

Human or machine? discursive constructions of authenticity in AI-generated news and public communication in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Background: Generative artificial intelligence is reshaping news production and public communication by complicating established relations among authorship, credibility, transparency, and institutional responsibility. **Objective:** This study investigates how Indonesian governmental, regulatory, and media institutions discursively construct authenticity in documents concerning AI-assisted journalism and public communication. **Method:** Using a qualitative corpus-assisted design, this study analyses fifteen public documents published between 2023 and 2026 through Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, van Leeuwen's social-actor framework, and multimodal discourse analysis, with metadata, textual evidence, and coding stored in linked datasets. **Results:** Findings show that authenticity is constructed primarily through institutional authority, human verification, source traceability, ethical disclosure, and professional accountability. Human-centred authenticity dominates journalism-related documents, whereas public-communication texts more frequently combine innovation, partnership, official-data authorization, and risk framing. AI is widely granted productive agency as a tool, collaborator, presenter, or intermediary, but responsibility remains assigned to journalists, media organizations, government institutions, and platform operators. **Implication:** Contextual variation further indicates that news discourse protects epistemic authority, while governmental communication more readily legitimizes AI as an administrative resource. **Novelty:** This study contributes a relational model of authenticity that moves beyond binary human-machine authorship by integrating discursive legitimation, distributed agency, institutional context, and multimodal representation within an Indonesian communication setting amid rapid technological institutional change.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Generative artificial intelligence has moved from an experimental newsroom technology to an infrastructure that can draft, summarize, translate, visualize, and present public information, unsettling the distinction between human authorship and machine production. This shift matters because authenticity is attached not only to factual accuracy but also to disclosure, provenance, accountability, and human judgment. The Reuters Institute's 2024 survey of more than 95,000 respondents across 47 markets found that only 40% trusted most news most of the time, while audiences were less comfortable with news produced mainly by AI than with human-led journalism. In Indonesia, institutional concern has become explicit: the Press Council issued Regulation No. 1/2025 requiring AI-assisted journalistic work to remain governed by journalistic

ethics, while official guidance stresses labeling, verification, and human responsibility. These developments make Indonesia a consequential setting for examining how legitimacy is allocated when institutions portray AI as tool, partner, threat, or quasi-author in communication.

Recent scholarship has examined newsroom adoption, professional role negotiation, audience trust, disclosure effects, and the ethical risks of generative AI. Studies show that journalists value AI for efficiency while reserving verification, contextual judgment, and accountability for humans [1], [2], [3]. Experimental research further demonstrates that AI labels may reduce perceived trustworthiness or willingness to share, even when content is accurate, although disclosure and supervision policies can mitigate this penalty [4], [5], [6], [7]. Other work addresses visual generation, professional ethics, epistemic authority, and audience expectations [8], [9], [10]. Yet this literature is dominated by audience experiments and newsroom interviews in Western settings. It has rarely investigated how Indonesian governmental, regulatory, and media institutions construct authenticity through language, actor representation, and multimodal design across journalism and public communication.

This study therefore investigates how authenticity is discursively produced in Indonesian documents concerning AI-assisted news and public communication published between January 2023 and June 2026. Rather than treating authenticity as an intrinsic quality of either human or machine output, this study examines it as an institutional claim assembled through lexical choices, disclosure practices, authority relations, visual cues, and allocations of responsibility. Three questions organize the analysis. First, which discursive resources define communication as authentic, transparent, credible, or trustworthy? Second, how are journalists, AI systems, government agencies, media organizations, and platforms positioned as authors, tools, supervisors, verifiers, or accountable actors? Third, how do these constructions vary across news and public-communication domains and across textual and multimodal forms? This study combines Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, van Leeuwen's social-actor framework, and multimodal discourse analysis, enabling comparison between linguistic form, institutional practice, and visual legitimation without inferring audience effects that this corpus cannot establish.

This study advances the argument that authenticity in AI-mediated communication is constructed less as proof of exclusively human authorship than as a negotiated institutional achievement. In this formulation, AI may be normalized as a productive instrument, yet legitimacy remains conditional on human oversight, source traceability, disclosure, and accountability. Evidence indicates that audiences distinguish technical competence from ethical trust and often react negatively when AI authorship appears opaque or insufficiently supervised [11], [12]. Journalism research likewise shows that professional actors preserve epistemic authority by defining AI as assistive rather than autonomous. The Indonesian corpus enables this proposition to be tested in a regulatory and communicative environment shaped by state institutions, a national press council, and public-service imperatives. Conceptually, this approach shifts inquiry from whether machines can imitate credible news to how institutions authorize human-machine arrangements as credible, responsible, and publicly legitimate.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Authenticity

Authenticity in AI-mediated communication is neither human origin nor naturalness; it is a socially authorized claim about provenance, sincerity, accountability, and epistemic reliability. Classical accounts distinguish existential authenticity from constructed authenticity, while communication research treats authenticity as an audience judgment shaped by source cues and institutional expectations. In journalism, recent studies show that AI authorship can weaken credibility even when content remains accurate, because readers associate authentic news with human intention, professional norms, and answerability [5], [11]. Accordingly, authenticity should be examined as discursive accomplishment rather than measurable textual essence.

Its dimensions include authorship transparency, source traceability, verification, accountability, emotional sincerity, and institutional legitimacy. Disclosure identifies whether AI participated in production, whereas provenance connects claims to identifiable sources and production histories. Verification concerns accuracy; accountability identifies who must answer for error; sincerity concerns perceived human concern; legitimacy derives from professional authority. These dimensions may converge, but they are not interchangeable: transparent AI content can remain inaccurate, while correct output can appear inauthentic when responsibility is obscured. Research on newsroom ethics, visual generation, and governance recommends layered assessment rather than binary human-machine classification [8], [9], [13].

2.2. Agency

Agency concerns actors' capacity to initiate actions, make decisions, produce meanings, and bear consequences. Human-centred approaches reserve intentionality and moral responsibility for people, whereas sociotechnical perspectives distribute agency across journalists, algorithms, institutions, interfaces, and

platforms. Communicative AI complicates this distinction because systems may generate or modify messages while remaining dependent on organizational choices [14], [15]. Journalism scholarship rejects both technological determinism and purely instrumental accounts: AI can materially restructure workflows and dependencies without becoming equivalent to a journalist [1], [16], [17]. Agency is also relational, represented, and institutionally allocated.

Analytically, agency can be traced through inclusion, activation, passivation, authorization, authorship, and responsibility. Van Leeuwen's social-actor framework identifies how discourse foregrounds some participants while suppressing others. In AI journalism, recurring relations include tool use, collaboration, supervision, substitution, competition, and platform dependency. Journalists may be activated as verifiers but backgrounded as producers; AI may be personalized as an author yet denied accountability; institutions may claim authority while assigning error to technology. Research on professional roles, epistemic authority, and adoption confirms that these allocations protect occupational boundaries while normalizing automation [18], [19].

2.3. Multimodality

Multimodality refers to meaning produced through the orchestration of language, image, sound, typography, space, and interface design. Kress and van Leeuwen conceptualize modes as socially organized resources, whereas platform research emphasizes that meanings are also shaped by technical affordances and circulation systems. In AI-mediated news, authenticity may be signalled by human faces, newsroom settings, institutional logos, voices, disclosure labels, or interfaces. Conversely, avatars and synthetic imagery may simulate human presence while destabilizing evidential status. Studies of generative visual journalism and communicative-AI framing show that visual realism does not guarantee credibility [8], [20].

Relevant multimodal indicators include represented actors, gaze, distance, camera angle, salience, framing, colour, layout, logo placement, vocal quality, sequencing, and text-image relations. Representational meaning identifies depicted actions; interactive meaning positions viewers; compositional meaning organizes authority and attention. Reinforcement occurs when visual and verbal modes support human oversight, while contradiction emerges when anthropomorphic imagery masks automated production or weak disclosure. Yet multimodal analysis cannot explain institutional power, just as discourse analysis may overlook sensory legitimation. This study therefore integrates Fairclough's critical discourse analysis, van Leeuwen's actor framework, and multimodal grammar to conceptualize authenticity as contested, relational, and institutionally authorized human-machine communication.

3. METHOD

This study examines fifteen publicly accessible documents concerning artificial intelligence, journalism, and public communication in Indonesia, published between January 2023 and June 2026. The document constitutes the observational unit, while words, phrases, clauses, quotations, actor representations, disclosure statements, and visual elements constitute analytical units. The corpus comprises twelve primary documents, two secondary documents, and one contextual item: seven press releases, three institutional news items, three news reports, one regulation, and one feature article. Eleven documents address news, whereas four concern public communication. Eight items provide full-text access, six provide partial excerpts, and one contains verifiable metadata only during this period.

This study adopts a qualitative, corpus-assisted critical discourse design integrating textual, social-actor, and multimodal analysis. Such integration is appropriate because authenticity is approached neither as an intrinsic property of human writing nor as a technical feature detectable from language alone, but as an institutional claim produced through discourse. Fairclough's three-dimensional model connects textual features with processes of production, circulation, and broader social practice. Van Leeuwen's framework identifies how human, machine, and institutional actors are included, activated, authorized, or assigned responsibility. Kress and van Leeuwen's visual grammar systematically examines representational, interactive, and compositional meanings across images, layouts, logos, and audiovisual frames.

Information was obtained exclusively from lawful, publicly accessible institutional sources: the Ministry of Communication and Digital Affairs, its Directorate General of Public Communication and Media, the Indonesian Press Council, the Press Council's legal-document repository, and ANTARA News, including regional and English-language channels. Sources were classified as primary when they directly articulated institutional policy or official positions, secondary when they reported or interpreted AI-related developments, and contextual when they explained platform relations, publisher rights, or media sustainability. Source validity was established through institutional ownership, identifiable publication metadata, stable URLs, document provenance, and correspondence between titles, dates, issuing bodies, and accessible content.

Table 1. Corpus dataset of research

Code	Data type	Source	Location/scope	Period/date	Main characteristic
DOC001	Press release	Komdigi	National	2025-10-22	AI framed as a partner in public communication
DOC002	Press release	Kominfo/Komdigi	National	2024-04-24	Institutional encouragement of AI adoption
DOC003	Press release	Kominfo/Komdigi	National	Date unverified	Ethical risks of AI-supported communication
DOC004	Press release	DJKPM Komdigi	South Sumatra	2026-04-16	Ethics and transparency in media AI
DOC005	Press release	DJKPM Komdigi	Southeast Sulawesi	2026-05-13	Verification, empathy, and journalistic responsibility
DOC006	Institutional news	Indonesian Press Council	National	2025-10-14	AI as an assistive tool under human control
DOC007	Institutional news	Indonesian Press Council	Central Java	2025-10-14	Accuracy, transparency, and press accountability
DOC008	Regulation	Press Council legal repository	National	2025-01-22	Formal guidance for AI use in journalism
DOC009	News report	ANTARA News English	International forum	2024-09-16	Disclosure and editorial validation
DOC010	Feature article	ANTARA News Mataram	West Nusa Tenggara	2024-09-04	AI reporters, avatars, and disclaimers
DOC011	News report	ANTARA News Megapolitan	West Java	2023-11-20	Human expertise and AI-generated misinformation
DOC012	Press release	Komdigi	National	2026-02-08	Publisher rights and journalistic value
DOC013	Press release	Komdigi	National	2026-02-08	Public trust versus algorithmic authority
DOC014	Institutional news	Komdigi	National	2026-04-16	Official-data provenance in public-service AI
DOC015	News report/context	ANTARA News English	Jakarta	2026-02-24	Attribution, copyright, and platform relations

Data collection combined manual web searching, direct examination of accessible webpages, and manual extraction of metadata and short evidentiary passages; no application programming interface or automated web scraping was used. Searches combined Indonesian and English keywords concerning AI-generated news, public communication, transparency, verification, human oversight, journalism ethics, official data, presenters, algorithms, and publisher rights. Each eligible document received a unique identifier from DOC001 to DOC015. Metadata, text segments, and preliminary coding were stored separately in linked

CSV files. Duplicate screening systematically compared URLs, titles, institutions, dates, events, locations, and textual similarity. Inaccessible content remained blank and was explicitly marked metadata-only.

Analysis proceeded in five stages. First, documents were segmented into headlines, clauses, paragraphs, quotations, disclosures, and visual units. Second, Faircloughian analysis examined lexical choices, modality, evidentiality, intertextuality, transparency, trust, and institutional legitimation across textual, discursive, and social levels. Third, social-actor analysis coded authorship, activation, passivation, agency roles, responsibility, human oversight, and human-machine relations. Fourth, multimodal analysis examined represented actors, gaze, distance, salience, framing, colour, layout, logos, and text-image relations where visual evidence was accessible. Finally, cases were compared across domains, institutions, formats, regions, and access statuses, with discrepant cases retained and preliminary codes subjected to verification before final interpretive synthesis

4. RESULTS

4.1. Discursive constructions of authenticity, transparency, and trust

This section maps the discursive resources through which the accessible corpus constructs credible AI-mediated news and public communication. The analysis includes fourteen documents with usable textual evidence; one regulation represented only by verified metadata was excluded from substantive interpretation. Frequencies refer to document-level occurrences of each preliminary authenticity resource rather than to every lexical repetition within a document. This distinction prevents longer articles from acquiring disproportionate analytical weight. The categories capture different foundations of credibility: institutional authorization, human judgment, contested machine production, human-AI partnership, source provenance, technological utility, and explicit transparency. Their distribution demonstrates that authenticity is not operationalized as a single binary distinction between human and machine authorship. Instead, the documents organize authenticity around multiple conditions governing who produces communication, which sources validate it, and who remains answerable for its consequences.

Table 2. Distribution of discursive resources used to construct authenticity

Main category	Frequency	Percentage	Data variation	Illustrative quotation	Document codes
Institutional authenticity	5	35.7%	News: 4; public communication: 1; full text: 2; partial excerpt: 3	“AI layanan publik wajib gunakan data resmi.”	DOC004, DOC007, DOC012, DOC013, DOC014
Human authenticity	3	21.4%	News: 3; full text: 3	“AI hanya berperan sebagai alat bantu, bukan pengganti jurnalis.”	DOC005, DOC006, DOC011
Contested authenticity	2	14.3%	News: 1; public communication: 1; full text: 1; partial excerpt: 1	“Konten berita yang dibuat AI tidak boleh dianggap sebagai fakta atau akurat.”	DOC003, DOC010
Hybrid authenticity	1	7.1%	Public communication: 1; partial excerpt: 1	“AI harus jadi mitra dalam komunikasi publik.”	DOC001
Source-based authenticity	1	7.1%	News: 1; full text: 1	“Journalistic content has the right to be legally protected.”	DOC015
Technological authenticity	1	7.1%	Public communication: 1; partial excerpt: 1	“Teknologi AI menjadi peluang bagi pengembangan sektor komunikasi publik.”	DOC002
Transparent AI	1	7.1%	News: 1; full text: 1	“AI supports and assists, not replaces, human decision-making.”	DOC009

Institutional authenticity is the most frequent category, occurring in five documents, or 35.7% of the coded corpus. These documents associate credible AI use with official data, ethical regulation, publisher rights, organizational responsibility, or public trust. Human authenticity follows with three documents, representing 21.4%, all of which concern news and are available in full text. These items emphasize verification, empathy, professional expertise, and human control. Contested authenticity appears twice, whereas hybrid, source-based, technological, and transparent-AI constructions each occur once. Discursive positioning is similarly concentrated: institutional, human, source-based, and transparent constructions are primarily human-centred, while hybrid and technological authenticity position AI within collaborative arrangements. Only contested authenticity occupies skeptical or ambiguous positions. Objectively, therefore, positive acceptance of AI is usually accompanied by explicit or implied limits on autonomous machine authority.

This distribution suggests that authenticity operates as an institutional and relational accomplishment rather than as evidence that communication originated entirely from a human author. AI is normalized where institutions retain the authority to define data quality, professional ethics, disclosure, and responsibility; it becomes contested when synthetic production imitates human agency without equivalent accountability. This interpretation accords with newsroom research showing that generative AI is used across production and distribution, while journalists continue to regard contextual judgment and editorial control as professional responsibilities. It also reflects research identifying algorithmic transparency as an organizational practice shaped by institutional dynamics, rather than a simple label attached to technological output. Recent credibility research further indicates that disclosure and human oversight positively structure evaluations of AI-mediated news. Thus, this study treats authenticity as negotiated through authorization, traceability, human supervision, and accountable institutional positioning

4.2. Human, machine, and institutional agency in ai-mediated communication

This section presents how communicative agency is distributed among human, machine, and institutional actors in fourteen documents containing accessible textual evidence. Agency was coded through actor type, functional role, authorship attribution, responsibility attribution, human oversight, and the relationship assigned to humans and AI. The table does not measure actual technological autonomy; it records how institutional discourse represents participation in communication. Six relational configurations were identified: supervision, tool use, competition, dependency, collaboration, and substitution. Institutionally supervised AI constitutes the largest category, followed by instrumental tool use. By contrast, autonomous or substitutional machine agency appears only once. This distribution indicates that the corpus largely recognizes AI as participating in message production while restricting legitimate decision-making, verification, and accountability to journalists, public communicators, media organizations, or regulatory institutions.

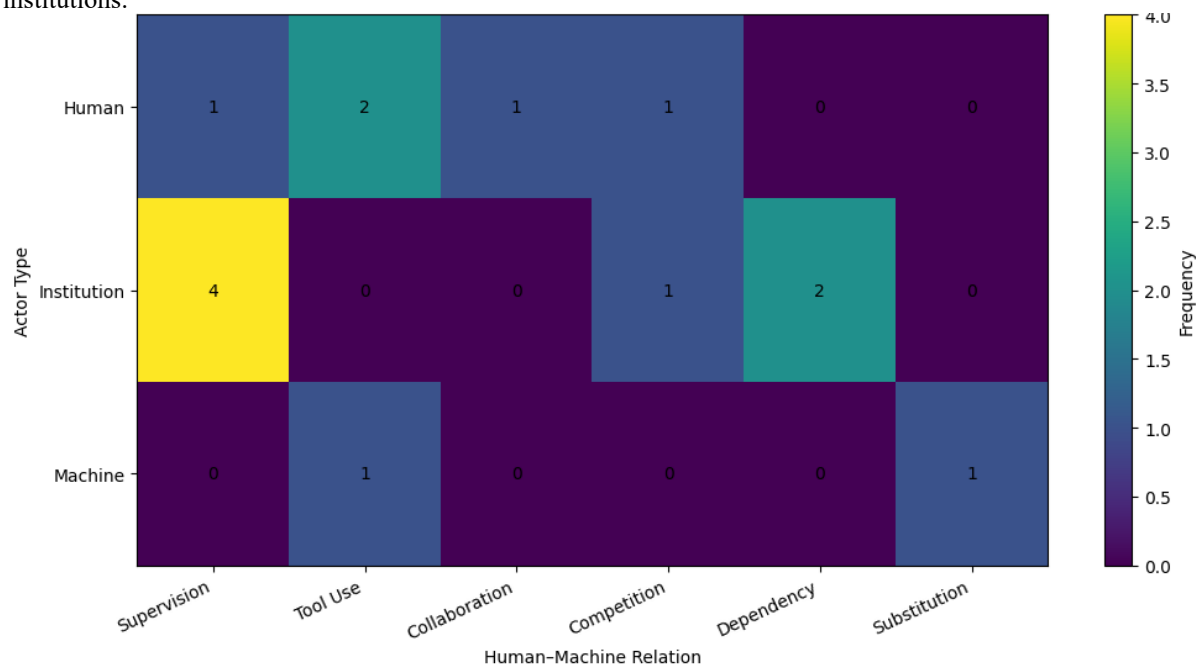


Figure 1. Actor types across human-machine relations (n = 14)

Supervision is the dominant configuration, appearing in five documents, or 35.7% of the coded corpus. Four of these centre institutional actors, and all five explicitly mention human control, editorial validation, verification, or official data. Tool use occurs in three documents, representing 21.4%, and similarly limits AI to an assisting function. Competition and dependency each appear twice. Competitive discourse contrasts journalistic expertise or public trust with algorithmic replacement, whereas dependency discourse emphasizes platforms' reliance on professionally produced news and identifiable sources. Collaboration and substitution each occur once. Overall, institutional actors constitute half of all coded actor types, while humans account for five items and machines for two. Hybrid authorship is attributed in seven documents, but responsibility is never assigned exclusively to AI. Explicit human oversight appears in eight cases, implied oversight in five, and unclear oversight in only one case.

The pattern reflects a discursive separation between productive agency and accountable agency. AI may generate, process, present, or distribute communication, yet moral and epistemic responsibility remains attached to humans and institutions. This distinction supports sociotechnical accounts in which agency is distributed across systems but not equally translated into professional authority. Recent newsroom research likewise shows that generative AI is incorporated according to existing journalistic roles, with verification and judgment retained as occupational boundaries. Studies of journalistic authority further indicate that professionals respond to automation by reinforcing human expertise, readjusting work practices, and reclaiming tasks considered central to journalism. The isolated substitution case is therefore analytically significant: machine authorship becomes visible, but responsibility shifts to platform operators rather than to AI itself. This study consequently interprets human-machine agency as asymmetrically distributed: production may be hybridized, whereas accountability remains institutionally human.

4.3. Contextual variation across communication domains and institutions

This section compares authenticity discourse across communication domains and institutional settings. Fourteen documents containing accessible textual evidence were classified by communicative domain, institution type, authenticity position, transparency status, and access condition. News comprises ten documents issued by government bodies, the press regulator, and the state news agency, while public communication comprises four government documents. This comparison does not assume that institutional affiliation directly causes a particular discourse. Instead, it identifies patterned differences in how organizations formulate legitimate AI use according to their communicative responsibilities. News discourse primarily addresses professional authority, editorial verification, ownership, and accountability, whereas public-communication discourse places greater emphasis on partnership, technological development, official information, and potential social risks. Context therefore provides an organizing condition for interpreting authenticity claims.

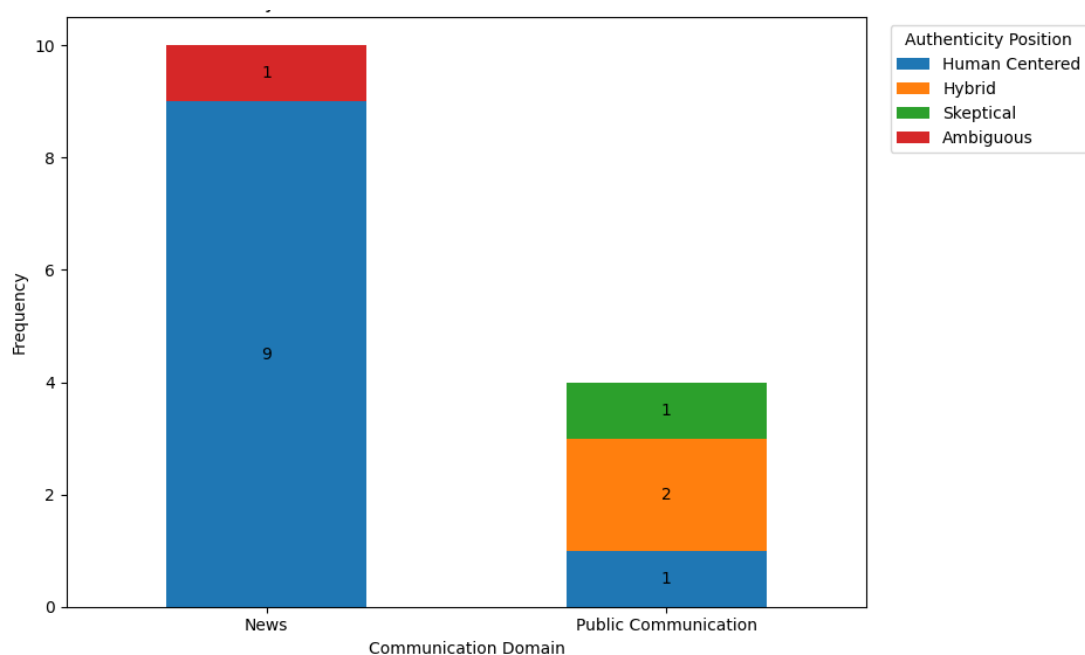


Figure 2. Authenticity positions across communication domains (n = 14)

Human-centred authenticity dominates news discourse, appearing in nine of ten news documents. All governmental and press-regulatory news items adopt this position, while three of four state-news-agency documents do so; one state-agency feature presents AI authorship ambiguously. Explicit transparency is concentrated in news, particularly in regulatory statements and full-text media documents. Public communication is more heterogeneous: two documents adopt hybrid positions, one is human-centred, and one is skeptical. Its transparency markers are predominantly implicit, with one document containing no identifiable disclosure marker in the accessible excerpt. Institutionally, government sources constitute eight documents, but their framing varies by domain. Governmental news emphasizes human verification and public trust, whereas governmental public communication more frequently describes AI as a partner, opportunity, managed informational system, or communication risk.

These differences indicate that authenticity is adapted to institutional function rather than articulated through a uniform national discourse. Journalism-related documents protect legitimacy by reaffirming verification, editorial authority, professional judgment, and source ownership because AI directly challenges established boundaries of news production. Public-communication documents permit broader technological optimism because AI is commonly positioned as an administrative or communicative resource rather than an autonomous author. This interpretation is consistent with research showing that generative AI is incorporated across news production while professional actors retain judgment and ethical responsibility [21]. It also corresponds with evidence that institutional dynamics shape how algorithmic transparency is defined and implemented [12]. Thus, this study conceptualizes contextual variation as a process through which institutions recalibrate innovation, risk, and human authority according to their public mandate.

5. DISCUSSION

The dominance of institutional and human-centred authenticity indicates that AI-mediated communication becomes legitimate only when credibility is anchored in accountable social actors. This functions productively by preserving traceability, editorial review, and public responsibility while permitting institutions to adopt generative tools. It also prevents technical fluency from being mistaken for epistemic reliability. However, this arrangement can become dysfunctional when authenticity is reduced to institutional assertion, since official authorization does not guarantee accuracy, fairness, or meaningful disclosure. Cools and Diakopoulos show that journalists recognize generative AI's efficiency while remaining concerned about credibility, bias, and verification [21], whereas Porlezza argues that ethical governance must address both use and system design [3]. The findings extend these debates by showing that Indonesian institutional discourse treats authenticity as a governed relationship among technology, professional norms, and answerability. Trustworthy AI communication therefore depends less on whether machines participate than on whether responsibility remains visible, contestable, and enforceable in practice.

This pattern is structurally produced by journalism's need to defend epistemic authority while incorporating technologies that redistribute communicative labour. Institutional authenticity dominates because governments, regulators, and news organizations define valid data, ethical procedure, and professional accountability. Human authenticity persists because verification, empathy, contextual judgment, and moral responsibility remain boundary markers through which journalism differentiates itself from automated production. Møller and colleagues similarly show that professional roles shape generative-AI adoption [18], while van Dalen observes that technological possibilities remain constrained by journalistic norms [2]. Yet disclosure research complicates a celebratory interpretation: Toff and colleagues found that AI labels may reduce trust even when audiences do not judge content less accurate. Transparency produces a paradox. Institutions must disclose AI involvement to demonstrate accountability, but disclosure may also activate suspicion. The underlying structure is not resistance to innovation; it is negotiation between efficiency, occupational legitimacy, and the expectation that communication has an identifiable source publicly.

The asymmetric distribution of agency carries an implication: hybrid production is normalized, but autonomous machine authority is not. This division functions by allowing AI to draft, process, summarize, or present information while preserving human control over validation and consequences. This fits sociotechnical understandings of distributed work because production can be shared without treating software as a moral subject. Nevertheless, the arrangement may obscure where decisions occur. When institutions describe AI merely as a tool, they can understate how system design, training data, interfaces, and platform infrastructures shape available choices. Chan argues that AI recalibrates power and labour throughout the news value chain [22], while Cools and Diakopoulos document concerns extending beyond replacement to dependence and organizational control [21]. The findings suggest that human oversight should not be a ceremonial final check. Its meaningful function requires source access, authority to reject outputs, technical understanding, and organizational responsibility for errors within hybrid production systems in practice.

The underlying reason for this asymmetry is that productive capacity and accountability belong to different normative orders. Generative systems can perform communicative actions, yet legal, ethical, and

professional regimes require responsibility to be assigned to persons or organizations. Accordingly, documents activate AI as producer or presenter but relocate liability to journalists, editors, institutions, or platform operators. This corresponds with Natale's relational account of communicative AI [15], in which machines appear socially agentic through interaction without acquiring equivalent moral status. It also supports research showing that journalists preserve authority by defining verification and judgment as professional practices. However, the dependency category reveals a deeper structural shift: institutions may remain nominally accountable while relying on platforms and models they cannot fully inspect [23]. Dependency can weaken oversight and complicate attribution. Thus, discourse protects human authority symbolically, but material agency may be distributed across proprietary infrastructures, creating a gap between declared responsibility and operational control.

Variation between news and public communication shows that authenticity is calibrated to institutional purpose. In journalism, human-centred positioning functions to protect evidential standards, professional identity, source ownership, and audience trust because AI intervenes in practices associated with truth production. In public communication, partnership and innovation frames function to legitimize modernization, administrative efficiency, and informational reach. This flexibility is useful because identical governance rules may not fit every communicative setting. Yet it may become dysfunctional when optimistic innovation discourse leaves disclosure implicit or treats official data as sufficient evidence of legitimacy. Algorithmic transparency research demonstrates that disclosure practices are shaped by priorities and cannot be reduced to one label. Likewise, Misri finds that newsroom ethics remain unevenly formalized as AI practices develop [9]. The comparison implies that sector-specific standards are necessary, but they should share minimum requirements: identifiable provenance, explicit oversight, accessible correction procedures, and clear responsibility across journalistic and governmental communication.

These contextual differences arise from distinct institutional mandates, risk structures, and relations with audiences. News organizations derive legitimacy from independence, verification, and professional authorship, making substitutional AI threatening to their epistemic authority. Government communication derives legitimacy primarily from administrative mandate and official information, so AI can be framed more readily as an instrument of service delivery. Press regulators occupy a boundary position and articulate restrictions on accuracy, transparency, and human control. Cross-national research supports the importance of institutional context: Groenewald shows that AI adoption in African newsrooms is conditioned by organizational and infrastructural inequalities [24], while Lischka identifies national legal and innovation environments as determinants of journalistic AI development [25]. The Indonesian pattern should not be interpreted as universal. Rather, it demonstrates that authenticity discourse is embedded in governance and institutional histories. This study positions authenticity as a negotiated regulatory achievement whose form changes with communicative mandate, technological dependence, and accountability risk.

6. CONCLUSION

This study shows that authenticity in Indonesian AI-mediated news and public communication is constructed primarily through institutional authority, human oversight, source traceability, transparency, and professional accountability rather than through exclusively human authorship. Its central lesson is that AI becomes communicatively legitimate when institutions make responsibility visible and preserve human judgment over verification, correction, and ethical consequences. By integrating critical discourse analysis, social-actor analysis, and multimodal discourse analysis, this study contributes a relational perspective that connects authenticity claims with agency distribution, institutional mandates, and visual legitimation. It therefore extends current debates beyond binary human-machine distinctions toward governed arrangements of hybrid communication.

This study is limited by its small pilot corpus, uneven source accessibility, reliance on institutional documents, and the predominance of discourse about AI rather than fully verified AI-generated outputs. Several items were available only through partial excerpts, while one regulation could be recorded only at metadata level; consequently, findings should not be generalized to Indonesian media as a whole or to audience responses. Future research should expand the corpus across commercial media, government agencies, social platforms, and regional institutions, incorporate verified AI-produced content, interviews, and audience experiments, and apply longitudinal and comparative designs to examine how disclosure, provenance, and human oversight reshape authenticity over time.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Dewi Masyithoh: conceptualization (lead), methodology (lead), formal analysis (lead), writing – original draft (lead), writing – review and editing (lead).

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Author stated no conflict of interest.

AI USE DECLARATION

The author used artificial intelligence tools to assist with the generation of illustrative figures and with the formatting and layout of this manuscript. AI was not used to generate the substantive content, conceptualization, data, analysis, or conclusions of the research, all of which remain the sole responsibility of the author.

INFORMED CONSENT

I have obtained informed consent from all individuals included in this study.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research related to human use has been complied with all the relevant national regulations and institutional policies in accordance with the tenets of the Helsinki Declaration and has been approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

Data availability is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study.

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