Sarihati, T, et.al, 2022).

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Radio KDS 8 and Community Information Groups (KIM) were able to reduce the spread of hoaxes by applying content verification standards taught in trainings provided by the local government and partner NGOs.

Figure 1. Key Pillars of the Local Community-Based Citizen Journalism Strengthening Model
Source: Data Processed, 2025

Overcoming Less Constructive Public Participation

In practice, public participation in Indonesia has often been passive, sporadic or fragmented, unable to drive substantive policy change. The strengthening model presents local communities as mediators who consolidate citizens' voices and organise their participation in a more structured system. This is in line with participation theory, which emphasises the need for formal and informal mechanisms to bridge the gap between citizens and government for effective communication and collaboration (Hariadi et al., 2025)

Community organising that involves various actors, ranging from community media managers, community leaders, to local government officials, builds social attachment and collective responsibility that strengthens the commitment of citizens to contribute consistently and constructively. Thus, this model not only increases the quantity of participation, but also the quality of aspirations conveyed, encouraging governance that is more responsive and oriented towards the real needs of the community. Through activities driven by Radio KDS 8 and the Community Information Group (KIM), citizens are encouraged to submit policy criticisms and suggestions collectively and systematically, rather than sporadically on social media.

Counteracting the Spread of Hoaxes and Disinformation

The massive phenomenon of hoaxes and disinformation is one of the biggest threats to digital democracy and public trust in government institutions (Aris Sarjito, 2024). This model of strengthening citizen journalism prioritises the provision of media literacy and journalistic ethics for local community members, as well as the application of fact verification standards in the process of producing and distributing information. The government provides regulatory support and adequate resources to ensure the sustainability and professionalism of these communities.

With internal community monitoring mechanisms and close collaboration with government agencies, the spread of false information can be minimised. This also improves the reputation and credibility of citizen journalism as a social control tool that can be trusted by the wider community. These findings reinforce the argument that media literacy and regulatory frameworks are crucial elements in building a healthy and democratic information ecosystem (Bahram, 2023).

Complementing the Shortcomings of Previous Studies

This research fills a significant gap from previous studies that have mostly highlighted the role of individuals or global social media platforms without including the dimensions of local communities and local government policies as determinants of citizen journalism success (Pathak, K., 2025). The case study approach used allows for an in-depth contextual understanding of the local socio-political and cultural dynamics that strongly influence the practice of citizen journalism in Indonesia

By integrating local communities as active actors of socio-political change, this model emphasises that strengthening citizen journalism cannot be separated from the social and cultural realities on the ground (Peña-Fernández et al., 2024). Adaptive policy support and strong regulations from the local government are the main pillars so that the role of this community can run effectively and sustainably (Tse, 2024).

Novelty of Digital Democracy Models and Implications

The main novelty of this strengthening model lies in the incorporation of structural aspects of the community, an integrated two-way communication system, and government policies that provide real space and support for citizen journalism. This model offers strategic solutions that are not only theoretical, but also applicable and adaptive to local needs, so as to improve the quality of digital democracy at the regional level.

The implementation of this model is expected to strengthen transparent, accountable and participatory governance. In addition, this model accommodates advances in digital technology while considering the limited access and level of media literacy of the community, so that the strengthening of citizen journalism becomes inclusive and equitable.

Policy Research and Development Roadmap

A systematic research roadmap, starting from literature review, identification of empirical problems, model analysis, to field data-based evaluation enables realistic and implementable policy development. This iterative process ensures that the formulated model is not only academically relevant, but also applicable to decision-makers and practitioners in the field.

Two previous studies related to citizen journalism that became the basis for developing the roadmap (figure 2) :

Mediatised Participation: Citizen Journalism and the Decline in User Engagement (2024), mengidentifikasi penurunan partisipasi dan tantangan mempertahankan keterlibatan (Peña-Fernández et al., 2024), and Current status and future agenda of citizen journalism research : a computational analysis (2024), memberikan gambaran komprehensif mengenai status terkini dan agenda riset masa depan dalam bidang citizen journalism (Pathak, K, 2025). From these two studies, the researchers developed a research roadmap for policy development related to citizen journalism in increasing public participation.

With this approach, it is expected to create a more meaningful ecosystem of public participation, more effective policy oversight, and harmonious relations between the community and the government in the context of local government. The model of strengthening citizen journalism through local communities is not only a communication instrument, but also a solid democratic foundation in facing the challenges of the digital era and disinformation. This thematic analysis confirms that the success of strengthening local community-based citizen journalism, such as Radio KDS 8 and Community Information Groups (KIM), lies in a neat organisational structure, effective two-

way communication, and adequate policy support. These strategies can reduce the spread of disinformation and substantially increase citizen participation in local digital democracy.

Figure 2 Research development roadmap
Source: Data Processed, 2025

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of Local Community-Based Citizen Journalism

Theme	Sub-theme	Key Findings on KDS 8 & KIM Community in Malang City
1. Local Community Organisation Structure	Clear management -Collective working mechanism - Involvement of community leaders	Radio KDS 8 and KIM have an active community management structure, involving volunteers, local leaders, and support from the Office of Communication and Information for information management.
2. G2C (Government to Citizen) Communication System	- Integration of digital & conventional channels - Community forums & radio broadcasts - Direct citizen voices	KDS 8 facilitates interactive broadcast forums and social media channels, KIM utilises community meetings to bridge two-way information between citizens and local government.
3. Media Literacy and Journalistic Ethics	- Community journalism training - Information verification - Countering hoaxes	Communities receive journalism and code of ethics training from local government & partners, produce factual and responsible content on local channels.
4. Collaboration with Local Government	- Regulatory support - Access to training funds - Community legality	The Malang city government provided regulations and allocation of training funds for KDS 8 & KIM, strengthening their legitimacy as partners in citizen journalism.
5. Active Community Engagement	- Public complaint channels - Policy discussions via communities - Issue-based social mobilisation	Radio KDS 8 & KIM play a role in raising public issues such as waste management, infrastructure, and social services through community media.

Source: Processed Data 2025

Table 3. Thematic Analysis of Local Community-Based Citizen Journalism provides a structured breakdown of the key themes identified from the research on strengthening citizen journalism through local communities, focusing on examples from Radio KDS 8 and Community Information Groups (KIM)

in Malang City. The table organizes these themes and sub-themes based on key findings and the role of these local communities in fostering participatory governance and countering disinformation.
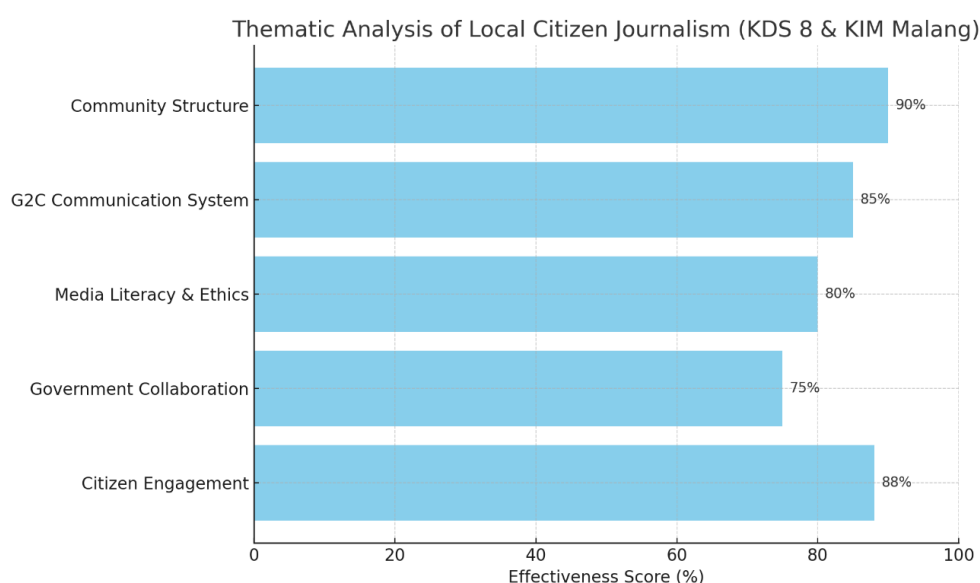

Figure 3: Local Community Thematic Analysis Chart
Source : Data Processed 2025

The following visual graph illustrates the results of the thematic analysis of strengthening citizen journalism by local communities such as Radio KDS 8 and KIM in Malang City. This graph shows the effectiveness of the contribution of each main theme based on the observation and interpretation of the research results. This graph shows the effectiveness of the contribution of each main theme based on the observation and interpretation of the research results. The graph is based on the results of the thematic analysis of the qualitative research that mapped the contributions of the five main themes in strengthening citizen journalism through local communities (Radio KDS 8 and KIM in Malang City). The effectiveness score (in per cent) shown on the graph is a form of illustrative visual representation, to show the level of contribution or strength of the role of each theme based on: The strength of the field findings, the focus and depth of the data, the significance to the strengthening model, and the impact on the research objectives. Thus, the scores in the graphs are not quantitative data from surveys or statistics, but rather thematic judgements that are analytical and descriptive in nature as a synthesis of qualitative data based on the case study method.

CONCLUSION

This research successfully developed a conceptual model for strengthening citizen journalism through local communities as a strategic response to the challenges of digital democracy in Indonesia. By using a qualitative case study approach involving Radio KDS 8 and Community Information Groups (KIM) in Malang, the study found that well-structured local community organisations, effective Government-to-Citizen (G2C) communication systems, and adequate policy and regulatory support are essential pillars in enhancing the credibility, inclusivity, and responsiveness of citizen journalism. The proposed model highlights that empowering local communities is not merely a capacity-building exercise but requires the creation of a collaborative ecosystem involving the community, local authorities, and regulatory frameworks. This ecosystem facilitates constructive public participation, counters the spread of hoaxes and disinformation, and improves transparency and accountability in governance. The thematic findings confirm that when local media actors receive structured training, legal recognition, and are integrated into policy channels, their role as reliable social communicators

and oversight agents is significantly strengthened. The model contributes not only to the theoretical discourse on participatory governance but also offers a practical roadmap for local governments to implement inclusive, ethical, and effective citizen journalism policies. In conclusion, the model of strengthening citizen journalism through local communities can serve as a foundational mechanism for supporting digital democratic resilience, improving public trust, and fostering meaningful engagement between citizens and the state.

It is recommended to conduct further research with a focus on a long-term analysis of the impact of community-based citizen journalism reinforcement models on the level of public participation in local government. This research can expand the scope of the region and involve more communities to get a more representative picture of the effectiveness of the model. Further research could also conduct comparisons between local communities in different regions, both in urban and rural areas, to see differences in the application and results achieved by citizen journalism models. This will enrich the perspectives related to the application of the model in different socio-political contexts and future research can also deepen the analysis of government involvement in the process of media education and community empowerment to accelerate the adoption of technologies used by citizens in journalism, as well as to strengthen information verification systems at the local level.

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