




Digital Public Opinion and Infrastructure Framing in the Bandar Lampung Cable Car Project Account@Lampung

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the perceptions of Bandar Lampung City residents toward news coverage of the cable car project on the Instagram account @lampung. The development of digital communication technology has transformed social media, particularly Instagram, into a digital public sphere that shapes public opinion regarding local government development policies. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach using a netnographic method through online observation and screen capture techniques. The data consisted of public comments on three posts related to the cable car project published between February and July 2025, which were classified into positive, negative, and neutral perceptions. The findings indicate that public perception was predominantly negative, accounting for 89.9% of the total comments. In the post with the highest level of interaction (May 23, 2025), there were 4,310 negative comments (93.3%), 45 positive comments (1.0%), and 312 neutral comments (6.7%). Negative perceptions were driven by concerns regarding inappropriate development priorities, potential environmental impacts, lack of project transparency, and low public trust in the government. Meanwhile, positive perceptions emerged from expectations of increased tourism, regional economic growth, and the strengthening of Bandar Lampung City's image. These findings reinforce the relevance of framing and agenda-setting theories in explaining the dynamics of public opinion on social media and provide practical implications for local government public communication strategies in the digital era.

Keywords: Instagram, cable car, development communication, public opinion, public perception.

INTRODUCTION

The development of information and communication technology has fundamentally transformed the way people access and respond to information regarding regional development. Social media platforms, particularly Instagram, have grown into dominant information channels due to their ability to present visual content that is fast, concise, and highly interactive. In Indonesia, the number of active social media users reached 191 million in 2022, representing a 12.35% increase from the previous year (Valkenburg, 2022). This phenomenon positions Instagram comment sections as representative data sources for understanding public opinion toward government policies (Indainanto, 2021; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Nasrullah, 2014; Nasution, 2025).

Theoretically, mass media and social media perform two primary functions in shaping public perception. First, through the agenda-setting mechanism, the media determine which issues are considered important by the public (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). McCombs (2014) further developed this proposition into a second level, in which the media not only determine issues but also define the attributes such as investment value, foreign capital involvement, and tourism orientation used by the public to evaluate those issues (McCombs, 2014). Second, through the framing mechanism, the media actively construct reality by emphasizing certain aspects while downplaying others within an event or issue (Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). Hallahan (1999) identified seven framing models applicable in public communication, including government policy communication (Hallahan, 1999). In Indonesia, Tamburaka (2012) and Eriyanto (2002) have elaborated the relevance of these theories within the context of mass media and local policy (Eriyanto, 2002; Tamburaka, 2012). In the social media era, Gilardi et al. (2022) demonstrated that digital platforms are increasingly taking over the role of traditional media in shaping the public agenda (Gilardi et al., 2022).

Bandar Lampung City, the capital of Lampung Province with a population of more than 1.1 million people, became a dynamic arena of public discourse when the city government announced a cable car development project as a new tourism icon. The Instagram account @lampung, a widely followed local news aggregator, published three posts related to the project between February and July 2025, generating more than 30,000 likes, 7,557 comments, and 4,069 shared links. This high level of interaction reflects the extent to which the issue attracted broad public interest and concern (Bungin, 2008; Morissan, 2013; Nasution, 2025).

Several previous studies on public perceptions of infrastructure projects provide a strong comparative foundation for this research. Hermanto and Meiyani (2019) found that public perceptions in Makassar toward the A.P. Pettarani elevated toll road were influenced by environmental impacts, traffic congestion, and the distance between residents' homes and the project location (Hermanto et al., 2019). Wahyuddin and Fahleti (2022) identified cognitive, affective, and evaluative dimensions in the perceptions of the Kutai Kartanegara community toward the development of household gas networks (Wahyuddin & Fahleti, 2022). Syarifuddin et al. (2025) found that expectations of tourism-related economic benefits were the main drivers of positive perceptions toward tourism development in Parepare (Syarifuddin & Ali, 2025). Heriyanti and Rabbani (2025) demonstrated that community participation significantly correlates with positive perceptions of sanitation infrastructure projects (Heriyanti & Rabbani, 2025).

Specifically, examined the construction of local media discourse regarding infrastructure development in Bandar Lampung and found that media narratives tended to frame development projects within the perspectives of developmentalism and technocratism, potentially overlooking aspects of public participation and community needs (Nasution, 2025). These findings provide a strong contextual foundation for the present study, as the object of analysis is located in the same city. Nevertheless, these previous studies employed

survey methods, interviews, and text analysis, and therefore did not explore the dynamics of perceptions formed spontaneously through social media comments.

Methodologically, this study employs netnography, an adaptation of ethnographic methodology used to examine online cultures and communities through observations of users' digital traces (Kozinets, 2002). Eriyanto (2021) developed netnographic guidelines for the Indonesian context, emphasizing that social media comment sections constitute legitimate data sources for revealing authentic public opinions and perceptions (Eriyanto, 2021). Zha et al. (2023) and Dwiarsianti (2022) have also demonstrated the reliability of this method in communication journals indexed by Sinta (Dwiarsianti, 2022; Zha et al., 2023). The novelty of this research lies in the integration of framing theory, agenda-setting theory, and the spiral of silence theory within a netnographic analytical framework to examine news coverage of local government infrastructure projects through a single local social media account, an approach that has not previously been conducted in the context of Bandar Lampung.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach using the netnography method (Eriyanto, 2021; Kozinets, 2010). This design was selected because it enables naturalistic and non-intrusive observation of authentic user interactions on digital platforms, in line with the research objective of understanding patterns of perception that emerge spontaneously within Instagram comment sections (Kozinets, 2010; Sugiyono, 2017).

The object of this study consisted of three Instagram posts from the account *@lampung* related to the cable car project, published between February and July 2025. This account was purposively selected because it is one of Lampung's local news aggregators with a high level of community engagement and verified credibility. Among the three posts, the post published on May 23, 2025 (13,000 likes; 4,355 comments; 1,564 shared links) was designated as the primary unit of analysis due to its highest interaction volume, while the other two posts served as triangulation data.

Comment data were collected through systematic online observation and screen capture techniques conducted between February and March 2026. All visible comments were documented and transcribed. Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by (Hashimov, 2015), consisting of three iterative stages: (1) data reduction, filtering duplicate, spam, and irrelevant comments; (2) data display, classifying comments into perception categories using semantic and pragmatic indicators; and (3) conclusion drawing, identifying themes and conducting theoretical interpretation.

The three perception categories were operationalized as follows: Positive comments expressing support, optimism, or appreciation toward the project; Negative comments expressing criticism, rejection, cynicism, concern, sarcasm, or anger; and Neutral comments seeking clarification, asking questions without clear valence, or expressing ambivalence. Comments dominated by emojis were classified based on the dominant emotional register (for example, 🤔😏 = negative-sarcastic; 🙌 = positive). All user account names were

anonymized using alphanumeric codes (U01, U02, etc.) in accordance with the ethical guidelines for internet research established by AoIR (2019).

The reliability of the findings was strengthened through coder triangulation: two independent coders classified 10% of a random sample of comments, resulting in an inter-coder agreement rate of 87.3%. The complete research procedure is presented in Figure 1 below.

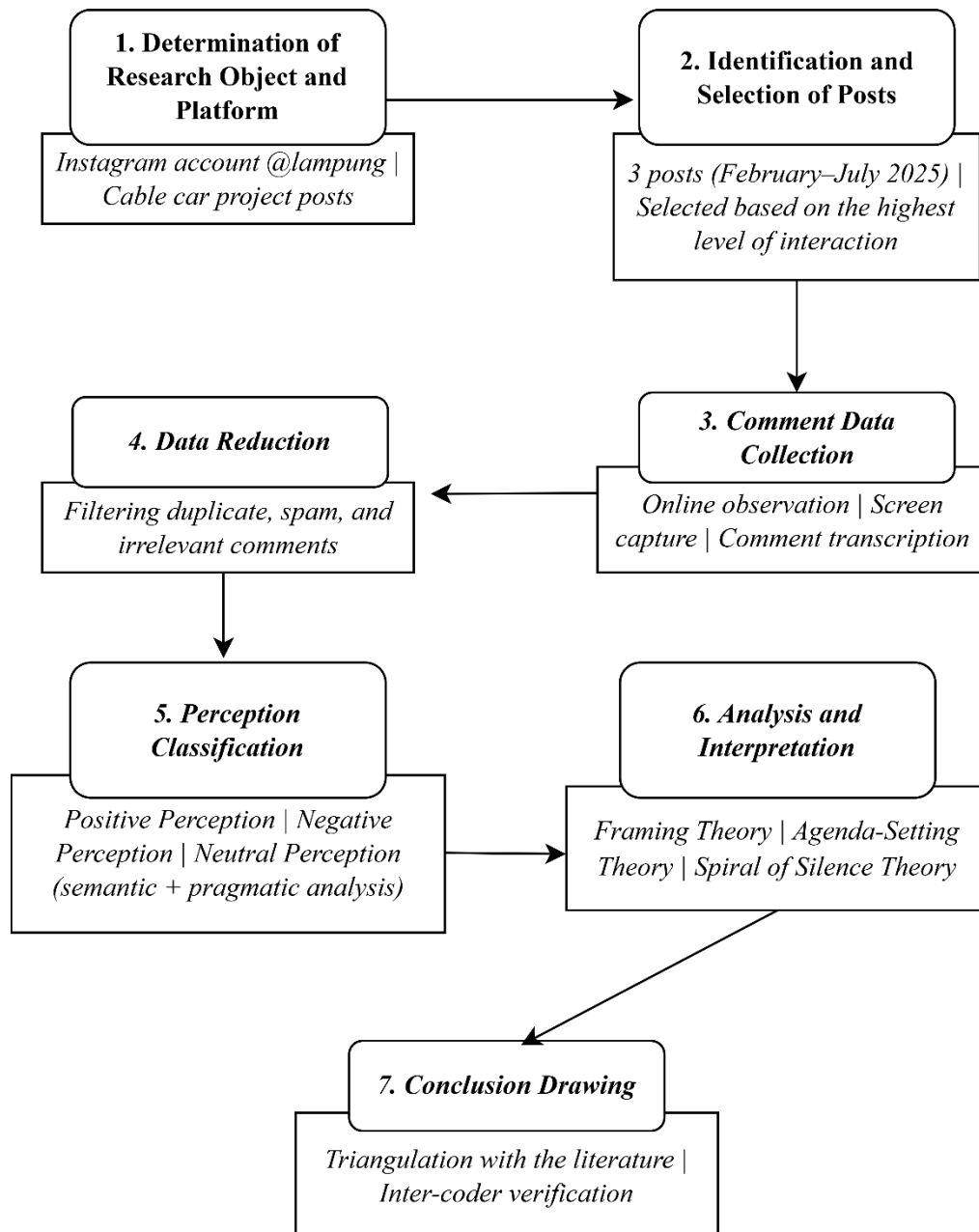


Figure 1. Research Flow Diagram




Source: Processed by the researchers (2026)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Findings

Table 1 presents data from the three Instagram posts published by the account @lampung that were analyzed in this study, including posting dates, caption summaries, and interaction metrics. The data were collected in February 2026.

Table 1. Instagram Posts by @lampung Related to the Cable Car Project (February – July 2025)

No	Posting Date	Caption Summary	Likes	Comments	Shared Links	Visual Description
1	18 Feb 2025	POV: Riding the first cable car in Bandar Lampung	8.696	1.668	1.128	
2	23 Mei 2025	The Bandar Lampung City Government collaborates with Chinese investors to build a tourism cable car project; investment value of IDR 2.5 trillion; 50:50 profit-sharing scheme	13.000	4.355	1.564	
3	3 Jul 2025	The cable car route was changed from Pulau Kubur to Batu Putu Waterfall; the IDR 2.5 trillion investment is fully financed by Chinese investors	9.019	1.534	1.377	
To tal	3 Posts		30.715	7.557	4.069	

The data presented in Table 1 indicate that the cable car project generated substantial public engagement across all three posts. The post published on May 23, 2025, which

announced a partnership with Chinese investors and an investment value of IDR 2.5 trillion, received the highest level of interaction, with 13,000 likes, 4,355 comments, and 1,564 shared links. The announcement of foreign investment involvement and the profit-sharing scheme appears to have functioned as a framing stimulus that triggered extensive public scrutiny and debate (Entman, 1993; McCombs, 2014).

Table 2 presents the classification of comments from the three posts into positive, negative, and neutral perception categories. The primary analysis was conducted on the May 23, 2025 post as the main data source.

Table 2. Classification of Public Perceptions Based on Comment Categories

No	Posting Date	Positive	Negative	Neutral
1	18 Feb 2025	37	1.293	338
2	23 Mei 2025 (Primer)	45 (1,0%)	4.310 (93,3%)	312 (6,7%)
3	3 Jul 2025	28	1.201	305
Total	3 Posts	110 (1,5%)	6.804 (89,9%)	955 (12,6%)*

Note: Percentages may not total exactly 100% due to rounding. Emoji-based comments were included in the classification.

The data presented in Table 2 reveal a distribution of perceptions that was overwhelmingly dominated by negative sentiment. Across the three posts, 89.9% of comments were classified as negative, 1.5% as positive, and 12.6% as neutral. The most extreme dominance of negative sentiment occurred in the post published on May 23, 2025, with an approximate ratio of negative to positive comments of 96:1.

2. Persepsi Positif

Positive perceptions emerged from groups of community members who viewed the cable car development project as a symbol of regional infrastructure progress, tourism development potential, and the modernization of Bandar Lampung City. Examples of comments reflecting these perceptions include:

“Ya bagus lah makin maju Lampung.” (U01)

“Alhamdulillah, terimakasih Bunda.” (U02)

“TOP mantap IS THE BEST.” (U03)

These positive perceptions are consistent with the findings of Syarifuddin et al. (2025), which demonstrated that expectations of economic benefits and tourism image enhancement are the primary drivers of public support for tourism-sector development projects (Syarifuddin & Ali, 2025). Within the framework of perception theory (Jalaluddin

Rakhmat, 2018; Walgito, 2019), these comments reflect positive affective aspects formed through projected expectations of future benefits.

3. Negative Perceptions

Negative perceptions constituted the dominant category and clustered around four major themes: (1) inappropriate development priorities, (2) concerns regarding environmental and social impacts, (3) a lack of project transparency, and (4) low public trust in government integrity. Representative comments include:

“Jalanannya dibenerin dulu bu, broo.” (U04) tema: prioritas pembangunan

“Mending kerja dulu benerin jalan-jalan rusak Bu. Berguna dikit.” (U05) tema: prioritas pembangunan

“Kalo mau buat wisata bok ya, pake dana pribadi bu. Jangan uang rakyat.” (U06) tema: transparansi & kepercayaan

“Sebenarnya mau bangun apa saja kita dukung... tapi kalo jalan masih pada rusak, selokan dan siring pada mampet dan banjir mengancam apakah ini tepat?” (U07) tema: prioritas & dampak

These findings are consistent with the study conducted by (Hermanto et al., 2019), which concluded that negative perceptions of infrastructure projects are driven by the gap between unmet community needs and the government’s development ambitions. (Wahyuddin & Fahleti, 2022) also identified a similar pattern, in which the evaluative aspects of public perception are strongly influenced by everyday community priorities.

4. Neutral Perceptions

Neutral perceptions emerged from individuals who withheld judgment and sought further information before forming an opinion. Examples of such comments include:

“Dampak ke masyarakat apa?” (U08)

“Byar gx naek kereta gantung y?” (U09)

This group reflects what (Walgito, 2019) describes as the cognitive exploration phase in the perception process, in which individuals actively seek additional information to complete their understanding before forming a judgment..

5. Discussion

The dominance of negative perceptions (89.9%) can be explained through the convergence of several theoretical frameworks. From the perspective of framing theory (Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993), the @lampung posts framed the cable car project primarily through prestige and economic frames by emphasizing the investment value of IDR 2.5 trillion, the involvement of foreign investors, and its function as a tourism icon. This framing indirectly activated a counter-frame in the minds of the audience: when people received information about a high-cost project financed by foreign parties, they reflexively

compared it with their real experiences regarding unmet basic infrastructure needs (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989; Scheufele, 1999). The discrepancy between the prestige frame and the need frame generated cognitive dissonance, which manifested itself in negative comments. These findings reinforce the argument proposed by (Prayoga et al. 2025), who concluded that local media discourse in Bandar Lampung tends to dominate narratives of technocratic developmentalism while marginalizing critical public voices, a condition that was, in fact, challenged when the public was given open spaces for expression on social media.

Agenda-setting theory provides a complementary explanation. By publishing three consecutive posts about the cable car project, @lampung not only increased the salience of the issue in the public mind but also shaped the evaluative attributes used by audiences, which (McCombs, 2014) refers to as second-level agenda setting. Giraldi observed a similar phenomenon in the European context, where agenda setting by institutional accounts triggered a “backfire” effect when the emphasized attributes conflicted with public expectations (Giraldi et al., 2022). Rogers and Dearing (1988) had previously identified this dynamic in studies concerning the relationship between policy agendas and public agendas.

The ratio of negative to positive comments reaching 96:1 in the primary post is also relevant when analyzed through the spiral of silence theory (Noelle-Neumann, 1974). In the context of Instagram comment sections, the accumulation of publicly visible negative comments may reinforce the confidence of users holding similar views to participate in the discussion, while users with positive opinions may choose to remain silent to avoid social stigma. Chong and Druckman (2007) describe this phenomenon as digital cascading opinion. Therefore, the very small number of positive comments does not necessarily reflect the actual proportion of project supporters within society (Chong & Druckman, 2007).

This study also confirms Instagram’s function as a digital discourse space rather than merely a one-way information channel. Within his four-level cyber media analysis framework, Nasrullah (2014) explains that at the level of media objects and experiences, users not only consume content but also actively construct meanings, challenge official narratives, and express collective interests (Nasrullah, 2014). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) characterize social media as a user-generated content platform that fundamentally transforms the relationship between information producers and consumers (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). Nasution (2025) further strengthens this perspective by demonstrating that the transformation of digital journalism in Indonesian local media has shifted communication models from one-way dissemination to interactive engagement, in which audiences increasingly participate in public discourse through digital platforms (Nasution, 2025). The findings of this study provide empirical evidence for these dynamics within the context of local government communication in Indonesia.

Methodologically, the netnographic approach (Eriyanto, 2021; Kozinets, 2010) proved effective in capturing spontaneous expressions of opinion that are less influenced by the social desirability bias commonly found in survey methods. The reliability of the screen-capture data and manual transcription was strengthened through coder triangulation, consistent with best practices in netnographic research (Dwiarsianti, 2022; Zha et al., 2023).

CONCLUSION

This study analyzed the perceptions of Bandar Lampung City residents toward news coverage of the cable car project on the Instagram account @lampung through a netnographic approach to 7,557 comments from three posts published between February and July 2025. The main findings indicate that public perception was overwhelmingly dominated by negative sentiment (89.9%), while neutral perceptions accounted for 12.6% and positive perceptions only 1.5%. The post with the highest level of interaction (May 23, 2025) displayed a ratio of negative to positive comments of approximately 96:1, indicating a significant intensity of public rejection toward the project.

Theoretically, this study demonstrates the convergence of framing theory, agenda-setting theory, and the spiral of silence theory in explaining the dominance of negative sentiment within social media discourse regarding government infrastructure projects. The prestige framing employed by @lampung activated a counter-frame of public needs in the audience's minds, generating evaluative dissonance that manifested itself in a massive flow of negative comments. These findings extend McCombs' (2014) second-level agenda-setting model and Entman's (1993) framing theory into the domain of social media-based regional development communication in Indonesia.

Practically, this study recommends that the Bandar Lampung City Government develop public communication strategies that: (1) utilize need-based framing by explicitly connecting project benefits with existing public concerns; (2) establish interactive public feedback channels before project announcements; and (3) regularly monitor social media sentiment to identify and address public concerns before they escalate into widespread rejection.

This study has several limitations, including its focus on a single Instagram account, the potential loss of comments deleted by moderators, and classification ambiguities in sarcastic and emoji-dominated comments. Future studies are recommended to expand data sources across multiple platforms (YouTube, Twitter/X, and TikTok), employ computational sentiment analysis for larger data volumes, and combine netnography with in-depth interviews to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of public perceptions toward infrastructure projects in the digital era.

Declaration of AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Writing Process

In the preparation of this work, the authors used AI-based tools for grammar checking and reference formatting. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as necessary and take full responsibility for the integrity, accuracy, and originality of the final published version.

CRedit Authorship Contribution Statement

- a. Naning Kirani: Conceptualization, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Investigation, Writing Original Draft, and Review & Editing.
- b. Fitri Yanti: Supervision, Validation, Project Administration, and Review & Editing.
- c. Nadya Amalia Nasoetion: Supervision, Validation, and Review & Editing.

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could have influenced the results reported in this paper.

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Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available upon reasonable request from the corresponding author at Naningk17@gmail.com.

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Ethical Approval Statement

This study complied with internet-based research ethics standards established by the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR, 2019). All user identities were fully anonymized.

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