

Neoliberal Discourse in Digital Sociopreneurship: A Foucauldian Analysis

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Abstract

This study examines how neoliberal ideology is reproduced through digital sociopreneurial communication by analyzing Garda Pangan, a foodbank-based sociopreneurial organization operating in Surabaya and Malang, Indonesia. The study addresses a key problem in contemporary humanitarian campaigns, namely the tendency to frame structural issues such as food waste and food insecurity as matters of individual moral responsibility. The objective of this research is to analyze how moral subjectivities are produced and governed through platform-based communication. Using Foucauldian Discourse Analysis within the Critical–Cultural Tradition, the study analyzes visual and textual narratives on Instagram alongside organizational guidelines. The analysis shows how subjectification is enabled through Instagram’s affordances, including aesthetic curation, Stories-based visibility, and engagement metrics, which align moral identity with digital performance. The findings identify four dominant discursive formations: food waste as moral failure, charity as redemption, volunteering as lifestyle identity, and institutional discipline of virtue. These discourses are structurally favored by Instagram’s algorithmic logic, which prioritizes emotionally resonant and visually legible content over structural or political critique. The study concludes that Garda Pangan’s communication operates as a moral governance dispositif that depoliticizes food insecurity by transforming collective responsibility into individualized virtue.

Keywords: Digital Humanitarianism; Foucauldian Discourse Analysis; Neoliberal Ideology; Instagram Communication; Moral Governance.

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Wacana Neoliberalisme dalam Sosiopreneurship Digital: Analisis Foucauldian

Abstrak

Penelitian ini mengkaji bagaimana ideologi neoliberal direproduksi melalui komunikasi sosiopreneurial digital dengan menganalisis Garda Pangan, sebuah organisasi sosiopreneur foodbank yang beroperasi di Surabaya dan Malang, Indonesia. Penelitian ini berangkat dari persoalan utama dalam kampanye kemanusiaan kontemporer, yaitu kecenderungan membingkai persoalan struktural seperti limbah pangan dan kerawanan pangan sebagai tanggung jawab moral individu. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah menganalisis bagaimana subjektivitas moral diproduksi dan diatur melalui komunikasi berbasis platform digital. Penelitian ini menggunakan Analisis Wacana Foucauldian dalam tradisi komunikasi kritis–kultural dengan menganalisis narasi visual dan tekstual pada Instagram serta dokumen pedoman organisasi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa proses subjektivasi dibentuk melalui affordance Instagram, seperti kurasi estetika, visibilitas melalui

fitur Stories, dan metrik keterlibatan, yang mendorong performativitas moral dan individualisasi tanggung jawab. Empat formasi diskursif utama diidentifikasi, yaitu limbah pangan sebagai kegagalan moral, amal sebagai penebusan, partisipasi sebagai gaya hidup, dan disiplin kebajikan institusional. Diskursus ini selaras dengan logika algoritmik Instagram yang memprioritaskan emosi dan visibilitas dibandingkan kritik struktural. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa komunikasi Garda Pangan beroperasi sebagai sebuah moral governance dispositif yang mendepolitisasi kerawanan pangan dengan mengalihkan tanggung jawab kolektif menjadi kebajikan individual.

Kata Kunci: *Humanitarianisme Digital, Analisis Wacana Foucauldian, Ideologi Neoliberal, Komunikasi Instagram, Tata Kelola Moral.*

Introduction

Food waste has become one of the most pressing global challenges in contemporary food systems, with significant environmental, social, and economic consequences. International research indicates that food waste reduction is increasingly facilitated through digital or community-based platforms that reframe waste management as a matter of social behaviour and responsibility rather than purely logistical or technical problems (de Almeida Oroski & da Silva, 2023). In particular, social media platforms such as Instagram do not merely disseminate these moral messages but function as discursive infrastructures, where visual aesthetics, short-form content, Stories features, and engagement metrics (likes, shares, and visibility) actively shape how responsibility and participation are communicated and valued. Additionally, global estimates show that nearly one third of food produced for human consumption is lost or wasted each year, highlighting how consumer behaviour remains a central driver of food waste at the household level (Jones-Garcia et al., 2022). Studies across Europe and Asia show that social media campaigns rely on moral appeals that frame individual discipline as the solution to food waste (Prokop et al., 2022).

In the global context of digital humanitarianism, scholars have noted a similar pattern in which humanitarian communication prioritizes affective imagery, personal virtue, and emotional engagement to mobilize audiences (Theys et al., 2020a). Such communication centres empathy and moral sentiment while downplaying structural causes of vulnerability such as inequitable food systems, labour precarity, and limited state support. These dynamics illustrate how digital humanitarian narratives worldwide contribute to the formation of neoliberal moral subjects who internalize social responsibilities as personal duties.

Although existing studies have examined food waste communication and humanitarian campaigns across various digital contexts, most research remains concentrated on western platforms and institutional actors. Very few studies investigate how these dynamics operate within sociopreneurial foodbanks in Southeast Asia, particularly those that adopt hybrid models combining charity, social entrepreneurship, and digital advocacy. Recent reviews of food waste initiatives in the region show significant gaps in the analysis of civil-society-led digital interventions (Abdel-Gawwad et al., 2020). These gaps are reinforced by findings

on digital social innovation in the Southeast Asia, which indicate that organizations often blend humanitarian goals with entrepreneurial and technological strategies to mobilize public participation (X. Liu et al., 2022).

In the contemporary era of digital sociopreneurship, social campaigns have become a dominant form of moral communication that merges humanitarian discourse with market rationality. This tendency is particularly evident in Indonesia, where social enterprises and non-profit organizations are increasingly combining digital engagement with institutionalized moral governance to mobilize public participation. One notable case is a foodbank-based sociopreneurial organization in Surabaya, referred to here as Garda Pangan, which operates across both digital and institutional spheres. The organization campaigns against food waste through visual storytelling and participatory content on Instagram, while also maintaining a formal “Guideline for Visitations” document that regulates volunteer conduct, behavioral ethics, and moral expectations during on-site activities.

Through slogans such as “Save Food, Share Love” and “Be a Food Hero,” the organization’s digital campaign constructs a discourse of moral responsibility and civic virtue, inviting individuals to participate in donation, gleaning, and volunteering. These simplified moral slogans are not only persuasive but also inherently more compatible with the algorithmic logic of social media platforms, where emotionally resonant, visually appealing, and easily consumable messages tend to gain greater visibility than complex structural analyses. As a result, discourses of individual

virtue become de facto stabilized as the dominant communicative frame within digital sociopreneurship. Meanwhile, the institutional guideline extends this moral framework into structured behavioral norms by prescribing humility, politeness, and gratitude as moral obligations. Together, these digital and institutional layers form an apparatus of moral governance in which individuals are guided not only through affective visual persuasion but also through normative regulation. Accordingly, this study explicitly examines visual rhetoric in the organization’s digital communication, including design elements such as color palettes, framing, and filters, to analyze how food insecurity and poverty are depoliticized and transformed into aestheticized moral commodities suitable for social media circulation.

At first glance, these campaigns and guidelines appear altruistic and community-oriented. However, from a critical standpoint, they reflect how humanitarian action is reframed within neoliberal logic, where social responsibility is individualized, moralized, and detached from its structural causes. Food waste, a complex systemic issue linked to production, distribution, and policy failures, is rearticulated as an individual moral problem that can be solved through micro acts of generosity. This process aligns with what Foucault (1991) calls governmentality, a mode of power that governs not through coercion but through the internalization of moral norms, producing subjects who willingly regulate themselves under the guise of ethical participation.

The persuasive role of Instagram in shaping individual engagement and

decision-making has been empirically demonstrated. Michelle and Susilo (2021) found that exposure to Instagram content significantly influences users' behavioral tendencies and purchasing decisions, confirming that digital visibility affects how individuals internalize social and moral messages. Their findings highlight how visual exposure on social media not only drives consumption but also constructs behavioral norms through emotional and cognitive engagement. In the context of digital sociopreneurship, this implies that exposure to moralized imagery and slogans such as "Save Food, Share Love" can similarly shape civic participation and moral identity through the logic of visibility and affect.

Within the Critical–Cultural Tradition of Communication (Craig, 1999), discourse is not merely a channel of information but a site of ideological struggle where meanings, identities, and power relations are constructed. Accordingly, this study adopts Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) to examine how Garda Pangan digital and institutional communication constructs discourses of responsabilization, moral subjectivity, and neoliberal self-governance. The critical–cultural paradigm enables scholars to interrogate how seemingly benevolent campaigns normalize specific moral regimes while silencing structural perspectives (Hidayat, 2016; Fairclough, 1995).

The paradox of food waste is particularly acute in Indonesia, where approximately 48 million tons of food are wasted annually (UNEP, 2024), while more than 25 million people continue to experience moderate to severe food

insecurity (BPS, 2023). Yet, the issue is often addressed through micro-level interventions such as donation drives, gleaning, and redistribution rather than structural policy reforms. In this framing, critical structural issues, including supply chain inefficiencies and subsidy regimes that privilege large-scale producers, weak regulation of corporate food waste and taxation, limited state intervention in food distribution systems, and persistent labor precarity affecting access to food, are largely backgrounded or silenced. Organizations like Garda Pangan frame food surplus as an opportunity for civic participation and moral fulfillment, using digital media to aestheticize charity and institutional discourse to discipline moral behavior. This convergence of visual affect and moral instruction reflects the neoliberal rationalities of self-governance and entrepreneurial ethics that shape public problem-solving in contemporary Indonesia.

Although this research focuses on a single sociopreneurial organization, Garda Pangan represents a broader paradigm of humanitarian entrepreneurship emerging in Indonesia's digital economy. Its practices exemplify how moral communication, market rationalities, and civic participation intersect in post-welfare contexts. Therefore, analyzing this organization provides not only a localized understanding of moral discourse but also a conceptual framework for interpreting how neoliberal ethics operate across similar digital humanitarian initiatives in Southeast Asia.

Previous studies on foodbank initiatives have primarily focused on managerial, technological, or behavioral

dimensions, including donation logistics (Hidayat et al., 2020a), digital campaign design (Rivaroli, 2022), and Islamic social finance models (Ahmadi et al., 2024). However, few have interrogated the ideological and discursive operations that underlie such campaigns. This study fills that gap by analyzing how Garda Pangan communication, across both Instagram and institutional documents, constructs truth claims about moral responsibility, citizenship, and virtue, whereby affective moral appeals circulated through digital campaigns are subsequently formalized and stabilized through organizational guidelines that regulate volunteer behavior and codify expected ethical conduct.

By employing Foucauldian Discourse Analysis within the Critical–Cultural Tradition, this research argues that beneath the surface of moral advocacy lies a system of discursive regularities that normalize neoliberal ethics of individual responsibility while obscuring the structural politics of food insecurity. In this context, Garda Pangan communication, both digital and institutional, functions as a *dispositif* of moral governance, where media aesthetics and institutional discipline converge to produce subjects who internalize virtue as a mode of self-governance.

Moreover, examining sociopreneurial foodbank communication in Indonesia becomes increasingly important as digital humanitarian practices rapidly evolve across Southeast Asia. In the Indonesian context, discourses of morality and virtue articulated through digital sociopreneurship intersect with long-standing socio-cultural and religious ethics, such as the notion of *gotong*

royong (collective mutual assistance) and Islamic practices of *sadaqah* (voluntary almsgiving). These moral frameworks provide culturally legitimate vocabularies through which individual responsibility, care, and generosity are normalized, thereby rendering neoliberal forms of responsabilization locally acceptable and ethically resonant. Existing studies have not fully explored how organizational guidelines and digital narratives interact to shape moral behaviour, making this analytical focus both timely and necessary. Therefore, this study not only maps discursive constructions of responsibility but also provides a methodological contribution by integrating institutional documentation with digital discourse.

Beyond these contextual challenges, this study addresses a critical gap in communication scholarship by integrating food waste discourse, digital humanitarianism, and sociopreneurial governance into a unified analytical frame. While previous studies have examined each of these themes separately, limited research has explored how digital platforms, institutional guidelines, and moral narratives interact to shape individual responsibility within humanitarian entrepreneurship. By applying Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, the present study provides a more comprehensive account of how power, visibility, and moral regulation converge in the communication practices of foodbank organizations in Indonesia. This conceptual integration reinforces the urgency of interrogating how digital moral appeals influence citizenship formation and public understanding of structural issues such as food insecurity.

Literature Review

The Critical–Cultural Tradition of Communication

Craig (1999) positions the critical–cultural tradition as a perspective that understands communication as a central site in which power, ideology, and social order are produced and contested. Rather than treating communication as a neutral process of message transmission, this tradition emphasizes discourse as a cultural practice that actively constructs meaning, identities, and normative frameworks. Media, therefore, are not passive channels but key arenas where ideological struggles take place and where particular ways of seeing and acting become normalized (Hall, 1997).

Building on this perspective, Fairclough (1995) argues that media discourse does not merely reflect social reality but participates in producing and legitimizing it through linguistic and visual strategies. In digital environments, where communication is organized around images, short texts, and affective cues, discourse increasingly operates through moral and emotional appeals that render power productive rather than coercive. When combined with neoliberal rationalities that frame social problems as matters of individual choice and responsibility, this communicative logic gives rise to a specific form of subjectivity. From a communication perspective, this subject can be understood as a neoliberal moral subject, or a “moral entrepreneur,” who is encouraged to translate care, empathy, and civic responsibility into visible and performative self-brands through digital participation.

Within contemporary digital contexts, this productive power intersects with neoliberal rationalities that frame social problems as matters of individual responsibility and self-management. From a communication perspective, this intersection produces what can be understood as a neoliberal moral subject, or a “moral entrepreneur,” who is encouraged to translate care, empathy, and civic responsibility into visible, performative, and marketable self-brands through digital participation. Moral appeals circulated through images, slogans, and affective narratives thus function not only as persuasion but as technologies of subject formation that align ethical conduct with visibility and self-presentation.

This theoretical view is consistent with empirical findings on digital media exposure. Michelle and Susilo (2021) demonstrate that repeated exposure to Instagram content significantly shapes audience behaviour and decision-making, underscoring the role of visibility and attention as mechanisms of influence. From a critical–cultural standpoint, such exposure functions not only as information consumption but also as affective conditioning, reinforcing Hall’s (1997) notion of media as a site of ideological struggle. Accordingly, Instagram visibility can be understood as a form of symbolic governance, structuring how audiences perceive moral responsibility, civic engagement, and appropriate modes of participation within contemporary digital culture.

In the context of digital sociopreneurship and humanitarian communication, the critical–cultural framework allows researchers to

interrogate how campaigns that appear benevolent may nonetheless reproduce neoliberal rationalities. This includes the moralization of individual behaviour, the commodification of virtue, and the displacement of structural problems into matters of personal ethics (Couldry, 2010; Gill, 2016). Within this study, such dynamics are examined through the specific communicative format of Garda Pangan, where short, highly visual Instagram posts mobilize affect and moral identification, while detailed institutional guidelines translate these affective appeals into formalized norms and disciplined conduct. Together, these formats operate as a dual technology of governance, combining digital persuasion with institutional regulation to shape moral subjectivity and participation.

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA)

Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) is grounded in Michel Foucault's archaeological and genealogical approaches to examining the historical construction of knowledge, truth, and power. Rather than focusing solely on linguistic features, FDA examines the broader conditions of possibility that allow particular statements, representations, and identities to be recognized as legitimate and meaningful within specific cultural and institutional contexts. Within this framework, discourse operates as a social practice that actively shapes reality by organizing what can be thought, said, and enacted.

According to Foucault (1972, 1980), discourse functions as a regime of truth, constituted through networks of practices that define who may speak, what may be

said, and how certain moral claims gain authority. Power, in this sense, is productive rather than repressive, as it operates through the formation of subjectivities and the normalization of moral responsibilities. Building on this perspective, Waitt (2005) argues that FDA is particularly suited to media analysis because it reveals how everyday communication contributes to the reproduction of dominant moral orders and ideological formations.

Methodologically, FDA operates through two interrelated analytical lenses: archaeology and genealogy. The archaeological reading identifies discursive regularities, recurring moral vocabularies, silences, and exclusions that structure meaning within a particular domain, such as how campaigns repeatedly frame "care," "responsibility," or "virtue." The genealogical reading traces how these moral discourses become stabilized over time through institutional norms, documents, and practices, thereby revealing the power-knowledge relations that sustain them.

Through this dual approach, FDA enables a critical reading of digital sociopreneurial campaigns as part of a moral economy of visibility, in which acts of care and responsibility are circulated, evaluated, and legitimized through digital exposure. Within this economy, visibility functions as a form of symbolic value, encouraging moral actions to be performed, displayed, and recognized, thereby transforming virtue into a communicative and quasi-commodified resource.

At the same time, FDA foregrounds how discourses are sustained through material and technological constraints. In the context of Instagram, affordances

such as the pressure for polished visual aesthetics, the brevity of captions, and the ephemeral nature of Stories operate as discursive constraints that privilege personalized, emotionally resonant, and easily digestible narratives. These platform conditions limit the articulation of complex structural critique and instead orient sociopreneurial communication toward individualized moral failure, redemption, and self-responsibility. By linking digital discourse to institutional frameworks, the analysis demonstrates how humanitarian communication is continuously steered toward neoliberal subjectivities and normalized forms of moral self-governance.

Neoliberal Ideology and Digital Sociopreneurship

Neoliberalism, as articulated by scholars such as Brown (2015) and Harvey (2007), extends market logic into all spheres of life. It redefines citizenship as entrepreneurship and social responsibility as personal morality. Within this ideological framework, social problems such as poverty, hunger, or waste are reframed as issues of individual choice and self-discipline rather than structural inequality.

In digital environments, this ideology manifests through what Hearn (2008) calls “self-branding,” which refers to a process in which individuals construct moral and aesthetic identities that align with marketable virtues such as empathy, sustainability, and activism.

In sociopreneurial contexts, digital campaigns often merge humanitarian values with business-oriented communication. They mobilize participation through emotional appeal (affective governance)

while subtly reinforcing the neoliberal discourse of responsabilization, which is the belief that individuals, rather than institutions, are responsible for solving collective problems (Rose, 1999). Consequently, the aesthetic of charity, which is characterized by the portrayal of smiling volunteers, ethical consumers, and grateful beneficiaries, functions as a moral economy that legitimizes neoliberal subjectivities.

Digital Humanitarianism and Moral Governance

Digital humanitarianism refers to the use of digital platforms to mobilize empathy, coordinate relief, and shape public engagement with social issues. Recent studies show that digital humanitarian communication frequently relies on affective imagery, moral appeals, and personal virtue to encourage public participation (Theys et al., 2020a). While these strategies generate emotional connection and visibility, they often marginalize structural explanations of vulnerability, including inequitable food systems, limited welfare provision, labor precarity, and weak regulatory oversight. Within this communicative framing, discourses that emphasize corporate accountability for supply chain waste, state responsibility in food governance, or policy failures in redistribution systems are frequently displaced by narratives of individual moral action and personal responsibility.

A central feature of digital humanitarianism is the production of a moral economy of visibility, in which acts of care are publicly displayed and circulated to generate legitimacy and emotional

resonance. Visual content such as smiling volunteers, curated images of giving, and symbolic representations of care function not only to attract engagement but also to prioritize reputational value and audience responsiveness over structural critique (Moreno-Cabanillas et al., 2024). As a result, humanitarian communication increasingly privileges individualized moral action, framing care as a visible and performative practice rather than a matter of political accountability.

Conceptually, this study contributes to the literature by applying Foucauldian Discourse Analysis to the intersection of digital media, sociopreneurship, and morality. By doing so, it extends existing work on digital humanitarianism beyond descriptive accounts of affective communication, demonstrating how moral discourse operates simultaneously as persuasion, governance, and subject formation. FDA enables the analysis to trace how moral appeals are not only circulated through digital platforms but also stabilized through institutional arrangements, revealing the power-knowledge relations that sustain neoliberal responsabilization within humanitarian entrepreneurship.

Digital humanitarianism is therefore closely linked to moral governance, where institutions regulate behaviour, emotional expression, and moral expectations of volunteers and supporters. Organizational guidelines function as subtle technologies of governmentality that shape how individuals are expected to enact humility, gratitude, and empathy in humanitarian settings (Tkalac Verčič, 2021). In this framework, digital campaigns do not

merely inform or inspire but actively construct normative models of “good” humanitarian conduct. For sociopreneurial foodbanks such as Garda Pangan, digital content generates affective solidarity, while institutional documents translate these affective norms into formalized moral discipline. Together, these practices produce individualized, emotionally governed modes of participation aligned with neoliberal subject formation.

While international scholarship has extensively examined digital humanitarianism in the context of large NGOs, far less attention has been given to how local sociopreneurial organizations operationalize similar moral and affective strategies. This gap is particularly evident in Southeast Asia, where hybrid humanitarian-entrepreneurial models are rapidly expanding. In the Indonesian context, discourses of responsabilization are further articulated through culturally and religiously resonant ethics such as gotong royong (collective mutual assistance) and Islamic practices of sadaqah. These moral frameworks provide locally legitimate vocabularies of care and generosity, enabling neoliberal forms of individual responsibility to be naturalized and accepted as ethical obligations rather than political arrangements. Addressing this gap allows for a more grounded understanding of how moral governance is localized and rearticulated through region-specific cultural practices.

Methods

This study employed a qualitative research design grounded in the Critical-Cultural Tradition of Communication

(Craig, 1999), in which communication is understood as a cultural practice embedded in power relations, ideology, and identity formation. Within this paradigm, meaning is not treated as neutral or fixed, but as socially constructed through discourse. The researcher therefore functioned as the primary instrument of interpretation, enabling a reflexive and contextual reading of moral meanings and subjectivities as they are produced through communication (Lune & Berg, 2017; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

To examine how digital sociopreneurial communication constructs moral truths, individual responsibility, and neoliberal subjectivities, this study employed Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA). Drawing on Foucault's archaeological and genealogical approaches (Foucault, 1972, 1980), FDA allows for an analysis of discourse as a regime of truth in which power operates productively through the formation of knowledge and subjectivity. Rather than treating moral appeals as expressions of altruism, FDA makes it possible to interrogate how affect, participation, and responsibility function as technologies of governance within everyday communication practices (Waitt, 2005).

The corpus of this study consisted of visual and textual materials drawn from the official Instagram account of a foodbank-based sociopreneurial organization operating in Surabaya and Malang, referred to as Garda Pangan to maintain ethical standards. The organization was selected due to its active engagement in food waste awareness, volunteer mobilization, and humanitarian branding through social media. Data were collected from

posts, captions, hashtags, and campaign visuals published between 2020 and 2025, a period marked by intensified digital humanitarian initiatives, including donation drives, gleaning programs, and volunteer recruitment. An initial dataset of approximately 1,000 Instagram posts was identified using digital crawling tools. From this corpus, 20 posts were purposively selected for in-depth analysis based on their thematic relevance to morality, participation, visibility, and responsibility.

In addition to digital content, this study analyzed an institutional document titled Guideline for Visitations, which outlines expected behavioral norms, ethical conduct, and moral dispositions for volunteers and visitors. This document was treated as an institutional discourse that codifies and stabilizes the moral values circulated through digital campaigns. Integrating institutional documentation with social media content enabled the analysis to trace how affective moral appeals are translated into formalized norms, thereby revealing how organizational governance and digital representation converge in producing regimes of neoliberal morality.

Following the analytical framework proposed by Waitt (2005), the analysis proceeded through two interrelated stages: archaeological and genealogical readings. The archaeological reading focused on identifying discursive regularities, including recurring words, slogans, metaphors, and visual motifs that structured representations of food waste, care, and responsibility. This stage also attended to silences and exclusions, such as the absence of structural explanations related to state accountability or policy failure.

The genealogical reading traced how these moral discourses were stabilized and institutionalized through organizational practices and documents, linking them to broader neoliberal rationalities that promote self-governance and moral entrepreneurship.

Operationally, the analysis followed a systematic four-step procedure adapted from Waitt (2005). First, open coding was conducted to identify recurring moral vocabularies, affective expressions, and visual patterns within the digital and institutional texts. Second, axial coding grouped these elements into broader discursive clusters, including moral responsibility, charity, participation, and institutional virtue. Third, an archaeological reading mapped the discursive formations, silences, and exclusions that structured moral visibility. Fourth, a genealogical reading connected these discursive patterns to historical and institutional practices that sustain neoliberal subjectivity and humanitarian governance. This multilayered process ensured that both surface representations and deeper power relations were analyzed comprehensively.

The most significant methodological contribution of this study lies in extending Foucauldian Discourse Analysis to explicitly address the intersection of platform-based digital communication, sociopreneurial practice, and moral governance. While FDA has traditionally been applied to textual or institutional discourses, this study demonstrates how FDA can be operationalized to analyze platform-specific affordances, such as visual aesthetics, regimes of visibility, and affective circulation, alongside organizational

documents that formalize moral conduct. By integrating Instagram content and institutional guidelines within a single analytical framework, the study advances a platform-aware FDA capable of capturing how neoliberal moral subjectivities are produced through digital performance and stabilized through institutional regulation.

Throughout the research process, methodological rigor was ensured through reflexivity and trustworthiness rather than statistical generalization (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Credibility was supported through prolonged engagement with the corpus and repeated interpretive reading of visual and textual materials. Dependability was maintained by consistently applying the analytical framework across all stages of coding. Confirmability was enhanced through reflexive memoing that documented analytical decisions and minimized personal bias. Thick description was employed to contextualize visual symbols, moral vocabularies, institutional documents, and cultural references, allowing readers to fully grasp how discursive meanings were produced within their social context.

The researcher's positionality is informed by training in critical communication studies, shaping sensitivity toward issues of power, ideology, and digital media. Reflexivity was maintained throughout the analytical process by continuously examining underlying assumptions and recognizing that discourse analysis itself is a situated and interpretive practice. This reflexive stance supports a transparent and critically aware methodological framework consistent with qualitative discourse analysis.

Ethical Considerations

Initially, the organization's identity was anonymized to uphold ethical responsibility in representing institutional discourse. However, following editorial and supervisory guidance, this study explicitly identifies Garda Pangan, a foodbank sociopreneurial organization operating in Surabaya and Malang, Indonesia, for the sake of contextual transparency and academic verification. The analysis relies solely on publicly accessible materials, including Instagram posts and institutional documents officially released by the organization. The researcher acknowledges the ethical implications of institutional identification and respectfully requests that editors and reviewers consider this disclosure within the spirit of scholarly integrity and professional ethics. No confidential, private, or internal data were used in this research.

In addition to organizational identification, this study also observed ethical principles related to digital content analysis. All materials used were publicly available and no imagery of beneficiaries, children, or vulnerable individuals is reproduced in this article to prevent misrepresentation. The study did not involve direct interaction with human participants and therefore did not require formal informed consent. However, the researcher exercised ethical sensitivity in interpreting visual and textual materials by avoiding judgemental language, ensuring fair representation, and recognizing power imbalances in portrayals of humanitarian work. This ethical stance is consistent with qualitative research guidelines that

prioritize respect, care, and protection of digitally represented communities.

Results and Discussion

This study identified four dominant discursive formations across Garda Pangan's Instagram campaigns and institutional documents that frame food waste, charity, participation, and volunteer conduct within individualized moral registers. Rather than foregrounding food insecurity as a structural or policy-driven issue, the findings consistently emphasize personal ethics, emotional engagement, and moral self-regulation as the primary modes of addressing social need. This pattern aligns with previous studies showing that digital food waste communication tends to prioritize individual behavioural framing over systemic or policy-oriented explanations (Danso et al., 2021).

The analysis of Instagram content indicates that food waste is predominantly framed as a form of individual moral failure. Messages such as "Don't waste what others need" and "Every meal counts" position waste prevention as a personal ethical obligation, while references to broader food system governance, market dynamics, or state responsibility remain largely absent. This framing redirects accountability away from institutional actors and situates moral responsibility primarily at the level of individual behavior.

Charity is simultaneously represented as a form of moral redemption. Visual depictions of smiling volunteers, grateful recipients, and symbolic acts of giving are accompanied by captions emphasizing kindness, gratitude, and emotional fulfillment. These representations construct

charitable action as a morally restorative practice, where emotional satisfaction and visible care function as indicators of ethical success. Similar patterns have been observed in studies of humanitarian communication on Instagram, which highlight the dominance of affective storytelling and moral sentiment in engaging audiences (McCosker et al., 2021).

Participation is further framed as a lifestyle-oriented practice and a site of identity formation. Campaign slogans such as “Be a Food Hero” and “Join the kindness movement” present volunteering as an opportunity for self-expression, emotional fulfillment, and positive self-presentation. Participation is depicted not merely as civic duty but as a desirable personal attribute that can be continuously displayed and affirmed through digital visibility. This discourse foregrounds

enthusiasm, emotional commitment, and personal involvement, while minimizing collective political action or structural critique.

Beyond digital campaigns, the analysis of institutional documents reveals a complementary discourse of moral discipline. The Guideline for Visitations prescribes expected behaviors such as politeness, modesty, humility, and gratitude, outlining how volunteers and visitors should conduct themselves within organizational settings. These prescriptions formalize moral expectations that are initially introduced through digital communication, translating affective moral appeals into explicit behavioral norms. Together, the digital and institutional texts demonstrate how moral values are not only promoted but also regulated through organizational discourse.

Discourse	Description	Representative Example	Ideological / Power Function
Food waste as moral Failure	Frames food waste as a personal ethical lapse rather than a structural issue	<i>“Don’t waste what others need”; “Every meal counts.”</i>	Responsibilization and shifting accountability from institutions to individuals.
Charity as Redemption	Represents acts of giving as moral restoration and emotional reward.	Smiling volunteers, grateful recipients, and captions such as “Share kindness.”	Normalization of moral virtue through affective validation.
Participation as Lifestyle	Presents volunteering as a lifestyle practice and identity performance.	<i>“Be a Food Hero”; “Join the kindness movement.”</i>	Subjectivation through visibility and affective engagement.
Institutional Discipline of Virtue	Codifies moral conduct through organizational guidelines	<i>Guideline for Visitations</i> prescribing politeness, modesty, humility.	Governmentality through internalized moral regulation.

Source :Processed research2025 ,

Taken together, these findings show that food waste and humanitarian participation are consistently framed through individualized moral responsibility across digital and institutional texts. The discursive formations identified in this study demonstrate how moral meanings are produced and stabilized through multiple communicative channels, providing an empirical basis for further interpretive analysis in the following Discussion section.

Discussion

Food Waste as Moral Failure

The first discursive formation positions food waste primarily as a matter of personal moral responsibility. Messages that equate uneaten food with missed opportunities for kindness encourage audiences to interpret waste prevention as an expression of individual virtue and ethical character. Within this framing, food waste becomes a problem of personal discipline and moral awareness rather than a consequence of broader socio-economic arrangements. This pattern is consistent with studies showing that food waste discourses frequently reduce the issue to household habits while marginalizing structural determinants such as production inefficiencies, price volatility, market incentives, and distribution systems (Keller & Gombos, 2025; Liu & Keoleian, 2020).

From a Foucauldian perspective, this moralization operates through a logic of responsabilization, whereby social problems are internalized as personal duties rather than articulated as collective or institutional responsibilities. Specifically, the discourse of “food waste as moral

failure” effectively substitutes and silences structural discourses concerning state responsibility in food governance, corporate accountability within supply chains, and policy failures related to food redistribution, agricultural subsidies, and social welfare provision. These structural dimensions are rendered largely absent from the communicative field, not through explicit denial, but through their systematic exclusion from what is made visible, sayable, and morally relevant.

This discursive displacement mirrors patterns identified in youth-centered and lifestyle-oriented digital campaigns, where participation is framed through value signaling, self-expression, and personalized moral identity rather than political engagement or structural critique (Espinosa et al., 2022). In such contexts, moral appeal functions as a depoliticizing mechanism that redirects attention from institutional arrangements to individual conduct, reinforcing the perception that social problems can be resolved through ethical self-management.

As a result, this framing risks narrowing public understanding of food insecurity by encouraging audiences to interpret waste as a character flaw rather than a symptom of systemic inequalities embedded in food production, market governance, and welfare infrastructures. The moral tone embedded in these messages promotes a view of responsibility that is individualized and affective, while questions of regulation, policy reform, and structural intervention remain peripheral or invisible.

These findings resonate with global research documenting a broader shift

toward individualized behavioural messaging in food waste communication, particularly within social media campaigns and community-led initiatives (Jones-Garcia et al., 2022). However, this study extends existing scholarship by demonstrating that the individualization of responsibility is not confined to digital representation alone but is further institutionalized through organizational guidelines that codify moral expectations and behavioural norms. This dual reinforcement illustrates how moral discourse is sustained across both digital and institutional domains, deepening the displacement of structural accountability through everyday communicative practices.

Charity as Redemption

The second discursive formation constructs charity as a pathway to moral restoration, in which acts of giving are framed as emotionally rewarding and ethically redemptive. In Garda Pangan's digital content, visual representations of smiling volunteers, grateful beneficiaries, and moments of shared care foreground charity as an affective experience that restores moral order. Within digital humanitarian communication, such emotional visibility has been widely identified as a key strategy for generating legitimacy, engagement, and public trust (Jhoti & Allen, 2025). In this context, emotional imagery operates as a form of symbolic and emotional capital that reinforces both individual and organizational claims to moral virtue.

Crucially, this affective framing is not incidental but is structurally shaped by Instagram's specific affordances. The pressure for profile curation encourages volunteers to integrate charitable participation into their

self-presentation, while the Stories feature enables the real-time documentation of moral action as it unfolds. Engagement metrics such as likes, shares, and comments function as quantifiable indicators of moral recognition, rewarding content that displays care, gratitude, and emotional authenticity. Through these affordances, moral discipline is transformed into identity performance, as volunteers are subtly compelled to render their ethical conduct visible, emotionally resonant, and compatible with the platform's attention economy. This process aligns with CDA research on platformed subjectivity, which shows how digital infrastructures shape not only what is communicated, but how moral selves are performed and validated (van Dijck, 2013; Bucher, 2018).

Similar dynamics have been documented in studies of mediated solidarity, where emotional displays consistently overshadow structural critique and reframe humanitarian engagement as a matter of compassion rather than political responsibility (Q. Liu et al., 2021). From a critical discourse perspective, such affective emphasis operates as a depoliticizing mechanism, narrowing the horizon of public understanding by privileging emotional resonance over systemic analysis. Humanitarian media research further demonstrates that digital platforms tend to elevate affective appeals as a means of sustaining audience attention and donation behaviour (Theys et al., 2020a), reinforcing the dominance of emotionally legible narratives within digital public spaces.

This study extends existing CDA and digital humanitarianism scholarship by demonstrating how these affective dynamics are embedded within a broader

moral dispositif. In the case of Garda Pangan, digital aesthetics function as an emotional recruiter, mobilizing empathy and participation through visually appealing and emotionally charged content, while organizational guidelines operate as a moral training center that formalizes and disciplines the conduct of volunteers. Together, these communicative layers constitute an integrated apparatus of governance in which affective attraction and moral regulation operate in tandem. Unlike prior studies that focus primarily on large international NGOs, this analysis shows how small-to-medium sociopreneurial organizations in Southeast Asia reproduce similar dispositifs of moral governance, adapting global digital humanitarian logics to local organizational contexts.

Participation as Lifestyle

The third discursive formation frames volunteering as a lifestyle and identity practice. The portrayal of young, enthusiastic volunteers and motivational captions suggests that participation in food rescue activities is an aspirational form of self-expression. This mirrors the rise of lifestyle oriented and expressive forms of digital activism, where individuals participate in social causes as a means to express personal values and construct public identity. Such patterns have been observed in recent studies of online youth participation that highlight value signalling, moral identity performance, and lifestyle driven modes of civic engagement (Earl et al., 2022).

These similarities confirm that the logic of “lifestyle activism” is not limited to environmental or human rights campaigns

but also emerges in food rescue initiatives. This study expands existing literature by demonstrating how lifestyle participation is intensified through institutional discourse that codifies moral expectations, a dimension not usually explored in youth activism research.

Institutional Discipline of Virtue

The fourth discursive formation highlights how organizational guidelines function to discipline moral behaviour and stabilize ethical norms promoted through digital communication. Garda Pangan’s rules for volunteers emphasize humility, politeness, emotional restraint, and appropriate conduct when interacting with donors and beneficiaries. Rather than operating through overt coercion, these prescriptions exemplify a form of governmentality in which individuals are encouraged to regulate themselves in accordance with internalized moral expectations (Saxena, 2022). Within this framework, ethical conduct is framed as a personal obligation that must be continuously enacted and embodied in everyday interactions.

Crucially, this institutional discipline operates in close alignment with the organization’s visual rhetoric on Instagram. The analysis of Garda Pangan’s visual content reveals a consistent aesthetic pattern in which images foreground positive emotions, such as smiles, gratitude, and moments of harmonious interaction, while systematically minimizing or erasing the broader material and structural contexts of poverty. Backgrounds are often neutral, sanitized, or blurred, and representations of hardship are rendered abstract or absent.

As a result, poverty is depoliticized and transformed into an aestheticized object of compassion, stripped of its structural causes and presented primarily as a site for emotional connection and moral action. From a visual CDA perspective, this selective framing functions to naturalize inequality by making it emotionally palatable and visually consumable (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020; Machin & Mayr, 2023).

This visual depoliticization complements the organization's institutional guidelines by delineating not only how volunteers should act, but also how poverty should be seen, felt, and responded to. By emphasizing emotional restraint, politeness, and humility, the guidelines discipline volunteers to align their conduct with the affective tone established through digital imagery. In Foucauldian terms, these rules operate as technologies of the self, encouraging individuals to monitor and adjust their emotions, gestures, and moral comportment in line with organizational ideals of virtue (Foucault, 1988). Ethical subjectivity is thus cultivated through both visual persuasion and formalized regulation.

Similar patterns have been identified in studies of non-profit organizations, where moral regulation and behavioural expectations produce disciplined subjects who internalize organizational values as part of their everyday roles (Farrow et al., 2021). However, this study extends existing scholarship by demonstrating a tighter coupling between digital representation and institutional regulation, showing that moral governance in Garda Pangan operates through an integrated communicative regime. Digital campaigns

attract participation through affective and aesthetic appeal, while organizational guidelines consolidate these moral expectations into durable norms that govern conduct beyond the screen.

Taken together, these findings illustrate how institutional discipline and visual rhetoric work in tandem to produce a coherent moral dispositif. In this dispositif, digital imagery functions to recruit empathy and normalize affective responses to poverty, while organizational rules function as a moral training mechanism that stabilizes these responses through self-discipline. This integrated form of governance not only shapes how volunteers behave, but also constrains how poverty itself is understood, seen, and morally addressed, reinforcing individualized and depoliticized modes of humanitarian engagement.

Intersection of Discourses: Algorithmic Logic, Emotional Governance, and Neoliberal Subjectivity

Taken together, the four discursive formations identified in this study converge to produce what can be conceptualized as a neoliberal humanitarian subject. This subject is responsible, visible, disciplined, and emotionally expressive. Food waste is interpreted as a personal moral failure, charity as moral repair, volunteering as lifestyle curation, and institutional rules as ethical self-discipline. These discourses do not merely coexist but mutually reinforce one another, forming a coherent moral framework through which humanitarian engagement is rendered intelligible and desirable.

A critical insight of this study lies in demonstrating that this coherence is not accidental but structurally reinforced by Instagram's algorithmic engagement logic. Instagram prioritizes content that generates rapid and measurable engagement, such as likes, shares, comments, and short viewing durations. Discourses that are fast, visually simple, and emotionally legible—such as gratitude, redemption, and moral success—are therefore more compatible with the platform's visibility regime than complex, slow, and cognitively demanding analyses of systemic inequality, food governance, or policy failure. As a result, emotion-based moral narratives are structurally amplified, while systemic critiques are rendered less visible or effectively marginalized within the platform's attention economy. This algorithmic privileging operates as a form of infrastructural power that subtly shapes what kinds of moral discourse can circulate widely and gain legitimacy (Bucher, 2018; van Dijck, 2013; Poell et al., 2024).

From a critical discourse perspective, this alignment between emotional logic and algorithmic logic has significant ideological consequences. By favoring individualized, affective narratives, the platform environment de facto reinforces neoliberal ideology, which frames social problems as matters of personal responsibility and ethical self-management rather than collective political struggle or institutional reform. In this sense, Instagram does not merely host humanitarian discourse but actively participates in its ideological structuring by privileging communicative forms that align with responsabilization and moral self-branding. Similar configurations have been observed in studies of digital

humanitarian communication, where affective solidarity and personalized responsibility consistently overshadow structural inequalities and political-economic critique (Theys et al., 2020b; Lilie Chouliaraki, 2013).

This study advances existing scholarship by showing that digital sociopreneurial organizations do not rely solely on algorithmically favored emotional content but also consolidate these moral logics through formalized institutional documents. Organizational guidelines translate affective moral appeals into durable norms that govern conduct beyond the platform, ensuring that algorithmically amplified discourses are stabilized and internalized through everyday practices. The combined effect of digital visibility and institutional regulation produces a multilayered system of governmentality in which moral aesthetics, emotional engagement, and disciplinary norms operate as a coherent apparatus of power.

These findings resonate with broader debates in critical communication studies that conceptualize contemporary humanitarianism as a form of emotional governance, where public participation is secured through affect rather than political deliberation. By integrating platform affordances, visual rhetoric, and organizational governance within a single analytical framework, this study enriches CDA scholarship by demonstrating how power operates across technological, discursive, and institutional layers in digital sociopreneurial settings. This integrated perspective moves beyond analyses that isolate digital messaging or organizational rules, offering a more comprehensive

account of how neoliberal humanitarian subjectivities are produced, sustained, and normalized in contemporary digital culture.

Theoretical Contribution

This study contributes to communication scholarship by integrating Foucauldian Discourse Analysis with debates on digital humanitarianism, visibility, and neoliberal subject formation. Its central theoretical contribution lies in demonstrating how organizational guidelines function as Foucault's "technologies of the self," through which individuals internalize moral norms and actively regulate their conduct, emotions, and ethical comportment. By prescribing virtues such as humility, politeness, gratitude, and emotional restraint, these guidelines cultivate self-discipline rather than external compliance, shaping volunteers as morally appropriate humanitarian subjects.

The study further shows that these technologies of the self operate in articulation with digital communication practices. Sociopreneurial organizations reproduce governmentality by aligning affective digital narratives with formalized behavioural expectations, thereby governing moral responsibility across multiple communicative layers, including platform-based visibility, moral aesthetics, and organizational governance.

Finally, this study extends food waste communication research by demonstrating how moral framing intersects with volunteer identity formation and institutional discipline. Rather than treating food waste as a purely behavioural or managerial issue,

the analysis reveals how responsibility is moralized and individualized through discourse, while structural dimensions remain marginal, offering a theoretically grounded account of how neoliberal moral subjectivities are localized within Indonesian sociopreneurial settings.

Practical Implications

The findings indicate that Garda Pangan's campaign predominantly positions individual moral change as the primary solution to food waste and food insecurity, thereby substituting structural discourses related to state responsibility in food governance, corporate accountability within food supply chains, and policy failures in redistribution, agricultural subsidies, and social welfare provision. Consequently, food insecurity is framed less as a political-economic issue and more as a matter of personal ethics and voluntary action.

For sociopreneurial organizations, these findings underscore the need to balance moral storytelling with structural awareness. While emotional appeals and community participation remain effective, campaigns could more explicitly situate food insecurity within broader systemic conditions, such as food governance and social protection, to avoid depoliticizing hunger.

In addition, volunteer guidelines could move beyond behavioural discipline to include critical educational components addressing inequality and structural determinants of hunger, supporting forms of humanitarian participation that are not only emotionally engaging but also more reflective and potentially transformative.

Conclusion

This study advances a central conclusion that Garda Pangan's communication constitutes a moral governance dispositif in the Foucauldian sense, rather than merely promoting humanitarian values. Through the integration of Instagram-based digital aesthetics and institutional discipline embedded in organizational guidelines, Garda Pangan produces an interconnected apparatus of power that cultivates moral responsibility, self-regulation, and visibility. Within this dispositif, digital campaigns function as affective technologies that recruit participation, while institutional documents stabilize moral conduct through disciplinary norms.

Applying Foucauldian Discourse Analysis, the study demonstrates that food waste is systematically reframed from a structural and policy-driven issue into an individualized moral responsibility. Recurring discursive formations—food waste as moral failure, charity as redemption, and participation as lifestyle—normalize ethical expectations and position individual behavioural change as the primary solution, thereby marginalizing systemic concerns related to food governance, supply chains, and welfare provision. These moral discourses are further institutionalized through organizational guidelines that operate as technologies of the self, encouraging volunteers to internalize virtues such as humility, politeness, and emotional restraint in line with neoliberal governmentality.

Together, these mechanisms produce a neoliberal humanitarian subject characterized as responsible, visible,

disciplined, and emotionally expressive. Among these characteristics, visibility is most heavily dependent on Instagram, as the platform's affordances—profile curation, Stories, and engagement metrics—render moral conduct legible, performative, and socially validated. Visibility thus becomes the key condition through which virtue and responsibility are recognized and rewarded within the humanitarian dispositif.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the Critical-Cultural Tradition by demonstrating how sociopreneurial organizations govern morality through an integrated apparatus that aligns emotional persuasion, digital visibility, and institutional discipline. Practically, the findings underscore the ethical importance of moving beyond performative and commodified displays of care toward more authentic, reflexive, and non-performative humanitarian communication that does not obscure structural politics.

Future research should critically examine digital resistance, particularly how audiences may re-politicize food insecurity by challenging aestheticized narratives and reintroducing structural critique within platform spaces, such as comment sections, rather than merely rejecting humanitarian imagery. Such inquiry would deepen understanding of how moral governance is negotiated, contested, or disrupted in platform-mediated humanitarian communication.

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