

# Precision Journalism and Pandemic Coverage: A Study on Tirto.id

Thomas Benmetan<sup>1</sup> and Lila Nathania<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Communication Science Department, Faculty of Digital Communication and Hotel & Tourism, Bina Nusantara University. Jakarta, Indonesia 11480

**Abstract.** Pandemic changes various human behaviour, including how we get our news and information. With the help of the internet and technology, all information is within our reach all the time. Precision journalism is essential to bring light to crucial conditions during this information age. The research was conducted to study the manifestations of precision journalism in media coverage of a critical situation, specifically to the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia. The research examined data from tirto.id's coverage of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia in its category "Mild Report" from March 2020 to January 2022. The selected articles were analysed using qualitative content analysis to see how the narrative of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia was created by the media outlet. What was found in this research showcased that in a time of crisis, the public needs to be alarmed, informed, and to be enlightened with a specific understanding of such issues to prevent misapprehension that leads to possible instability. Also, the framing process in tirto.id's coverages include the employment of sensationalism to exaggerate the narrative, which impacted the creation moral panic narrative of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia. Therefore, the principalities of precision journalism are implemented in tirto.id's pandemic coverage managed to extrapolate the discourse of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia in a discursive community, showcasing an example that in a critical time like pandemic, media outlets must administer specific forms of journalism that can act beyond the bounds such as precision journalism.

## 1 Introduction

In times of crisis like pandemics, media must ensure that the spreading news has clear, valid, and justified information. However, media have their agenda that implies through their news coverage, because media not only tell us what to think about, but also tell us how to think (Ghanem et al. 2009). Since the announcement of the first case on the second day of March 2020, the topic of the coronavirus pandemic dominated most media headlines in Indonesia. One of the leading news outlets with an extensive amount of coverage of this issue is tirto.id. In a specific category named "Mild Report," tirto.id publishes articles that contain semi-analysis reports as an attempt to cover events from another perspective supported by existing data and extensive analysis based on primary data (Remotivi 2020).

Lavrakas (2008) defines precision journalism as a form of journalism that links the application of social science research methods (including survey research methods) to the practice of gathering information for the news purposes of journalists. Thus, the articles in tirto.id tend to be longer and consist of analytical reviews, statistics, and data. In other words, Tirto's news reports can be seen as scientific reports since they are adopting a scientific method, scientific objectivity, and scientific

ideals to the entire process of journalism (Meyer in Sylwester 2001).

Further to this, the way media represent issues like the pandemic in their coverage is essential to understand how such discourse is brought to the public, be it to inform, alarm, or educate the public regarding the pandemic. Henceforth, it is interesting to study how the Indonesian news portal tirto.id cover the issue of the coronavirus pandemic. It is important to look upon this matter because mass media serve as one of the key communication platforms in a public health crisis. Whether they can fulfil this important role, however, depends on the media's untainted reputation as a trusted information source just as much as on the actual information they broadcast (Glik 2007; Nan et al. 2011; Klemm et al. 2014). Henceforth, the research question coined for this study is as follows: In what ways does the pandemic coverage on tirto.id's mild report reflect the manifestation of precision journalism?

### 1.1 Objectives

Focusing on the notion of the importance of precision journalism in a critical situation and its relevance to the coverage of pandemic, a report from Reuters Institute (2020) showed that the coronavirus pandemic contributed to the increasing trend of news

\*Corresponding author: [lila.nathania@binus.edu](mailto:lila.nathania@binus.edu)

consumption for mainstream media, which means that media outlets need to ensure that what they offer to the public is accurate and trustworthy. In addition to that, the report also suggests that media has a responsibility to fulfil the public's need for reliable, accurate journalism that can inform and educate populations because a wider range of sources and 'alternative facts'. Therefore, a specific way of news coverage is highly needed to educate, alarm, and pertain public trust towards the information given.

Moreover, Xiao et al. (2015) in their research about media impact switching surfaces during an infectious disease outbreak found that the important role of media in informing the public about an outbreak is to alter behavioural changes, hence a comprehensive understanding of media impacts during an epidemic threat can aid in the development of an implementable public health policy. Therefore, by studying how media set and frame an issue such as the coronavirus pandemic on a discourse level, one could grasp the understanding that media serve as instruments of socialization and have an important impact on the staging and communicating of emotions. In other words, we learn from the media how to live and how to die (Langer 1999).

## **2 Literature Review**

### **2.1 Precision Journalism: Seeing Journalist as Social Scientist**

In journalism, the accuracy of the provided information is one of the most essential elements. This means that a journalist needs to possess the ability to process and present information in a more convincing way to ensure the credibility of their reports. Thus, the produced articles would not just be mere results of gathering information, but standardised reports that uncover a broader and more accurate understanding of an issue (Lavrakas 2008). In many circumstances, this approach is used in the type of journalism that correlates with data, scientific information and coverage that requires a more skilful and in-depth approach (Lavrakas 2008), known as precision journalism.

The term "precision journalism" originated in 1971 by Everette E. Dennis. He introduced this concept at a seminar that he taught at the University of Oregon, inspired by several writers who construct powerful narratives by using fiction techniques. However, it was first introduced as an academic concept for journalism by Phillip Meyer. He specifically addressed that it is the application of social science and behavioural methods to the practice of journalism (Meyer 2002). At this point, a journalist is seen as a social scientist that discloses the data collection methodology well enough that another precision journalist or researcher could replicate the research studies and ostensibly would reach the same conclusions (Lavrakas 2008). Similar to that, Lawrence Cranberg in Meyer (2002) argued that journalism is a science, therefore a journalist is a practicing scientist.

Meyer (2002) proposed that there are four elements that today's journalists should be familiar with. Specifically for precision journalists, proficiency in

such a field will allow them to meet one of the most essential elements of a profession. The elements are as follows: how to find information; how to evaluate and analyse it; how to communicate it in a way that will pierce the babble of information overload and reach the people who need and want it; and how to determine, and then obtain, the amount of precision needed for a particular story.

What makes it different from other forms of journalism according to Meyer is the principle that a precision journalist can be seen as a social scientist whose work resulted in the combination of both science and storytelling. To this extent, it is believable that knowing what to do with data becomes the essence of precision journalism (Meyer 2002). In working with data, precision journalists act as social scientists although the objectives of both professions are different. Journalists over the years have used the concept of precision journalism as one of the most scientific approaches in their coverage by applying several methods ranging from content analysis of public records, experimental designs, and other quantitative and qualitative behavioural science methods (Lavrakas 2008).

### **2.2 Precision Journalism and Other Forms of Scientific Journalistic Reports**

Precision journalism is indeed inter-related with other types of journalism such as science journalism, data journalism, and slow journalism. It is seen from the fact that these four forms of journalism adhere to a similar goal which is producing quality journalism that contains certain key figures such as accuracy, depth, context, analysis, and expert opinion (Delayed Gratification 2020). However, the similarity does not necessarily mean that these four forms of journalism are equally applicable for the coverage of issues like pandemics and crises. Several important points highlight the differences between each of them.

Firstly, it could be argued that both precision journalism and data journalism work on similar objectives regarding the use of data in reporting. These two forms of journalism regard data as the most important source for the coverage, referring to the fact that news stories are flowing from multiple sources and perspectives, and data can be used to create deeper insights into what is happening around us and how it might affect us (Gray et al. 2012). However, there is a particular thing that differentiates precision journalism and data journalism regarding the way they perceive the source of data. Bounegru (2016) addressed the difference in this matter by stating that data journalism pays as much attention to the data itself rather than using knowledge merely as a means of discovering or improving stories.

Secondly, it is seen from the fact that both forms of journalism adhere to the core value of journalism; presenting clear and justified information. However, what differs precision journalism from science journalism is its main objective in producing news. In

precision journalism, what matters is how to apply the scientific approaches on any kind of topic to ensure that the coverage is precisely correct.

Lastly, precision journalism and slow journalism focus on the in-depth, accurate and analytical types of reportage. However, the biggest contrast between these two is the main objective of their end-products. Precision journalism does not necessarily focus on the stylistic narrative, whilst in slow journalism, the complexity of information and the narrative style are two of the key figures in its reportage. It usually contains longer stories on the side-lines of breaking news, often made by using literary principles of narrative structuring and multi-layering (Drok and Hermans 2016).

In precision journalism, the accuracy of information is the focus of which scientific method is highly needed to gather, interpret, and vividly present information to the audience (Ukonu 2005). Greenberg (2020) stated that slow journalism gives time for research and writing at length, with an aim of quality “the highest standards of storytelling craft.” Similarly, Le Masurier (2014) argued that slow journalism requires the time for deeper reflection and/or investigation of an original subject. In this sense, it can be argued that slow journalism focuses more on the depth of information, rather than how fast the coverage reaches the public.

### 2.3 Media Framing and Pandemic Coverage

News is a carefully constructed media product, going through a series of production processes before broadcast or publication (Udeze and Uzuegbunam 2013). By this, it means that as a product, the news is constructed under a certain influence which shapes its forms, ranging from the selection of issues, words, sentences, narrative, and many more, widely known as framing. In terms of conceptualisation, there are numerous definitions of framing proposed by scholars. Gitlin (2003) defined frames as “persistent patterns of cognition, interpretation, and presentation, of selection, emphasis and exclusion by which symbol- handlers routinely organize discourse”.

Media logic manifests itself in the framing of news content (Opperhuizen et al. 2018). Henceforth, the depiction of the issue through framing could be one of the most visible ways to understand the media’s stance on something. More specifically, on the issues that concern public attention such as a pandemic, natural disaster, political events and so forth. Regarding this matter, Cappella and Jamieson (2010) addressed that there are four criteria through which media frame operates. Firstly, a news frame should obtain identifiable conceptual and linguistic characteristics. Secondly, it should be commonly observed in journalistic practice. The third aspect is the frame should be possible to be distinguished from one another. Lastly, a frame must have representational validity, in other words, can be recognised by others and not be merely a figment of the researcher’s imagination.

In the context of discourse analysis in this study, framing is one of the main concepts to be studied, as the exact purpose of this research is to analyse how Tirta.id

constructs the narrative of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia, regarding the creation and manifestation of moral panic in the coverages. It shows that the concept of framing is, to a certain degree, converged with agenda-setting theory. McCombs (1992) stated that through agenda setting, the media tell us what to think about, whereas through framing the media tell us how to think about it.

## 3 Methods

This study was led by a research question that focused on analysing how the pandemic coverage on *tirto.id*’s mild report reflects the manifestation of precision journalism. Therefore, qualitative content analysis was used as the method for this study, owing up to the fact it is a method that focuses on describing qualitative materials in a systematic way (Schreier 2012). As one of the sources of information, what was presented in media coverage affects the way the public perceives the issue. *Tirto.id* was selected as a subject for this research due to its consistency in publishing extensive coverage of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia. As a private-owned media company in Indonesia, *tirto.id* was launched in 2016 to provide coverages that are “clear, enlighten, insightful, contextual, in-depth, investigative, factual, supported by data (both quantitative and qualitative), and accountable” (*Tirto.id* 2020). With its presence online media platform that focused on the track of precision journalism, *tirto.id* distinguishes itself from other online media in Indonesia by focusing on delivering reportage under the railway of precision journalism, believing that Indonesians, especially the decision-makers and controllers of change deserve journalistic products that are based on data and well-delivered without time constraints (*Tirto.id* 2020).

## 4 Data Collection

The articles used as the sample for this research were taken from the specific category on *tirto.id* namely “Mild Report.” It is a section that contains short reports about significant societal issues which are published twice a week as of January 2017 (*Tirto.id* 2020). In total, there are 49 articles in three different timeframes of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia. The first period contains articles published from 4 March 2020 to 2 April 2020, owing up to the fact that the first outbreak was announced in March 2020, therefore it is necessary to look upon the coverages of the earliest covid situation in Indonesia. Considering the damage of the cases caused by Omicron and Delta variants, the second period contains articles dating from 9 July 2021 – 5 August 2021 because at that period, the spread of the delta variant of coronavirus was very present in Indonesia. In the third period, articles from 3 December 2021 – 6 January 2022 were taken as samples, considering that the omicron variant of coronavirus was first found in Indonesia.

The articles from three different timeframes were then coded using two categories developed by the authors, because qualitative content analysis requires the researcher to translate all those meanings in the material that is of interest into the categories of a coding frame, as well as to classify successive parts of the material according to these categories (Schreier 2012). The first category is Accuracy of Information, focusing on investigating how precise the information was built in each article that *tirto.id* produced. As Meyer (2002) said, articles in precision journalism contain scientific information which likely to be seen as the whole truth.

The second category in this analysis is Degree of Information, comprising of a selection of words and textual structure of the articles. In this category of analysis, the study focused on the systematic structure of the articles to see how data, scientific information, and methods are disseminated into reportage as well as the text's production and distribution. The analysis was conducted to interpret the pattern of textual language and the contextual situation in the articles in a broader scheme of interpretation.

## 5 Results and Discussion

As mentioned in the previous chapter, this research focuses on discovering the implementation of precision journalism in pandemic coverage, specifically on the construction of discourses in relation to the coronavirus pandemic in *Tirto's* coverage. These findings are then used for the discussion based on the idea that mass communication is an extended chain of communicative events, and that one type of communicative event "reconceptualises" others (Fairclough 1995). Whilst the results give an overwhelming amount of information, there are two important points to be discussed, encompassing the answer to the research question that led this study.

### 5.1 Formulating Trust in Pandemic Coverage: Three Key Elements

One of the main concerns in the coverage of pandemics is trust. In a critical situation like this, everything is questionable: Do they (the media) provide valid information? What is fact and what is not? Such questions emerged in public rapidly and became so crucial, specifically on the global pandemic of coronavirus. Although the trust in media's coverage of the coronavirus pandemic was relatively high in all countries, the level of trust in media decreased globally in comparison to 2019 (Reuters Institute 2020). It shows that the need for clear, justified, and credible information is highly essential. The matter of trustworthiness in news coverage is highly important, because the public tends to turn to media for information at times an outbreak occurred (Anwar et al. 2020).

The term "precision," in precision journalism emphasizes the essence that this type of reportage is lack the possibility of false and misleading information. Findings in the first category, Accuracy of Information

show that *Tirto* has a similar pattern of constructing the form of articles in each of the coverage of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia. It shows that *Tirto* configures the text in a particular order to ascertain a standardised reportage that uncovers a broader and more accurate understanding of the issue (Lavrakas 2008). Referring to the framework of this study, the application of this journalistic approach relies on the accuracy of information which scientific method is highly needed to gather, interpret, and vividly present information to the audience (Ukonu 2005).

Thus, what was presented in all the coverages of *Tirto* showcases that the texts are structured in a definite order, depicting how the media formulate information and present to the public with significant characteristics like data collectors who use their knowledge and skill to bring understanding out of complexity (Schünemann 2013). When looking at the structure of the articles, *Tirto* has a definite order of constructing the news starting from (1) Headline in a form of a declarative statement or grammatical question; (2) Background of the issue by narrating problems and situations regarding the pandemic; (3) Facts, numbers, statistics, and data to support their analysis of issue; and (4) Short conclusion or evaluation towards the issue. The precise structure of *Tirto* coverage of pandemics gives the impression that the content was formulated well, simply interconnected with three key roles in pandemic coverage such as *to alarm, control, and educate*.

To begin with, precision journalism is an approach that aims to strengthen the role of media as an *alarm* during a pandemic. As cited from Yan et al. (2016), media reports have effects on some important epidemic characteristics such as the magnitude of the peak, its timing and the final level of infections which need to be considered when planning interventions. *Tirto.id's* coverage of the coronavirus pandemic in three different phases shows that when using precision journalism as an approach in the coverage of a pandemic aiming to *alarm* the public regarding the crisis, there is a possibility that it could create the amplification of the issue and will validate the frame of a 'real' crisis and can aid in promoting public health communication strategies and disease mitigation measures (Yan et al. 2016).

The issues presented in a definite structure comprising a wide range of topics surrounding pandemic situations such as social, economy, health, humanity and politics, which resembles the report from *Reuter's Digital News Report* showing that on a survey they conducted in April 2020, news media were considered to have done a good job in helping ordinary people understand the extent of the crisis and making clear to what people can personally do to mitigate the impact. Headlines with declarative statements are often used in articles containing issues regarding direct discussions of the coronavirus pandemic on the society, for instance:

*"Having No Cash Injections and Limitations, Corona Threatens Millions of Workers."*

Moreover, grammatical questions as headlines mainly appear in the articles about the government's approach to dealing with the pandemic and the shifting lifestyle of people during pandemic and lockdown. This type of headline is commonly related to the way they ask, evaluate, and analyse government policies, development, and societal changes during pandemics. Several examples of the headlines are as follow:

*Why can a COVID-19 test with tap water be positive?  
How did They handle COVID-19 in Indonesia in 2021?*

These types of headlines are followed by the background of the event in which the text producer narrates the situation. The introductory story of the articles is usually composed of a historical review of the issue to give a context. It is then followed up by facts, numbers, and statistics regarding the said issue in the articles. Tirto presents data in a form of tables, figures, and charts, especially in articles related to the health, social and economic sectors.

For instance, in the article titled *"It's Not True There Is a New Variant of The COVID-19 Virus Named Delmicron,"* Tirto included a historical explanation of the issue by referencing numerous research, articles and statements from the experts. This type of scientific work is important in transforming the "scientific facts and data" about the coronavirus pandemic into a more understandable narrative, which means that it could also influence people in certain emotions, because how people receive data and data visualisations depends on their emotional engagements in data, such as pleasure, frustration, and confusion (Kennedy and Hill 2017). It could be argued that precision journalism aims to enhance a positive connotation of news coverage by providing coverage with clarity and trustworthy information. In conclusion, the type of reportage in tirto.id's coverage of coronavirus pandemic resembles a *control mechanism* to ensure that the public receives clear and valid information about the pandemic.

Emphasising the term "precision," the type of reporting found in tirto's coverage of the coronavirus pandemic is focused on how "valid" the information is presented to the public, which is why it relies on scientific methods in conducting the coverage. In the articles, tirto, on a critical situation like a pandemic, apply these methods to news reportage to reduce the possibility of false and misleading information, since distorted journalistic reports can generate both false hopes and unwarranted fears (Shuchman and Wilkes 1997).

For example, in the article titled *"The Negligent Handling of Covid-19 Outbreak in Indonesia,"* Tirto attaches information from The Office of National Statistics to showcase to show the possibility of virus transmission through foreign tourists that enter Indonesia at that time. In connecting with the practice of precision journalism, the use of this data in news stories from multiple sources and perspectives, can be

used to create deeper insights into what is happening around us and how it might affect us (Gray et al. 2012).

Moreover, a statement from experts is also found measurably one to two in every article. Also, when presenting the data and information, Tirto often compares the situation in Indonesia with the same situation in other countries like Malaysia, the USA, Korea, China, and Singapore. Data from the said countries appear as a benchmark for Tirto to analyse and evaluate the situation in Indonesia, and such evaluations are mainly delivered in a negative tone, especially when it comes to the portrayal of the government. Taken as an example is the article titled *"When Terawan Fails to Calm People from COVID-19 Panic,"* Tirto compares Terawan's negligence with the prevention acts in Korea when the first outbreak occurred by stating that:

*"The government (of Korea) has also prepared hand sanitisers in every room, restroom, and other modes of transportation. On February 23, South Korea announced a red alert status regarding the spread of Corona."*

Lastly, the ending part of the articles contains a short conclusion of the issue and is often written in a suggestive tone;

*"Based on the fact research that has been carried out, there is no definitive conclusion that can be drawn regarding the claim and the new SARS-CoV-2 Coronavirus which causes COVID-19 will subside in certain seasons. Further research by scientists still needs to be done."*

*"This period can also be the right moment to increase intimacy with your partner. Especially for those who are usually drowned by work in the office and only meet briefly when each one is tired. Now is the time to pay it all."*

As previously stated, that precision journalism must be logical and supported by empirical facts, we can say that in this stance Tirto applies the work of precision journalism regarding present information as a scientific approach, as if it were a science, with the scientific method, scientific objectivity, and scientific ideas to the process of mass communication (Meyer 2002).

## **5.2 Between Trust and Precision in Pandemic Coverage: Sensationalism**

Interestingly, this study found that the implementation of precision journalism in tirto.id's coverage of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia comes with the element of sensationalism, specifically in its degree of information. The use of emotive, sensationalist, and exaggerated words and phrases is apparent in the articles that they publish. As seen in the findings, the study showcase how Tirto incorporate sensationalism to provoke the narrative of the coronavirus pandemic. Hence by doing that, the sensationalist coverage often led to the prevalence of

negative emotions as it is violating notions of social decency, displacing socially significant stories, and drifting into excessiveness (Aslam et al. 2020; Grabe et al. 2001).

Regarding the degree of information, this research shows that in general, Tirta tends to use the similar word multiple times in each of its articles. In the articles regarding the social situation of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia, Words are structured emotionally based, meaning that the repetitive, over-wording, rewording are drawn upon the emotive words, aiming to spread fear and worry. Example of the repetitive words is: *Kasus terkonfirmasi* (confirmed case), *kegelisahan public* (public's anxiety), *panik* (panic), *tidak kondusif* (not conducive), *penyakit menular* (infectious disease), *krisis* (crisis), *ancaman* (threat), *gempar* (fussy).

In the article about the economic situation in Indonesia during the coronavirus pandemic, Tirta tends to emphasise that the government is to be blamed for the way they handle the pandemic. Tirta continuously projects the government as they failed to control the panic buying, chaos in public, and their unpreparedness in handling the increasing case of covid-19 in Indonesia. In connecting with tirta's manifesto as an independent news site without any political and ideological inclination, we can say that the coverage of the coronavirus pandemic does not resemble tirta's apparent reason for standing against the government, owing up to the fact that the media outlet declares their independency as an online media platform that does not work for any political interest (Tirta.id 2020).

The constant way of addressing the negative side of the government in handling the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia also topped with the emotive depiction of the economic, social, humanity, health, and political situations as the victim of the government's fault. In this stance, tirta.id strongly stripped all the favourable characteristics of the government and imparted exclusively negative ones, whatever guise it appears in a way that is explicit, stereotypical, and sharper than reality (Goode and Ben-Yehuda 2009; Monod 2017). Meanwhile, in the category of economics, words are often associated with the situation where the pandemic affected fear and panic, economical interest, as well as government's misleading.

In the articles about humanity, the words are often structured based on emotion, meaning that the repetitive, over-wording, and rewording are drawn upon the emotive words, aiming to attract public sympathy towards the issue. Tirta used words such as: *Lunturnya empati* (lack of empathy), *egois* (selfish), *merasa bersalah* (feeling guilty), *tewas* (slain), *menghancurkan* (destroy). It is also apparent that Tirta tends to use metaphors in the articles, specifically on issues related to the health and the emotional impact of the coronavirus pandemic, which means that it is likely to resemble sensationalist use of language. For example, in the article titled "*Dengue Fever gets Worse: Haunted by COVID-19?*" the term "*dihantui* (haunted)" is a metaphor to emphasize the fact that Covid-19 is equal to the terror that spread fear and worry to the public.

Such findings show that Tirta's coverage of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia has been exaggerated through the particular use of language and word choice, and the construction of the issue through media framing. Taken as an example is the use of semi-formal words and euphemistic expression as well as the use of metaphors in the coverage, of which such selections depict how Tirta manifest the use of language to capture the tensions among expressed elements of meaning, or between what is said and what is left unsaid (Reese 2001). Tirta applies the approach of precision journalism to provide fact, truth, and clarity of information, but it was delivered in a sensational way. Hence, sensationalism as a key contributor in magnifying or diminishing a threat regarding an issue (Gabrial 2013) is adopted by Tirta to stitch pieces of facts, data, statistics, and scientific analysis of precision reporting.

## 6 Conclusion

This study showcases that based on what has been postulated in the previous chapters, the role of journalism still matters, especially during a critical situation like pandemics. In a time of crisis, the public needs to be alarmed, informed, and to be elevated into a specific understanding of such issues to prevent misapprehension that leads to possible chaos. Thus, it is needed for the media to produce news with approaches that could strengthen the validity, can be trusted, educating, and informing. Precision journalism is indeed the form of journalism with such techniques that could embrace a broader point of view of society as an integrated social system, combining it with a scientific approach to enhance the trust element of the articles. It acts beyond the sole purpose to provide information, adapting to a tumultuous media environment whilst preserving its vital role in a free society - seeking out and sharing information, speaking truth to power, and illuminating, through narrative, the verities of the human experience (Belt and South 2015). When conducting coverage, media outlets must administer specific forms of journalism that can act beyond the bounds such as precision journalism.

In precision pandemic reporting, tirta.id implements the work of precision journalism by providing data analysis, fact-checking, and emphasizing the element of truth in its coverages, to compose the validity and the significant occurrence of the coronavirus pandemic. Tirta.id managed to extrapolate the discourse of the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia in a discursive community where the issue is presented by the media outlet as a phenomenon that triggers the fears in public, improperly responded to by the officials (i.e., government) thus to cause certain social problems such as chaos, economic befall, societal problems, and humanity issues affected by the coronavirus pandemic in Indonesia. Tirta.id amplifies the issue by providing

precise and trustworthy coverages delivered in a sensationalist way.

The results of this study are drawn from the perspective of qualitative nature which means that on a different approach to studying the same material, there is a possibility of resulting in a different outcome because alternative notions of knowledge reality in qualitative nature is socially constructed (Brennen 2013). Therefore, a suggestion for future research would be to take a different approach on a different scale such as a quantitative study, to expand the sampling size and enrich the variety of media outlets to acquire more comprehensive results (Brennen 2013).

## References

1. Anwar, A., Malik, M., Raees, V. and Anwar, A., Role of mass media and public health communications in the COVID-19 pandemic, *Cureus*, vol.12, no. 9, 2020.
2. Aslam, F., Awan, T. M., Syed, J. H., Kashif, A. and Parveen, M., Sentiments and emotions evoked by news headlines of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak, *Humanities and Social Sciences Communications*, vol. 7, no. 23, 2020.
3. Belt, D. and South, J., Slow journalism and the out of eden walk, *Digital Journalism*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 547–562, 2015.
4. Bounegru, L., Data journalism in perspective, *The data journalism handbook*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, pp. 57–70, O'Reilly Media, Sebastopol, CA, 2016.
5. Brennen, B., *Qualitative research methods for media studies*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, Routledge, London, 2013.
6. Cappella, J. N. and Jamieson, K. H., *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good*, 1<sup>st</sup> digital edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2010.
7. Delayed Gratification, Why slow journalism matters, Available: <https://www.slow-journalism.com/slow-journalism>, Accessed on December 2020.
8. Drok, N. and Hermans, L., Is there a future for slow journalism? *Journalism Practice*, vol.10, no. 4, pp. 539–554, 2015.
9. Fairclough, N., *Discourse and social change*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Polity Press, Cambridge, Malden, 1995.
10. Gabrial, B., 'Alarming Intelligence': Sensationalism in newspapers after the raids at Harpers Ferry, Virginia, and St. Albans, Vermont, *SENSATIONALISM Murder, Mayhem, Mudslinging, Scandals, and Disasters in 19th-Century Reporting*, 1<sup>st</sup> edition, pp. 74–93, Transaction Publishers, New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2013.
11. Ghanem, S. I., McCombs, M. and Chernov, G., Agenda setting and framing, *21st Century Communication: A Reference Handbook 21st Century Communication: A Reference Handbook*, pp. 516–24. SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA, 2009.
12. Gitlin, T., *The whole world is watching: Mass media in the making & unmaking of the new left*, University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, 2003.
13. Glik, D. C., Risk communication for public health emergencies, *Annual Review of Public Health*, vol. 28, no. 1, pp. 33–54, 2007.
14. Goode, E. and Ben-Yehuda, N., *Moral panics: The social construction of deviance*, Wiley-Blackwell, Chichester, U.K, Malden, MA, 2009.
15. Grabe, M. E., Zhou, S. and Barnett, B., Explicating sensationalism in television news: Content and the bells and whistles of form, *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media*, vol. 45, no. 4, pp. 635–55, 2001.
16. Gray, J., Bounegru, L. and Chambers, L., European journalism centre, and open knowledge foundation, *The Data Journalism Handbook: [How Journalists Can Use Data to Improve News]*. O'reilly Media, Sebastopol, CA, 2012.
17. Greenberg, S., Slow journalism. Why doesn't Britain have a culture of serious non-fiction journalism like the US? Available: <https://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/magazine/slowjournalism#UiahWuDtKfR>, Accessed on December 2020.
18. Kennedy, H. and Hill, R. L., The feeling of numbers: Emotions in everyday engagements with data and their visualisation, *Sociolog*, vol. 52, no. 4, pp. 830–848, 2017.
19. Klemm, C., Das, E. and Hartmann, T., Swine flu and hype: A systematic review of media dramatization of the H1N1 influenza pandemic, *Journal of Risk Research*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 1–20, 2014.
20. Langer, R., Towards a constructivist communication theory? Report from Germany, *Nordicom Information*, vol. 1 no. 2, 1999.
21. Lavrakas, P. J., *Encyclopedia of survey research methods*. Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA, 2008.
22. Le Masurier, M., What is slow journalism? *Journalism Practice*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 138–152, 2014.
23. McCombs, M. E., Explorers and surveyors: Expanding strategies for agenda-setting research, *Journalism Quarterly*, vol. 69, no. 4, pp. 813–24, 1992.
24. Meyer, P., *Precision journalism: A reporter's introduction to social science methods*, Rowman & Littlefield, Lanhan, 2002.
25. Monod, S. W., *Making sense of moral panics*, Cham Springer International Publishing, 2017.
26. Nan, Y., Frohlich, D. O., Fougner, J. and Lezhao, R., Communicating a health epidemic: A risk assessment of the Swine flu coverage in US Newspapers, *International Public Health Journal*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 63–76, 2011.
27. Opperhuizen, A. E., Schouten, K. and Klijn, E. H., Framing a conflict! How media report on earthquake risks caused by gas drilling, *Journalism Studies*, vol. 20, no. 5, pp. 714–34, 2018.

28. Reese, S. D., Prologue—Framing public life: A bridging model for media research, *Framing Public Life, Perspectives on Media and Our Understanding of the Social World*, pp. 7–29, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc., New Jersey, 2001.
29. Remotivi, Zen RS: Kami ingin membangun kultur riset di media, Available: <https://www.remotivi.or.id/wawancara/434/zens-kami-ingin-membangun-kultur-riset-di-media>, Accessed on October 2020.
30. Reuters Institute, *Reuters Institute digital news report 2020*, Available: <https://www.digitalnewsreport.org/>, 2020.
31. Schreier, M., *Qualitative content analysis in practice*, Sage, Los Angeles, 2012.
32. Schünemann, S., Science journalism, *Specialist Journalism*, pp. 134–46, Routledge, London, 2013.
33. Shuchman, M. and Wilkes, M. S., Medical scientists and health news reporting: A case of miscommunication, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, vol. 126, no. 12, pp. 976, 1997.
34. Sylwester, M., Journalism and the scientific methods, *ETC: A Review of General Semantics*, vol. 58, no. 4, pp. 389–391, 2001.
35. Tirto.id, Jernih, mengalir, mencerahkan bersama tirto.id, Available: <https://tirto.id/insider/tentang-kami>, Accessed on October 2020
36. Tirto.id, Pertanyaan yang sering diajukan (FAQ), Available: <https://tirto.id/insider/faq>, Accessed on October 2020.
37. Udeze, S. E. and Uzuegbunam, C. E., Sensationalism in the media: The right to sell or the right to tell? *Journal of Communication and Media Research*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 60–78, 2013.
38. Ukonu, M. O., Precision reporting in the new information society, *International Journal of Communication*, no. 3 (April), pp. 67–78, 2005.
39. Xiao, Y., Tang, S. and Wu, J., Media impact switching surface during an infectious disease outbreak, *Scientific Reports*, vol. 5, no. 1, 2015.
40. Yan, Q., Tang, S., Gabriele, S. and Wu, J., Media coverage and hospital notifications: Correlation analysis and optimal media impact duration to manage a pandemic, *Journal of Theoretical Biology*, vol. 390 (February), pp. 1–13, 2016.