

CONFIGURING LECTURER WELL-BEING POLICY DELIBERATION ON YOUTUBE: A CRITICAL STUDY OF VIRTUAL NETNOGRAPHY THROUGH A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine how the YouTube platform is used as a digital public space in articulating social policy discourse, especially related to the welfare of lecturers. Using the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach, as many as 22 scientific articles from highly reputable journals were analyzed to identify discourse configurations, representation strategies, and affective, performative, and algorithmic dynamics that shape public opinion related to the issue. The results show that YouTube acts as an alternative deliberative arena that allows academic actors to voice criticism, strengthen the legitimacy of personal experiences, and form digital solidarity. However, not all interactions on these platforms reflect rational deliberation in the Habermasian sense; Many of them are driven by emotional logic and algorithmic selection mechanisms. These dynamics result in complex discourse configurations, where affection and performativity are important elements in building policy narratives. This research contributes to the development of social policy studies and digital public spaces by emphasizing the importance of reading the deliberation process in the context of platform mediation and digital culture. Suggestions for further research include exploration of direct netnography and comparative studies between digital platforms to understand the variations in policy discourse dynamics in more depth.

Keywords: Lecturer welfare, digital public space, YouTube, policy deliberation, netnography, systematic literature review

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade, YouTube has undergone a fundamental transformation from a mere video-sharing medium to a complex digital public arena, where social, political, and cultural discourses are represented, negotiated, and even debated widely and variously. As an open, participatory, and highly visual platform, YouTube allows anyone to voice their opinions, build community, and articulate their social identities and aspirations in an affective and performative format. Recent research shows that the comment space and video content on YouTube have functioned as an alternative medium in conveying life experiences, policy criticism, and ideological resistance to the dominant institutional narrative (Castro McGowan, 2024; Vallström & Törnberg, 2025). In the midst of this

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development, lecturers as higher education policy actors have begun to use YouTube to voice their welfare problems—whether in the form of work pressure, inequality of incentives, administrative bureaucracy, and other structural problems that were previously only discussed behind closed doors or limited to formal forums. This digital transformation opens up new possibilities in observing the dynamics of social policy discourse in virtual public spaces, especially how the narrative of lecturer welfare is openly constructed, widely disseminated, and fought discursively among users. However, so far there is still little research that systematically explores how the configuration of these discourses is formed, what the ideological and affective structures are that accompany them, and how the YouTube platform itself mediates the validity and reach of these narratives.

The urgency of this research is even more prominent when we realize that the welfare of lecturers is not only an internal institutional issue, but concerns the social construction of academic positions in the structure of society and the national policy system. In the Indonesian context, the discourse on lecturers is often reduced to administrative, evaluative, and individual issues, without exploring broader structural aspects such as the relationship between the state and the academic profession, meritocratic values, and neoliberal logic in higher education governance (Park & Sakai, 2024; Shibanova & Malinovskiy, 2021). Utilizing the Systematic Literature Review approach, this study maps the contributions of various studies that have examined the dynamics of discourse on YouTube in diverse social contexts, such as the representation of subaltern identities (Castro McGowan, 2024), affective articulation in the health community (Ángel Pérez-Dasilva et al., 2024), validation of scientific knowledge (Kang et al., 2024), and the mobilization of opinions in ecological and political crises (Diegoli, 2025; Erokhin, 2025; Vallström & Törnberg, 2025). From this synthesis, it can be seen that YouTube provides an alternative public space that is very rich in expression, but also vulnerable to polarization, misinformation, and algorithmic bias that hinder ideal deliberation. Therefore, mapping the discourse on lecturer welfare on YouTube not only reveals the representation of content, but also opens up the possibility of reading the dynamics of power, affection, and discursive performativity that compose digital public opinion.

The main objective of this study is to analyze how the configuration of deliberations regarding lecturer welfare policies is constructed in a YouTube-based virtual public space, by systematically reviewing various literature that has discussed the role of YouTube as an arena for policy and social discourse. This research also aims to understand how the typical characteristics of platforms—such as narrative visualization, interaction affectivity, and algorithmic logic—affect the structure of argumentation, the legitimacy of discourse, and the distribution of narratives in digital spaces. By integrating Habermas' theory of public space and critical netnography approaches, this study develops a conceptual framework that allows evaluation of the quality of digital public deliberation, including communicative rationality, inclusivity of actors, and openness to

evidence-based arguments. This research also answers the need for a deeper understanding of how lecturers as policy subjects are able (or fail) to use digital platforms to fight for their welfare rights in an open, conflict-filled, and sometimes unformally institutionalized discursive field. Thus, this study is not only descriptive but also critical, with significant implications for the development of policy communication strategies in the digital age, particularly in the higher education sector.

The various literature collected in this study shows that public discourse on YouTube is not a neutral field, but rather a space formed by intertwined affective, performative, and algorithmic dynamics (Lustig et al., 2021; Nemati et al., 2024; Van Natta et al., 2023). In the context of lecturer welfare issues, personal narratives conveyed through video and reinforced through commentary can serve as a form of collective articulation that challenges the dominance of institutional narratives and opens up space for new discursive solidarity (Bakombo et al., 2023; Knight et al., 2023). However, as shown in the research of Gupta et al. (2023), YouTube's algorithms also tend to amplify polarization and create echo chambers that limit cross-position dialogue. Therefore, understanding the configuration of digital deliberations is not enough just to assess the content of the argument, but it is also necessary to investigate the distribution structure, affective engagement, and visual strategies used to build public trust. In this regard, the critical netnography approach becomes particularly relevant as it allows a reading into the dynamics of symbolic power in online discursive practices, as well as how users and content creators navigate the boundaries between personal expression and policy advocacy.

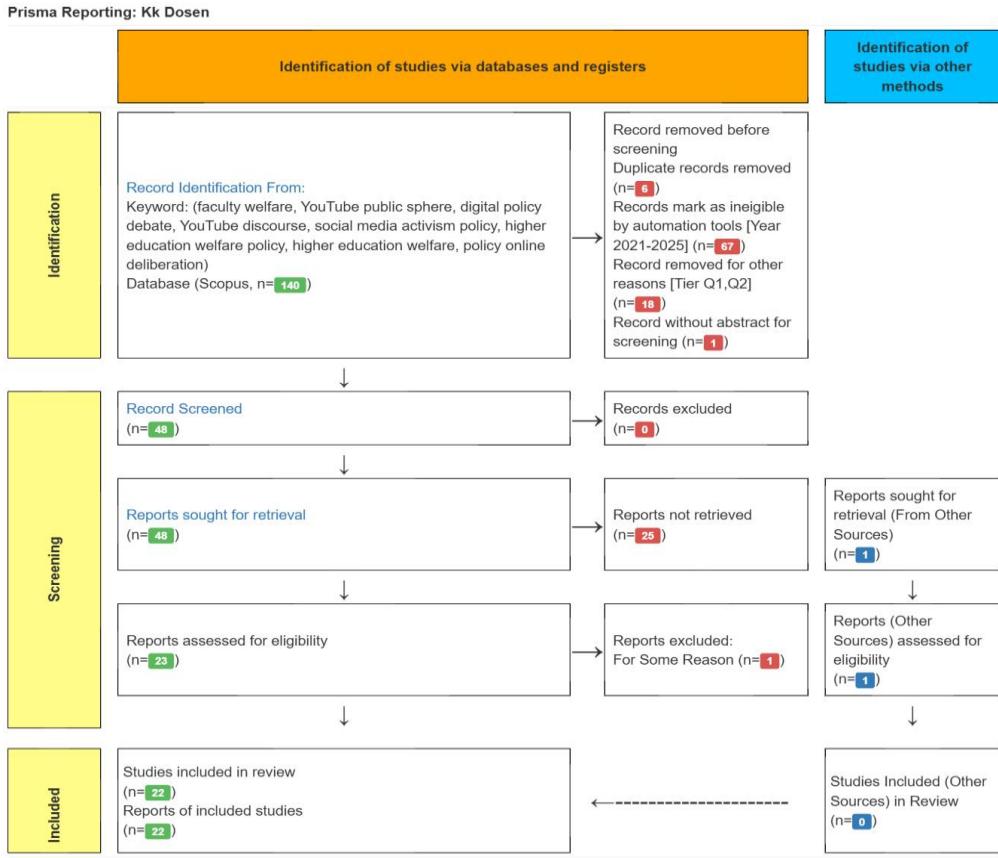
The weakness of Habermas' theory of public space in explaining digital communication that is full of affection and visualization can be bridged through integration with empirical approaches that capture the complexity of online interactions (Baba et al., 2021; Esau et al., 2021). As shown by Diegoli (2025) in his study of public apologies on YouTube, and by Vallström & Törnberg (2025) in his study of digital political mobilization, digital public spaces combine rational and emotional dimensions in one fluid and open field. In the context of lecturer well-being, this means that data-driven or policy-driven arguments are not always the primary determinants in shaping public opinion, but rather affections, personal narratives, and visual symbolization that play a crucial role in mobilizing support. Therefore, this study uses an evaluative framework that combines the normative principles of deliberation (rationality, inclusivity, reciprocity) with the reality of complex online communication practices. This strategy allows researchers to assess not only the content of the discourse, but also the mediation structure and power relations involved in the production and consumption of lecturer welfare policy discourse on YouTube.

Based on a systematic review of various previous studies and the conceptual framework used, this research is formulated to answer three main questions. First, how is the YouTube platform used as a digital public space for the articulation of social policy discourse, especially related to the welfare of lecturers? Second, to what extent does the

public discourse on YouTube reflect the principles of democratic deliberation according to Habermas's theory of public space? Third, how do affective, performative, and algorithmic dynamics on YouTube affect the process of forming public opinion and validating lecturer welfare policy discourse? These three questions are the main guidelines in formulating the conceptual synthesis and mapping of the findings in this study, as well as in assessing the transformational capacity of digital communication practices in the context of social policy. Thus, the focus of this research is not only on representations or communication patterns, but also on the capacity of such discourses to change public perception, influence policy, and build collective solidarity in a digital terrain full of dynamics and contestation.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach with an exploratory-qualitative design to identify, sort, evaluate, and synthesize conceptual and empirical findings related to the articulation of lecturer welfare policy discourse on YouTube as a digital public space. This design was chosen because it provides a methodological framework that allows for comprehensive, as well as in-depth search and integration of the literature, in line with the objectives of the study that are not only descriptive, but also analytical and critical-transformational. This SLR approach is not directed solely at the collection of empirical evidence in aggregate, but is focused on the exploration of discourse structures, affective dynamics, and technological mechanisms that mediate the production and validation of meaning in the digital space. Conceptually, SLR in this study is also based on the need to formulate a synthesis framework that combines Habermas' theory of public space with critical netnography as a basis for analysis. Thus, this method not only allows mapping of academic trends in the theme of lecturer well-being and digital space, but also builds a reflective foothold for advanced studies based on primary data. In practice, the design of this study follows the structure of PRISMA 2020 with systematic stages consisting of identification, screening, feasibility assessment, and final inclusion of articles.



The subjects in this study are not individuals or social groups in the conventional sense, but a corpus of scientific journal articles that discuss the relationship between the YouTube platform, digital public spaces, social policies (especially related to lecturers or higher education), and the phenomenon of digital discourse and participation. A total of 140 initial articles were successfully identified through the Scopus database with the help of the Watase Uake Tools, which functions to manage searches by keyword and extract bibliographic information and DOIs from the exported PDF documents. Keywords used in the search include: faculty welfare, YouTube public sphere, digital policy debate, YouTube discourse, social media activism policy, higher education welfare policy, and policy online deliberation, as stated in the PRISMA document. The entire keyword was combined in advanced searches and tailored to the needs of the topic to capture the nuances of socio-political discourse in digital platforms, especially in relation to academic actors. The article data obtained is then filtered based on the year of publication, Q-journal classification, and completeness of metadata such as abstract and full text accessibility.

The main instrument in this study consists of three components. First, Watase Uake Tools software is used for article identification, DOI mapping, and metadata classification. Second, the PRISMA 2020 framework is used as a systematic guideline in filtering and grouping articles relevant to the research. Third, manual worksheets were developed by researchers to categorize each article based on thematic variables such as the type of policy discussed, forms of public participation, epistemological orientation,

methodological approach, and theoretical contributions. All of these instruments are designed to ensure consistency and transparency in the data collection and processing process. In addition, the manual annotation process is carried out to explore the content of the article contextually, especially in identifying discursive elements related to Habermas's theory of public space and critical netnography, such as communicative rationality, discourse inclusivity, public emotions, and algorithmic dynamics.

The data collection procedure is carried out in four stages according to the PRISMA diagram. The first stage was identification, in which 140 articles were drawn from the Scopus database. At this stage, 6 articles were deleted as duplicates, 67 articles were declared ineligible by automation tools because they were out of the time range (2021–2025), 18 articles were deleted because they did not come from Q1 or Q2 journals, and 1 article did not have an adequate abstract. After the initial screening, a total of 48 articles entered the advanced screening stage. No articles have been released at this stage. However, at the retrieval stage, as many as 25 articles could not be accessed due to technical constraints or institutional access. Of the 23 articles evaluated for eligibility, 1 article was then removed for not meeting the content criteria. Finally, 22 articles were included as a fully reviewed study and used as the basis for further analysis. The entire process is done manually after the automatic screening stage, by reading the article in its entirety, examining its empirical and theoretical context, and assessing the relevance of the content to the focus of the research.

The analysis method used in this study is a synthetic thematic analysis based on narrative synthesis, with a focus on identifying conceptual patterns across studies. The analysis process is carried out in three stages. First, initial thematic articulation is identified from the abstract and conclusion of the article that passes the screening, to determine the fit between the topic and the context of the research. Second, each article is analyzed in depth to identify affective, performative, algorithmic, as well as forms of representation and policy articulation in the digital public space, especially YouTube. Third, a theoretical synthesis mapping was carried out that combined empirical results with Habermas' public space deliberation framework and critical netnography approach. In this case, the analysis is not directed to find causal relationships, but to build a conceptual construction of the way lecturer welfare policy discourses are reproduced, contested, and legitimized on digital platforms. The existence of patterns such as narrative authenticity (Vallström & Törnberg, 2025), collective emotion (Diegoli, 2025), or algorithmic polarization (Gupta et al., 2023) is analyzed as part of a complex and dynamic configuration of deliberation. All findings are arranged in a synthesis matrix and visualized in a narrative map to show the linkages between themes, discourse positions, and theoretical implications.

Thus, this research method provides a strong, systematic, and replicable foundation for the exploration of lecturer welfare policy discourse configurations on YouTube. The advantage of this method lies in its ability to capture the diversity of approaches in previous studies, while at the same time building a new theoretical framework that is

relevant to understanding the dynamics of contemporary digital public spaces. While the limitations lie in the attachment to limited document access and the potential for manual selection bias, mitigation measures have been taken through systematic recording and cross-testing between categories. This research ultimately shows that SLR is not just a literature inventory, but can be a reflective-productive method to develop a synthesis of critical knowledge about social policy in the era of platformization.

FINDINGS

The synthesis of the 22 articles reviewed shows that YouTube has evolved into a multifunctional digital public discourse arena, with different articulative capacities depending on the issue, actors, and discursive context. A total of 9 articles explicitly place YouTube as an alternative public space in the Habermasian sense, focusing on aspects of participation, political expression, and resistance to dominant narratives, as shown in the studies of McGowan (2024), Bakombo et al. (2023), and Sagredos & Nikolova (2022). Meanwhile, the other 7 articles utilize semiotic, performative, or social network frameworks to examine the ways in which YouTube shapes emotional affiliations, identity representations, and political legitimacy, as in the research of Lustig et al. (2021), Diegoli (2025), and Vallström & Törnberg (2025). The majority of studies (15 out of 22) stated that user comments have strategic value as discursive data that represents public opinion and the construction of collective meaning. However, only 6 articles explicitly state the use of commentary as the main unit of analysis with an in-depth thematic or qualitative approach, as done by Nematy et al. (2024) and Kang et al. (2024). The rest only allude to comments as contextualizing or supporting to reinforce the visual, narrative, or algorithmic analysis that is the main focus of the study. This suggests that although the potential for comments in deliberative configurations has been recognized, systematic approaches to the structure of public interaction in the comment space are still limited.

In terms of methodological approach, there is diversity that reflects the multidisciplinarity of YouTube studies. A total of 8 articles use a qualitative approach based on critical discourse analysis, semiotics, or grounded theory, while the other 6 articles incorporate quantitative methods such as social network analysis (Ángel Pérez-Dasilva et al., 2024), topic modeling (Erokhin, 2025), and random network simulation (Gupta et al., 2023). Four articles apply mixed-methods approaches, including Knight et al. (2023) and Baba et al. (2021), which combine experimentation, participatory observation, and cognitive measurement based on structural models. The rest are conceptual or narrative studies that rely on document analysis or theoretical frameworks, as done by Mahajan (2021) and Warren (2024). These findings suggest that the study of public discourse on YouTube is not tied to a single methodological paradigm, but utilizes a wide range of instruments according to the context and objectives of the study. However, out of 22 articles, only 4 explicitly state the involvement of YouTube audiences or users as active subjects in the formation of public opinion through dialogical

interactions. This is an important note in assessing the deliberative quality of the digital space, because public participation is not only a matter of technical involvement, but also a matter of openness to the formation of collective arguments.

Based on the findings of the synthesis, there are three dominant themes in the configuration of discourse on YouTube. First, the theme of representation and identity, which includes issues such as race, gender, ethnicity, and social status in videos and comments. This theme is very dominant in the studies of McGowan (2024), Diegoli (2025), and Zhou Li et al. (2023), which show how YouTube becomes a symbolic contestation space between dominant narratives and counternarratives. Second, the theme of knowledge validation and discursive authority, which highlights how links, sources of information, and credible actors are used to strengthen positions in policy debates or social issues, as examined in Kang et al. (2024) and Van Natta et al. (2023). Third, the theme of emotional affection and mobilization, which includes the use of performative strategies, visual aesthetics, and emotional language to shape public opinion, as discussed in Lustig et al. (2021), Erokhin (2025), and Vallström & Törnberg (2025). Although these three themes appear to be separate, in practice they often intertwine, suggesting that public discourse on YouTube is shaped by a combination of complex symbolic, emotional, and cognitive dimensions.

In terms of the context of the issue, 9 of the 22 articles highlighted public health themes and social crises, such as breast cancer (Pérez-Dasilva et al., 2024), the COVID-19 pandemic (Gupta et al., 2022), and psychological disorders (Lustig et al., 2021). Meanwhile, 7 articles focus on higher education policy and academic well-being, including Knight et al. (2023), Park & Sakai (2023), and Shibanova & Malinovskiy (2021), which constitute an important cornerstone for understanding the position of lecturers in the state policy system. The rest raised the issue of political ideology, nationalism, and policy peripety, as in the research of Warren (2024) and Mahajan (2021). Although only a few explicitly address the well-being of lecturers, most of the studies make a conceptual contribution to reading the positions of academic actors amid neoliberal pressures, discursive hegemony, and the transformation of the structure of digital public spaces. This reinforces YouTube's relevance as an alternative articulation space for professional groups such as lecturers who often do not have direct access to the formal policy arena.

From the geographical dimension, the reviewed research covers the context of Europe (9 studies), East Asia (6 studies), Latin America (3 studies), and global or multi-region (4 studies). Studies from Europe such as those conducted by Warren (2024) and Esau et al. (2020) emphasize a lot on the quality of deliberation and ideological tension in the welfare system. East Asian studies, such as Park & Sakai (2023) and Baba et al. (2021), emphasize changing policy regimes and online deliberative experiments. Latin American studies, such as McGowan (2024), have highlighted more identity politics and cultural mediation. This pattern shows that social policy issues on YouTube are not homogeneous, but highly contextual and influenced by different political systems,

participation cultures, and digital infrastructure. In this context, these studies enrich the reading that lecturer welfare is not only a sectoral issue, but also a reflection of broader systemic dynamics.

Content structure and visualization also received important attention in several studies. A total of 8 out of 22 articles highlighted the role of visual aesthetics, audiovisual elements, and digital performativity as important elements in the formation of public affection. The study of Diegoli (2025) emphasizes the role of metapragmatic expression in cross-cultural commentary, while the study of Zhou Li et al. (2023) shows how representations of infrastructure projects can be used to reinforce Western geopolitical narratives. Research by Knight et al. (2023) and Lustig et al. (2021) adds that visualization is not only aesthetic, but also cognitive and affective, which affects the way the public understands, assesses, and responds to policy issues. In this context, visual narratives can be a means of validation that is no less important than argumentative logic. This is relevant to the study of lecturer welfare, where workload visualization, income comparison, and working conditions are an important part of public articulation efforts and the search for legitimacy for policy criticism.

To conclude the results section, it should be noted that only 3 of the 22 studies explicitly mentioned netnography as a methodological approach or inspiration, namely Bakombo et al. (2023), Nematy et al. (2023), and Lustig et al. (2021). Nonetheless, almost all studies use data sourced from digital practices such as comments, video content, or algorithmic interactions, which are essentially compatible with critical netnography principles. Therefore, this SLR approach not only shows methodological and thematic diversity in YouTube studies, but also indicates a great opportunity to develop a critical netnography approach as a tool for social policy analysis based on digital media. By compiling a synthesis of these various perspectives, the results of this SLR provide a preliminary overview of the configuration of public deliberation on YouTube on the issue of lecturer welfare policies, which involve intersecting representations, affects, algorithms, and social articulation.

DISCUSSION

How is the YouTube platform used as a digital public space for the articulation of social policy discourse, especially related to the welfare of lecturers?

SLR's findings show that YouTube is used as a digital public space in a variety of ways, both as a medium of personal expression and as an arena for collective advocacy on social policy issues, including the welfare of lecturers. The platform allows users to produce and disseminate critical narratives that previously had no place in mainstream media or formal policy forums. This can be seen in the study of McGowan (2024), which shows how subaltern actors use YouTube to voice marginalized life experiences, and in the study of Bakombo et al. (2023) which shows the function of YouTube in mediating local community opinion against dominant policy structures. In the context of lecturer welfare, this representation is significant because it allows narratives of resistance to

bureaucratic systems, workloads, wage inequality, and other structural pressures to be communicated openly and gain public support. Knight et al. (2023) reinforce this by showing how lecturers and students form a collective narrative network to dismantle the paradox of higher education policy rhetoric. YouTube, in this case, is not just a communication channel, but a space that allows the formation of alternative deliberative arenas outside state institutions. The existence of elements such as comments, affective reactions, and distribution algorithms expands the reach of discourse and makes room for the strengthening of solidarity among social actors. Thus, YouTube serves as an expressive and articulate field to fight for lecturers' welfare claims in the context of digital policy transformation.

The deliberative function of YouTube as a digital public space is also reflected in how users process policy narratives in visual, emotional, and narrative formats. In this context, the study of Lustig et al. (2021) shows how personal and audiovisual evidence is used to challenge the discursive authority of the state and formal institutions. Video representations are used as "evidence" of life experiences that are not officially documented, but serve as a strong basis for criticism of policies. In the issue of lecturer welfare, similar representations can be seen in videos that illustrate inequality in workload, salary comparisons, and sub-ideal working conditions. This kind of content often garnered an emotional response and broad support from the community, as reflected by comments and follow-up discussions in video threads. This is in line with the analysis of Van Natta et al. (2023), who highlight the function of comments as an arena of collective articulation and validation of public affection. Therefore, YouTube enables a process of social policy articulation that is horizontal, participatory, and emotionally resonant, which is structurally and semantically different from formal discourse in policy documents or academic forums.

To what extent does the public discourse on YouTube reflect the principles of democratic deliberation according to Habermas's theory of public space?

In answering this question, the results of the SLR show that the public discourse on YouTube only partially meets the principles of democratic deliberation as formulated by Habermas, especially in terms of communicative rationality, inclusivity of participants, and openness to argumentation. The study of Esau et al. (2020) explicitly tested the quality of deliberation in several digital forums and showed that while there is room for expression, there is not necessarily a rational and equal exchange of arguments. In the context of YouTube, only a small number of studies have shown that comment spaces are used for argumentative exchanges of opinions, as shown by Kang et al. (2024) and Gupta et al. (2022). Most of the interactions in the comment column are expressive, emotional, or rhetorical, with a lack of systematic contestation of ideas. This suggests that although YouTube opens up a space for participation, it has not fully created ideal conditions for deliberation in the Habermasian sense of emphasizing consensus through rational arguments and critical consideration.

Further, limitations in reflecting ideal deliberations are also seen in the algorithmic structures and affective dynamics that shape user interactions. As shown by Lustig et al. (2021) and Diegoli (2025), YouTube's algorithm operates on the logic of attention and emotional engagement, rather than on argumentative quality. This causes emotional or provocative content to spread more easily than content that is oriented towards rational debate. The study of Vallström & Törnberg (2025) confirms that affective logic and virality often get rid of deliberative nuances, and replace them with polarizing dynamics and echo chambers. Thus, in the context of lecturer welfare, although many videos critically voice structural injustice, the form of delivery tends to be emotional and oriented towards mobilizing public sympathy, rather than on building rational arguments that are open to rebuttal. This is certainly a challenge in using YouTube as a true deliberative space, as well as opening up a new discussion space regarding the expansion of the definition of deliberation in the digital context that is affective and performative.

How do affective, performative, and algorithmic dynamics on YouTube affect the process of shaping public opinion and validating lecturer welfare policy discourse?

Affective dynamics was one of the most dominant findings in the SLR results, with almost all of the studies reviewed stating that public affection plays a central role in shaping opinions and responses to policy discourse. Diegoli's study (2025) shows how public apologies through YouTube are shaped by emotional metapragmatics that shape perceptions of sincerity and legitimacy. In the issue of lecturer welfare, similar dynamics can be seen in the narrative of suffering, personal testimonies, and visual testimonies that drive public empathy. This kind of representation affects how the public assesses the validity of lecturers' claims for unfair policies, even when they are not accompanied by formal data or academic arguments. Thus, affection becomes a significant form of social validation in the digital public space.

Meanwhile, the performative dimension is seen in the way users and content creators present themselves as moral or epistemic authorities on a particular issue. McGowan (2024) and Warren (2024) highlight how personal narratives are packaged with visual aesthetics and narrative strategies that build credibility, strengthen engagement, and disguise representation inequality. In the context of lecturer welfare, this performativity is seen in the touching presentation style, the choice of setting, and the use of visual data to elicit sympathy and justification. This strategy amplifies the reach and influence of content, but it also carries the potential for manipulation of affection and simplification of complex policy issues. As for algorithmic dynamics, as analyzed by Gupta et al. (2022), shape the selectivity of access to the content displayed to users. In other words, content about the welfare of lecturers that is not interesting enough in terms of algorithms may not get exposure even though it has a high argumentative value. This limits deliberative capacity and reinforces the dominance of emotional or sensational content, rather than argumentative ones.

Significance and Contribution of Research

This research has important theoretical and practical significance in the study of social policy, especially in understanding how digital public spaces such as YouTube mediate policy discourse through a combination of affectivity, performativity, and algorithmic mechanisms. From the theoretical side, this study expands the Habermas framework by including affective dynamics and digital mediation as key elements in the configuration of contemporary deliberation. While public space theory tends to emphasize rational arguments and face-to-face discussions, this study shows that digital expression through video and commentary has its own representational logic that remains politically and ideologically charged. In the field of social policy studies, this research contributes by showing that opinion formation and policy advocacy no longer only occur in formal arenas such as academic meetings or bureaucratic consultations, but also in open, emotional, and decentralized digital spaces. This urges the need to expand understanding of communication actors, mediums, and strategies in the policy formation process in the digital era.

Research Implications and Limitations

The implications of this study include three main dimensions. First, methodologically, the SLR approach with a focus on critical netnography paves the way for reflective integration between secondary data and in-depth theoretical synthesis. Second, from a policy perspective, these findings encourage policymakers to be more responsive to the dynamics of digital public opinion, especially those that emerge organically from grassroots actors such as lecturers. Third, from the pedagogical side, this research is an important reference in higher education and public administration studies that want to examine the relationship between policy, digital space, and symbolic resistance.

The limitations of this study lie in the geographical scope of the literature which is still dominant in the context of the global north and the limited access to primary video content that is only analyzed indirectly through articles. In addition, because this study is based on secondary literature, it cannot capture the real-time dynamics of content and user interactions on YouTube. Further research based on direct netnography is urgently needed to complement the results of this synthesis with empirical observations of content, comments, and algorithmic dynamics that are constantly evolving.

CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that YouTube has become a relevant and dynamic digital public space in shaping social policy discourse, especially in the issue of lecturer welfare. Through a Systematic Literature Review of 22 recent scientific articles, it was found that YouTube functions not only as a medium of individual expression, but also as a collective articulative arena that allows lecturers and the general public to construct, criticize, and disseminate policy narratives independently. Although it does not fully reflect Habermas-style rational deliberation in the classical sense, the interactions that occur in the

commentary space, video testimonials, and visual representations still show a significant process of public argumentation, affection, and validation. The findings also indicate that affective, performative, and algorithmic dynamics strongly influence the way policy discourse is shaped and accepted by digital audiences. In other words, today's digital public space can no longer be read normatively alone, but needs to be understood as a complex arena that combines cognitive and emotional dimensions simultaneously.

The main contribution of this research lies in the integration of Habermas's theoretical approach to public space with a critical analysis of netnography-based digital practices. This research expands theoretical understandings in the study of social policy, public administration, and political communication by showing that policy articulation now takes place not only in formal forums, but also in platformization ecosystems mediated by algorithmic logic and digital performativity. In the context of lecturer welfare, these findings confirm that academic actors are no longer passive in accepting policies, but actively shaping public opinion and legitimacy through horizontal digital channels. Thus, this research contributes to the development of literature on welfare politics, digital participation, and knowledge production in a new media era that is more participatory and open, but also full of challenges.

For future research, it is recommended that a direct netnographic exploration of YouTube content, including videos, comments, and interactions between users and algorithms, be conducted. It is important to complement the findings of this SLR with primary data that can capture the nuances of digital communication in a more in-depth and contextual way. In addition, it is also necessary to study comparisons between platforms, for example between YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, in order to understand the differences in the structure of affection and deliberation in each media ecosystem. Follow-up research can also explore the involvement of policy actors (such as bureaucrats, legislators, or leaders of educational institutions) in responding to evolving discourses in the digital space. Finally, an interdisciplinary approach that combines policy analysis, media studies, and the sociology of knowledge will be very useful to build a more complete understanding of the politics of welfare in this era of platformization.

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