LOCAL OPEN GOVERNMENT: CASE IN SOUTH COTABATO

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Abstract

This research aims to analyze open government trends and policies in South Cotabato. A qualitative approach, the bibliometric analysis method, and the content analysis method were used in this research. Research data comes from Scopus, Web of Science, Semantic Scholar, Crossref, and South Cotabato policy documents. This research found 127 relevant articles, 683 citations, 13 h-index, and 24 g-index, which show that the South Cotabato open government study has a high impact and productivity. There are 2646 total link strengths, 668 occurrences, 103 topics, and 9 clusters in this study. Access information, public participation, open legislation, public access, public service, infrastructure, public monitoring, public information, information openness, and extractive are the topics that dominate. Meanwhile, potential research topics are public service, service quality, access, public information, communication, interactive, information openness, information quality, accountability, monitoring, and evaluation. Currently, South Cotabato is focused on commitments to open legislation, public participation in extractives, public monitoring of infrastructure, and access to information. These commitments have the potential to make South Cotabato more open.

Keywords : *bibliometric analysis, content analysis, open government, south cotabato*

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis tren dan kebijakan open government South Cotabato. Pendekatan kualitatif, metode analisis bibliomterik, dan metode analisis konten digunakan pada penelitian ini. Data penelitian bersumber dari database Scopus, Web of Science, Semantic Scholar, Crossref dan dokumen kebijakan South Cotabato. Penelitian ini menemukan 127 artikel relevan, 683 sitasi, 13 h-index, dan 24 g-index yang menunjukkan bahwa studi open government South Cotabato memiliki dampak dan produktivitas yang tinggi. Terdapat 2646 total link strength, 668 occurrences, 103 topik, dan 9 klaster pada studi ini. Access information, public participation, open legislation, public access, public service, infrastructure, public monitoring, public information, information openness, dan extractive merupakan topik-topik yang mendominasi. Sedangkan topik-topik penelitian potensial yakni public service, service quality, acess, public information, communication, interactive, information openness, information quality, accountability, monitoring, dan evaluation. Saat ini South Cotabato fokus pada komimen open legislation, public participation in extractives, public monitoring of infrastructure, dan access to information. Komitmen-komitmen tersebut berpotensi menjadikan South Cotabato lebih terbuka.

Kata Kunci : *analisis bibliometrik, analisis konten, open government, south cotabato*

Introduction

Open government has become an important strategy for administrative reform, thereby encouraging many countries around the world to design and implement initiatives related to access to information, transparency, participation, and collaboration (Afandi, Afandi, Erdayani, & Afandi, 2023; De Blasio & Selva, 2019; Gil-Garcia, Gasco-Hernandez, & Pardo, 2020a). Many governments have expanded the concept of open government; for example, the Obama administration announced the Open Government Directive in 2009 and took a leading role in establishing the Open Government Partnership (OGP), a multinational effort to promote open government worldwide (Afandi, Afandi, & Anugerah, 2023; Moon, 2020; Schmidthuber & Hilgers, 2021).

The Open Government Partnership is based on the idea that open government is more accessible, more responsive, and more accountable to citizens, and that improving relations between society and government has long-term and exponential benefits for all (Erdayani, Afandi, & Afandi, 2023; Ruijer & Meijer, 2020; Tai, 2021). The Open Government Partnership is a broad partnership that includes members at the national and local levels (Gao, Janssen, & Zhang, 2021; Ingrams, 2020; Ruijer, Détienne, Baker, Groff, & Meijer, 2020).

Being part of the local OGP provides benefits for encouraging open reform, which has become part of the vision and mission of every local government to achieve a level of accountability, responsiveness, inclusion, and transparency (Afandi, Afandi, & Erdayani, 2023; Ingrams, Piotrowski, & Berliner, 2020; Zulfa & Afandi, 2023). Through membership in this global community, each local government can obtain new information about the implementation of open government, as well as be able to share views, experiences, and resources to achieve the principles of open government (Afandi, Erdayani, & Afandi, 2023; Lnenicka & Saxena, 2021; Wirtz, Weyerer, & Sch, 2019).

The Open Government Partnership has launched the Local Government Pilot Program, recognizing that much open government innovation and reform occurs at the local level, where governments can engage more directly with communities and deliver many important public services (Fraundorfer, 2020; Park & Kim, 2022; Piotrowski, 2020). This pilot program is implemented by fifteen local governments, namely Austin, Basque Country, Buenos Aires, Elgeyo Marakwet, Jalisco, Kaduna State, La Libertad, Madrid, Paris, São Paulo, Scotland, Sekondi-Takoradi, Seoul, Tbilisi, and South Cotabato.

South Cotabato is one of the local governments in the Philippines. The Philippines is one of eight countries that played a major role in the formation of the Open Government Partnership. In the Philippines, South Cotabato has successfully pioneered the implementation of integrity programs at the local government level through the South Cotabato for Integrity and Jobs program. The South Cotabato Integrity Circle (SCIC) was formed and has developed

twenty-four integrity mechanisms following Caren Levy's Web of Institutionalization model (Michael P. Canares, Marcial, & Narca, 2020; Michael P Canares, 2020). This research aims to analyze South Cotabato's open government trends and the local government's commitment to implementing open government.

Theoretical framework

While the codification of Athenian law in Greece is credited with giving rise to open government, the Visigothic Code of the Kingdom of Sweden is regarded as the start of a more contemporary open government initiative that takes individuals' right to information into consideration (Moon, 2020). Open government has emerged as a key administrative reform tactic that has inspired nations all over the world to develop and carry out projects pertaining to information access, transparency, involvement, and cooperation (Afandi, Afandi, & Anugerah, 2023; Gil-Garcia, Gasco-Hernandez, & Pardo, 2020b).

One of the most crucial aspects of a democratic administration has long been regarded as being openness. In the past, certain elements have been emphasized to encourage transparency in the public sector (Heywood, 2014). Although the political environment frequently limits the contribution of freedom of information laws to increased transparency, accountability, and public trust, the term "open government" refers to the freedom of information made available to citizens so that they can hold government authorities transparent and accountable. Since online technologies enable new routes via which more information can be delivered concurrently to many anonymous persons beyond the limitations of time and geography, traditional approaches to information freedom are being rethought and reformed (Moon, 2020).

As a result, there are now open government efforts that prioritize the proactive sharing of public information ahead of citizen requests and the reuse of public information. From traditional freedom of information approaches to citizens' right to know (also known as "old open government") to more recent open government approaches, there have been significant changes in many areas. These changes have occurred at both national and international levels, such as with open government partnerships and US open government data (Afandi, Afandi, Erdayani, et al., 2023; Afandi, Erdayani, Afandi, & Afandi, 2022).

Public and scholarly interest in transparent government has grown significantly since the Obama Memorandum for Heads of Departments and Executive Agencies was released in 2009 (Ruijer & Meijer, 2020). Through citizen participation, open government seeks to establish an accountable and cooperative government. The goal of open government is to increase efficiency and equip it to handle the problems of the digital age (Subedi, Nyamasvisva, & Pokharel, 2022). At the moment, open government is well-liked throughout the world, especially in Asia, Australia, and the European Union. Open government is not a brand-new idea; it has been applied in many

different situations throughout history. continually, research in the field of open government is continually expanding. It is interesting to do this open government study because of this (Wang & Shepherd, 2020).

Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with bibliometric analysis and content analysis methods. Bibliometric analysis is a method for analyzing scientific literature in a particular field of knowledge or topic (Donthu, Kumar, Mukherjee, Pandey, & Lim, 2021; Moral-Muñoz, Herrera-Viedma, Santisteban-Espejo, & Cobo, 2020). This method is used to identify trends and highlight critical insights generated from scientific literature (Gaviria-Marin, Merigó, & Baier-Fuentes, 2019; Kulsum et al., 2022). Meanwhile, content analysis is a method used to investigate and understand certain issues or topics by analyzing the contents of documents (Subedi et al., 2022; Wang & Shepherd, 2020).

In the bibliometric analysis, the data used was obtained from the Scopus, Web of Science, Semantic Scholar, and Crossref databases using Publish or Perish with the keyword "open government South Cotabato". The data was saved in RIS format, selected using OpenRefine, and analyzed using VOSviewer to obtain a bibliometric map. Meanwhile, for content analysis, data comes from South Cotabato open government policy documents obtained from the government website. The data is then categorized and interpreted to obtain the results of the South Cotabato open government policy analysis.

Result and Dicussion

South Cotabato Open Government Trends

This analysis discovered 127 relevant articles, 683 citations, 13 h-indexes, and 24 g-indexes, indicating that open government publications in South Cotabato are interesting, have an impact, and are highly productive. The H-index and g-index are commonly used to assess the productivity and effect of published publications. The distinction is that the h-index is computed using the number of articles generated and the number of citations received, but the g-index is derived using the distribution of citations and the average number of citations.
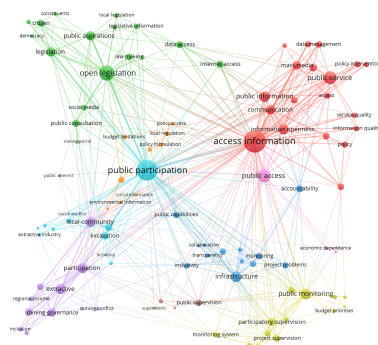

Figure. 1 Network Visualization

Based on the article keywords used in this study, the graphic above was created. There are no duplicate items shown in the visualization above. Identical items that appeared in multiple articles were counted as a single item. This visualization represents items with labels and circles. The size of the labels and circles is determined by their respective weights. The more often an item appears, the bigger the resulting label and circle. The lines between items represent links, and the location of each item indicates the closeness of the relationship. The dominant items can be seen in Figure 2, item clusters can be seen in Figure 3, and the most recent year items can be seen in Figure 4.
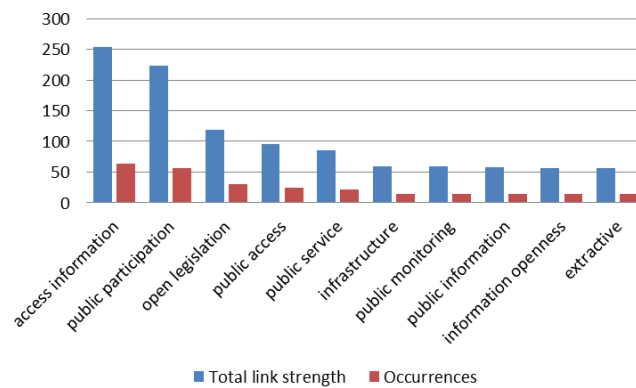

Figure. 2 Item Domination

The blue hue in the figure above represents an item's total link strength, whereas the red color represents an item's overall appearance in all articles. There are 2646 total link strengths and 668 occurrences in South Cotabato's open government articles. There are 2646 total link strengths and 668 occurrences in South Cotabato open government articles. Access information (Total Link Strength 254 and Occurrences 64), public participation (Total Link Strength 223 and Occurrences 56), open legislation (Total Link Strength 119 and Occurrences 30), public access (Total Link Strength 96 and Occurrences 24), public service (Total Link Strength 86 and Occurrences 22), infrastructure (Total Link Strength 60 and Occurrences 15), public monitoring (Total Link Strength 59 and Occurrences 15), public information (Total Link Strength 58 and Occurrences 15), information openness (Total Link Strength 56 and Occurrences 14), and extractive (Total Link Strength 56 and Occurrences 14) are the list of topics that dominate in this study. These topics are the most widely used by researchers and are the main focus of South Cotabato open government studies.
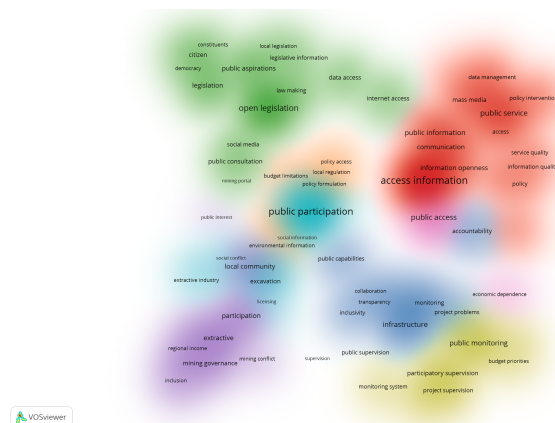
Figure. 3,Density Visualization

South Cotabato open government articles contained one hundred and three topics. The topics discussed are grouped into nine groups of differing sizes. This topic's cluster is produced by connecting lines between topics (Figure 1), ensuring that each topic in the cluster is tightly related. Cluster one's topics include policymaking, information, information quality, service quality, access, policy, policy intervention, public dialogue, data management, development projects, interactive, policy allocation, public policy, mass media, communication, information openness, public information, public services, and information access.

The topics in cluster two are mining portal, constituents, decision making, democracy, legislative data, local legislation, political process, legislative information, social media, law making, citizen, data access, internet access, public consultation, legislation, public aspirations, and open legislation. The topics in cluster three are civil society, collaboration, secretariat process, strategic projects, transparency, evaluation, inclusiveness, project monitoring, project problems, monitoring, public capabilities, accountability, and infrastructure.

The topics in cluster four are central funds, budget priorities, regional funds, infrastructure projects, monitoring process, open data kit, data updates, monitoring system, project status, project quality, project supervision, participatory supervision, and public monitoring. The topics in cluster five are culture, public interest, mining conflict, inclusion, local economy, regional income, environmental protection, social protection, mining governance, local community, participation, and extractive.

The topics in cluster six are licensing, production information, public capacity, social conflict, contracts, extraction information, extractive industry, industrial information, environmental degradation, excavation, mining, and public participation. The topics in cluster seven are economic information, social information, environmental information, policy access, budget limitations, local regulation, policy formulation, public involvement, and public awareness. The topics in cluster eight are illegal extractives, supervision, illegal mining, and public supervision. Meanwhile, the topics in

cluster nine are basic services, social services, economic dependence, and public access.
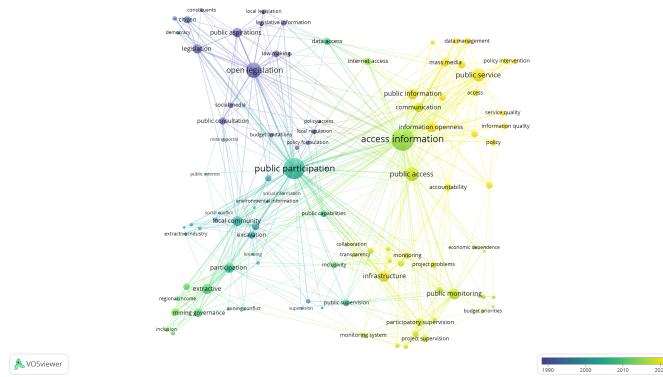

Figure. 4 Overlay visualization

The above visualization is identical to the network visualization (Figure 1), except for the color of each item. In this visualization, colors range from blue (the lowest score), green (the middle score), and yellow (the highest score). The darker the color of an item, the more it is left behind; conversely, the more yellow it is, the more attention it gets. Topics that are currently receiving attention are public service, service quality, access, public information, communication, interactive, information openness, information quality, accountability, monitoring, and evaluation. These topics allow for potential future research.

South Cotabato Commitment

As one of fifteen local governments selected for the Open Government Partnership regional government pilot program, the South Cotabato government has established four commitments to support the implementation of open government in the region. First, open legislation. In a democracy, citizen involvement in the political process is very important. Currently, citizen involvement remains limited because constituents have limited knowledge of legislative measures, especially because public hearings are not mandatory for all legislative measures. For legislative measures that require public consultation, only a small percentage of local residents are reached due to limited funds for sending communications and holding face-to-face meetings (Michael P Canares, 2020; Harrison, Pardo, & Cook, 2022).

The lack of public understanding and awareness that they can actually be involved in the formulation of regional policies and regulations, as well as how to access policies, is a major problem. Apart from that, statutory regulatory records are also not easily accessible and available both offline and online. All of this causes the majority of society not to actively participate in the decision-making process when making laws. Meanwhile, those who are aware of their right to participate or access legislative information lose interest because the process for voicing opinions is unclear (Michael P Canares, 2020; Siar, 2020).

This commitment aims to create more space for community involvement to improve the regional legislative process through online channels, thereby increasing the relevance of regional regulations in meeting community needs and development problems. This will be done by first creating a legislative information technology system. The system functions as a database for legislative records where the public can easily search for current and ongoing/pending policies and regulations.

This legislative database will also be connected to the provincial online database so that it can be accessed by the public at any time online. The online platform also includes creating an official Facebook page and connecting it to an official website where anyone can suggest new policies and regulations as well as provide comments on existing policies and regulations. This will be a platform for the general public to propose ideas regarding new laws and regulations and provide feedback on existing local policies and regulations. This will be in addition to the face-to-face public consultation currently taking place.

Establishing online channels to disseminate and consult with citizens on legislative processes and measures will expand citizen involvement in legislation and ensure the passage and implementation of relevant laws that effectively respond to real issues and development problems in society. This commitment has the potential to have an impact on increasing community involvement and access to information in the regional legislative process.

Relying on complex protocols, offline public hearings, and manual procedures to obtain feedback from the public on proposed laws, propositions commit to providing an online platform for legislative record-keeping and establish social media channels for citizen participation in lawmaking, which represents a major step forward in community engagement and access to legislative information. However, because not all regions have good internet access, this commitment's reliance on online platforms means its scope is still limited.

Second, public participation in extractives. Inadequate access and misinformation regarding mining and quarrying activities equate to lost income, environmental degradation, and social conflict. Often, communities located in the vicinity of illegal mining and quarrying activities will consider these operations as normal until the community is directly impacted by these practices or if illegal mining has been caught by the authorities. Apart from limited government personnel to monitor these illegal activities, community participation in monitoring and reporting illegal extractive activities is also low because they do not have access to and capacity to understand mining and quarrying information (Michael P. Canares et al., 2020; Huffman, 2020).

The public still does not appreciate extractive industry information because the numbers are not translated into something they can relate to or something that is important to them; for example, information about production or extraction amounts is converted into real income or benefits for the host community. This is exacerbated by environmental degradation

and conflicts in the implementation of mining and excavation rights. Currently, there are many mining operators with regular and special permits operating in indigenous peoples' territories. This area is included in the contract area of the Mining Production Sharing Agreement (Michael P. Canares et al., 2020; Ishii, 2020).

This commitment will focus on developing policies and creating transparent electronic systems and channels to better involve the community in mining governance, thereby increasing inclusion, especially of minority groups in mining areas. Access to mining and quarrying information will be improved through an online mining portal that will be developed and linked to the provincial government website, the Interactive Province Online Database, and social media to encourage public interaction. Consultation with stakeholders will be undertaken regarding what data is of public interest, relevance, and attractiveness that needs to be disclosed. CSO participation in the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board (PMRB) will be expanded to include grassroots community participation.

Through technology-based and participatory online portals, standards, channels, and branding, there will be increased openness of social, environmental, and economic information, thereby strengthening public awareness and involvement in decision-making regarding the extractive industry. This will result in increased access to information and participation of grassroots communities in mining governance, especially indigenous communities where mining areas are located, minimizing disputes and conflicts related to mining and excavation, and growing culture with a monitoring system that involves the community. Consequently, all of this can improve revenue collection, provide increased local economic opportunities, increase inclusion in mining governance, and promote socio-cultural and environmental protection in affected areas.

This commitment has the potential to increase community involvement in mining governance and increase access to information. The use of participatory-based technology and systems, standards, and branding to increase public awareness and participation can minimize disputes and conflicts, increase revenue collection and sharing between provincial and sub-provincial units, and encourage socio-cultural and environmental protection. Increasing PMRB membership, including grassroots participation, can increase the platform for engagement where discussions and issues can be addressed collaboratively and constructively. Collectively, these initiatives represent a major step forward.

Third, public monitoring of infrastructure Every year, the government implements development projects sourced from regional and central funds. Infrastructure projects usually make up a large portion of the budget. However, many infrastructure projects experience delays in implementation and completion, poor quality, and poor utilization of funds. Therefore, monitoring of these projects must be carried out regularly, efficiently, transparently, and participatively. Likewise, monitoring results should be

made available to the community for feedback. However, currently, monitoring results are only limited to members of the Provincial Project Monitoring Committee (PPMC) and the Provincial Development Council, so the general public does not know the real-time status of the project (Michael Parmisano Canares & Shekhar, 2021; Gabriel & Castillo, 2020).

These conditions mean that communities have limited opportunities to provide feedback regarding the actual status of projects (e.g., delays in implementation, poor quality of materials, or poor use of funds) or whether recommendations reflected in monitoring results are being implemented by the government. Problems in monitoring and implementing infrastructure projects have an impact on beneficiaries, especially in increasing the mobility of people, goods, and services, increasing access of disadvantaged, poor, and geographically isolated rural communities to basic social services, and supporting economic interdependence between rural and urban communities (Michael Parmisano Canares & Shekhar, 2021; Yilmaz & Venugopal, 2020).

This commitment includes efforts to make PPMC monitoring results more open and accessible to the general public by posting them for the general public to provide feedback or access monitoring results. This includes posting monitoring results to the provincial government website the day after PPMC's quarterly monitoring implementation to provide near-real-time project status to the public. Thus, PPMC will adopt the Open Data Kit, or mobile-based project monitoring system, to monitor projects in almost real-time. This commitment also includes updating the provincial government website as well as its Facebook page to include the results of community monitoring of the project for recommendations. The general public also has the opportunity to upload images of ongoing projects in their communities and post the status of those projects online. This commitment will also improve the monitoring process and composition of PPMC to strengthen the involvement of communities or communities directly affected.

This commitment can provide a wider space for communities and civil society organizations to collaborate with the provincial government in overcoming project implementation problems such as delays, poor project quality, and poor use of funds. Participation in this process can enable communities to provide feedback to improve project implementation. When monitoring findings and recommendations are published, the contractor and relevant government officials will be held responsible for project delays or other relevant agencies' non-compliance with the recommendations in the report. In line with this, existing complaint handling mechanisms (e.g., blacklisting contractors or filing cases) in the province will be strengthened to ensure accountability.

This commitment can improve the government's monitoring and evaluation process by strengthening PPMC's involvement with the community. This initiative could be a major step forward in inclusive project monitoring. Currently, monitoring and evaluation reports must go through a time-consuming secretariat process, which can hinder PPMC's timely

consideration of important projects. In contrast, community access to near-real-time project monitoring results, as envisioned through this commitment, could significantly reduce poor project implementation. This will be further enhanced by the community's ability to proactively provide feedback and comments, as well as report on infrastructure implementation. Transparency, as well as increased collaboration between government and civil society, can overcome the problems faced at every stage of project implementation.

Fourth, access to information. Among other factors, limited access to government information seriously hinders the delivery of appropriate services and interventions to address the real needs of society. Access to correct information has a direct and empowering relationship with ensuring the delivery of appropriate interventions and services to the community. Although South Cotabato already complies with full information disclosure policies issued by the department of the interior and local government, the government does not yet have a simplified information disclosure policy. Specific requests for information are generally met upon receipt, and proactive disclosure is limited (Perez & Henninger, 2020; Saxena, 2021).

The government has established mechanisms to receive and follow up on requests for information from the public and appointed a dedicated Provincial Information Officer (PIO) to process and follow up on these requests manually. However, in practice, access to information is often determined by the citizen's physical presence and even proximity to the provincial capital where the application is submitted to the PIO. For information that is not routinely published in public facilities or broadcast via print media, radio, or television, citizens must write a letter to the relevant government agency and wait for an approval decision. Information to respond to such requests often must be forwarded from other provincial, regional, or national offices (Arpit, 2022; Saxena, 2021).

This commitment aims to build online and offline channels to expand public access to government information and enable the public to provide input on government programs and services. More and better quality information will be disclosed, including not only the information required under the Philippines' full disclosure policy and basic data on the socio-economic profile of the province but also information on programs, projects, or services and project monitoring reports.

This includes developing an interactive online platform for the general public to access, view, store, and print government data and information on programs and services directly in their homes for free, with special features for the general public to provide their input on government services and programs. Part of that commitment includes holding workshops to develop mechanisms to respond to community input. This commitment also includes localizing central government policies regarding freedom of information through regional regulations and institutionalizing the public's right to information.

As an offline mechanism, a direct community participation program will be launched for people who do not have internet access. Citizens' questions to the governor will be recorded during the weekly outreach program to poor and remote communities where the provincial government brings its services directly to the community. The governor's responses to these questions will be recorded and broadcast via the province's official radio program every week and on specific dates to be announced to the public.

This commitment can increase public access to government data and information and enable feedback on government programs and services by establishing online and offline platforms for community dialogue, training workshops on data management, and creating local regulations that make it possible to institutionalize this commitment. The combined implementation of multiple media channels can trigger feedback loops that can connect communities with officials at the provincial, city, and even village levels and help policymakers design services that better align with community needs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

South Cotabato open government studies have been of interest, impact, and high productivity. This can be seen from the discovery of 127 relevant articles, 683 citations, 13 h-index, and 24 g-index. There are also 2646 total link strengths, 668 occurrences, 103 topics, and 9 clusters in this study. The topics that dominate this study include access to information, public participation, open legislation, public access, and public service. Meanwhile, public service, service quality, access, public information, and communication are several potential study topics in the future.

South Cotabato is one of dozens of local governments in the world selected for the Open Government Partnership regional government pilot program. As a form of the government's seriousness in implementing this program, South Cotabato has established four commitments, which include open legislation, public participation in extractives, public monitoring of infrastructure, and access to information. These commitments, if implemented optimally, have the potential to encourage South Cotabato to become more open.

The author recommends that the South Cotabato government collaborate with researchers in formulating and implementing open government. Apart from that, researchers who focus on open government studies, especially studies in South Cotabato, can continue this study by using the findings of this research as a basis for carrying out more in-depth development so that they can continue to contribute to government openness in South Cotabato.

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