



## **“I’m not gonna answer that”: A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Hawley-Zuckerberg Debate**

**Fadhlur Rahman<sup>1\*</sup>, Rahma Nuzulia<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Universitas Islam Negeri Sultanah Nahrasiyah Lhokseumawe, Indonesia

Corresponding Author Email: [fadhlur.rahman@uinsuna.ac.id](mailto:fadhlur.rahman@uinsuna.ac.id)

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### **ABSTRACT**

The widespread use of social media has had a significant impact on digital power dynamics and accountability. Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, has frequently faced criticism for its social responsibility in addressing the detrimental effects of its platforms. Arguments between Senator Josh Hawley and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg during a US congressional hearing exemplified this tension. This study employs a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach based on Norman Fairclough's model, which has three main dimensions: text analysis, discursive practice analysis, and social practice analysis. This analysis demonstrates how Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg's debate at a US congressional hearing highlighted the tension between technological innovation and Meta-corporate social responsibility. Also, it emphasizes how Zuckerberg's apology lacked concrete steps in response to this issue, as he did not mention compensation for victims or major changes to the platform's algorithm. Hawley utilized hostile speech (aggressive or antagonistic, frequently with the intention of eliciting a negative response) to pressure Zuckerberg to admit Meta's failure to protect users. In contrast, Zuckerberg preferred defensive language (respond defensively, frequently in a manner that prevents open dialogue or hinders understanding) to project a positive picture of the corporation.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis, Debate, Hawley, Zuckerberg

### **INTRODUCTION**

Within the scope of this research, the intersection of religion and policy represents a complex dimension that is the focus of our study. We employ Garamond font size 11 with single spacing to ensure clarity and readability. This research seeks to comprehend and analyze the role of religion within the context of policy in a specific region. The introduction encompasses crucial elements, addressing what, who, why, how, when, and where the research is conducted, along with the intended research goals.

The sudden influx of social media has fundamentally altered our means of global interaction, information distribution, and communication (Yuzar et al., 2023). People's life now revolves around these platforms, which help to connect them but also provide difficulties including social influence, data privacy, and false information/hoax. In a matter of seconds, information can disseminate news, ideas, and global trends together with quick access to beliefs and views, thus, social media also offers a forum for people to share experiences, express themselves, and create communities grounded on common values and interests.

Though social media offers a lot of advantages, these developments also provide significant challenges (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Kapoor et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2022). The fast dissemination of knowledge sometimes carries the danger of false information and misleading ideas, which might influence public opinion and democratic procedures. Social media has also changed the power dynamics of communication, enabling governments, companies, and people to use these channels to affect public opinion and impact policy (Zurriyati et al., 2023). Therefore, even if social media has transformed our interactions worldwide, its social influence calls more attention in terms of control, digital literacy, and ethical application of technology.

Platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok have allowed people and businesses link

instantly across geographic borders, thus creating a larger and more vibrant communication network (Poell et al., 2021; Lipschultz, 2023; Ingram, 2024). Meta, the parent company of these websites (Lawrence, 2022), has come under fire for not meeting its social obligation for the detrimental impacts of being a digital business. Although social media provides many advantages in terms of information sharing and communication, concerns have been expressed about the great power of tech companies influencing public opinion, policy, even the political process (Di Domenico et al., 2021).

The dispute or debate between Senator Josh Hawley and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg in the US Senate is one instance of this conflict, a real-world illustration of how social media dominates conversations on digital power, control, and the obligation of tech corporations to solve the negative effects of their platforms. Such high-stakes discursive interactions highlight the need of Critical Discourse Analysis, which helps us to examine how language creates authority, responsibility, and ideological dominance. By means of CDA, we may explore whose voices are amplified or suppressed, how stories are constructed, and what power relations are ingrained in public discourse—so fostering more democratic and open communication practices in ever more complicated digital society.

Particularly in sociopolitical settings, the methodical approach known as Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) exposes the subtle ways language enacts, sustains, and legitimizes power. Fairclough and others' CDA, as presented, is not only a language practice but also a fundamentally political one that shows how power systems shape and are shaped by speech (Weiss & Wodak, 2007; Van Leeuwen, 2008; Fairclough, 2013). It presents conversation as a social activity firmly embedded in the dynamics of institutional control and ideology. The conviction of CDA that language is never neutral drives everything else. Rather, it serves as a mechanism by which prevailing ideas are maintained and challenged. When political leaders or media sources characterize immigration as a "crisis," for example, such language does more than just depict reality; it creates a specific perspective that supports some policies and marginalizes others. To expose their ideological foundations and social consequences, CDA aims to dissect such stories (Van Dijk, 2011). Van Dijk (2011) notes that knowledge and access to discourse are unequally distributed and stresses the part "elite discourses" play in preserving society hierarchies. By means of selective representations and exclusions, institutions including the media, government, and academia often act as gatekeepers of "legitimate" knowledge, so supporting dominant power structures. This asymmetry produces what he defines as "symbolic power," in which control over public consciousness and society norms corresponds with control over language. Thus, "What specific power relations or discursive strategies are being examined in this debate?"

This paper aims to examine how language choices in the Hawley–Zuckerberg debate construct, contest, and legitimize power relations between political authority and corporate responsibility. We investigate both figures' ways of communicating using a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach in order to better grasp how power shows itself in public debate (Fairclough, 2023). This study, further, offers an exciting opportunity to understand how social media and major technological companies interact with political leaders. It will also assist individual to grasp how public opinion and policy on social media control is shaped by digital discourse in the period of technological globalization.

This study used Fairclough's critical discourse analysis framework, which consists in three main dimensions: text analysis, discourse practice analysis, and social practice analysis (Fairclough, 1989, 2014; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 2021). By employing this approach, the research investigated how discourse strategies, word choice, and communication patterns utilized in the debate demonstrate or contest power.

Textual analysis particularly allows researchers to analyze the form and structure of the language used, thus, directing their respective positions of the major debate themes and messages. By studying how this language was really used, discourse practice analysis helped us to grasp the background and intention of the conversation. On digital platforms, media involvement, news coverage, and public comments on both sides helped to either strengthen or weaken the stories created by each other.

Social practice analysis, meanwhile, investigated how language affected social institutions and structures. This covers subjects including government control of big tech companies, corporate dominance in the internet sector, and how cultural standards and society values affect individual's opinions of digital responsibility. Therefore, this multidimensional approach clarifies how ideas and social power systems are shaped by language in ways transcending mere communication. Knowing these three features helps researchers to offer more thorough analysis of how social media debate shapes digital

age public opinion, policy, and power relations.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The video ABC News posted shows Mark Zuckerberg apologizing to the families of children who suffered negative effects from the Meta Co. The video shows how language is used in the argument between Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg to transmit power, narrative, and preserve public image (Khan, 2024). In this argument, Hawley seems as a direct attacker while Zuckerberg seems to be defensive in defending his business corp.

### Word choices: Narrative, Tone, and Dominance

Josh Hawley's word choice as a narrative tool has a deep meaning with moral and emotional pressure, such as the words "victims," "families" and "responsibility." These words contain emotional content intended to capture public attention while also putting psychological pressure on Zuckerberg. This choice of words not only cornered Zuckerberg, but also created a narrative in which Meta failed to protect its users, particularly teenage girls.

In the video Hawley mentions "do you know who families are sitting behind you? You've got families from across the nation whose children are either or gone," directly Hawley tries to connect Meta with the suffering of families whose children are negatively affected by their platform. Instead, Zuckerberg uses word choice that reflects a defensive strategy that focuses on shifting responsibility from moral culpability to the technical efforts being made by his company.

Further, by mentioning "we build tools to help keep people safe," here Zuckerberg attempted to redirect the audience's attention through the choice of words (Chimombo & Roseberry, 2013; Pandey, 2024), such as "tools, industry-leading, effort, and building technology," where this word choice often seemed to avoid the core question asked by Hawley. This includes diverting the audience's attention to the role of Meta AI technology innovation which he considers as a solution to reduce the negative impact of the platform. This could be a positive impact if used for creativity and self-development.

But the reality is, in this digital era, there are many teenagers who actually use Meta AI for unproductive things, such as following trends that are viral on social media without clear goals. This of course can encourage consumptive behavior on social media and foster dependence on digital validation rather than real interaction. The negative impact seen here is that it triggers dependence and obsession with social validation, where the main focus is popularity rather than positive things.

However, these impacts depend on how the technology is utilized. This is in line with Parashar & Waraich's research (2023) which shows that although technological innovation can help moderate content, the negative impact of social media remains significant on mental health, such as social anxiety and dependence on digital validation. This means that individuals cannot solve these problems with just technology solutions.

The tone of verbal produced by Hawley and Zuckerberg is an ideal estimate of their various domains of influence. Hawley uses a tense and forceful voice in the ABC News video capturing the two men's conversation. This shows his will to keep control of the conversation and prevent Zuckerberg from allowing space for responses to questions outside the main emphasis of the exchange. Frequent interruptions of Zuckerberg by Hawley, asking questions like "Who did you fire?" and "Are you going to compensate the victims?" clearly show his tenacity. These probes reveal Hawley's intention to get Zuckerberg's clear response or acknowledgement.

Conversely, Zuckerberg's flat and defensive voice exposes a defensive approach meant to keep direct confrontation away. His responses, such "this is complicated" or "I'm not gonna answer that question," suggest an avoidance of responsibility, so supporting Hawley's critique of Meta. This conversation has a strong power dynamic created by the conflict between Zuckerberg's defensive tone and Hawley's aggressive one.

In the framework of this exchange, Hawley has been holding Zuckerberg's accountability, reflecting his drive to confirm his status as a powerful figure. Zuckerberg chooses his language very deliberately to support his stance, which could be seen as a means of escape from the pressure and criticism he encounters. Beyond basic communication, the tone and language of the two men are crucial components that initiate a more in-depth conversation on power relations and responsibility concerns in the digital age. This dialogue offers crucial new perspectives on how modern society's power structures

are formed and preserved (Fairclough, 2014).

### **Rhetoric, Communication Strategy, and the Representation of Power in Language**

Josh Hawley supports his assaults on Meta with emotional rhetoric. He probes Zuckerberg with questions intended to corner him, such "Why shouldn't your company be sued for this?" These questions suggest that Meta is responsible for it, so denying Zuckerberg of the chance to respond since they do not call for a clear answer. Furthermore, using Instagram statistics on teenage girls is a great tool to induce guilt that emphasizes the seriousness of the issue and hence motivates the action.

On the other hand, Zuckerberg prefers a communication approach emphasizing on keeping his reputation as a meticulous technological innovator and developing a good image for his company. He has underlined several times Meta's expenditures in monitoring content and user protection technologies including Meta AI.

Yet, Zuckerberg frequently provides off-topic responses instead of straight answers to Hawley's questions. For instance, his reply, "Our job is to build tools," responded to Hawley's allegation that Meta had neglected to safeguard its users, but it lacked any particular remedies or clear acceptance of responsibility. Satyaninrum et al. (2023) claim that these strategies are less successful without specific actions like direct apologies or victim compensation without that. One could consider Zuckerberg's strategy as evasive, which runs the danger of aggravating the criticism he has already encountered even more. In the end, Hawley's aggressive rhetoric and Zuckerberg's defensive approach start a meaningful conversation, specifically about corporate responsibility and ethics in the digital age, and this interaction is crucial in clarifying problems of power relations and accountability in modern society (Fairclough, 2014).

The language used by both sides clearly shows their power dynamic. To show his political influence, Josh Hawley probes Mark Zuckerberg with a series of targeted inquiries. Beyond basic information searches to take advantage of Meta's vulnerabilities, his questions serve as strategic weapons to assess Zuckerberg's responses and assign responsibility. For instance, Hawley challenges Meta's policies or choices, so putting Zuckerberg on the defensive. This proves Hawley's political influence and indicates he is in charge of the discussion. Because of his emotionally charged questions, the audience will strongly believe Meta is responsible. Hawley also chooses divisive subjects specifically to provoke a reaction from Zuckerberg. This is meant to confirm Hawley's stance and deteriorate Zuckerberg's reputation at the same time. Hawley communicates firmly to his supporters and makes political presence by doing this.

Further, trying to preserve a positive impression of his company and technology, Zuckerberg responds defensively against these assaults. His language is occasionally evasive, though, and he often responds in circles instead of squarely addressing Hawley's exact questions. Eventually, the language used by both of them goes further than simple everyday discussion and becomes a significant clue of the political context and power structure they are in. This interaction starts a thorough conversation on corporate responsibility and power relations in modern society.

Meanwhile, Zuckerberg attempted to balance the power dynamic by using technological authority, although this strategy was less effective in overcoming the emotional and moral pressure Hawley exerted. The language used becomes an ideological battleground, where Hawley emphasizes moral accountability, while Zuckerberg tries to maintain Meta's reputation by focusing on technological innovation. Because social media has a significant impact on adolescents' mental health, which is at the heart of the problem Hawley criticizes Meta for.

Further, Syam & Kurnia (2024) assert that the importance of crisis communication in maintaining corporate reputation, particularly in contexts involving data privacy breaches and corporate social responsibility failures. They emphasize how a flat tone without acknowledgment of responsibility in apology strategies can undermine efforts to maintain corporate reputation in crisis situations. However, this debate shows that Zuckerberg tends to avoid the direct apology approach, which makes his communication strategy less effective in defusing criticism from lawmakers and the public.

### **Discursive Practices**

The conversation that took place between Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg in a US congressional hearing shows how discourse in a broader discursive context is produced, delivered, and

received (Fairclough, 2014). This conversation is not only about a dialog between two individuals with different interests, but also shows how power dynamics, moral responsibility, and communication strategies in the face of public criticism (Rahman et al., 2024). This discourse is not only relevant to Meta, but also to the audience consisting of the media, public, and regulators.

The conversation was kicked off by Josh Hawley who pointed out the astonishing data from the whistleblower regarding child safety and harmful context exposure on Meta's platforms. The statistics revealed that among girls aged of 13 and 15 using Meta's services, 37% reported exposure to unwanted nudity, 24% experienced unwanted sexual solicitation, and 17% encountered content encouraging self-harm, all within the last seven days. These statistics are presented not only as a factual evidence of systematic failures in content moderation and child protection, but also to build an emotional narrative demonstrating the direct consequences of Meta's inadequate safety measures and corporate negligence. When Hawley asks, "who did you fire?" he employs a rhetorical question to emphasize Meta's failure to take concrete accountability measures, highlighting the gap between the company's corporate social responsibility claims and its actual enforcement action against executives responsible for user safety.

In addition, Hawley also connects the suffering of the victims' families with Meta's policies and actions, such as "Families sitting behind you", which emotionally further connects the suffering of the victims' families with Meta's policies. This strategy shows how Hawley uses language to frame victims, as explained by Costantina & Irwansyah (2024), that the strategy used by Hawley is a very effective tool in public discourse to pressure large institutions.

Meanwhile, Mark Zuckerberg responded with a more technical approach, focusing on technological solutions such as Meta AI development to detect and remove malicious content. Through his statement, "Our job is to build tools to keep people safe," he reframed the issue from one of corporate accountability for existing harms to future-oriented innovation, highlighting his company's technological developments rather than addressing Hawley's core criticism regarding Meta's moral and legal responsibility for current child safety failure. As Hawley continued to press Zuckerberg with pointed questions "Why should your company not be sued for this?" and "Shouldn't you be held personally accountable?" Zuckerberg responded with answers that reflected a defensive crisis communication strategy focused on protecting corporate reputation and limiting legal liability rather than providing concrete remedial actions to address the documented harms to minors. His statements, such as "These are complicated" and "I don't think that's my job..." exemplify evasive language that deflects personal responsibility. Here, Zuckerberg shows an effort to avoid direct acknowledgement of corporate failures in content moderation and child protection, giving the impression that he does not accept full accountability for the platform's role in facilitating harm to vulnerable users, particularly adolescent girls exposed to sexual content and self-harm material (Kirtley, Hussey & Marzano, 2021).

The conversation between Josh Hawley and Zuckerberg reached an emotional peak when Hawley directly accused Zuckerberg of not taking concrete steps to solve the victims' problems. Hawley asserted "You've made billions of dollars on these families sitting behind you. You've done nothing to help them. You've done nothing compensate them." Under intense pressure from Hawley and in front of the victims' families present, Zuckerberg stood up and delivered his apology "I'm sorry that your families have had to suffer. This is why we invested so much and are going to continue doing industry-leading efforts to make sure that no one has to go through the types of things that your families have had to suffer." This apology shows the limitations of Zuckerberg's crisis communication strategy, as explained by Syam & Kurnia (2024), crisis communication involves strategic discourse between a corporation and the public intended to navigate and respond to organizational emergencies. Communication strategies used by companies in dealing with this crisis can improve their image and reputation in the post-crisis period (Solihin, 2021). Although Zuckerberg's apology seemed sincere, however, it is not accompanied by concrete steps such as compensation to victims, as expressed by Chung and Lee (2021), who assert that apologies that are not followed by concrete actions such as expressing sympathy, compensation, and promises of corrective actions often fail to restore public trust. Scher and Darley (1997) also reveal that in the context of apologies there are 4 elements of the apology factor that must be considered, consisting of: express regret, admit responsibility, promise that the problem will not happen again, and suggest improvements.

The audiences of this conversation have different responses. The media, as one of the main recipients of this discourse, highlighted certain emotional moments such as Zuckerberg's apology to

frame the narrative that Meta was under great moral pressure. On the other hand, the public, especially social media users, tend to side with Hawley's narrative which shows more of the victims' suffering and the need for social responsibility from Meta.

Further, Hawley's criticism of Meta is in line with the increasing public awareness and empirical research regarding the negative impact of social media platforms on adolescent mental health, including issues such as anxiety, depression, body image disorders, and exposure to harmful content. This debate provides a foundation for policymakers to consider stricter regulatory frameworks governing technology companies' content moderation practices and child safety protocols (Majebi & Drakeford, 2025). When Hawley asks, "Why should your company not be sued for this?", he indirectly challenges the legitimacy of Meta's activities without stricter supervision. This question was not only directed at Zuckerberg, but also at the audience of regulators monitoring the hearing. Regulators often require tangible evidence that tech companies like Meta are not only focusing on technical innovation but also acting to protect the public from the negative impacts of their products. This reflects a shift toward corporate social responsibility models that prioritize user welfare alongside shareholder interests (Bartlett III & Bubb, 2024).

The tensions between the government and the tech companies depicted in this conversation define the limits of their social responsibility. By stating, "We are doing industry-leading efforts," Zuckerberg attempts to frame Meta as a highly responsible tech company. But the reality is, Hawley's critique of the moral responsibility and direct impact of the Meta points to a gap between the Company's claims of innovation and the reality on the ground.

In a broader social context, the debate between Josh Hawley and Zuckerberg reflects a global debate about the role of technology companies in society. Zuckerberg further tries to build a narrative that technology is the main solution to social problems, but this approach is often considered inappropriate by the public who want concrete steps. As explained by Malecki, Keating, & Safdar (2021), crisis communication is the process of disseminating information that aims to explain the problems that are happening, whether caused by natural disasters, technical disruptions, and communication crises. However, what happens in this context is that Zuckerberg's communication strategy seems less successful because it does not meet the expectations of audiences who focus more on moral accountability.

### **Social Practice Analysis**

The debate between Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg in a US congressional hearing is symbolic of the dynamics of power, moral responsibility, and social regulation that are increasingly pressuring large tech companies like Meta (Peeples & Murphy, 2022). This discussion was not just a private debate between a regulator and a CEO, but also a manifestation of the broader tension between the need for innovation and the demands of social accountability.

By emphasizing the social impact of meta platforms, Hawley uses emotional narratives to build connections between the suffering of victims and the failure of meta. It also illustrates how public discourse can be a tool to create moral, political, and cultural pressure, not only on Zuckerberg as the CEO representing the Company but also on Meta as a corporate entity.

The analysis of social practices reveals five main dimensions to the debate: social, political, cultural, economic, and global. Each of these elements interacts to create a complex discursive dynamic that offers thorough understanding of the difficulties Meta encounters in the digital era. Fairclough (1989, 2013, 2014) defines discourse as a means of expressing power, establishing legitimacy, and challenging the current systems.

The argument between Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg during the Senate hearing marks a major turning point in the influence of big businesses such as meta. In this social aspect, the argument between Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg tackles the ways in which meta platforms—especially Instagram—cause dangerous surroundings for users and give negative experiences for young women. In this sense, the algorithms applied often aggravate emotionally distressing material including self-harm or sexual exploitation.

According to several studies, Instagram exposure fuels constant social comparison and unattainable beauty standards, which raises body discontent among young women (Curtin, 2020; Ivey-Stephenson et al., 2020; Douthat, 2021). Repeated exposure still results in negative self-perceptions and

lower self-esteem even if users know images are filtered or unrealistic. Parashar and Waraich (2023) explain that people's mental health suffers greatly when they come across this negative content, including the risk of depression, anxiety, and psychological problems. This indicates that the victim's family as well as the digital community and the larger society experience the social impact in addition to the victim personally. Based on a whistle-blower report on the effects of Instagram on teenage girls aged 13–15 that happened in the past seven days, Hawley shockingly showed the audience during the hearing.

Statistics show that the negative impact of social media on teenagers, especially girls, is becoming increasingly alarming. According to The Wall Street Journal, the company realized that the platform was worsening body image for one in three teenage girls using Instagram (Horwitz et al., 2021). The study underscores how features such as face filters and visually-based algorithms encourage unrealistic beauty standards, which then impact young users' self-esteem. This finding was reinforced by direct statements from teens in an interview with The New York Times, who stated that they were not surprised by the results as they already feel such pressure on a daily basis (Woo, 2021).

These impacts are not only psychological, but have also been reflected in public health data. The CDC's 2019 Youth Risk Behaviour Survey showed a significant increase in suicidal ideation and behaviour among high school students in the US (Ivey-Stephenson et al., 2020). While Meta (formerly Facebook) defended themselves by claiming that their internal data was misinterpreted, this did not seem to convince the public and the scientific community (Raychoudhury, 2021). In fact, an article in The Atlantic likened social media to "attention alcohol," implying that even though users are aware of its ill effects, they still find it difficult to disengage due to the addictive nature of the platform (Thompson, 2021). Hence, it is clear, then, that social media like Instagram is not just a communication tool, but an instrument that can significantly shape young people's identity, self-perception, and even mental health.

Meta's inability to control harmful content has also raised concerns about digital safety in the modern era. The families of the victims present at the hearing became living proof of the negative impact of the platform, where the suffering of teenage girls who experienced the devastating data that Hawley had shown became a symbol of the failure of a major technology company to fulfill its social responsibility. Hawley strategically uses an emotional narrative that directly connects the victim's suffering with Meta's policies, and also creates moral pressure not only on Zuckerberg as the CEO of a large technology company but also on Meta as a corporate entity. As the statement goes: "Families are sitting behind you" and "Why should your company not be sued for this?". As explained by Syam & Kurnia (2024), victim framing in crisis communication is a very effective tool to create moral pressure and increase public sympathy which indirectly encourages a sense of responsibility for the crisis that is happening.

Meta as a large technology company is certainly also affected by social impacts that can create a crisis of confidence in the community and affect public perceptions of the company. As noted by Constantina & Irwansyah (2024), a company's reputation is not only built on technical innovation but also on its ability to meet social expectations, including keeping its users safe from their products. This is in line with Keni et al. (2021) who also explain that a bad user experience can damage people's perception of a brand or company, which in turn can affect the company's sustainability in the global market. Similarly, in this case, user dissatisfaction creates a lasting effect on user loyalty, and if this happens, Meta could lose their main user base among the younger generation.

### **The Political Impact: The Role of Government and Technology Regulation**

The political dimension of the debate between Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg reflects the dynamic relationship between the government as regulator and large technology companies like Meta. The debate provides a venue for discussion that demands social, moral, and financial accountability from tech companies, and demonstrates the need for regulatory reform in today's digital age. In the video uploaded by ABC News, you can see how Hawley repeatedly argues and constantly presses Zuckerberg to take personal responsibility for the negative impact and bad experiences experienced by victims, especially teenage girls that occurred in the last seven days caused by the Meta platform.

As the question "Will you personally commit to compensating the victims? You're a billionaire; will you commit to compensating the victims? Will you set up a compensation fund with your money?" The question addressed to Zuckerberg directly connects Zuckerberg's personal wealth with the responsibility that Meta should bear. This moral narrative aims to make Zuckerberg feel guilty for his

failure to protect the public and give him a sense of responsibility to solve the problem. In this case, Hawley's rhetorical question aims to reveal Meta's disrespect for the victims who have been harmed by their platform.

As explained by Syam & Kurnia (2024), crisis communication involving the government is often used to increase moral pressure on companies, in the hope that it can provide solutions to the negative impacts they have caused. However, the response given by Zuckerberg seems to be the opposite of what is expected. Here Zuckerberg answers with defensive statements and seems to avoid the criticism given by Hawley. For example: "These are complicated." And "I don't think that's my job. My job is to build tools to keep people safe." Zuckerberg's response reflects Meta's unpreparedness to face political criticism directly, as well as the company's reliance on technical innovation to defend itself. However, this strategy was less effective in defusing Hawley's moral and social criticism.

Hawley continued to press Zuckerberg, saying: "your job is to be responsible for what your company has done. You've done nothing to help them. You've done nothing to compensate them. You've done nothing to put it right." His statement illustrates the urgent need for stronger regulation of large tech companies. As explained by Satyaninrum et al. (2023), that media impacts transcend national boundaries, a holistic and collaborative strategy is needed to address this challenge. Hawley also criticized how US section 230 provides protection to Meta for the content uploaded by its users. Like his statement "Why is it that you can claim you hide behind a liability shield?" through this statement, Hawley tries to question government policies that provide too much protection to companies without demanding their accountability.

In this context, strict regulation of platforms such as Meta is needed to help reduce risks and improve digital safety from exposure to negative social media content that often impacts the mental health of users, especially among teenagers. Therefore, monitoring, transparency, and user protection are important steps in policy reform to build a safe digital environment. In this political dimension, the role of the government is very important in supervising large technology companies, and it is concluded that it should play a more active role.

Satyaninrum et al. (2023) explain that international collaboration is key to regulating multinational technology companies that operate in many countries. This is in line with the impact of this debate expanding globally, reflecting international regulatory trends such as GDPR in the European Union, which demands data transparency from user protection.

As an economic entity, Meta has invested substantial resources in privacy and security, including hiring over 3,000 employees to improve user security (Proxy statement, 2024, p. 7). However, the answers given by Zuckerberg show that these efforts are not enough to address issues that should come first such as the balance between financial gain and social responsibility.

This session reflects the international challenges Meta must face to be accountable for their influence around the world. As a multinational company, Meta naturally has a widespread impact on culture, economics, and regulation on a global level. As Sihombing (2024) explains, social media has accelerated the globalization of culture, and allowed global trends and values to spread rapidly. This globalization often leads to the erosion of local values, especially in developing countries.

Overall, the analysis shows that Meta faces major challenges in balancing technological innovation with social responsibility and global regulation. Overall, this analysis reveals how Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg's debate in the US congressional hearing highlighted the tension between technological innovation and Meta- corporate social responsibility. It also highlights how Zuckerberg's apology lacked concrete steps in response to this issue, where he did not mention compensation for victims or major revisions to the platform's algorithm.

## CONCLUSION

The widespread use of social media has significantly altered digital power dynamics and accountability. Though social media has many advantages, it also presents significant challenges. The rapid dissemination of knowledge can lead to the spread of false information and misleading ideas, which can influence public opinion and democratic processes. Social media has also altered the power dynamics of communication, allowing governments, businesses, and individuals to use these platforms to influence



public opinion and policy. Meta, the parent company of Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp, has frequently been chastised for its social responsibility in addressing the negative effects of its platforms. Arguments between Senator Josh Hawley and Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg at a US congressional hearing exemplified this tension.

This paper provided an exciting opportunity to learn how social media and major technological companies interact with political leaders. It will also help individuals understand how digital discourse shapes public opinion and policy on social media control during this era of technological globalization. This analysis shows how Senator Josh Hawley and Mark Zuckerberg's debate at a US congressional hearing highlighted the conflict between technological innovation and meta-corporate social responsibility. It also emphasizes how Zuckerberg's apology lacked concrete steps to address the issue, as he made no mention of compensation for victims or significant changes to the platform's algorithm. Hawley used hostile speech (aggressive or antagonistic language, often with the intent of eliciting a negative response) to persuade Zuckerberg to admit Meta's failure to protect users. On the contrary, Zuckerberg preferred defensive language (responding defensively, frequently in a way that prevents open dialogue or impedes understanding) to project a positive image of the company.

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