

Independence of Television Journalists in Reporting on the COVID-19 Vaccine in Indonesia: A Case Study

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Abstract

The first case of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia was discovered on March 2, 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic is a multidimensional crisis that has had a negative impact on various fields, including the journalism sector, especially press freedom, press democracy, and the press as a pillar of the Fourth Estate. The aim of this research is to analyse the impact of interest manipulation on the independence of television journalists in reporting about the COVID-19 vaccine. This research uses a case study that examines the editorial background in reporting on the COVID-19 vaccine. This research aims to reveal the manipulation of interests behind news about the COVID-19 vaccine. The research object consists of four private television stations selected based on a purposive sample, namely iNews TV, Metro TV, TV One, and Trans 7. The government guarantees that it will not hinder the critical power of journalists, so that media independence remains a priority. However, journalists must pay attention to the impact of the news and the needs of society. The results of the research show that there are irregularities in the newsroom regarding the government's involvement in regulation. The government, through the National Board for Disaster Management (BNPB), is trying to intervene in journalistic work so that reporting is in line with the wishes of the government as the main policymaker. In addition, researchers found that there was intervention from internal and external companies that attempted to influence the content and direction of editorial reporting policies regarding the COVID-19 vaccine.

Keywords: COVID-19, Democracy, Journalist, Press, Television, Vaccine.

1. Introduction

In actuality, unrestricted free expression and a free media have never existed anywhere in the globe (Pearson, 2013). A free press is essential for people to be informed and to take part in democracy, in addition to free speech (Lessner, 2018). The press is an independent institution that does not side with any group or government, but only sides with the truth of the information in the form of facts that it conveys to the public (Hajad, 2018). According to McQuail (2000), press freedom encompasses both the level of autonomy that the media enjoys and the level of freedom and access that the public has to media material (Maniou, 2023). The importance of a free press in educating the public and keeping the government responsible has been well-documented (Hiaeshutter-Rice et al., 2019). Habermas (1989) contends that the "press itself became manipulable to the extent that it became commercialized," transforming the public sphere from a venue for reasoned critical debate into a "platform for advertising" (Benson, 2009).

In libertarian theory, the concept of the press is a guarantee of freedom of expression. The concept of the press is in the free marketplace of ideas and is controlled by a self-righting process of truth. This means that the press is no longer prohibited from criticizing the government but is prohibited from spreading false news, slanderous information, that is inaccurate, inflammatory, and can harm other people. In this concept, the press becomes an important instrument in social control and a tool that brings together all the interests of society. Libertarian ideology cautions that without press autonomy, journalism cannot serve as society's watchdog (Ogbebor, 2020). The term "watchdog"—which refers to an individual who scrutinizes the actions of the established powers—became more and more prevalent in the 20th century (Hansen, 2018).

In Indonesia, press freedom was marked by the birth of Press Law Number 40 of 1999 one year after the 1998 reform. The former press restrictions were altered as a means of exercising government power to repress the press, specifically with the passage of Law Number 40 of 1999 regulating the Press in 1998 (Jati, 2021). According to Press Law No. 40 of 1999 article 1 states: The press is a social institution and mass communication vehicle that carries out journalistic activities covering, searching for, obtaining, possessing, storing, processing and conveying information in the form of writing, sound, images, sounds and images as well as data and graphics and in other forms print media, electronic media and all types of available channels (Lamalo, 2013). In the concept of Press Law no. 40 of 1999 that self-righting process of truth alone is not enough. This law emphasizes responsible press freedom and social responsibility. The reason is that excessive freedom will have an impact on deviation. This concept puts greater emphasis on ethical issues and responsibility in freedom. The point is that freedom is obtained and limited by the social responsibilities of a journalist and the media itself.

Democracy requires freedom for its citizens to gather, express opinions and express their ideas in the form of criticism. On the other hand, when a government system rejects democracy, the system will always monitor people who gather, suppress opinions and even suppress criticism. Supervising the distribution of information in the form of organizing and providing direction for news, placing pro-government people in the editorial ranks and leadership of press organizations, and

even “engineering fake news”. Press or mass media is one of the indicators of the community or democratic government which has independence, namely as one manifestation of the sovereignty of the people based on the principles of democracy, justice, and rule of law, the Sound of Article 2 Act number 40 of 1999 (Ekaningsih, 2020). It is often known that a free press is crucial for informing the public and holding the government accountable (Hiaeshutter-Rice et al., 2019). Particularly newspapers are regarded as being essential to democracy (Badillo and Bourgeois, 2017). More people are realizing that improved citizen information increases democratic responsibility (Besley and Dray, 2023). The political news media, which offer both news content and a venue for political discussion, are crucial to the smooth operation of democratic societies (Leroch, 2022). In essence, the press is independent and impartial and a journalist's main loyalty is to the community. Journalists will only be able to serve their communities when they can be independent of the people they cover. Independence means being free from any interests other than truth. Apart from that, there is no interference from other parties in the editorial room regarding journalists' decisions in writing news or presenting facts. Independence means the absence of external control, and freedom from the influence of other parties. Besides that, independence describes the capacity of an individual or institution to make decisions and act according to its own logic. The independence of journalists can influence the idealism of the news they convey. Article 4 of the Code of Ethics for Indonesian Journalists (PWI) explains that independence: "Journalists do not receive compensation for broadcasting or not broadcasting writings, pictures, sounds and images, which can benefit or harm someone or a party." Therefore, a journalist is required to have the courage to convey the truth (<https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2009/02/07/2016580/atmakusumah..jurnalis.harus.independen>). When journalists act as professionals driven more by financial incentives, they will exchange communal and civic values for commercial values or corporate interests. If they become guardians of the status quo, then public space is privatized or left in a vacuum. The challenge for journalists, once they know the facts, is to explain what happened in a way that allows others to see things differently and engage in dialogue (Hayase, 2018).

The media plays a role in helping the public to define what is believed to be the truth and providing answers to contradictions in individual and societal interests in everyday life. There are five ideal roles of the media in realizing a democratic life, namely: 1) Informing what is happening, 2) Educating the public about facts found in the field, 3) Becoming a forum for discourse so that it can influence public opinion, 4) Playing a role as a monitor of power, and 5) Play a role in advocating some political views (McNair, 2019). In order to spread knowledge and encourage debate, the media is essential (Badillo and Bourgeois, 2017).

The media is considered the fourth pillar of democracy apart from the executive, legislative and judiciary. In the early decades of the 19th century, the term “fourth estate” referenced the press and the journalistic profession (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2022) which is strongly associated with state affairs, and thus events within domestic boundaries. The global fourth estate expands the domestic space of politics (Berglez and Gearing, 2018). The failure of the fourth estate brings

decay of the cultural sphere and the absence of a public that holds policymakers accountable (Hayase, 2018). The normative role played by the media in democracy is often encapsulated in the concept of the 'fourth estate' and it is particularly relevant to investigative journalism (Lashmar, 2020).

Mass media and social media in post-Suharto Indonesia have significantly played a central role in promoting the democratic public sphere and monitoring the ruling government (Saeed, 2013). Habermas calls a manipulated public sphere in which states and corporations use 'publicity' in the modern sense to secure for themselves a kind of plebiscitary acclamation (Lunt and Livingstone, 2013). Researchers see the current media as if it is undermining democracy, through certain ways the media exchanges democracy for "mediaocracy" which occurs through the agenda setting power of media corporations. The roots of mediaocracy can be traced to the strengthening of media corporations which have continued to change over the years as well as to the rise of political corporations themselves. Schechter (2007) interprets mediaocracy as a reflection of the increasingly symbiotic relationship between media elites and political circles. Together they form a powerful interdependent system where open ideologies and shared views of the world actually succeed in hiding corporate agendas. One example of the practice of mediaocracy is the work pattern of journalists, especially television journalists during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The 2020 Wuhan, China-caused COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on social development, politics, the economy, and public health worldwide (Jia et al., 2021). The coronavirus pandemic that started in 2020 showed society how vulnerable journalism is and how important it is (Olsen and Westlund, 2020). While the full impact of the pandemic on journalism has to be fully explored, current research indicates that journalism suffered from a "extinction event" brought on by "an unprecedented convergence of threats" (Price and Antonova, 2022).

In Indonesia, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak has had a negative impact in various fields, not only the health sector but the journalism sector has also been affected by this multidimensional crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused changes in consumer behavior, including in terms of media consumption, according to Nielsen research results in March 2020 (Mustafa, 2021). The increasingly intense reporting has caused the public to start monitoring every development related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through various media, including television. There is an important role for the presence of mainstream media in providing education to the public regarding these impacts. Mainstream media must be able to select and sort every piece of information and verify the information they receive so that it becomes news that is guaranteed to be true. Keeping the flow of information always verified is not an easy matter because it requires professionalism from the parties working on it (Dewan Pers, 2020). This noble task can only be carried out by media that has journalists with integrity, insight and ready to become public servants.

The issue of the COVID-19 vaccine has high appeal because it concerns public health and safety issues. There are quite a few issues circulating accompanying the development of the COVID-19 vaccine, such as regarding its

safety, *halal* and *haram* issues, the type or brand of vaccine and the origin of the manufacturer. Since the first case of COVID-19 entered Indonesia on March 2 2020, the spread of false information has become more widespread day by day. Hoax news continues to increase in distribution on online media during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Nurmansyah's research as quoted by Setyaningsih, it was revealed that a group of people considered the disinformation circulating on social media regarding COVID-19 to be fact. Of the 530 respondents studied, 13.2% of respondents thought that the COVID-19 virus could not live in Indonesia's climate, 27.7% stated that the virus was a biological weapon deliberately created by a country, and 19.6% of respondents believe that gargling with salt water is believed to kill the virus (Setyaningsih, 2018).

However, the public relies heavily on the media for accurate and up-to-date information to make informed decisions regarding health-protective behavior. Conventional media such as television still has a good level of trust among the public, they still believe that this media will not spread fake news (Mustafa, 2021). Therefore, they are still looking for confirmation of the truth via television regarding the Covid - 19 issue. There is reason to think that the media occasionally presents citizens with skewed and prejudiced viewpoints, as was the case with COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous investigations have additionally confirmed the existence of media bias in the US regarding their reporting on the pandemic (Besley and Dray, 2023).

This research aims to analyze the function of freedom of television media in producing news about the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia. Conceptually, a free press media can provide accurate news to the public about the severity of the pandemic and the various activities carried out by the government and the press in dealing with the pandemic. However, in fact, the freedom of television media is experiencing obstacles due to intervention from the government and internal media companies.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Firewall

The "Great Firewall of China" is the term used to describe the disparity between economic riches and freedom in China. The information asymmetry can be reflected in several aspects such as China's internet blocks and firewalls (Jia and Lu, 2021). An additional layer of defense against unwanted access is a firewall (Alsaqour et al., 2021). Gap between economic wealth and freedom deficit in terms known as the "Great Firewall of China." (Kim and Douai, 2012). Mulvenon and Chase (2006) state that the Great Firewall is a comprehensive deployment of cutting-edge software that may restrict access to proxy servers and illegal websites. The Great Firewall of China enables authorities to bar Internet users in China from visiting specific foreign websites (Tanejaa and Wu, 2014). Samorisky (2002) contends that interactions between governments, communities, and cultures result in the control of the internet which "has become a political technology and a powerful instrument of social control."(Zhang, 2006). The Internet is being manipulated by anti-democratic forces more and more. In 2009, in response to the

mounting turmoil in Xinjiang, the Chinese authorities decided to simply shut off the Internet for ten months (Iosifidis, 2021).

2.2 Public Sphere

German philosopher Jurgen Habermas, a modernist who believes he can keep democracy moving in the right direction—particularly liberal democracy, which is logical, unaffected by capital interests, and free from authoritarian rule (Farid, 2023). Habermas identified a now destructive role for the media – instead of being a source of creative disorganization that promoted public autonomy and public life, the press had become a vehicle for established power (Lunt and Livingstone, 2013). Public sphere evolved into the normative framework for Habermas's theory (Farid, 2023). According to Habermas (1989), the public sphere serves as an independent realm between the private sphere and the state, in which citizens can freely express their concerns about general interests (Shao and Wang, 2016). This need is immediately addressed by Habermas' initial empirical identification of the public sphere as a mediator between governments and society (Jones, 2000).

In Britain, discussions over the public sphere have frequently centered on whether public service broadcasting is a good idea as a platform for expressing a variety of opinions (Tumber, 2001). The development of a strong public sphere has become essential to Habermas's developed aim (Jones, 2000). Zheng and Wu (2005) state that the public sphere has become one of main concepts to analyze the political implications of the Internet revolution in China (Shao and Wang, 2016). The traditional description of the public sphere was historically grounded in the era of print media (Shao and Wang, 2016). Public sphere as a sphere mediating between the state and civil society has had a decisive influence on the debate about the potential of collective reason for modern democracy (Seeliger and Sevignani, 2022). The press also conducts social control, the responsibility of the community to be able to live according to the agreed norms (Ekaningsih, 2020). The term "public sphere" is used so much in media and communications sociology these days that it's practically become a cliché (Benson, 2009).

The public sphere has been broken down into component parts and operational concepts in order to schematize it and later apply methodologies to it (Buschman, 2020). For Habermas a public sphere consists of “private people come together as a public” (Larsen, 2020) as a sphere mediating between the state and civil society has had a decisive influence on the debate about the potential of collective reason for modern democracy (Seeliger and Sevignani, 2022) as an independent realm between the private sphere and the state, in which citizens can freely express their concerns about general interests (Shao and Wang, 2016).

2.3 Fourth Estate

In the early decades of the 19th century, the term “fourth estate” referenced the press and the journalistic profession. In the first written reference to the fourth estate concept, the philosopher Edmund Burke was quoted as having said, ‘there were Three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters’ Gallery yonder, there sat a Fourth Estate more important far than they all’ (Felle, 2015; Hansen, 2018; Lashmar,

2020; Ibrahim and Jamri, 2022). John Declare, popularized the term “fourth estate” and held that the press could hold the state to account by “seeking out the truth, above all things” (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2022). The fourth estate can be seen to operate in German philosopher Jürgen Habermas’s concept of the ‘public sphere’ – a place where ordinary citizens could engage in informed discussion without fear of repression (Lashmar, 2020). One of the reasons why the press is included in the fourth pillar of democracy is because of its role and position, namely as an institution that controls the performance and policies of the three formal pillars of the state and is not part of the division of power in the Trias Politika (Hayase, 2018). Although the media is sometimes referred to as the Fourth Estate of political power, there doesn’t appear to be any systematic examination of what precisely that power involves in public and scholarly forums (Van Aelst et al., 2008). The global fourth estate expands the domestic space of politics (Berglez and Gearing, 2018). Thus, from our perspective, the global fourth estate is to be viewed not as a historical break with, but as an extension of, the tasks associated with the fourth estate in professional journalism (Berglez and Gearing, 2018). The failure of the fourth estate brings decay of the cultural sphere and the absence of a public that holds policymakers accountable (Hayase, 2018). The normative role played by the media in democracy is often encapsulated in the concept of the ‘fourth estate’ and it is particularly relevant to investigative journalism (Lashmar, 2020). The fourth estate concept tasks the media to hold the errant state and powerful to account (Lashmar, 2020). As part of their investigative and reporting duties, the news media essentially monitor the government and those in political office. As a result, they are frequently referred to as the “fourth estate” (Felle, 2015). The fourth estate can be seen to operate in German philosopher Jürgen Habermas’s concept of the ‘public sphere’ – a place where ordinary citizens could engage in informed discussion without fear of repression (Lashmar, 2020). The desired function of media, also referred to as the fourth estate, is that of a “watchdog,” holding the government accountable and looking out for the interests of the populace (Whitten-Woodring and James, 2012). Donohue and colleagues state that media serves as the power structure’s “guard dog” (Lee, 2015).

2.4 Democracy

Throughout history, millions of people have been executed for attempting to express their so-called “dissident” political or religious beliefs. For their expression, many more people have suffered from imprisonment, torture, or other forms of punishment (Pearson, 2013). The governments of nations like China, North Korea, and Cuba impose restrictions on their populations’ access to the Internet by blocking particular websites (Iosifidis, 2021). There is no doubt that the media is essential to representative democracy (Hiaeshutter-Rice et al., 2019). Numerous definitions and interpretations of democracy prevail. According to Huntington (1991) that the “essence of democracy, the inescapable sine qua non” is that elections are “open, free and fair” (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2022). Democracy, variously defined, involves the adoption of three fundamental principles: the configuration of authority whereby through the institutional format of “upward control” sovereignty resides at the lowest level of the hierarchy; the

value of political equality; and norms that shape individual and institutional behaviour limited by the principles of upward control and equality (Kakabadse and Kakabadse, 2022). A democracy ceases to be a democracy if its citizens do not participate in its governance (Lashmar, 2020). Democracy is a society in which the principles of freedom, equality and pluralism are developed (Ekaningsih, 2020). The press is seen as the most effective public institution in shaping the democracy culture of a society (Ekaningsih, 2020). In post-Suharto Indonesia, mass media and social media have been essential in advancing the democratic public sphere and keeping an eye on the ruling administration (Arifuddin, 2016). Media, and particularly newspapers, are considered as essential to democracy (Badillo and Bourgeois, 2017). According to Ibrahim and Jamri (2022) the media is essential to democratic administration and the advancement of the country. Nonetheless, the media are essential to the development and maintenance of democracy in today's liberal democracies (Ogbebor, 2020). In a representative democracy, it is vital for citizens to be informed of the actions of their government and to secure the right to freely speak their mind. Democracy is different from a monarchy, where the authority comes from a king or queen (Hayase, 2018). Mass media and social media in post-Suharto Indonesia have significantly played a central role in promoting the democratic public sphere and monitoring the ruling government (Saeed, 2013).

3. Research Methods

This research aims to examine how the manipulation of interests has an impact on the independence of television journalists in reporting about the COVID-19 vaccine in the editorial staff of iNews TV, Metro TV, TV One and Trans 7. This research uses the case study method, namely comprehensive descriptions and explanations relating to aspects of an individual, a group, an organization, a program, or a social situation (Mulyana, 2017). Case study research seeks to investigate and uncover "how and why" contemporary events occur (Yin, 2018). Generally, the events chosen are real-life events that are ongoing, not something that has passed (Rahardjo, 2017). The choice of this type of single instrument case study focuses on the issue or concern used for a case as an instrument and describes it in detail (Creswell, 2013).

The aim of the research is to examine the editorial background of iNews TV, Metro TV, TV One and Trans 7. containing news about the COVID-19 vaccine. What was the social, political, cultural and economic context or atmosphere when the news about the COVID-19 vaccine was created? Who are the parties who benefit from the flow and structure of communication that exists in reporting on the COVID-19 vaccine? This research aims to reveal the manipulation of interests behind the news about the COVID-19 vaccine.

The research object consists of 4 private television stations, namely iNews TV, Metro TV, TV One and Trans 7. Metro TV and TV One television stations were chosen as samples of news television stations with different political views. Metro TV has political affiliations with the government in power. Meanwhile, TV One news television station is a television station that is at odds with the government. iNews is a news television station that is in the middle regarding the content of its reporting. Lastly is the Trans 7 television station as an entertainment

television station which has a news program where the news content is relatively neutral.

Case study method research recognizes several data collection methods that are commonly used, including document collection, archival recordings, interviews, direct observation, observation of actors and physical equipment (Yin, 2018). Data was obtained through interviews, documentation, field notes, photos, recordings, personal documents, notes, other official documents. This research was carried out during March 2021. In this research, researchers revealed how and why incidents of interest manipulation occurred which affected the independence of television journalists when reporting on the COVID-19 vaccine. Through case studies with a critical paradigm, researchers will investigate and uncover irregularities in the flow and structure of communication that occur regarding news about the COVID-19 vaccine.

Researchers pay attention to several points, namely case studies aimed at tracing the existence of the ideology behind contemporary events, to develop "why and how" questions, so that researchers can have a sharper and deeper meaning regarding the topic. Oral information was obtained through informants in this research which was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, namely a data source sampling technique with certain considerations. The purposive sample was determined by looking for individuals who really knew and experienced the event and were able to articulate it. The informants are as follows: Editor of iNews TV, News Production Manager, Reporter, Cameraman and Editor; Editor of TV One, Executive Producer of Bulletin TV One; Reporter, Cameraman, and Editor of Metro TV, Producer News Bulletin; Trans 7 Reporter, Cameraman and Editor, Reporter, Cameraman and Editor of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) Covid Task Force for Media, Chair of the BNPB COVID-19 Task Force. Researchers also observed news texts regarding the COVID-19 vaccine produced by the four television stations based on Gamson and Mondigliany's framing theory. Documentation studies are used to obtain as much information as possible so that the processing of the data collected is able to explain the symptoms that occur.

Data Analysis Technique

Researchers carry out three forms of data analysis and interpretation in case study research, namely: 1). Description which describes all research findings which are then described so that they can be sorted according to the research objectives, 2). Theme analysis is an effort to find the "red thread" that integrates the various existing categories. Next, a "building construction" can be arranged for the social research object that was previously still dark or vague so that it is brighter and clearer, and 3). Researchers reiterate whether all the problems related to the phenomenon of journalist independence and the political economy of the media are related to reporting on the COVID-19 vaccine.

Data Validity Technique

Several qualitative researchers have used measuring tools to ensure the validity of data from qualitative research through the four trustworthiness criteria constructed by Guba and Lincoln (Moleong, 2017), namely as follows: 1).

Credibility, 2). Transferability, 3). Dependability, and 4). Confirmability. The research validity techniques used in this research include: 1). Extension of observations to check again whether the data that has been provided by the data source so far is correct data or not. If it is not correct, then the researcher carries out more careful and in-depth observations so that data is obtained that is certain to be true, 2). Triangulation of data sources to explore the truth of the data using different data sources. The steps taken by the researcher are as follows: first, compare the results of the informant's interview with the results of observations of the informant's behavior in interaction situations, both verbal and nonverbal behavior with other parties. Second, compare the consistency of the sources' answers, namely comparing what was said in public with what was said when they met in private. Third, the researcher chats with other parties outside the main informant, and fourth, compares the results of the interview with the contents of a document related to the interview. During the data collection process, researchers conducted in-depth interviews with informants which were recorded using video and audio recorders. The data was then made into an interview transcript and to ensure the accuracy of the data, the researcher asked the informant to read the transcript to ensure that what the informant meant matched what was written in the interview transcript. To synchronize the findings of this research, researchers will also conduct focus group discussions (FGD).

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 COVID-19 Pandemic

The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic from Wuhan, China, in December 2019 has been exerting a huge impact on public health, politics, economics, and social development across the globe (Jia and Lu, 2021). The COVID-19 brought a unique set of challenges to journalists worldwide, including new threats to media freedom, journalism safety and practice (Price and Antonova, 2022). Allsop (2020) states that COVID-19 “hammered” the media worldwide, particularly on local level, bringing cuts, layoffs, furlough and salary reductions (Price and Antonova, 2022). Bright et al. (2020) state that health news is usually regarded as biased and misleading as it is politicized by means of criticizing the corrupt democratic system, praising its own leadership, and making use of conspiracy theories (Jia and Lu, 2021).

The Indonesian government announced the discovery of the first case of COVID-19 on March 2, 2020. The rise of news on several television stations regarding COVID-19 throughout the period 1-18 March contributed to the increase in viewership of news programs. Television viewing of news programs increased significantly (+25%), especially among upper-class viewers. The increase was also seen in Children's Programs and Series. The stay-at-home policy to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which has been implemented since mid-March, has also affected television viewing. The Children's audience segment (aged 5-9 years) increased significantly, from an average rating of 12 percent to 15.8 percent on March 18. Even in Jakarta, viewership in this segment reached the highest rating, namely 16.2 percent.

The results of Nielsen Television Audience Measurement (TAM) monitoring in 11 cities show that average television viewership has begun to increase from an average rating of 12 percent on March 11 2020 to 13.8 percent on March 18 2020 or the equivalent of an addition of around 1 million viewers television. The duration of watching television also experienced a jump of more than 40 minutes, from an average of 4 hours 48 minutes on March 11 2020 to 5 hours 29 minutes on March 18, 2020. Upper-class viewers showed a tendency to watch television longer since March 14 2020 and the number also continues to increase. This increase can be seen from an average rating of 11.2 percent on March 11 to 13.7 percent on March 18, 2020.

This condition has of course forced television industry players to rack their brains to survive amid the COVID-19 pandemic. What is the impact of the COVID-19 virus on journalists and journalism? To tackle the spread of COVID-19, the Government through the Minister of Health has issued Minister of Health Regulation (PMK) Number 9 of 2020 concerning the Determination of Large-Scale Social Restrictions. This regulation also contains regulations regarding Workplace Vacations. Restrictions on working at the workplace are replaced with Work From Home except for Indonesian national army (TNI), Republic of Indonesia Police (Polri), food needs, fuel, health services, economy, finance, communications, industry, export-import, logistics distribution, and basic needs. Other offices must work with a minimum number of employees. The Ministry of Communication and Information also asked television stations to temporarily stop producing programs involving people during the COVID-19 virus outbreak (BBC News Indonesia, 2020).

The initial research that researchers obtained in the field included, among other things, what TV One's Deputy Editor-in-Chief said was that the impact felt by COVID-19, apart from income, was a change in journalists' work patterns. His party pays more attention to the safety of working crews, for example, by routinely spraying disinfectants and strictly dividing working hours. TV One itself applies work arrangements with a schedule of three days on and two days off. Regarding news content, TV One believes that television broadcasts are starting to get boring, the images are monotonous, so the potential threat of people not watching TV is getting bigger. For example, creating human interest due to the COVID-19 pandemic is quite difficult, because we also have to look after journalists and sources who sometimes refuse to be met (Suryanto, personal communication, 28 May 2020). Many aspects were previously unthinkable when journalists had to report during the pandemic, such as how to maintain independence when the only source of information is the government. Before the pandemic occurred, media companies rarely collaborated or held joint broadcasts. Television stations often produce their broadcasts (in-house production), both taping or news broadcasts and live broadcasts. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, television companies were asked to carry out joint broadcasts or television pools and radio pools. One of the television pools during the COVID-19 pandemic was the press conference for the Task Force for the Acceleration of Handling COVID-19 at the BNPB Jakarta Media Center. This press conference is usually hosted by a government

spokesperson and is broadcast live via television pool and radio pool with broadcasting rights allowed to be used by all media.

According to the Journalist Safety Committee (KKJ), there are currently television pools available at several television stations at Jakarta City Hall, the Presidential Palace, the Athlete's House, and BNPB which can be used to meet video needs in all media. Second, how journalists carry out the reporting process without face-to-face meetings or meetings. The editors-in-chief of CNN Indonesia television and Trans 7 assess that the threat of the COVID-19 virus means that the media must adapt, including regarding the use of information technology to obtain news material and coordination in the workplace (IJTI, 2020). However, the Editor-in-Chief of CNN Indonesia television and Trans 7 admitted that the Work from Home (WFH) work system makes journalists feel bored because it disrupts their ideas and space for movement, plus they have to self-isolate. Journalists must go to the field because by going directly to the field journalists get gestures from their sources, know whether the person is lying, and get new ideas for developing questions (Rosmasari, personal communication, May 28, 2020).

Uniformity in reporting content is a threat to journalists' criticality. The news discourse conveyed by private television is at least influenced by economic elements of the media, in this case, market construction, at least national private television media has an economic interest in what is reported. The market in question includes investors or owners, news sources, advertisers, and consumers. Investors or owners are said to be the market because they have an attachment and interest in the content of the news, in this case, the news issue regarding the COVID-19 vaccine. Investors or owners assist in the form of money and services to television to facilitate their business. Researchers see allegations that they also played a role in the "game" behind the scenes in television news. Meanwhile, news sources, whether from government, politicians, intellectuals, the public, and others, are called markets, because they influence media content with their opinions which attract public attention to provoke reactions in the form of support or rejection in the form of attitudes. Advertisers' interests are closely related to supporting the media by purchasing broadcast hours. Apart from that, advertising is the media's breath so that it can continue to exist. Consumers, in this case, the audience, provide ratings and audience share that the audience is the target of the content of media broadcasts, the more viewers the higher the audience's assessment of the media content.

Market-driven is nothing new for the Indonesian press industry. In principle, the media pays attention to market drive which is done by constructing the media market to answer the question of how much power the media market has in society in seeking the ideal form. (Harahap, 2013). Mosco (1996) revealed that the form of market mechanisms is determined by market forces. Through market control, it will be seen which factors are more dominant in determining media content. Regarding the news about the COVID-19 vaccine, researchers saw irregularities in the existing social structure. The newsroom should be free from interference from any party but in fact, this is not the case. Journalist independence should be something that journalists and newsrooms have. This research seeks to reveal "the real structure" behind the illusions, false consciousness, and false needs that appear in reality. The

news we see is not the actual reality. News is the result of journalists' construction of existing reality. Journalists produce facts and present them symbolically, therefore the reality shown is very dependent on how the facts are constructed. There are "individuals" from the government who then provide "funding injections" to television media companies. Here the researcher sees the existence of government "persons" who participate in state regulation. Based on data from the Press Council, it is reported that medium and small-scale media no longer can pay their employees' wages and have ended up terminating their employment (PHK). The Press Workers Union (SPS) reports that half of its 400 members have already started cutting their employees' salaries. In the circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, many news publishers—particularly local news publishers—cannot continue to exist as businesses (Olson et al., 2020). The situation is not much different for online media. Even though this type of media is quite popular during the COVID-19 pandemic. Even though the number of visitors has increased, the online media business has experienced a contraction due to a lack of advertising (Dewan Pers, 2021). Posetti, Bell, and Brown (2020) claim that the COVID-19 effect has resulted in a sharp decline in advertising revenues, sometimes as much as a 50–75% decrease. This decline can be attributed, in part, to businesses cutting back on their advertising spending and the dominance of social media in online advertising (Price and Antonova, 2022). Advertisers are suspending promotional funds in anticipation of the gloomy, uncertain economic situation. The radio media also experienced suffering, so many radio stations then terminated their employees' employment. Similar trends are observed globally, with numerous news publishers in Scandinavia reporting instant cancellations of between one-fifth and half of their anticipated advertising earnings (Olson et al., 2020).

The government invites the mainstream media to make the COVID-19 virus a "common enemy". The government needs mainstream media to help straighten out and clear up the confusing situation caused by the flood of hoaxes that have hit. There are two types of assistance provided by the government to the press. First to media companies, and to journalists through the Behavior Change Journalism Fellowship (FJPP) program. For press companies, the government has set economic incentives for the press industry, including eliminating taxes on imports of paper as a raw material for print media production starting in August 2020, the government also covers the payment of electricity costs for mass media companies for 6 months, starting in August 2020, the government also provides a suspension of payment obligations from the Employment Social Security Administration (BPJS) for media companies for 12 months, starting in August 2020, as well as purchasing placements at certain hours for public service advertising costs in mass media to socialize changes in Health behavior initiated by the Press Council and the COVID-19 Handling Task Force. The second program, for individual journalists, the Press Council together with the Government is holding FJPP program for journalists throughout Indonesia, especially those whose media has been economically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic (Dewan Pers, 2021). The benefits and drawbacks of the AstraZeneca and Sinovac vaccines as well as the immunization campaign are frequently discussed by journalists (Jati, 2021).

4.2 Behavior Change Journalism Fellowship Program (FJPP)

The media industry has been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic-related economic crisis, which has resulted in a dramatic drop in advertising income. In April 2020, media advertising revenue dropped by 25% to 3.5 trillion, according to the Nielsen Survey Institute (Yoedtadi and Hermawan, 2022). In order to assist journalists in Indonesia, particularly those whose media has been negatively impacted financially by the COVID-19 pandemic, the government launched the FJPP program (Yoedtadi and Hermawan, 2022). This program run by the Covid-19 Task Force and the Indonesian Press Council (Jati, 2021). The FJPP program aims to make journalists at the forefront of behavior change in society in efforts to prevent transmission of the COVID-19 virus, create journalistic works that comply with the Journalistic Code of Ethics regarding the development of information about the pandemic, participate in providing long-term solutions short for national press problems that have a direct impact on the welfare of journalists. In the FJPP program, the Press Council recruited around 4,300 journalists throughout the country to cover the pandemic with a behavioral change perspective that is conducive to overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic. Each fellowship participant gets an incentive of around Rp. 2,175,000 per month, these funds are expected to help journalists survive in emergency conditions during the pandemic. The FJPP program itself consists of three main activities, namely: First, this program invites journalists to create news with a perspective on behavior change as an effort to prevent the transmission of COVID-19. Second, participants are expected to be able to enrich news content by emphasizing the importance of disciplined behavior in society to implement health protocols. Third, actively involving journalists as agents of behavior change by increasing the role of the press as an institution as a form of carrying out its function, namely providing education to the public in facing national disasters. The FJPP program participants have the task of providing ongoing coverage regarding the COVID-19 pandemic by persuading the public about the importance of implementing health protocols as a new culture in society, such as using masks correctly, washing hands, maintaining social distance, exercising and vaccinating. For each news work produced, participants will receive compensation in the form of allowances every month (Dewan Pers, 2020).

Conclusion

The impact of COVID-19 felt by media companies and journalists has caused many media companies to go bankrupt or be unable to pay the salaries of the journalists or contributors they employ. This is because income from advertising has decreased drastically even though advertising is the main source of operational costs for news publishing. The reduction in advertising was caused by the national economy being devastated so that business was not running. This case occurs in many countries in the world, one example is Poland.

The FJPP program is the government's effort to help media companies not go bankrupt and journalists can still work. The government guarantees that the FJPP program will not hinder journalists' critical abilities so that media independence remains a priority for journalists. Guarantee democratic press freedom. However,

journalists must pay attention to the negative impacts of their reporting and meet the public's needs for information on COVID-19, including regarding vaccine brands and their availability.

The research results show that the government, through BNPB, is trying to intervene in journalistic work so that reporting is in accordance with the wishes of the government, policy makers and media owners. Other facts were found from a number of senior journalist sources who considered this to be a form of government intervention carried out openly against journalists. Meanwhile, BNPB explained that there are no restrictions or pressures in editorial reporting and aims to increase public awareness regarding the dangers of the COVID-19 pandemic. A number of sources understand that this is purely for the safety of the wider community in preventing various fake news about COVID-19. This strong reason and commitment to non-intervention is what caused this program to run without any resistance. Apart from that, researchers found that there were "hands" outside the editorial team who were trying to influence the content and direction of editorial reporting policies regarding the COVID-19 vaccine issue, both internally and externally from the company.

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