

Three-Agenda Dynamics in The Kuhap Controversy: Media, Public, and Policy Agenda in Indonesia's Digital Sphere

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the dynamics of the KUHAP revision issue through the interactions among the media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda, to understand how media coverage, public perceptions, and government responses collectively influence the construction of policy discourse. Employing a qualitative method with a Qualitative Data Analytic Software (Q-DAS) approach, the study traces patterns of exposure, keyword associations, conversation intensity, and temporal shifts in issue focus. Data were collected from online news media and social media between November 1 and 26, 2025, and classified into three phases: pre-viral, viral, and post-viral. During the initial phase, 1,205 news articles and 1,784 conversations were recorded; these numbers increased to 1,957 news articles and 73,418 conversations at the peak of virality, and then declined to 1,583 news articles and 14,597 conversations in the post-viral phase. The analysis reveals that the media agenda contributed to the early escalation by highlighting criticisms from academics and civil society regarding the erosion of due process, the expansion of investigative authority, and the potential for criminalization. This intensity fueled the public agenda, reflected in a surge of negative sentiment, particularly after the government's responses on 18–19 November failed to ease public concerns. Subsequently, public pressure influenced the policy agenda, marked by discourse on article evaluation, plans for public consultation, and adjustments to communication strategies. However, these remained reactive and did not fully address substantive objections. This study highlights the continuous interaction among the three agendas that shape the trajectory of the KUHAP revision controversy, demonstrating how digital information dynamics can significantly impact policy processes.

Keywords: Agenda-Setting Dynamics; KUHAP Revision; Media–Public–Policy Interaction; Qualitative Data Analytic Software (Q-DAS); Digital Discourse Analysis

INTRODUCTION

The shift from the traditional era to the modern era has transformed the way people interact and interpret events. Digital transformation has made society increasingly dependent on media as a primary space for discussion, critique, and the formation of opinions regarding social and political phenomena. Digital media is no longer merely an information channel but has become a public oversight arena for governmental practices (Bashir & Masood, 2025; Dychywald, 2021; Rachimoellah et al., 2024). With its capacity to disseminate information rapidly and widely, the media enables citizens to exert pressure on the government when policies are perceived as misaligned with the public interest (Abdu Nugraha et al., 2023a; Anwar & Fauzianty, 2025; Bouvier & Machin, 2018). Various social

movements in recent years ranging from opposition to controversial regulations and environmental advocacy to demands for policy reform demonstrate how the media can amplify public voices. However, this dynamic is not unidirectional. The government also has the capacity to influence media narratives through political agendas, making media simultaneously an instrument for shaping public perception and a mechanism for exerting counter-pressure on policymakers (De Cock et al., 2024; Dobrin, 2020; Susanti, 2015).

The reciprocal dynamics among media, the public, and the government resurfaced in the controversy surrounding the enactment of the revised Criminal Procedure Code (KUHAP), passed by the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI) on 18 November 2025. The decision triggered widespread opposition because it was perceived as rushed and lacking public participation, further narrowing the space for civic criticism. Several provisions in the new KUHAP were challenged by civil society groups, particularly due to concerns that they expand the authority of law enforcement agencies without adequate oversight mechanisms. This situation raised concerns about its implications for human rights advocacy, especially in terms of safeguarding suspects and ensuring transparency in judicial processes. The controversy rapidly evolved into a national issue, sparking resistance from academics, legal practitioners, civil society organizations, and digital communities. Monitoring of online and social media revealed a sharp surge in public discussions, illustrating how the KUHAP discourse quickly became a central public concern and triggered widespread debate, as depicted in the visualization below:

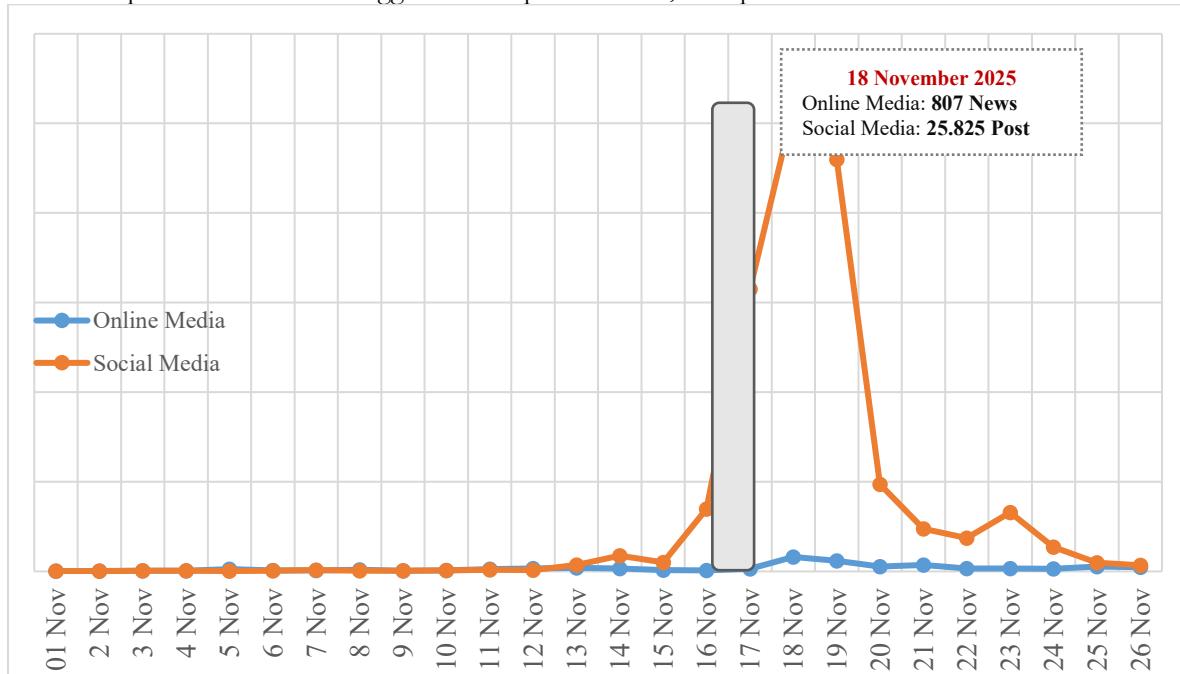


Figure 1. Online and Social Media Interactions Related to the Enactment of KUHAP by the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI)

Source: Collected from Online and Social Media Big Data, 2025

A sharp surge in discussions regarding KUHAP is clearly visible on 18 November 2025, when issue exposure increased simultaneously on both online and social media platforms. The data show that social media conversations were far more dominant, reaching 25,825 posts, while coverage in online media amounted to only 807 articles. In the perspective of Dearing and Rogers (1996), who expanded McCombs and Shaw's (1972) classical Agenda-Setting theory through the concept of three-agenda dynamics, this phenomenon illustrates how an issue can move, compete, and shift across arenas from media to the public, and eventually influencing policy directions. Building on this dynamic, several key questions emerge: Who initiated the KUHAP controversy? How did the issue move across different agendas? Did social media distort the agenda of mainstream media? Has the public agenda become more dominant? To what extent was the government responsive to public pressure? Did the KUHAP issue follow an issue-attention cycle? And how did it compete with other national issues?

These questions are relevant because the dynamics of the KUHAP controversy exhibit characteristics consistent with the three-agenda dynamics framework. The significantly larger spike in social media conversations compared to online media coverage suggests that the public can now serve as an initial trigger for issue escalation, rather than merely being recipients of information from mainstream media. At the same time, online media continue to construct official narratives that the public may reinforce or challenge through various posts. This interaction opens the possibility of agenda distortion, where social media can accelerate, amplify, or even shift the focus of the issue. Government responses manifested through press conferences, official clarifications, and justification narratives also serve as important indicators of how the issue transitions from the public sphere into

the policy arena. Furthermore, fluctuations in public attention suggest the potential presence of an issue-attention cycle. At the same time, competition with other national issues may shape whether the KUHAP controversy persists or fades within the digital public sphere.

Based on these dynamics, it is crucial to conduct a study that comprehensively analyzes how the KUHAP issue is addressed across the three agenda domains: media, public, and policy. Previous studies have examined the relationship between media and public opinion formation through the lenses of agenda setting, the public sphere, and shifting information power in the digital era (Rohid et al., 2025; Salsabilla et al., 2022; Tohari, 2024). Research on social media agenda setting also indicates that digital platforms can accelerate issue mobilization and generate political pressure that influences policy direction (Dwityas et al., 2023; Dyah et al., 2025; Wijaya & Ida, 2021). Meanwhile, studies on government responsiveness highlight that policy processes often shift in response to the intensity of public discourse (Abbas et al., 2025; Abdu Nugraha et al., 2023b; Kristiyono et al., 2024). However, these studies remain fragmented and have yet to integrate the three agendas simultaneously, particularly in the context of a controversial legal policy. In fact, Dearing and Rogers' three-agenda dynamics model emphasizes that public issues move through layered interactions among media, public, and policy. This pattern is clearly observable in the spike of KUHAP issue exposure, as visualized through the following three-dimensional theoretical model:

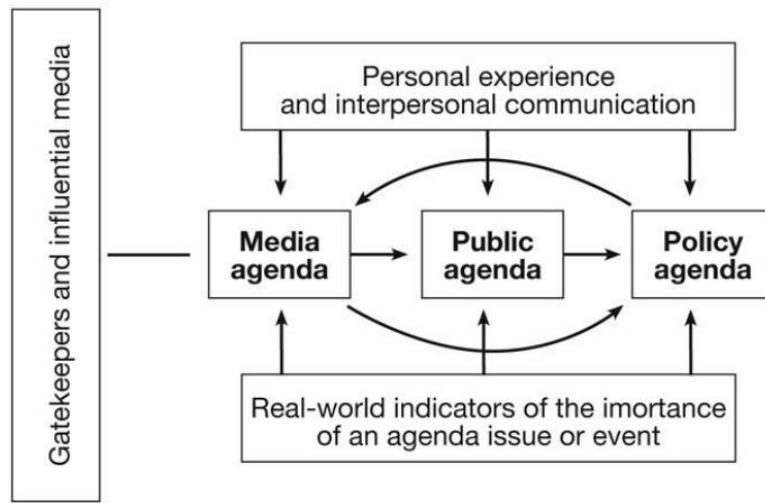


Figure 2. The Agenda-Setting Process: Media, Public, and Policy Agenda

Source. Dearing, J.W., & Rogers, E.M. *Communication Concepts 6: Agenda-Setting*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1996.

Based on the illustration above, this study aims to systematically examine the dynamics of the KUHAP issue as it unfolds across three primary arenas: media, the public, and policy. The fluctuating patterns of issue exposure indicate that discourse movement does not occur linearly; instead, it follows a rhythm shaped by the intensity of media coverage, surges in public conversations, and government responses that emerge at specific moments. In a fast-paced and highly competitive digital ecosystem, social media often becomes a space that expands, accelerates, and even redirects the agenda of mainstream media. This condition creates opportunities for distortion, reinforcement, or overtaking of agendas between these two spheres. Moreover, the KUHAP issue appears to follow an attention cycle from triggering events, escalation, to saturation while also competing with other national issues for public attention. Therefore, understanding how these inter-agenda interactions function is crucial for assessing their potential influence on the direction of a controversial legal policy (Ahmad & Setyawati, 2024; Alvarez et al., 2015; Horton & Street, 2021).

Aligned with these dynamics, this study seeks to uncover in greater depth how the KUHAP controversy is formed and evolves within an increasingly fragmented communication ecosystem. The interaction among media, the public, and the government illustrates that the actors driving an issue are not fixed; they may shift depending on the momentum of the discourse. Accordingly, this study formulates three core objectives: first, to identify which actors played the most significant role in triggering the escalation of the KUHAP controversy; second, to map the pathways through which the issue moved from media to the public sphere and ultimately into the policy domain; and third, to assess the extent to which social media reinforced or distorted the agenda of mainstream media. Through this approach, the study aims to generate empirical insights into how public agendas operate in the digital era, while contributing to a broader understanding of digital democracy and legal politics in Indonesia. This explanation further reinforces the urgency of examining the KUHAP issue within the framework of three-agenda dynamics.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative method with a Qualitative Data Analytic Software (Q-DAS) approach to analyze the movement patterns of the KUHAP issue across three arenas: media, public, and policy (J. Creswell, 2013; J. W. Creswell, 2014; J. W. Creswell & Miller, 2000). The qualitative approach was selected because it allows the researcher to understand meanings, discourse dynamics, and social constructions formed through media coverage and public conversations on social media. Meanwhile, the use of Q-DAS provides more systematic analytical support in tracing exposure patterns, relationships among keywords, conversation intensity, and temporal shifts in issue focus. This approach is relevant because the KUHAP issue developed very rapidly and was influenced by the interaction of various actors, thus requiring an analytical technique capable of capturing such complexity in depth. By combining qualitative interpretation and mapping supported by analytic software, this study can reveal the dynamics of digital agenda setting more comprehensively.

The research data were collected from online media and social media within the period of 01–26 November 2025, a timeframe selected because it reflects the early phase of KUHAP discussions up to the viral peak following its enactment on 18 November. This timeframe enables the researcher to observe exposure trends comprehensively by categorizing them into three phases: pre-viral, viral, and post-viral. This categorization was conducted to understand how discourse intensity changes in each phase and how shifts in actor dominance occur throughout the issue-attention cycle. Empirically, before the viral phase, there were 1,205 online news articles and 1,784 social media conversations. During the viral phase, these numbers increased sharply to 1,957 articles and 73,418 conversations. In the post-viral phase, they decreased to 1,583 articles and 14,597 conversations. This categorization helps the researcher trace the issue's escalation patterns, identify trigger points, and explain the mechanism of agenda transitions between the media and the public.

The categorized data, based on the three phases, will be analyzed using the three-agenda dynamics framework to trace how the KUHAP issue evolves and shifts across the media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda. This analysis aims to identify causal relationships or patterns of reciprocal influence between media reporting, public conversations, and government policy responses in each stage of issue development. By mapping the data into these three dimensions, this study aims to determine whether the escalation of public discussion was triggered by the media, driven by netizen dynamics, or, instead, by government actions. Aligning the data with the three agendas is also essential for assessing whether social media distorts or reinforces the agenda of mainstream media, how public opinion pressures the policy process, and how these three arenas interact in shaping the direction of discourse on the KUHAP issue more comprehensively. Therefore, the operational definition in this study is presented in the following table:

Table 1. Operational Definitions of the Study

Analysis Dimension	Analysis Variables	Purpose of Analysis
Media Agenda (Online Media)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Number of news articles and publication frequency Narrative/context of news coverage Issue framing patterns (positive, negative, neutral) Media outlets covering the issue and inter-media relationships 	To examine how online media shape public perception, dominant narratives, and the potential escalation of the KUHAP issue.
Public Agenda (Social Media)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Volume of conversations and interactions (likes, shares, comments) Viral topics and keywords Discussion-driving actors (influencers, organizations, netizens) Sentiment of conversations (positive, negative, neutral) Distribution and diffusion patterns of discourse 	To understand public perceptions, key actors driving the issue, and the dynamics of narrative amplification or distortion compared with media narratives.
Policy Agenda (Online & Social Media)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Official statements, press conferences, and government clarifications Government communication strategies related to the issue Mitigation policies or adjustments in response to public criticism 	To assess government responses to public pressure and the extent to which public discourse influences policy decisions.

The data analysis technique employed in this study is interactive, integrating qualitative approaches with analytics-based mapping to comprehensively capture the dynamics of the KUHAP issue. Data from online media

and social media were processed using Q-DAS, which enables researchers to trace exposure patterns, relationships among keywords, conversation sentiment, and the temporal intensity of public interactions. The analysis was conducted iteratively, with initial results evaluated to identify emerging trends, and subsequently expanded by examining the reciprocal relationships between the media, the public, and policy responses. This approach allows the researcher to interpret the social context underlying digital conversations, observe how the issue circulates, and understand the actors who play a role in triggering or directing the discourse (Miles & Huberman, 2014). Through this interactive technique, the researcher not only maps the quantity of conversations but also the quality of narratives and patterns of inter-agenda influence, ensuring that the findings are both comprehensive and analytically robust.

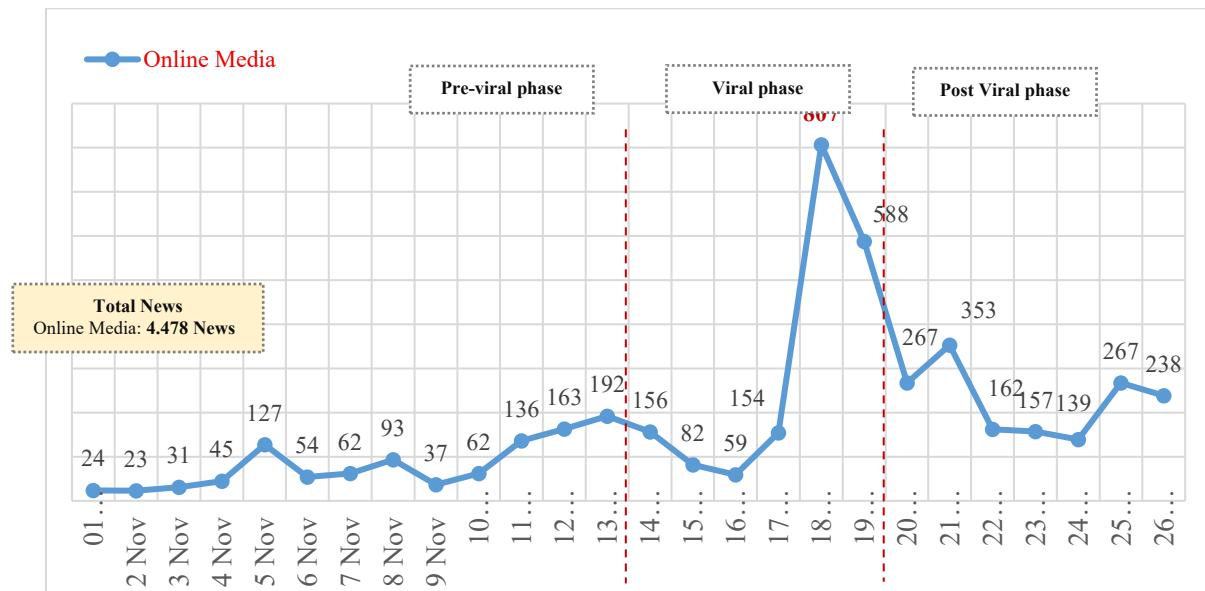
RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Media Agenda

Within the framework of the Agenda-Setting Process developed by Dearing and Rogers, the media agenda is understood as the set of issues that receive the most attention in news coverage and become the primary focus presented to the public. This variable is crucial because the media plays a central role in determining which issues are perceived as necessary by society through the frequency of coverage, the emphasis on particular aspects, and how an issue is constructed. Theoretically, the media agenda influences public perceptions by directing attention toward specific topics, leading the public to consider those issues more significant than others. Thus, examining the media agenda is relevant for understanding the mechanisms through which an issue can intensify, move, and transform within the public sphere (Burbach et al., 2023; Crow et al., 2017; Jong et al., 2023). The aim of discussing this variable is to explain how the media initiates, reinforces, or even redirects discourse, as well as how media-driven narratives can propel an issue toward the public agenda or policy agenda.

In the context of the KUHAP controversy, the concept of the media agenda becomes particularly relevant because Dearing's definition highlights the media as the initial actor capable of triggering public attention toward a particular issue. The enactment of KUHAP, which sparked nationwide controversy, necessitates an in-depth analysis to examine the extent to which the media framed the problem and how coverage influenced the direction of public discourse. The media agenda is a critical variable because, through news reporting, the media can reinforce certain narratives whether KUHAP is perceived as hastily passed, lacking public participation, or potentially weakening legal protections. The media agenda analysis in this study highlights how the media constructs perceptions through the volume and frequency of publications, the narrative context presented, issue-framing patterns (positive, negative, or neutral), and inter-media networks that cite or amplify one another's reporting.

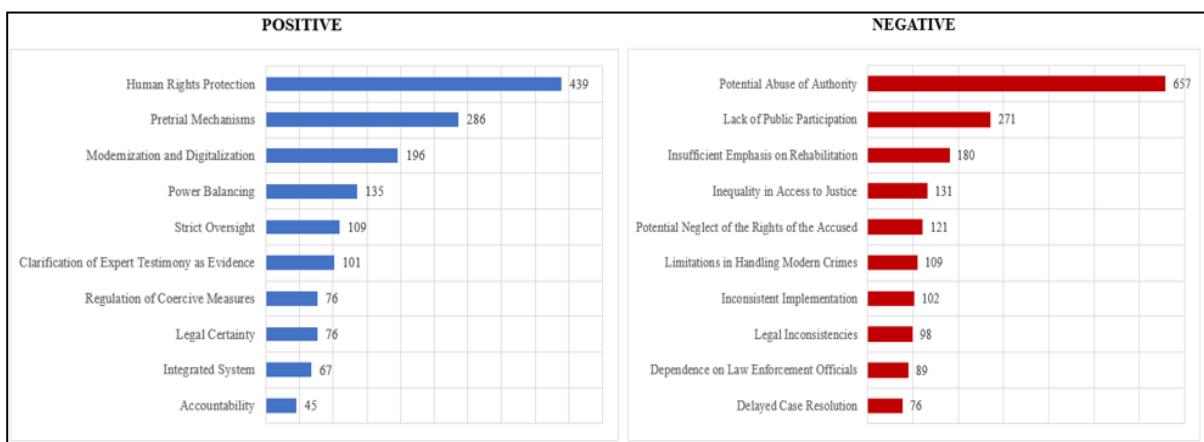
The volume of KUHAP-related news becomes a vital aspect of analysis because the intensity of coverage reflects the level of media attention to an issue and has the potential to shape public perceptions. The greater the number of published articles, the higher the likelihood that the public will consider the issue necessary, consistent with contemporary agenda-setting research that identifies a strong correlation between coverage frequency and public salience. Through the news volume data, this study traces daily exposure patterns from 1–26 November to recognize potential moments when the KUHAP issue experienced heightened attention. Accordingly, the analysis is divided into three phases pre-viral, viral, and post-viral to determine whether fluctuations or sudden surges occurred within a short period. The results indicate a significant spike on 18 November 2025, precisely when KUHAP was enacted, following relatively low exposure on 16 November and a gradual increase on 17 November. This spike pattern aligns with recent studies (e.g., Zhang & Leung, 2021; Wirawan, 2022), which show that major political events often trigger sudden issue spikes driven by a combination of political momentum and intensified media coverage. The visualization of the exposure pattern described above is presented in the following figure:

**Figure 3.** Number of News Articles and Publication Frequency

Source. Collected Data from Online and Social Media Big Data, 2025

The total exposure of the KUHAP issue in online media reached 4,478 publications, as illustrated in Figure 3, indicating that the issue received substantial attention from mainstream media throughout the analysis period. When examined across the three phases, the pre-viral phase (1–15 November) shows relatively low exposure, with an average of 85.5 articles per day. However, entering the viral phase (16–21 November), a sharp increase occurred, particularly on 17 November (154 articles), followed by a dramatic peak on 18 November, the day KUHAP was enacted, with 807 articles, or approximately 9.4 times higher than the pre-viral daily average. Subsequently, the number decreased on 19 November (588) and 20 November (267) before rising again on 21 November (353). In the post-viral phase (22–26 November), exposure fluctuated with an average of 192 articles per day. This pattern aligns with agenda-setting theory, which posits that key events trigger sudden spikes in media attention, directing the public's focus toward the highlighted issue.

The pattern of rising exposure observed in the data corresponds with agenda-setting theory, which emphasizes that key events can generate substantial increases in media attention, thereby prompting the public to concentrate on the same issue. Each surge in exposure not only enhances the visibility of the problem but also stimulates variation in the narratives constructed by the media. In the case of KUHAP, high-intensity coverage created opportunities for diverse framing: some outlets portrayed the enactment as a positive step toward legal reform, while others emphasized concerns that the revision could weaken principles of justice and accountability. This framing diversity has the potential to shape public perspectives, as audiences often evaluate issues based on how the media constructs information. These findings align with recent studies (e.g., Tandoc et al., 2020; Ardha, 2023), which demonstrate that media framing has a significant impact on public opinion and interpretation. The issue and exposure patterns based on sentiment can be observed in the following visualization:

**Figure 4.** Issues and Exposure Frequency in Media Coverage Based on Sentiment

Source. Collected Data from Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

The analysis in Figure 4 categorizes the media framing of the KUHAP issue into two significant types: positive framing and negative framing. Under the positive category, three issues stand out most prominently: human rights protection, with 439 publications; pretrial mechanisms, with 286 publications; and modernization and digitalization, with 196 publications. These issues reflect how certain media outlets portrayed KUHAP as a legal reform initiative that enhances the protection of suspects' rights, clarifies pretrial procedures, and aligns judicial processes with technological advancements. Such narratives may shape public perceptions by framing the KUHAP revision as a progressive governmental step toward improving the criminal justice system. The reinforcement of positive framing aligns with findings in agenda-setting and framing literature such as Chong & Druckman (2020) and Nugroho (2022) which emphasize that media can highlight specific policy aspects to construct a more favorable public impression and increase acceptance of new regulations.

On the other hand, the negative framing of KUHAP appears considerably more dominant. The three most frequently reported issues are potential abuse of authority (657 publications), lack of public participation (271 publications), and inequality and weak emphasis on rehabilitation (180 publications). These issues indicate the media's focus on concerns related to expanded institutional powers, limited public involvement, and imbalances in the orientation of legal reform. The prevalence of these negative narratives may contribute to heightened public concern that the enactment of KUHAP could enable the misuse of authority and undermine the principles of justice. Previous studies, such as Ardia (2021) and Lim & Rufaidah (2022), suggest that negative framing of legal issues often triggers public criticism and intensifies pressure on government institutions. Compared with positive framing, harmful exposure is substantially higher, which may shape a more skeptical public sentiment toward KUHAP. Overall, media sentiment regarding the KUHAP issue is dominated by the neutral category, followed by negative and positive sentiment, as illustrated in the subsequent visualization:

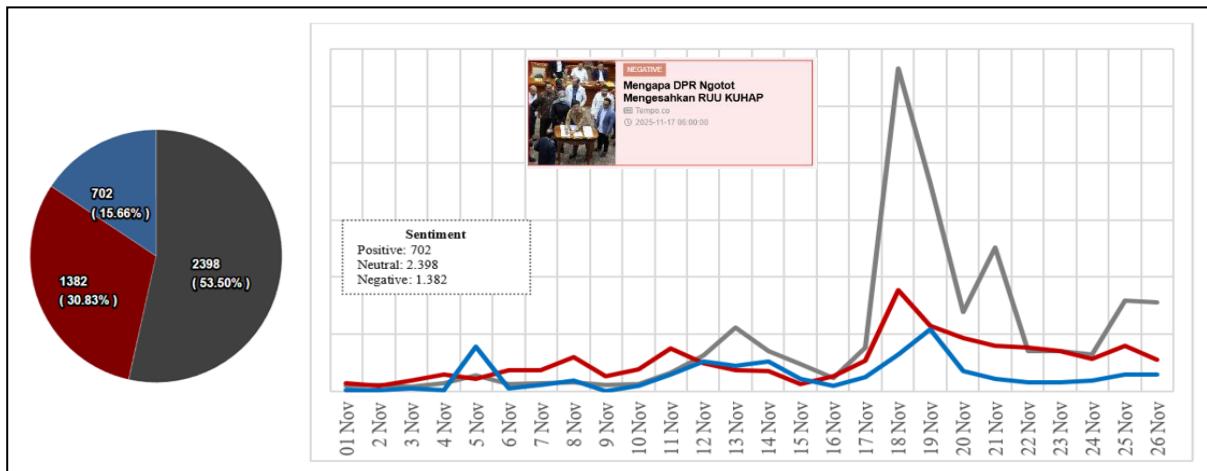


Figure 5. Sentiment and the First Media Outlet Discussing the KUHAP Issue Before Viral Spread
Source. Collected Data from Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

The sentiment analysis presented in Figure 5 indicates that neutral sentiment dominated KUHAP news coverage, with 2,398 publications (53.50%). This dominance of neutral sentiment generally occurs because most mainstream media tend to position themselves as providers of factual information without explicitly evaluating the policy, particularly on technical and complex legal issues. In the context of reporting regulations such as KUHAP, many media outlets prioritize official statements, chronological accounts, and normative explanations, resulting in informative and impartial framing. Conversely, negative sentiment was also substantial, with 1,382 publications (30.83%), reflecting the attention given by certain media to policy risks, controversies, and civil society criticism of specific articles. This high proportion of negative sentiment underscores public and media sensitivity toward potential abuse of power and limited public participation in the legislative process.

Meanwhile, positive sentiment accounted for only 702 publications (15.66%), indicating that support for the KUHAP revision was significantly lower compared to critical or neutral narratives. During the "viral" phase, issue expansion is typically triggered by an initial source that prompts other media to follow suit, and this pattern is clearly observed in the KUHAP case. The analysis shows that Tempo.co was the first media outlet to report on the issue, serving as the catalyst for subsequent discussion across multiple channels. Known for its critical editorial stance and tendency to adopt oppositional perspectives toward government policies, Tempo.co published the initial report on 17 November at 06:00, one day before KUHAP's enactment, with the provocative headline: "Why Did the DPR Insist on Enacting the KUHAP Bill?" This early publication prompted other media outlets to follow the reporting rhythm, as observed in the monitoring of the top five media between November 17 and 18, where

Tempo's initial coverage served as the focal point for similar reports and triggered a surge in public discussion, as visualized below:

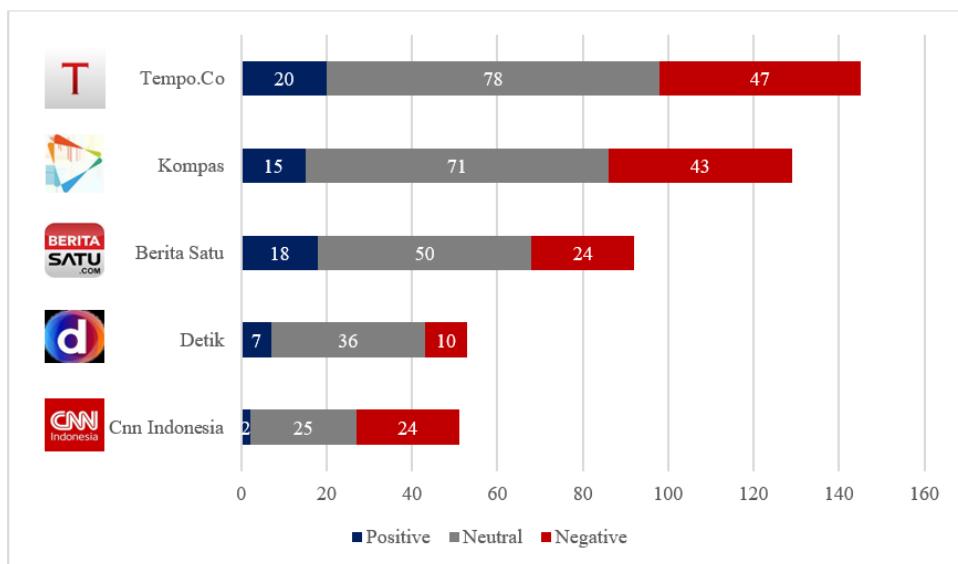


Figure 6. Top 5 Media Covering the KUHAP Issue and Sentiment Distribution

Source. Collected Data from Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

The analysis presented in Figure 6 indicates that Tempo.co had the highest intensity of KUHAP coverage, with 145 publications, comprising 20 positive, 78 neutral, and 47 negative articles. This finding confirms that Tempo.co not only acted as the initial catalyst for the spread of the KUHAP issue but also produced the highest number of negative news items, thereby shaping the early debate atmosphere. Other media outlets also demonstrated substantial coverage: Kompas with 129 articles (15 positive, 71 neutral, 43 negative), BeritaSatu with 92 articles (18 positive, 50 neutral, 24 negative), Detik with 53 articles (7 positive, 36 neutral, 10 negative), and CNN Indonesia with 51 articles (2 positive, 25 neutral, 24 negative). This exposure pattern illustrates the intermedia influence, where media with strong editorial positions often serve as agenda setters for other outlets. This aligns with the theory of intermedia agenda-setting, which suggests that major media or outlets with a strong investigative tradition frequently become reference points for different media in determining the focus of coverage on strategic issues.

Based on the overall analysis, KUHAP reporting shaped a distinct media agenda pattern through surges in news volume, daily publication intensity, narrative diversity, and the dominance of negative and neutral framing propagated by mainstream media. Sharp increases in coverage during key moments demonstrate how the press directs public attention, while variations in framing from legal reform narratives to critiques of potential abuse of authority shape perceptions and stimulate a rapidly evolving discourse. Intermedia relationships are evident through patterns of intermedia agenda-setting, whereby one outlet serves as the initial trigger for issue dissemination, which is subsequently reinforced by other media. These findings confirm that the press not only disseminates information but also constructs perceptions and dominant narratives that guide the escalation of the KUHAP issue. Overall, these patterns are consistent with agenda-setting and framing theories, which emphasize the media's role in influencing public attention and evaluation.

Public Agenda

Public agenda is one of the essential components in the theory of The Agenda-Setting Process: Media, Public, and Policy Agenda, developed by Dearing and Rogers (1996). This theory emphasizes the dynamic interaction between media, the public, and policy, where issues presented in the media are not merely received passively by society but can be responded to, reinforced, or even modified by the public through active participation. The main objective of this theory is to understand how an issue transfers from the media to the public, influencing societal perceptions and priorities, ultimately impacting policy. In other words, the public agenda reflects problems considered necessary by society, which can drive collective attention, stimulate discussion, and generate political pressure. Mapping the public agenda allows researchers to assess the extent to which public discourse is independently formed or responsive to mainstream media coverage, as well as how specific issues may influence policy direction through public involvement.

In the context of this study, the Agenda-Setting theory provides a relevant framework to trace the movement of the KUHAP issue in the digital public sphere. The research focuses on understanding public perceptions, identifying key actors who initiate discussions, and analyzing how media narratives can be reinforced or even distorted through public interaction. Therefore, the analytical variables include: the volume of conversations reflecting public attention intensity; user interactions such as likes, shares, and comments indicating active engagement; trending topics and keywords serving as indicators of discourse focus; actors triggering discussion, including influencers, organizations, and netizens; conversation sentiment categorized as positive, negative, or neutral; and the distribution and patterns of discourse propagation, which help understand how issues move within the digital space. These variables enable researchers to assess the correlation between media exposure, public response, and potential influence on policy agendas.

Public agenda analysis indicates that the number and frequency of netizen posts on social media regarding the KUHAP issue experienced a significant surge. Particularly on November 18, 2025, the problem became the primary public concern, with 25,825 conversations recorded across multiple social platforms. This phenomenon reinforces the Agenda-Setting theory's idea that the public is not merely a passive recipient of information but can also act as a catalyst, amplifying or modifying the narrative presented by mainstream media. The surge in public interaction demonstrates that social media is a crucial space for forming and mobilizing the public agenda, where the intensity of attention can influence policy responses. This pattern also supports the concept of the issue attention cycle, in which issues undergo phases of triggering, escalation, and potential saturation over time. Data visualization of public conversation distribution is shown in the figure below, highlighting netizen attention concentration and interaction patterns:

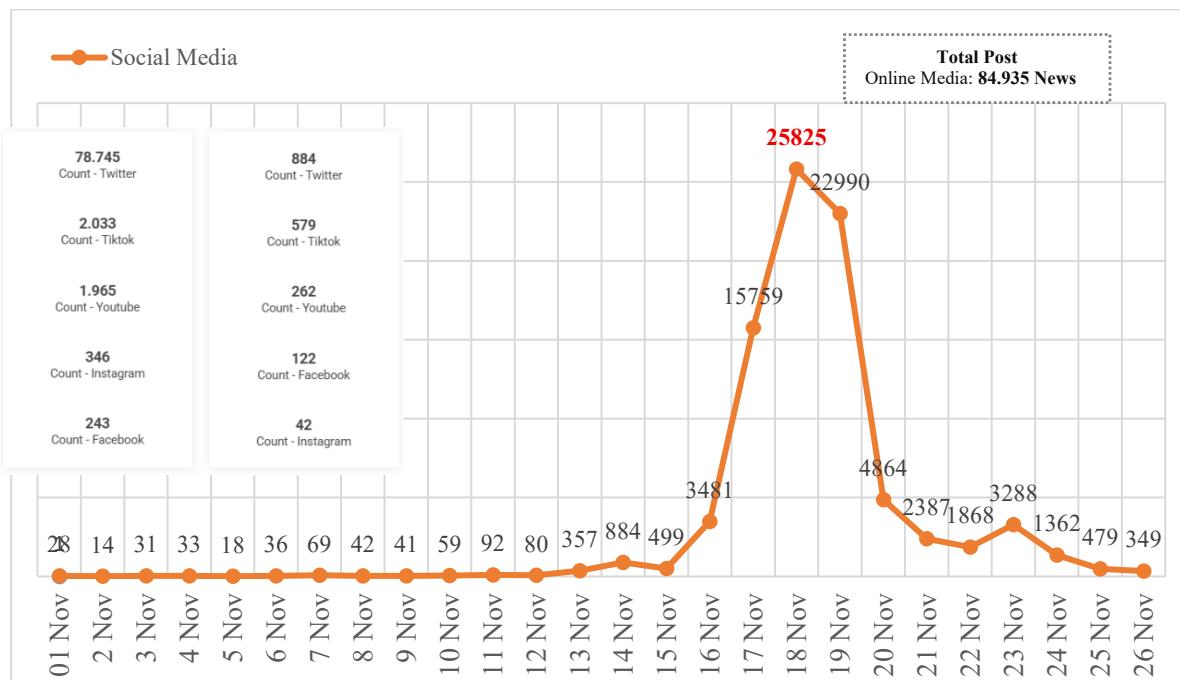


Figure 7. Number and Frequency of Netizen Posts on Social Media

Source. Data Collected Through Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

Public agenda analysis reveals that the number and frequency of netizen posts on social media regarding the KUHAP issue totaled 84,935 posts, with the most significant spike occurring on November 18, 2025, coinciding with the ratification of KUHAP by the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR RI). Previously, on November 17, discussions had already reached 15,759 posts, indicating an escalation phase leading up to the ratification moment. The surge to 25,825 posts on the ratification day reflects massive and intense public attention to this legislative decision. This phenomenon indicates that the KUHAP issue successfully captured the public's primary focus, triggering high interaction on social media. From the Agenda-Setting perspective, this spike demonstrates how the public not only responds to media coverage but also actively expands and reinforces the issue through posts and interactions, resulting in the formation of a tangible public agenda.

The platforms most widely used to discuss the KUHAP issue were X (Twitter) with 78,745 posts and 884 mentions, followed by TikTok with 2,033 posts and 579 mentions, YouTube with 1,965 posts and 262 mentions, Instagram with 346 posts and 43 mentions, and Facebook with 243 posts and limited mentions. TikTok stood out as a popular platform due to its fast, visual, and easily shareable nature, facilitating the rapid spread of brief narratives to a broad audience, particularly younger generations. Nevertheless, the majority of posts were retweets

or shares, accounting for 84.55%, whereas comments constituted only 1.15%, indicating that the public's behavior leaned more toward redistributing content than adding new opinions. This phenomenon aligns with the diffusion of innovations theory, where information perceived as relevant spreads quickly through social networks, while active participation, in the form of comments, remains relatively low. This pattern is visualized in the figure below, showing retweets' dominance compared to other interactions:

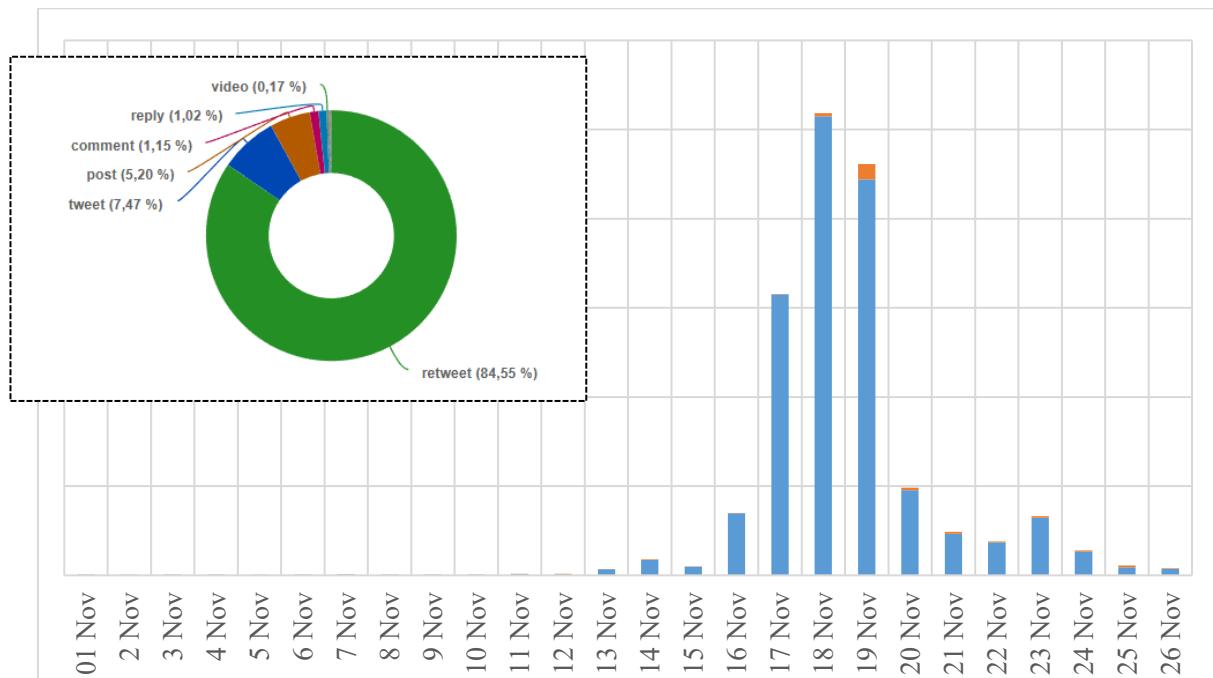


Figure 8. Comparison Between Netizen Posts and Comments Related to the KUHAP Issue

Source. Data Collected Through Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

Figure 8 illustrates the comparison between netizen posts and comments on the KUHAP issue, where posts overwhelmingly dominate over comments. Quantitatively, posts account for 5.20% of total interactions, whereas comments constitute only 1.15%. More specifically, the majority of posts were retweets at 84.55%, compared to original tweets at 7.47%, replies at 1.02%, and videos at 0.17%. This dominance suggests that netizens tend to redistribute information deemed necessary or viral, rather than creating new content, which reflects the information diffusion behavior outlined in Rogers' (2003) diffusion of innovations theory. Retweets serve as a key mechanism to rapidly expand the reach of an issue, allowing narratives to spread widely and collectively shape public attention. This phenomenon highlights that social media is not merely a space for passive interaction, but also a platform for shaping the public agenda through information distribution and participation.

Beyond post quantity, it is also essential to identify trending topics via hashtags, as hashtags serve as indicators of discussion focus and issue trends on social media. Regarding the KUHAP issue, the most dominant hashtag was #intinyadeh, with a total of 8,318 posts, pioneered by a Twitter account that heavily criticized the KUHAP content. This phenomenon aligns with the agenda-setting theory, which highlights that social media can amplify issues and shape public attention through recognizable symbols or hashtags. Hashtags not only facilitate the identification of popular topics but also map conversation networks and the actors involved in discussions. Visualization of hashtag distribution and its relation to the KUHAP issue is presented in the figure below, highlighting the main themes discussed by netizens:

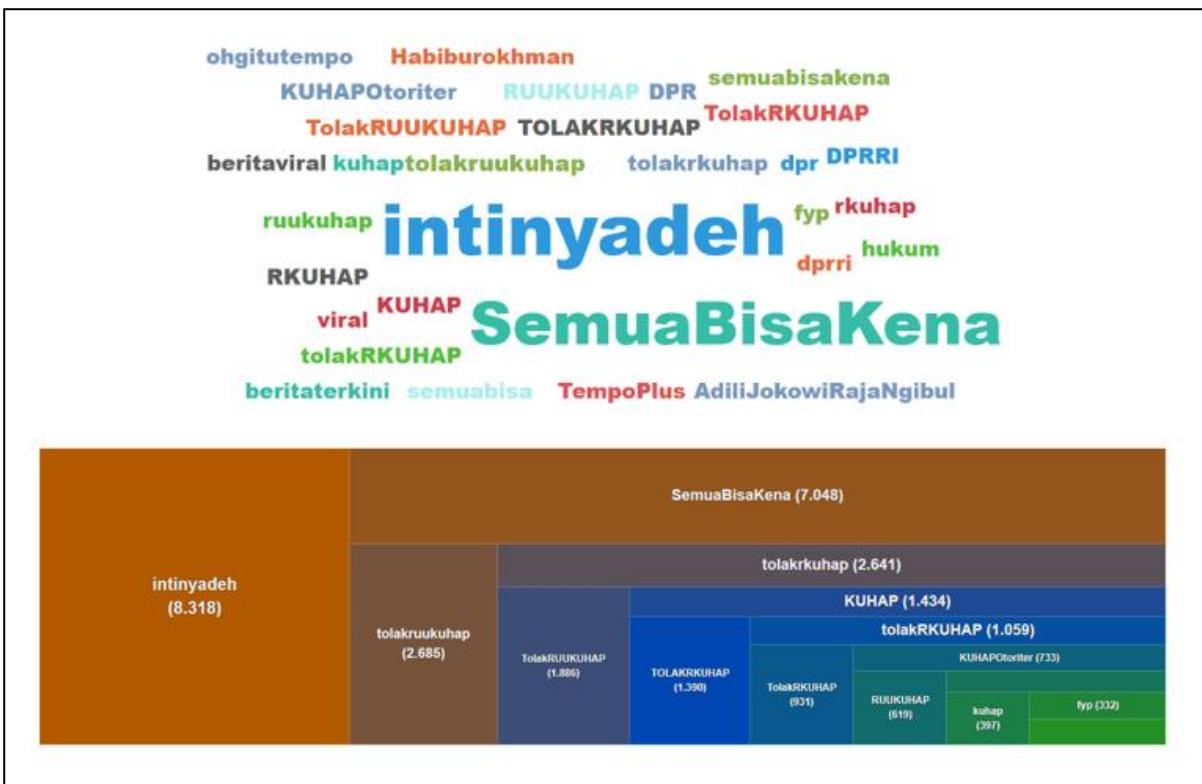


Figure 9. Hashtag Analysis Related to KUHAP Posts

Source. Data Collected Through Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

Hashtag analysis indicates that the most frequently used tag by netizens regarding the KUHP issue was #intinyadeh, with a total of 8,318 posts. This hashtag carried a satirical tone toward the DPR's sudden ratification of KUHP, reflecting creative and humorous public critique of the legislative process. The second most used hashtag, #semuabisakena, with 7,048 posts, focused on the potential negative impacts of ratification, raising netizen concerns about the expansion of authority and the legal implications for society. Meanwhile, the third most frequent hashtag, #tolakrukuhap, with 2,641 posts, expressed direct and assertive rejection of RKUHP. The analysis of these three hashtags reveals that, despite varying expression styles, satire, concern, or outright rejection all serve as means for the public to construct a collective narrative in response to a controversial policy.

From the hashtag analysis, different conversation clusters are evident, yet all share the same meaning: rejecting RKUHP. # Intinyadeh mainly discussed the satirical critique of the DPR, which ratified RKUHP hastily, while #Semuabisakena emphasized the potential risks and negative consequences of ratification, eliciting public concern. In contrast, #tolakrukuhap displayed a direct and firm refusal of RKUHP. The intensity of discussion highlights accounts that actively voice the issue, simultaneously serving as the most retweeted sources and generating viral waves. Two prominent accounts in spreading the issue are @YLBHI and @Intinyadeh on Twitter, with activity patterns and reach visualized below:

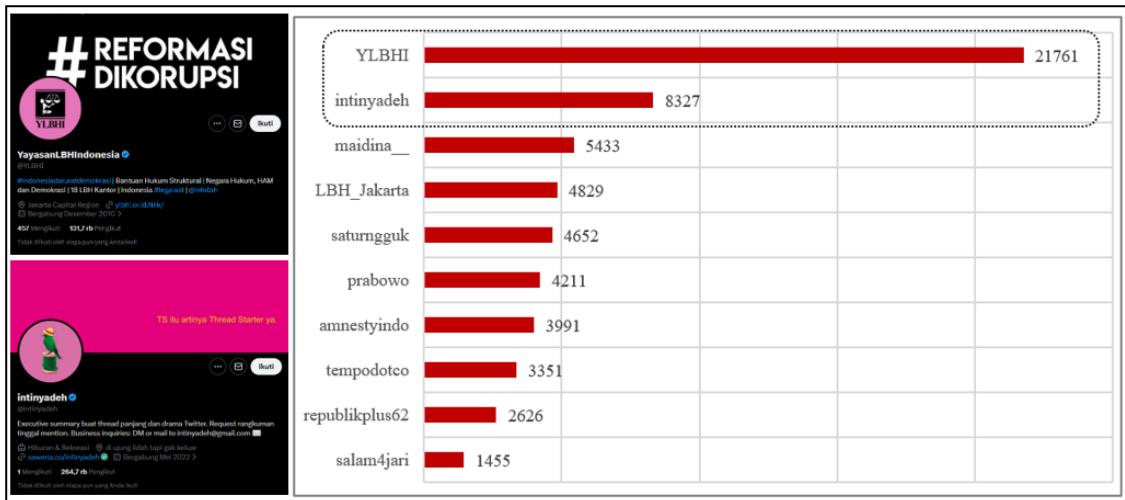


Figure 10. Influential Accounts Driving Netizen Conversations to Viral Levels on the KUHAP Issue
Source. Data Collected Through Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

Figure 10 illustrates influential accounts that drive netizen conversations to viral levels regarding the KUHAP issue. Among the most dominant is the Indonesian Legal Aid Foundation (YLBHI), a legal advocacy organization with 131.7k followers. In the KUHAP debate, YLBHI actively criticized various articles and potential issues, particularly through hashtags #semuabisakena and #tolakrkuhaph. Their critique was informative, analytical, and human rights-oriented, receiving a broad public response. This is evident from the high number of reposts of YLBHI posts, totaling 21,761, indicating that the account functions as an opinion leader in spreading KUHAP rejection narratives. From the two-step flow of communication theory perspective, accounts like YLBHI act as information filters, influencing how the public understands issues and thereby reinforcing the formation of the public agenda.

Unlike YLBHI, which focuses on legal and advocacy aspects, the @intinyadeh account adopts a more casual and communicative style through satire, mainly using #intinyadeh. With a much larger following of 264.7k, the account reaches a broader audience, particularly younger social media users. Despite different communication styles, @intinyadeh posts remain among the most reposted by netizens, totaling 8,327 reposts. In agenda-building and networked public sphere theory, these two accounts perform complementary but distinct functions: YLBHI contributes legitimacy through legal arguments, while @intinyadeh spreads narratives using humor and accessible language. Their combination strengthens the wave of predominantly negative netizen critique. Influence patterns of both accounts are illustrated in the visualization below:

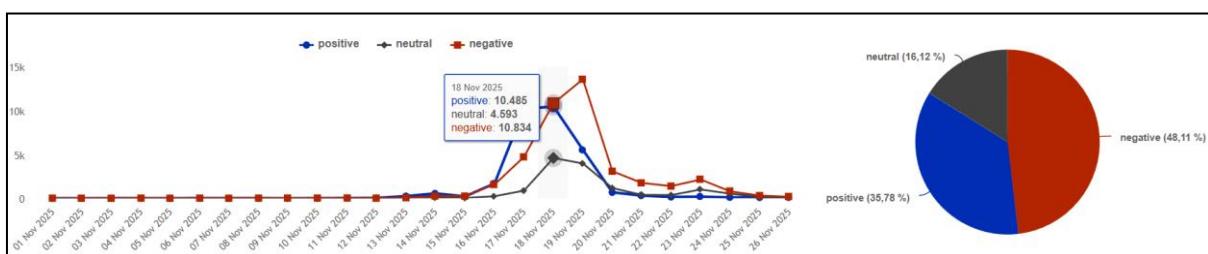


Figure 11. Netizen Sentiment Toward the KUHAP Issue on Social Media
Source. Data Collected Through Online & Social Media Big Data, 2025

Figure 11 shows that accounts like YLBHI and @intinyadeh successfully framed netizen perceptions regarding the KUHAP issue. While online media, such as Tempo.com, served as initial discussion triggers, these social media accounts shaped the narrative flow organically, reinforcing public opinion and encouraging active participation from netizens. Interestingly, the negative sentiment spike occurred not on the KUHAP ratification day but the following day, November 19, differing from online media, which experienced real-time increases on November 18. Overall, negative sentiment reached 48.11%, or 10,834 conversations. Distribution and discourse propagation patterns suggest that public interaction is dispersed, yet focused on key driver accounts, forming conversation networks that amplify criticism, primarily through retweets and hashtag usage.

This pattern illustrates how the public agenda on social media operates at a different rhythm than mainstream online media. Overall, the analysis reveals that the public agenda surrounding the KUHAP issue is shaped through complex interactions among online media, social media accounts, and netizens. Emerging narratives successfully

reveal public perception, identify key actors driving the problem, and detect dynamics of narrative reinforcement or distortion. Accounts like YLBHI and @intinyadeh serve as opinion leaders, influencing public responses to the issue, while netizen interactions, including retweets, comments, and hashtags, create viral waves that strengthen collective narratives. These findings align with agenda-setting and networked public sphere theories, emphasizing that social media enables the public not only to receive information but also to actively shape, disseminate, and reinforce issues of societal concern.

Policy Agenda

Policy agenda in this study focuses on how the KUHAP issue developed and was responded to by the government as the holder of policy authority. The primary objective of discussing the policy agenda is to trace whether the dynamics of discourse in the media and the public genuinely influenced governmental actions, either through official statements, mitigation steps, or policy adjustments. Within the framework of three-agenda dynamics, the policy agenda represents the stage at which an issue has become sufficiently strong in both media and the public sphere, thereby compelling the government to provide an institutional response. Therefore, this section aims to identify patterns linking rising public criticism, the pressure of digital discourse, and governmental decisions or stances regarding the KUHAP controversy. This analysis is important for understanding whether the government acts responsively, defensively, or remains unaffected by shifts in public opinion. In addition, examining the policy agenda helps explain how policy legitimacy is formed and negotiated amid the pressures of digital democracy.

In the context of KUHAP enactment, the policy agenda is used to assess the extent to which the government responded to public criticism and whether such pressure had a tangible impact on the policy process. Based on the two previous findings media agenda and public agenda it is evident that the KUHAP issue received strong criticism from the public, particularly netizens who questioned the accelerated legislative process and several provisions considered problematic. Therefore, the analysis of the policy agenda focuses on various forms of governmental response, such as official statements, press conferences, clarifications from officials, communication strategies used to counter criticism, and potential mitigation steps prepared to address public pressure. This approach is strengthened by agenda-setting theory and three-agenda dynamics, which explain that policy movements often follow the intensity of public and media discourse. Within this model, governmental responses serve as crucial indicators of whether an issue has entered a decisive stage in the policy process.

The analysis shows that influencer exposure from government-affiliated actors responding to the KUHAP enactment controversy was dominated by members of the DPR RI. This dominance is understandable because the DPR RI is the institution directly responsible for drafting and approving legislation, making its members naturally the most active actors in providing clarifications and defending the decision. Among DPR RI members, Habiburokhman and Puan Maharani recorded the highest exposure within the digital discourse related to KUHAP. Both appeared most frequently in news reports and public conversations because their statements were perceived as representing the official stance of the DPR RI. Their level of involvement is illustrated in the data visualization below, which demonstrates how certain political figures play significant roles in reframing discourse and influencing the direction of public debate on KUHAP:

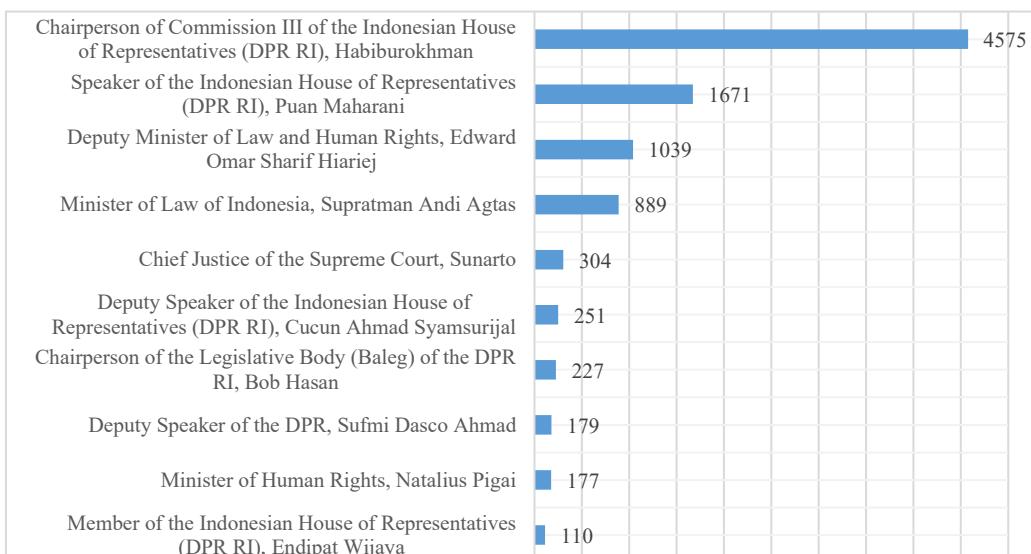


Figure 13. Government-Affiliated Influencer Exposure in Responding to the KUHAP Enactment Controversy

Source. Collected from Online and Social Media Big Data, 2025

Based on the analysis in Figure 13, it is evident that Habiburokhman, a DPR RI member from the Gerindra faction who also serves as Deputy Chair of Commission III, became the figure providing the most responses regarding the KUHAP controversy, with a total of 4,575 statements. This number positions him as the most vocal actor defending the legislative process while correcting various public criticisms. The next most active figure is Puan Maharani, Chair of the DPR RI from the PDI Perjuangan faction, who recorded 1,671 statements. Her involvement reflects the institutional position of the DPR as the body authorized to pass laws. Additionally, figures such as Edward Omar Sharif Hiariej, Deputy Minister of Law and Human Rights and a criminal law scholar, recorded 1,039 statements, mostly offering technical explanations. This pattern indicates that the most dominant responses came from those with direct authority over the legislative process, particularly individuals responsible for explaining the normative and political rationale behind KUHAP's enactment.

Overall, Habiburokhman and Puan Maharani became the most active figures issuing statements during the viral phase on 18 November, precisely when public criticism peaked. Most of their statements consisted of rebuttals against public accusations that KUHAP was passed hastily, threatened civil liberties, expanded law-enforcement powers without proper oversight, and potentially weakened protections for suspects. Both actors framed these accusations as misinformation, misleading narratives, or hoaxes circulating on social media. This pattern of rebuttal is visible in the visualization below, which portrays the DPR's defensive narrative through clarifications, restatements of articles, and attempts to calm public opinion on the day KUHAP was passed. This phenomenon aligns with agenda-building theory and three-agenda dynamics, in which political actors attempt to control the direction of discourse once an issue enters the stage of public escalation. At this stage, governmental statements function as agenda-correction strategies to counter distortions spreading in the digital sphere:

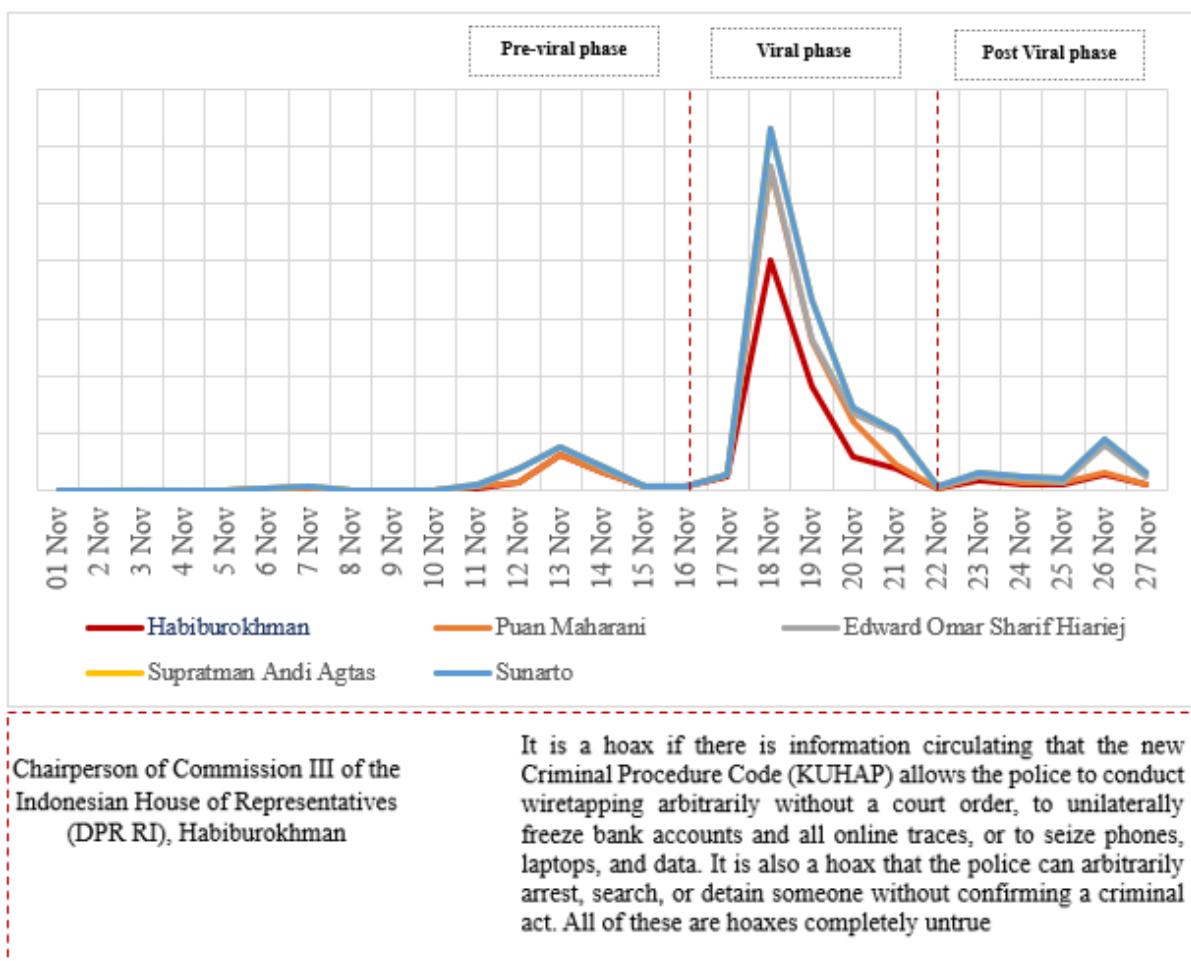


Figure 14. Frequency of Government Influencer Exposure in Responding to the KUHAP Controversy
Source. Collected from Online and Social Media Big Data, 2025

Figure 14 illustrates that all government actors, both from the DPR RI and relevant ministries, consistently provided positive framing of KUHAP's enactment. They attempted to build a narrative that the regulation had undergone a long process, possessed strong academic grounding, and aimed to modernize the criminal justice system. Each actor emphasized elements such as transparency, protection of suspects' rights, and simplification of

legal procedures as part of their defensive arguments. This pattern of positive framing indicates message uniformity among stakeholders, strategically directed at neutralizing public criticism. Such uniformity also reflects coordinated efforts to maintain institutional legitimacy within both the legislative and executive branches under intensifying discourse pressure.

Despite the clarifications and explanations provided on 18 November, public unrest increased on 19 November, especially on social media, which showed a surge in negative framing. This condition indicates that governmental responses did not immediately reduce negative public sentiment; instead, they triggered new waves of highly critical discussions. Theoretically, this phenomenon can be explained through the concept of issue amplification in social media agenda-setting theory, in which governmental rebuttals inadvertently heighten attention and expand the space for public interpretation. In the framework of three-agenda dynamics, this also suggests the possibility of counter-flow, where the public agenda moves faster than media and policy agendas, causing government clarifications to lag behind the already-expanding discourse. The visualization below clearly shows this pattern: the intensity of public discussions on 19 November rose sharply, indicating that governmental intervention was insufficient to control the direction of discourse:

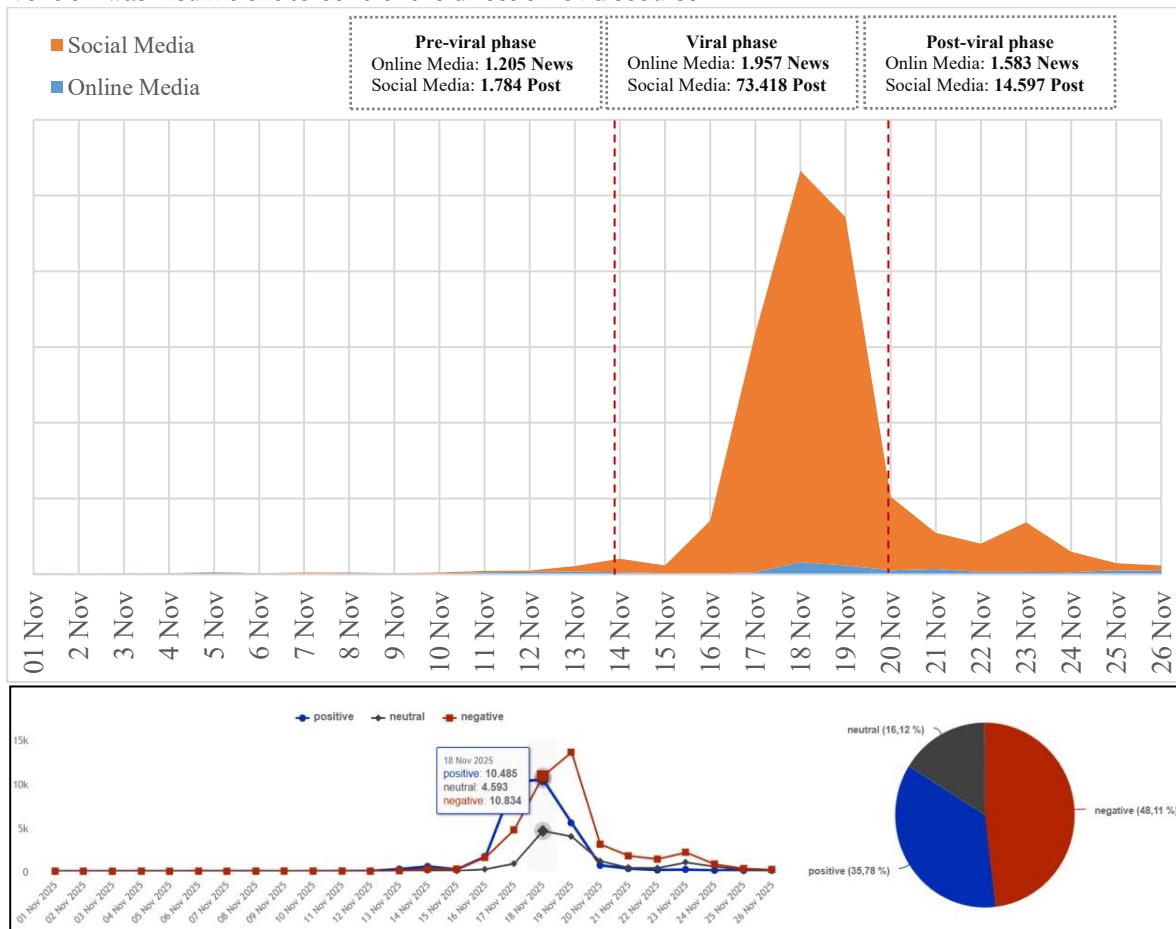


Figure 15. Categorization of the Viral Phase After Government Response & Netizen Sentiment on the KUHAP Issue

Source: Collected from Online and Social Media Big Data, 2025

The simultaneous governmental responses on 18 November did not immediately reduce negative netizen sentiment. Instead, data show that on 19 November, negative sentiment rose significantly on social media. This increase demonstrates that governmental clarifications failed to control public perception and even generated new waves of criticism that broadened negative discourse. Nonetheless, after this peak, the issue gradually declined until 26 November. Several factors may explain this decline: first, issue fatigue, or public exhaustion after a high-intensity phase; second, the shift of public attention toward other emerging national issues; and third, the reduction of governmental responses, resulting in no additional triggers that could sustain narrative conflict. This pattern reflects a digital discourse cycle that is unstable yet exhibits a natural rhythm toward saturation.

Within the context of the policy agenda, governmental responses to the KUHAP controversy show a dynamic tension between public pressure and attempts to maintain policy direction. Although the government issued clarifications, press conferences, and affirmative narratives on 18 November, these responses did not fully suppress public criticism. This indicates that public discourse holds increasing influence in shaping perceptions of policy

legitimacy. However, shifts in policy direction do not always occur immediately, as the government tends to maintain its initial position while emphasizing normative and procedural arguments. In the three-agenda dynamics framework, this situation represents a stage of competition between the public agenda and the policy agenda, where rising public discourse influences governmental communication strategies even if it does not instantly alter policy content. In other words, public discourse shapes governmental responses, but not necessarily the final policy outcome.

Overall, the policy agenda analysis shows that the government responded to the KUHAP issue reactively and focused on positive framing efforts to preserve policy legitimacy. The synchronized responses on 18 November indicate that the government felt significant public pressure and therefore needed to present official narratives capable of balancing the rising criticism. However, the fact that negative sentiment increased further on 19 November shows that discourse control was not entirely successful. Nevertheless, the issue entered a decline phase between 20–26 November, indicating that it followed the typical pattern of the digital issue-attention cycle. These findings reinforce that in the digital democracy era, the policy agenda is no longer shaped solely through top-down mechanisms but influenced by layered interactions among media, the public, and the government. Thus, the KUHAP enactment becomes a concrete example of how digital pressure can test governmental responsiveness, even if it does not always change policy direction.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it is evident that the media agenda, public agenda, and policy agenda surrounding the KUHAP revision issue affected one another, although not always simultaneously or in the same direction. From the media agenda perspective, coverage of the KUHAP revision increased significantly after criticism from academics and civil society organizations emerged, particularly concerning the weakening of due process, the expansion of investigators' authority, and the potential for criminalization through ambiguous provisions. This rise in exposure subsequently stimulated the public agenda, as reflected in the surge of negative sentiment and conversation volume on social media, especially after 18–19 when the government delivered its official response. Rather than easing the issue, the government's reaction instead provoked stronger public objections because it was perceived as failing to address the substantive criticisms, shifting the discourse toward concerns about transparency, participation, and the implications of the KUHAP revision for the protection of citizens' rights. These dynamics then exerted pressure on the policy agenda, as indicated by discussions about revisiting certain articles, plans for further public consultations, and evaluations of norms considered potentially harmful to suspect protections. However, policy responses remained reactive and did not fully meet public expectations. Thus, this study affirms that the media agenda triggers public attention, the public agenda strengthens opinion pressure, and the policy agenda moves in response, although its implementation is not yet optimal. These findings demonstrate the empirical interconnectedness between information flows, public opinion, and policymaking in the dynamics of the KUHAP revision.

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