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Tirto.id's Critical Construction against Government's Unreadiness in Handling Covid-19

Hendra Alfani, Budi Santoso, Lishapsari Prihatini

Abstract

Mass media as the main channel of information was responsible for conveying information that became

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Abstract

Mass media as the main channel of information was responsible for conveying information that became the public reference. Tirto.id, a verified news portal at the Press Council, reported six investigative news stories highlighting the government's unpreparedness in dealing with the spread of Covid-19. The news between 27 February to 14 March 2020 were the objects of this research. Based on the objects, this research focused on the construction of Tirto.id on the reality of the government's unpreparedness. This study used a descriptive qualitative method through Robert M. Entman's framing analysis model. The reports of this study were restructured into: Define Problems, Diagnose Causes, Make Moral Judgments, and Treatment Recommendations. On the aspect of Define Problems, the research showed misinformation and coordination. The aspects of Diagnose Causes were being ignored because of safe feeling. On the aspect of Make Moral Judgments, it showed criticism of biased policies. Meanwhile, on Treatment Recommendations, the state/government must be able to protect its people. The conclusion obtained showed that Tirto.id saw the government's unpreparedness as a reflection of the country's failure to protect its people due to unprofessional actions and biased policies in handling Covid-19.

Keywords

Covid-19; online media; construction of reality; framing analysis

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***Tirto.id*'s Critical Construction against Government's Unreadiness in Handling Covid-19**

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ABSTRACT

Mass media as the main channel of information was responsible for conveying information that became the public reference. Tirto.id, a verified news portal at the Press Council, reported six investigative news stories high lighting the government's unpreparedness in dealing with the spread of Covid-19. The news between 27 February to 14 March 2020 were the objects of this research. Based on the objects, this research focused on the construction of Tirto.id on the reality of the government's unpreparedness. This study used a descriptive qualitative method through Robert M. Entman's framing analysis model. The reports of this study werestructured into: Define Problems, Diagnose Causes, Make Moral Judgments, and Treatment Recommendations. On the aspect of Define Problems, the research showed misinformation and coordination. The aspects of DiagnoseCauses were being ignored because of safe feeling. On the aspect of Make Moral Judgments, it showed criticism of biased policies. Meanwhile, on Treatment Recommendations, the state/government must be able to protect its people. The conclusion obtained showed that Tirto.id saw the government's unpreparedness as a reflection of the country's failure to protect its people due to unprofessional actions and biased policies in handling Covid-19.

Keywords: Covid-19; online media; construction of reality; framing analysis

ABSTRAK

Media massa sebagai saluran utama informasi, bertanggungjawab menyampaikan informasi yang menjadi rujukan publik. Tirto.id, yang terverifikasi di Dewan Pers, adalah media yang pemberitaannya dirujuk oleh publik dalam mencermati perkembangan Covid-19. Enam berita investigasi Tirto.id yang menyoroti ketidaksiapan pemerintah dalam menangani penyebaran Covid-19 yang terbit pada rentang tanggal 27 Februari hingga 14 Maret 2020, menjadi objek penelitian ini. Berdasarkan itu, masalah penelitian ini fokus pada pertanyaan bagaimana konstruksi yang dilakukan Tirto.id terhadap realitas ketidaksiapan pemerintah tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif deskriptif melalui analisis framing model Robert M. Entman. Struktur pemberitaan yang dikaji adalah *define problems*, *diagnose causes*, *make moral judgement*, dan *treatment recommendation*. Hasil penelitian secara per bagian dari aspek define problems adalah misinformation dan koordinasi. Dari diagnose causes adalah bersikap abai karena merasa aman. Dari aspek Make moral judgement adalah kritik terhadap kebijakan yang bias, dan dari treatment recommendation adalah negara/pemerintah harus mampu melindungi rakyatnya. Kesimpulan yang diperoleh menunjukkan bahwa Tirto.id melihat ketidaksiapan pemerintah sebagai cerminan gagalnya negara melindungi rakyatnya, karena tindakan tidak profesional dan kebijakan yang bias dalam penanganan Covid-19.

Keywords: Covid-19; media daring; konstruksi realitas; analisis framing

INTRODUCTION

Until February 2020, through the Ministry of Health, the Indonesian government has not yet issued a particular policy as a serious effort to detect the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia. In fact, Indonesia is geographically one of the most vulnerable countries to the spread of Covid-19. The Indonesian government was actually busy preparing courses to maintain economic stability, especially in the tourism sector. Only after two patients of Covid-19 were verified positive in the City of Depok, West Java, the government stuttered and frantically formulated policies to anticipate them.

In this context, as the main channel for the public to get information, mass media exists to continuously inform the development of the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak every day, including criticizing the government's policies to suppress and overcome the spread rate of the virus and handling patients who tested positive for being infected. Initially, Indonesian media did not get complete information. The government was still closing the information about the certainty of the number of positively infected patients. As a result, the news was constructed on incomplete information. This situation created a "terror of information", which leads to disinformation and misinformation in public, which in turn, creating what so-called "infodemic" (Yustitia & Ashrianto, 2020). A study by Ferreira and Borges (2020) about media and Covid-19 misinformation showed that people relied more on the mainstream media, such as television and digital newspapers, to get information related to the ongoing pandemic. It was because they were trying to get valid information and to avoid misinformation.

Therefore, mass media are expected to play an important role in every disaster. The mass media becomes a liaison for all parties concerned in pre, ongoing, and post-disasters (Sanusi, 2018). In such a situation, media can actually play a significant role in providing statistics related to potential disasters that may be happened, whether it is positive or negative. Positive information can give confidence to the public about the truth of the news. On the other side, negative information has the potential to cause issues of unclear truth. The community can be influenced by negative news and create an atmosphere of panic (Lestari et al., 2018). A good understanding of disaster maps must be considered by the media so as not to worsen the atmosphere, sadness, and suffering of the disaster victims (Sukmono & Junaedi, 2018).

Meanwhile, in other situations, mass media are required to continue reporting the health crisis that has been increasing daily. It is a burdensome task in a difficult time to report a severe crisis without causing public panic and fear by responsibly conditioning and educating the public to continue to be careful and follow the health protocol. Moreover, the government has just released escalating unclear information that is still very doubtful. The peak of the "resentment" over the slow efforts of the government in issuing Covid-19 outbreak prevention and handling policy is when various groups began to criticize the panic and unreadiness of the government, which led to the increasing number of patients who were positively infected with Covid-19.

In addition, according to Prajarto (2008), the media enthusiasm portrayed in their reporting on disasters (in this case: Covid-19 pandemic) dragged more misconceptions. On one side, the disaster information system is trying to be established, and the media is positioned to be part of the disaster information system. However, on the other hand, the information media related to the disaster was turned into misinformation as well as disinformation. As a result, it actually raises public confusion about the disaster information system itself. Instead of getting integrated information through an integrated system, the public would only get partial information about the outbreak. In fact, the news is the final result of the media construction process towards a reality that becomes information as a media version of the truth. It influences the audience to accept and believe in the truth of the media version. Media framing of an event through news is one of the media's efforts to convince audiences of the reality it constructs based on facts arranged somehow from the media's point of view. Therefore, the articulation of meaning in the use of language through news is a context that must be considered. It is likely that the news published contains content or represents a certain ideology in an organized system. In this context, media framing about significant social phenomena, such as the Covid-19 outbreak, is essential to study. This is because every reality construction carried out by the media needs to be validated in a representative manner so that all parties can acknowledge its truth.

In relation to this phenomenon, some studies about media coverage on the Covid-19 pandemic have been done by some researchers. Yustitia & Ashrianto (2020), for instance, observed the tendency of misinformation and disinformation associated with Covid-19 using quantitative content analysis, with a focus on identifying media dissemination, as well as the types and sources of

misinformation and disinformation in Indonesia. Another research conducted by Sofian & Lestari (2021) analyzed *Tempo.co*'s news about the doubtful attitude of the Indonesian government in making policies and found that every policy made was seemed to have found no success in handling the Covid-19 case. Then, Fahrimal et al. (2020) studied *Kompas.com* and *Detik.com* framing in reporting Covid-19 in Indonesia during March 2020. The results showed that these two media applied two dominant frames: the public health issue to show aspects of the victims, risks, and threats of Covid-19 and the policy issue to frame the government's strategy in handling Covid-19. Furthermore, research by Liu et al. (2020) in China found out that media influences people's prevention behavior and excessive prevention intentions. The results showed that mass media exposure has a significant positive impact on subjective norms. In addition, mass media exposure can significantly increase preventive behavior through subjective norms.

Based on the description above, by examining previous research and exploring the context of the literature that is considered relevant, *Tirto.id*, as one of the most influential online media in Indonesia and verified in the Indonesian Press Council, has delivered a critical investigative report representing public's questions about the Indonesian government's unpreparedness in dealing with the Covid-19 outbreak. This situation attracted the researchers' interest to reveal amid a flood of uncontrolled information. Thus, based on that situation, the problem of this study is formulated as follows: "*How is the construction of news framing in the Tirto.id cyber media against the unpreparedness of the Indonesian government in dealing with the Covid-19 outbreak in the February-March 2020 edition?*".

METHOD

This study's approach is qualitative. In Lindlof and Taylor's (2002) view, qualitative research methods are considered more appropriate to be used by interpretive and critical researchers. Qualitative research is a form of interpretive approach in which researchers interpret what is seen, heard, and understood. Researchers' interpretation can not be separated from the background, history, context, and previous understanding (in Creswell, 2009). Meanwhile, Bogdan & Steven J. Taylor (1992) states that qualitative research is one of the research procedures that produces descriptive data in the form of speech or writing and the behavior of the people observed, which are detailed from the phenomena under study. Through qualitative research researchers can recognize subjects and feel what they experience in everyday life.

Based on the selection of qualitative methods, this study uses a framing analysis method to find out media's works and ideologies when constructing a reality. Social reality is understood, interpreted, and constructed with certain formations and meanings. These elements are not only part of technical journalism but rather indicate how events are interpreted and displayed. This is really a political reality – how the media builds, presents, maintains, and reproduces an event to its readers. In line with the context mentioned by Ahmadi & Sulaeman (2009), mass media has a very important and strategic role and use in transforming knowledge and insights into the audience. Media also has the strength of its exposure to influence and shape public opinion.

The framing analysis used in this study was developed by Robert Entman, who had formulated four models to see and explore the construction of reality carried out by the media, namely: *defining the problem, estimating the problem or the source of the problem, making moral decisions, and emphasizing problem-solving*. The formula is described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Robert Entman's Framing Analysis Model

Define Problems	How is an event or issue seen? As a what? Or as a matter of what?
Diagnose Causes	What was the event seen as caused? What is considered to be the cause of a problem? Who (the actor) is considered the cause of the problem?
Make Moral Judgement	What are moral values presented to explain the problem? What moral values are used to legitimize or delegitimize an action?
Treatment Recommendation	What solutions are offered to resolve the problem/issue? What path is offered and must be taken to overcome the problem?

Source: Eriyanto, (2011:223)

Furthermore, the research made six news published by *Tirto.id* on 27 February 2020 to 14 March 2020 (see table 2) as a unit of analysis. The six news are detailed on table below.

Table 2. Unit of Analysis

No.	News Title	Issued Date
1.	<i>Dana Rp72 Miliar buat Influencer, Pemerintah GagapTangani Covid-19</i> (IDR 72 Billion Fund for Influencers, Government Fails to Handle Covid-19)	27-02-2020
2.	<i>Dampak Pemerintah Menunda-nundaInformasisoalSebaran Virus Corona</i> (The Impact of the Government on Delaying Information about the Distribution of the Corona Virus)	04-03-2020
3.	<i>TeledorPenangananWabahCovid-19 di Indonesia</i> (The handling of the Covid-19 Outbreak in Indonesia is Negligent)	09-03-2020
4.	<i>Salah Kaprah Pemerintah BerujungKepanikanMassalterhadapCovid-19</i> (Government Misunderstanding Leads to Mass Panic against Covid-19)	10-03-2020
5.	<i>"Kikuknya" Menkes TerawanMenghadapiCovid-19</i> (Minister Terawan's "Clumsiness" in Facing Covid-19)	11-03-2020
6.	<i>MemunggungiPemda, Pemerintah Pusat Monopoli Penanganan Corona</i> (Turning its back on Regional Governments, Central Government Monopolizes Corona Handling)	14-03-2020

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Tirto.id's coverages reported in the final edition of February 2020 to mid-March 2020 featured several angles that focused on discussing the problem of dealing with Covid-19. The information vagueness in such a situation seemed to be well realized by the editor of *Tirto.id*, because the information audience, according to Panuju (2018), not only places the news as a source of information about events but also as guidelines for preparing the agenda. This is in accordance with the main function of disaster journalism, which is to help the community and other parties to manage the occurring disaster. In this context, *Tirto.id* put itself as a public stakeholder who had the control capacity to convey the certainty of information. Similarly, emphasized that in a disaster event, a disaster management operation will involve various stakeholders, each of which has the same tasks, resources, skills, and missions to the same and different interests (Budi HH, 2012).

The first news, "Rp72 Billion Funds for Influencers, the Government Stuttered to Handle Covid-19", published on 27 February 2020, displayed the frame of the problem of the spread of Covid-19, which continued to show an increase. Until 25 February 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) recorded 80.239 cases and 2,700 deaths worldwide. Its distribution was increasingly spreading to many countries worldwide. However, when other countries were worried about handling the Covid-19 outbreak and starting to impose travel ban, Indonesia actually did the opposite. The Indonesian government budgeted a total of Rp200 billion to fund social media users or influencers in tourism promotion and incentive packages to ward off the Coronavirus or Covid-19's negative effects.

However, to whom and how the technical policies that would be applied to use the funds could not be clearly explained by relevant officials such as the Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs and

the Minister of Tourism and Creative Economy. Meanwhile, Bhima Yudhistira, an economist at the Institute for Development of Economics and Finance (Indef), was worried that the budget could be redundant. According to him, based on available data, the followers of those international influencers' social media accounts were robotic accounts. That means, if the target was not clear and the output could not be measured, the budget was also useless, and the effort was truly unwise. In this context, it was clear that the government stuttered, looking for ways to reduce the impact of the Covid-19 outbreak.

The government's unreadiness was even more explicit when a patient of Covid-19 suspect reportedly died at Kariadi Hospital, Semarang. However, the authorities insisted that the death was not caused by the Coronavirus. The government was apprehensive and covered up information about the death. In fact, there were irregularities over the death; for instance, the doctors did not want to reveal the cause of death and patients buried in a kind of plastic wrap. The Coordinating Minister for PMK, Muhadjir Effendy, said that the government could not carelessly inform the information of the disease because it involved medical records protected by the medical code of ethics. Regarding the use of plastic, Muhadjir reasoned that the patient died in a pneumonia situation, so it had to be wrapped in plastic, and it was not at all related to Covid-19.

Table 3. Observation Results on *Framing Define Problems*

Framing Instrument	News Order	Observation Results
<i>Define Problems</i>	1	The spread of the Covid-19 epidemic continues to increase until 25 February 2020. The World Health Organization (WHO) recorded 80,239 cases of Corona infection and 2,700 deaths worldwide. The context of this event is seen as a severe threat to all countries in the world.
	2	President Joko Widodo officially announced two Indonesian citizens (mother and daughter) from Depok, West Java, infected with Covid-19. In contrast, the government previously claimed that Indonesia was free from the spread of this virus. The context of this event shows the impression that the government is not open to actual information and has inflicted unreadiness and panic (unpreparedness) in anticipating the outbreak.
	3	Apriyani, a news source quoted by <i>Tirto.id</i> , who had just returned from Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur, stated that she and her family had not been given strict procedures at the airport. Whereas, in Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur, she was examined and supervised with very strict procedures. In the context of this incident, Apriyani saw that the government had been very unprepared, and the airport authorities had not been serious or even careless in anticipating the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak.
	4	There was a government misunderstanding, where they seemed to be reluctant, in facing the increasingly widespread outbreak of Covid-19 even though it had been proven by the positive suspect exposed to Covid-19. The context of this event caused mass panic in the community, prices of basic needs jumped sharply, and personal protective equipment (PPE) and antiseptics also became expensive and difficult to obtain.
	5	The off-guard attitude of the central government in facing the expansion of the epidemic gave rise to a lack of vigilance in anticipating the pestilence. The government's attention was still focused on the economic impact alone, even though the WHO had firmly reminded that the Government of Indonesia not be careless. The context of this event causes weaknesses in preparing health mitigation measures, especially in the context of early detection, case management, and Covid-19 prevention.
	6	The central government monopolized the information sources related to

the Covid-19 outbreak. This attitude was considered by many parties to be very dangerous because it was feared that it would weaken coordination with local governments. The context of this event proves that the concern of many parties is valid. The information restriction policy proved to have a negative impact on the coordination of the prevention and handling of the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak with the local government.

The second news entitled “The Impact of the Government Delaying Information about the Corona Virus Distribution” published on 4 March 2020 presented a frame of government problems covering the information about the Covid-19 spread in Indonesia. Ideally, the government should be open to convey factual information about the spread of Covid-19. Eventually, on Monday (2/3/2020), President Joko Widodo officially announced a 64-year-old mother and her 31-year-old daughter from Depok, West Java, exposed to the Covid-19 virus. It was revealed after the Ministry of Health team checked the allegation that the two persons were infected. Both were suspected of interacting with a Japanese citizen (Covid-19 positive) who lives in Malaysia, in mid-February. Incongruously, prior to the announcement, the government claimed that Indonesia was free from the spread of this virus.

The third news published on 9 March 2020, entitled “Careless Management of the Covid-19 Plague in Indonesia”, strengthened the *Tirto.id* frame in criticizing the government’s unreadiness in anticipating the spread and in handling the suspect exposed to Covid-19. The unreadiness was clearly illustrated by Apriyani, the news source quoted by *Tirto.id*. Apriyani recently traveled with her small family from Hong Kong to Kuala Lumpur to Palembang, Indonesia. Apriyani said to *Tirto.id*’s journalist that she was shocked because she was carelessly examined by the airport authorities even though she had just returned from a country exposed to the plague of Covid-19.

According to Apriyani, when she arrived in Hong Kong on 18 January 2020, the Hong Kong International Airport –and the Kuala Lumpur Airport— imposed strict controls on foreigners as Covid-19 had spread to many countries. In Hong Kong and Kuala Lumpur, entrants ought to pass through a thermal scanner and thermometer gun. All must wear masks and were given a Covid-19 flow handling booklet by airport officials who sprayed the disinfectant every two hours in every room corner and cleaned the elevator buttons and escalator handles. Regarding the carelessness, on 3 March 2020, *Tirto.id* confirmed to Adita Irawati, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Transportation. Adita said that the supervision of foreign passengers had been conducted since last February. However, she acknowledged that the tightening of airport surveillance was only carried out after the Indonesian government announced two patients of Covid-19 positive on 2 March 2020.

The fourth news entitled “Misunderstanding the Government Ends Mass Panic on Covid-19” published on 10 March 2020 presented a frame of public panic due to the increasingly widespread outbreak of Covid-19 in Indonesia. The panic was triggered by the government’s misrepresentation in responding to the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak. The prices of basic necessities suddenly skyrocketed, including the increase in the price of masks and hand sanitizers, which also doubled and began to be difficult to obtain after President Joko Widodo announced Indonesians Covid-19 positive on 2 March 2020.

The fifth news published on 11 March 2020 titled “‘Clumsy’ Minister of Health Terawan Facing Covid-19” showed the frame that while people were asked not to panic facing the Covid-19 outbreak, the government made conditions less vigilant. That attitude was assumed as a reference by the public, but, over time, with the “terror of information” from various sources and the increasingly widespread outbreak, the panic situation widespread. Minister Terawan determinedly said that the government was ready to muffle public panic. To make no panic, Terawan asked the public to pray. Terawan’s seriousness to protect Indonesian people from panic did not go well. The fact was that panic had occurred in the community, for instance, panic buying. WHO also doubted the Indonesian government’s vanity. WHO representative for Indonesia, Navaratnasamy Paranietharan, said that all countries need to prepare themselves, starting with early detection, case management, and prevention.

Finally, on the aspect of Define Problem, in the sixth news published on 14 March 2020 titled “Turning its Back on the Regional Government, the Central Government Monopolizes Corona Handling” displayed a frame of poor coordination between the central and regional governments in handling the Covid-19 outbreak, even though positive cases of infection continued to increase rapidly after the first two positive cases in Depok. The central government actually monopolized the information about the Covid-19 pandemic, and this situation was considered very dangerous by

observers. Within eleven days, the number of Covid-19 patients had multiplied, after positive cases called “the 1st and 2nd cases” were officially announced by the president on 2 March 2020. As of 8 March 2020, there had been six positive cases. The positive case of Covid-19 then jumped dramatically to 19 on Monday 9 March 2020 and 34 people as of 11 March 2020. The figure even doubled as of 13 March 2020 to 69 cases.

Diagnose Causes

Tirto.id's framing of news related to the Indonesian government's unreadiness in handling the Covid-19 outbreak was categorized under certain subthemes. At this stage, an analysis was made to the background of the causes of the problem in the reporting. In addition, analysis was done to identify the actors framed in reporting. The causes of the problems in the six stories were used as the unit of analysis this study. Observation results of Diagnose Causes are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. The Result on *Framing Diagnose Causes*

Framing Instrument	News Order	Observation Results
<i>Diagnose Causes</i>	1	The events in this news were caused by the government's lax attitude in responding to the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak and the misleading confidence that Indonesia was safe from the outbreak. The context of the cause of the problem is that the central government prefers to focus on efforts to maintain economic stability and covers up information about the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak.
	2	The incident in this news was caused by the Indonesian government's claim to be free from the spread of the Covid-19 virus. The context of the cause of the problem is that the government is considered to be covering up information about the suspect case positively exposed to Covid-19. The government claimed the infection is not severe and that they are ready to handle the Covid-19 outbreak.
	3	The incident in this news was caused by the government that had not yet tightened the supervision of the traffic flow of people arriving at the airport that could spread Covid-19. The context of the cause of the problem is that airport authorities did not prepare thermal scanners and thermometer guns, did not order to wear masks, were not given a flowchart for handling Covid-19, and did not spray disinfectants for prevention.
	4	The incident in this news was caused by the government's negligence, feeling over-confident that Indonesia was safe from the threat of the Covid-19 epidemic then urged the public not to be panic and anxious. The context of the cause of the problem is: Indonesia has been able to mitigate and be “safe” from the Covid-19 outbreak. The status of a free Covid-19 Indonesia is “no doubt” because it has been validated by WHO's compliment to the Indonesian government.
	5	The events in this news were caused by the panic in the society due to the government's slow response regarding the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic. The number of suspects and infected victims continued to increase worldwide since December 2019, but the government claimed that Indonesia was still safe. The context of the cause of the problem is the statement of the Minister of Health Terawan, who asked the public not to be panic and just pray to God to deal with the Covid-19.
	6	The events in this news are caused by the central government's attitude, which monopolized information on the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak and ignored the role of the local government, resulting in poor coordination regarding the handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. The context of the cause of the problem is the information monopoly policy by the central government is deliberately carried out to avoid panic in the community.

In the context of the government's unreadiness in dealing with a pandemic, the core problem was found with the following analysis. In the first news, the government seemed to underestimate and were confident that Indonesia was safe from the threat of the Covid-19 attack by covering up information related to the virus spread. The government was still focused on the efforts to maintain economic stability. The actors who caused the problems were Airlangga Hartarto (Coordinating Minister for the Economy), Whisnutama (Minister for Tourism and Creative Economy), and Muhadjir Effendy (Coordinating Minister for Human Development and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia). They made statements that economic stability was more important, and they seemed insensitive about the threat of the outbreak of Covid-19.

In the second news, the event was caused by the attitude of the government officials who claimed that Indonesia was still free and safe from the threat of the Covid-19 outbreak and at the same time hid the information on the suspect cases. It was written in this news that the government was not serious nor ready to face the threat of the spread of the epidemic, which increasingly spread throughout the world. Sadly, President Jokowi was the main actor causing the problem in the context of the news. Then in the third news, the events were caused by the loosening of policies implemented by the government in monitoring the flow of people, especially from abroad, which had become the red zone. Tightening of supervision had not been done at all. Airport authorities had not implemented minimum supervision standards and were not supported by early detection and anticipation equipment to people suspected of being medium for transmitting the coronavirus. Actors causing problems in this news are Adita Irawati (Spokesman of the Ministry of Transportation) and Achmad Yuriyanto (Spokesperson for Covid-19 Task Force).

Then, in the fourth news, the events were caused by the government's false attitude in facing the threat of the pandemic spread. Until early March 2020, the government still insisted that Indonesia was safe from the threat of the virus outbreak and urged the public to remain calm, not panic. The government claimed that this situation could not be doubted because it had been validated by the WHO. Actors causing problems in this news are Ma'ruf Amin (Vice President), who made a controversial statement that the prayers of the *kyai* (Islamic Priests) are enough to eradicate Covid-19 from Indonesia. Then, Wiranto stated that WHO's validation of Indonesia's readiness in mitigating the Covid-19 outbreak disaster could not be doubted. Furthermore, Terawan Agus Putranto (Minister of Health) agreed with Vice President Ma'ruf Amin's statement that it was better to pray and took action is only needed when there were active cases of Covid-19.

In the fifth news, it was confirmed that the events occurred as the society began to panic concerning the threat of Covid-19 due to the government's slow response. The government kept emphasizing the claim that Indonesia was still safe from the threat of the plague. However, the Covid-19 epidemic was already spreading throughout the world, and the numbers of infected victims continue to grow. The actor causing the problem in this news is Terawan Agus Putranto, who asked the public not to panic and pray to God to handle the Covid-19. The statement was considered by many parties to be ridiculous, considering that Terawan was the Minister of Health of the Republic of Indonesia.

Finally, in the sixth news, the events were caused by the attitude and policy of the central government that monopolized information on the Covid-19 outbreak prevention and handling. The central government appeared to ignore the role of the local government, who were actually the foremost stakeholders in dealing with the expansion of the Covid outbreak 19. This attitude confused the information and had worsened the coordination between the central government (state institutions) and regional governments.

Make Moral Judgement

The *Make Moral Judgment* level (see table 5) focuses on the issues framed within themes related to specific values based on opinions or facts presented in the news content. The framing is to emerge the viewpoints and opinions of the audience; to provide an argumentative response to the highlighted problems in accordance with the *Tirto.id*'s designed agenda and goals in exposing the facts of the government's unreadiness in preventing and handling the Covid-19 outbreak which widespread quickly in Indonesia.

Table 5. Results on *Make Moral Judgement*

Framing Instrument	News Order	Observation Results
<i>Make Moral Judgement</i>	1	<i>Tirto.id</i> , through its news source, made strong criticisms to the government, which favored economic stability by preparing a total of Rp 200 billion for tourism promotion rather than focusing on actual steps to prevent and handle the danger of the widespread Covid-19 epidemic. Analysts were worried that the budget could be wasteful and valid data did not support the delivery. Followers of social media accounts of international influencers were mostly robotic accounts.
	2	The government had been criticized for covering up information on the cases of the Covid-19 outbreak in Indonesia and claiming that Indonesia was still safe and free of the virus outbreak for the sake of economic growth. The government was urged to convey information openly and show serious actions to prevent and deal with the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak, not to cause panic in the community.
	3	The government was overconfident by claiming that Indonesian territory was still safe from the Covid-19 outbreak. It was stated that there were no positive cases in all parts of Indonesia. This attitude caused negligence, unpreparedness, as well as unreadiness. When a positive case was announced of Covid-19 exposure, everything was not ready. In addition, the prevention-handling system was not coordinated. The surveillance of points that could be the “entry point” of Covid-19 transmissions, such as at the airport, was very weak.
	4	The government claims that Indonesia was still safe from the spread of the Covid-19 virus outbreak until entering early March. Wiranto’s statement that Indonesia was able to mitigate the plague of Covid-19 and the status of Indonesia free of Covid-19 need not be doubted, and the religious narratives of Vice President Ma’ruf Amin and Minister Terawan that the prayers of the priests might get rid of the Coronavirus. When the Covid-19 suspects were found, it was not only the people who panicked but also the government. As the most responsible stakeholder, the Indonesian government was panicky in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.
	5	Amidst the panic situation on Covid-19 peril, instead of preparing various instruments to deal with the contagious disease, the government focused on economic matters, both monetary and fiscal, to strengthen the country’s economic resilience and competitiveness.
	6	The central government had been criticized for “monopolizing” information on the spread of the Covid-19 epidemic. Local governments were not allowed to convey any information related to Covid-19 to the public, let alone the patient’s final status (positive or negative). As a result, the coordination among central and regional governments in facing the Covid-19 outbreak became very weak.

In the first news, the aspect *Make Moral Judgment* highlighted by *Tirto.id* was the context of criticizing the government’s attitude, which remained adamant with the importance of creating economic stability. Indeed, during the outbreak, the government enacted particular policies with the support of a total budget of Rp 200 billion to secure the tourism sector from the effects of the Covid-19 outbreak. The observer said, as quoted by *Tirto.id*, the policy was controversial since it had not been supported by valid data. The target was not yet clear as an indicator of the measurement of its success, so that the considerable budget stimulant was feared to be useless, or it might be wasted. Then, in the second news, *Tirto.id* presented the moral value that the government should guarantee the disclosure of information to the public instead of limiting and covering up the information needed. In fact, access to information related to the public interest ought to be delivered transparently in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the constitution: Article 28F of the 1945 Constitution and

Article 2, paragraph 1 and paragraph 3 of Law Number 14 of 2008 on Public Information Openness. The government was serious in making policies to face economic impacts but did not focus on the readiness to face the Covid-19 outbreak.

Still related to the first and second news, in the context of *Make Moral Judgment* in the third news, *Tirto.id* also presented a critical construction. The news presented the government's belief that Indonesia was free and safe from the threat of the Covid-19 outbreak because it had not been found (yet detected) a positive case in Indonesia's territory. The government's careless attitude generated unreadiness which was clearly observed when in the end, President Joko Widodo "had to" officially announce positive suspects of Covid-19, which were called Case 0 and Case 1. After the announcement, the Ministry of Health, as the leading sector in handling the Covid outbreak -19, experienced panic shocks. An unprepared information system was also followed by a chaotic health disaster mitigation system in emergency response situations.

Something is exciting about this fourth news. On the context of *Make Moral Judgment* in the news, *Tirto.id* presents a critical construction of the attitude of conceit and even the ridiculousness of the central government officials who claimed that Indonesia was free and safe from the spread of the Coronavirus. Unmitigated, the careless attitude and silliness were raised by Vice President Ma'ruf Amin, Wiranto, and Minister of Health Terawan Agus Putranto. Ma'ruf Amin said that thanks to the prayers of the Islamic priests, the corona might step aside from Indonesia. Wiranto stated that the status of Indonesia Covid-19 free could not be doubted because it had been validated by WHO and the government, he said, had already prepared an integrated Covid-19 mitigation system. Even more alarming was the statement of the Minister of Health Terawan, which stated that they could only pray while working, checking, doing detecting actions. Moreover, he openly stated that the government would take serious actions "if there were already victims".

Furthermore, in the fifth news that was observed, *Tirto.id* presented the context of *Make Moral Judgment* where the government seemed to lose its direction to declare its readiness in preventing and overcoming the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak. The government was just concerned with economic stability policies which were expected to be most affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. The statement of the central official showed this fact, especially the Minister of Health Terawan, who still believed that Indonesia was safe from the outbreak of the virus; thus, the public did not need to panic. However, the Minister of Health's appeal turned out to be considered "just a cradle". He did not seem serious to face the problem as a ministry commander who should have been at the forefront of preparing all policy and technical instruments to deal with the spread of the epidemic. In fact, every day, the number of positive suspects infected with Covid-19 continued to grow, and its distribution was increasingly widespread.

Finally, in the sixth news that was observed, *Tirto.id* presented the context of *Make Moral Judgment* that the government implemented a policy of information monopoly to cover the "disgrace" due to the unreadiness in facing the Covid-19 outbreaks. All parties, including local governments, were prohibited from submitting any information regarding Covid-19. All information held by the region regarding the outbreak ought to be reported to the central government. Furthermore, the central government had the right to announce this to the public, especially information relating to the patient's final status: positive or negative infection, patient under surveillance (PDP), or person under surveillance (ODP). In fact, the government as the leader of public communication should have been open. McAuslane et al. (2014) state that communications should be part of managing an outbreak from the outset and a strategy developed for informing the public and key stakeholders should be discussed and agreed upon at the Outbreak Control Team (OCT). As a result, in a force majeure situation, the central government's adoption of an information monopoly policy inflicted weak coordination between institutions and caused chaos in the information management system for handling and preventing the Covid-19 outbreak.

Treatment Recommendation

At the Treatment Recommendation level (see table 6), *Tirto.id* delivered a series of recommendations for solving the problems and issues related to government unreadiness in dealing with the Covid-19 that had been framed in the news. A contextual solution to the problem was described in categorical themes for public consumption. The news was framed by giving solutions in the following categories.

In the first news, the critical construction of recommendations by *Tirto.id* was developed by quoting the opinion of news sources. The recommendation focused on the context that the government was focusing too much on saving the economy, which was perceived to be most affected by the Covid-19 outbreak. Moreover, the economic “rescue” policy was not accompanied by tactical considerations and in-depth technical studies. In this news, the government was advised to make economic policies that were more measurable and had a real (direct) impact. Regarding the threat of the Covid-19 outbreak, the government was also advised to take concrete, tactical, and anticipatory actions.

Then, in the second news, *Tirto.id* delivered a firm recommendation that for the sake of public interests and people’s safety, the government should have convinced the community and the international world that Indonesia was prepared to face and anticipate the spread of the Covid-19. Through its news source, *Tirto.id* also suggested that the government should be careful, transparent, and responsive to the current situation. Then, in the third news, *Tirto.id* delivered a critical recommendation by quoting the opinions of the news sources; that the government should reduce public doubts by implementing a full policy related to the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak. The government was advised to classify the criteria of Covid-19 suspects, such as the suspicion of positive patient contact, visiting areas exposed to the virus, and clinical symptoms resembling Covid-19. Such measure is proposed so that the case would be quickly detected and concrete prevention and treatment efforts would be carried out to suppress the addition of infected victims.

Table 6. Results on Framing Treatment Recommendation

Framing Instrument	News Order	Observation Results
<i>Treatment Recommendation</i>	1	By quoting its news source regarding the effort to stabilize the economy, <i>Tirto.id</i> straightforwardly recommended that if the government insisted on using the services of influencers abroad, it ought to be seen by the target audience (looking at social class or audience age). Instead, the government could go for providing tourism tax incentives, focusing on providing more valuable promotions, lowering Bank Indonesia’s interest rates to 50 basis points, and on-target promotions to alternative countries. To prevent the Covid-19 outbreak, <i>Tirto.id</i> encouraged the government to communicate the information to the public regarding the outbreak development. In addition, <i>Tirto.id</i> also suggested tightening supervision, quick responding to suspect allegations, and reproducing the test kit that was not only centered in the Ministry of Health.
	2	The government should make the world and its people believe that Indonesia was ready to face the Covid-19 epidemic. Through his source, Bukhori Yusuf, Member of Commission VIII DPR RI, <i>Tirto.id</i> suggested that the Indonesian government be more careful and transparent. The issue of the Covid-19 outbreak ought to be well-responded to convince other countries. The government was also asked to be more open about the current condition of Indonesia in the pandemic of Covid-19. The government should not cover up while the occurring cases were not appropriately handled; it was feared that there would be an explosion of victims.
	3	<i>Tirto.id</i> ’s critical recommendations were also confirmed by quoting professor Chaerul Anwar Nidom –the chairman of Corona Research and Vaccine Formulation at the Professor Nidom Foundation (PNF) and a lecturer for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology at Airlangga University. The recommendation emphasized that the government should reduce public doubts on suspected Covid-19 cases by repeatedly testing the facts and results to be transparent. The public needed to know the actual risk so that the responsibility for control and prevention was not only resting on the government. The community could also be involved. Furthermore, to clear doubts in the community, The government was advised to classify the criteria of

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- Covid-19 suspects, such as the suspicion of positive patient contact, visiting areas exposed to the virus, and clinical symptoms resembling Covid-19. The government ought to clarify because the next victims would be the community.
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- 4 The government was asked not to be too confident that Indonesia was safe and free from the Covid-19. It should not be negligent but should strengthen and tighten supervision of the distribution of the Covid-19 outbreak and established an accurate and transparent information channel not to cause panic in the community. The main public officials were asked not to make counterproductive statements such as stating: “Indonesia was able to mitigate and be safe from Corona” (Wiranto), “Priests had prayed it, Corona stepped aside from Indonesia” (Ma’ruf Amin, Vice President), “We could only pray” and “The government would take serious action if there were any victims” (Terawan, Minister of Health). The government was also reminded not to make the economy a super-priority because “no matter how expensive Indonesian tourism costs were, it would not be more expensive than the price of one life.”
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- 5 The government was asked not to be careless and underestimating the issue of the spread of the viruses. The government should follow WHO’s advice that all countries need to prepare for early detection, case management, and prevention. *Tirto.id* reminded the government by exemplifying the firm stance of former Vice President Hamzah Has and former Minister of Health Achmad Sujudi when the SARS outbreak reached Indonesia in 2003. At that time, the government activated Law No. 4 of 1984 on Contagious Disease and stated that the threat of SARS outbreaks had to be addressed nationally, not to become a national crisis. Such regulation was needed because it had coercion in terms of handling emergencies related to disease outbreaks.
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- 6 In this news, *Tirto.id*, through its source Damar Juniarto (Executive Director of SAFEnet), mentioned that to reduce public panic, the government should establish official and primary information channels that could be referred by the public. *Tirto.id* also quoted the opinions of Anis Hidayah (Chair of the Migrant Care, Migration Study Center) and Trubus Rahardiansyah (Trisakti University Public Policy Analysis), that emphasized that the government should not have monopolized and restricted the information for the public. In addition, the government should not abandon the role of local governments in handling the Covid-19 outbreak.
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Meanwhile, in the fourth news, *Tirto.id* made a critical recommendation that the government should not be overconfident that Indonesia was still safe and free from the threat of the Covid-19 epidemic. Being too confident was believed to cause negligence in detecting the danger of the virus outbreak. The government should tighten supervision at the points prone to spread, such as at airports and other open public places where the flow of arrivals and departures of people from and to Indonesia was high. It was also recommended that state officials should not make controversial or even illogical statements. In this situation, all policies and actions should be based on logical, data-based, and factual calculations. Although as a creature of faith (having a certain religious/spiritual belief), praying to God is also a necessary effort that ought to be made. Yet, this context could not be drawn into the public domain but became a private matter or a personal affair.

In the fifth news, *Tirto.id* made the following recommendations. The government was advised not to look down on the issue of the widespread. The government should follow the world protocol announced by WHO, that all countries should set up serious preparations starting from early detection efforts, case management, and outbreak prevention work systems. The recommendation was reinforced by *Tirto.id* with an example of how alert the previous government was when the SARS

outbreak reached Indonesia in 2003. The former government, through the former Vice President Hamzah Has, immediately ordered the enforcement of emergency response situations nationally. Besides, Minister of Health Achmad Sujudi was ordered to activate Law Number 4 of 1984 on Plague Infectious diseases that had an element of coercion in terms of encountering emergencies related to pandemic issues.

Finally, in the last news that was observed, *Tirto.id* conveyed recommendations through the news sources to reduce public panic. The government should create an official main channel that could be used as a reliable reference and could be accessed openly by the public and all stakeholders related to Covid-19 handling. Furthermore, *Tirto.id* critically suggested Indonesian government stop monopolizing information and build effective coordination amongst state institutions, local governments, and other parties in dealing with and preventing the widespread of Covid-19.

CONCLUSION

Tirto.id tends to see the events of the government's unreadiness in dealing with and handling the Covid-19 outbreak as a reflection of the failure of the state in protecting its people. State managers and policymakers appeared to be unprofessional and less serious in preparing the systematic and accountable prevention and handling of the Covid-19 outbreak. This situation showed that Indonesia is experiencing an acute leadership crisis; it needs a leader with totality, who would devote all their abilities, dedication, and the utmost hard work to protect the people and the country. Unpopular, sectoral policies (only concerned with economic stability), weak coordination between state institutions, mixed information systems, and key state officials making counterproductive statements and non-anticipatory disaster mitigation management are presented by *Tirto.id* clearly through the case examples in their reports on the unreadiness of the government in dealing with the Covid-19 virus outbreak, during the February to March 2020 period.

The results of this study indicate that *Tirto.id* critically sees the government's unpreparedness as a reflection of the country's failure to protect its people due to unprofessional actions and biased policies in handling the spread of the Covid-19 outbreak. Therefore, there are four conclusions in this study according to the Entman model framing approach. *First*, define problems: there is misinformation and coordination that unfortunately exists between the lines of state administrators who have duties and responsibilities in preventing Covid-19. *Second*, diagnose causes: the government is ignorant, even seems to underestimate the threat from the spread of Covid-19 as they claimed that Indonesia is still safe from the outbreak. *Third*, make moral judgment: when the Covid-19 outbreak spread is out of control, the government looks panicked and is not ready to deal with it systematically. As a result, the policies issued are biased, not right on target. Thus, there has been harsh criticism from various groups towards these misguided policies. The handling of Covid-19 prevention has become overlapping and not systematically coordinated. The government is asked to focus, coordinate, and be transparent to be immediately on track in dealing with the epidemic. *Fourth*, treatment recommendation: on larger interests, the government, as a representative of the state, is expected to move and act quickly to overcome the crisis. Moreover, a multidimensional crisis caused by a non-natural disaster such as the Covid-19 outbreak had a wide impact on all sectors of people's lives. Therefore, the government/state is required at any time and in any situation to be able to protect its people.

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