International Journal of Environmental Communication
Vol. 2, No. 2, December 2024, pp. 55-105
P-ISSN: 3032-3185, E-ISSN: 3031-5662

Crisis Communication in Journalism in Digital Daily Media: Renewable Energy Issues in Coverage Ahead of Indonesia's 2024 Elections

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Abstract

Environmental issues that are already on the discussion of rising sea levels and centimeters of land sinking per year, show the many things that must be done by all stakeholders to reduce the environmental problems that result from these issues. The importance of collective action by all stakeholders to reduce the negative impacts that arise. One issue that has high relevance in contributing solutions is the growing use of renewable energy. Renewable energy can be obtained from a variety of natural resources such as sun, water, wind, and geothermal that we can feel the existence of everyday in Indonesia. This context sparked the study of renewable energy issues in the coverage ahead of the 2024 Election, to identify whether the media in Indonesia has a media agenda to carry out crisis communication on the issue of renewable energy when the events of the presidential candidate debate on environmental issues are conveyed to the Indonesian people? The concept of Agenda setting became a reference in analyzing the news that appeared in several digital daily national media in Indonesia on the date of the debate related to renewable energy issues as one of the solutions to climate change, especially in Indonesia. A content analysis was conducted on the text that appeared in the news in Indonesian digital media on the date when the presidential debate related to environmental topics was held, the day before and the day after. The results showed that the media framed these issues with various approaches, ranging from negative, neutral, to positive framing. By highlighting environmental issues in the news surrounding the vice president debate, the media showed concern over the lack of substantial discussion from the candidates on these strategic issues.

Keywords: Crisis Communication; Digital Media; Election 2024; Journalism; Renewable Energy

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's environment faces increasingly complex challenges amidst evolving global dynamics. Indonesia, as an archipelago with abundant natural resources, is at the forefront of the ecological crisis and the impacts of climate change. Walhi (Indonesian Forum for the Environment) notes that Indonesia is currently entering an era of significant ecological challenges. In the last stage of the second term of President Joko Widodo's administration, efforts to restore the environment, control the climate crisis, and protect human rights are considered stagnant and even tend to retreat. This shows that environmental policies have not reached an adequate level of sustainability, which is a serious concern for the future of the environment in Indonesia (Mongabay, 2024).

Other facts from abroad further emphasize the urgency of environmental problems faced by Indonesia. US President Joe Biden, in a speech in 2021, revealed a projection that Jakarta, Indonesia's capital city at the time, would most likely be submerged in the next 10 years due to rising sea levels. A mere 7.6 cm of sea level rise is expected to force millions of people from their homes. This projection is not only a warning for Indonesia, but also shows how the climate crisis has become a transboundary issue that affects various aspects of human life, including the sustainability of urban areas (Katadata, 2021).

These issues are major challenges that require more attention from various sectors, including the media. Media, especially digital media, plays a strategic role in conveying information and building public awareness regarding environmental issues. In the context of Indonesia's 2024 elections, the issue of new renewable energy (EBT) is one of the themes that should be raised significantly by the media, given its role in dealing with the climate crisis and building energy sustainability in the future. However, the challenges faced by digital media are not light. In addition to having to manage educative and informative narratives, the media also needs to ensure that its reporting is not affected by political agendas that can obscure the urgency of environmental issues (Wardhani & Prasetyo, 2023).

Communication plays a critical role in our understanding of the environment and environmental issues, and communication media serve as the primary public forum for raising awareness about these issues and the ways in which they are discussed, debated, and, potentially, resolved (Hansen, 2018). Environmental communication is heavily influenced by worldviews or cultural frameworks regarding God, existence, the afterlife, the universe, reality, material wealth, and other philosophical questions relevant to life (Lestari et al., 2016). How environmental issues and topics are communicated depends largely on the ideology attached to the source of the disseminated information (Meidina, 2024). Crisis communication and environmental communication are highly relevant fields of study in this context. Crisis communication helps ensure that complex information, such as the energy transition, can be conveyed clearly and effectively in situations of uncertainty. Meanwhile, environmental communication plays a role in building narratives that can inspire changes in behavior, policies and sustainable practices in society. Both approaches can make a significant contribution to addressing Indonesia's increasingly pressing environmental challenges (Mulyadi, 2021).

In the context of digital media, communication studies have an important role in promoting sustainability narratives that can bridge the gap between the government,

society and the private sector. By conveying renewable energy issues in a sustainable and solution-oriented manner, the media can contribute to the creation of better environmental policies in the future. The media also has the responsibility to be a reminder that the environmental crisis is not just a local issue, but also a global problem that requires the cooperation of all parties.

We are interested in raising several digital daily media because we want to compare the framing of the news on Kompas.com, Tempo, Tribunnews, Jawa Pos, Kumparan.com, Merdeka.com, sindonews, and suara.com. The selection of digital daily media as a data source is due to its wide distribution (Blagus & Žitnik, 2018). Not only that, online media is also one of the important actors in mobilizing public opinion (Schulze, 2020). Therefore, the media is required to be able to present good information and understand well the content of the messages conveyed. When two or more media do different news framing, the emergence of viewpoints and news contexts will also be different for readers (Bhakti, 2023).

This study aims to analyze how digital daily media in Indonesia manage crisis communication related to EBT issues in coverage ahead of the 2024 Election. By using crisis communication and environmental communication approaches, this research examines the framing of the EBT issue used by digital media, its impact on public perception and participation, and the media's potential in encouraging a sustainable energy transition. This research is also expected to be a reflection of the media's attitude in raising environmental communication issues in a sustainable manner. In addition, this research is expected to provide an overview of environmental policies for Indonesia in the next four years, particularly in supporting the energy transition and mitigating the environmental crisis.

METHOD

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze digital daily media coverage related to the issue of new renewable energy in the context of crisis communication and political communication ahead of the 2024 Indonesian elections. This approach aims to deeply understand how the media frames the issue of new renewable energy based on the news related to the presidential and vice presidential candidate debates on January 21, 2024 on the topics of Sustainable Development, Natural Resources, Environment, Energy, Food, Agrarian, Indigenous Peoples, and Villages. Qualitative research allows in-depth exploration and interpretation of social phenomena, such as crisis communication and media framing in renewable energy issues (Creswell, 2014). Description is used to describe the characteristics of news coverage, including the amount of coverage, news structure, and tone of reporting

on the issue of new renewable energy.

The main data in this study are documents in the form of news published by digital daily media on January 21, 2024. The focus of the data is coverage related to the presidential and vice presidential debates that discuss the issue of new renewable energy. The news is analyzed based on the 5W1H journalistic elements (what, who, when, where, why, how), as well as the news structure which includes: Headline: The main focus of the news; News lead: Opening information that summarizes the core of the news; News content: Main information and supporting details; News picture/photo: Visual elements that support the news; News caption: Description of the image that accompanies the news.

The data were analyzed using the content analysis method, which is in accordance with the standard procedures described by Krippendorff (2004). The analysis process was carried out through several steps, starting with the categorization stage, namely grouping news based on journalistic elements such as titles, leads, content, images, and captions. The next step is analysis based on the 5W1H journalistic concept to identify the news content in depth. After that, the tone of the news was evaluated to assess whether the tone used was positive, negative or neutral towards the implementation of new renewable energy issues. The last stage is theme abstraction, which aims to find the main themes related to government programs, including policies, activities, or funding allocations for renewable energy in the next four-year period. To ensure data validity, data triangulation was carried out by (1) comparing news from various digital daily media sources; (2) referencing news content with official documents or secondary data related to the presidential-vice-presidential debate; (3) discussing the results of the analysis with fellow researchers or communication experts.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings from the research will explain how the digital daily media illustrate how the media frames renewable energy issues. By comparing the media, this research aims to see how different frames affect public perception and policy discourse on renewable energy management. The discussion will highlight the implications of media framing on environmental awareness and public engagement, thus informing effective strategies to address the crisis related to renewable energy issues.

No	News Headline	Name of Media	Analysis
1	Disayangkan, Isu Krusial Batu Bara Luput dari Debat Cawapres	Kompas	Criticizing the inability of the vice president candidates to discuss important issues related to coal in the fourth debate. The tone of the news is negative, but still balanced in providing perspective. The focus on the lack of discussion of crucial issues shows weaknesses in political discourse at the debate.
2	Jelang Debat Cawapres, Pegiat Lingkungan Soroti Penambangan Nikel, Ekspansi Sawit dan Food Estate	Tribunnews	Highlighting the concerns of environmental activists regarding the negative impacts of nickel mining, palm oil expansion, and food estates on indigenous forests. The tone of the news is negative, illustrating concerns about the lack of attention to the recognition of customary forests. The report is balanced in raising environmental issues.
3	Debat Kedua Cawapres, Cak Imin Ajak Tobat Ekologis: Ojo Sak Karepe Dewe	Tempo	It contains Cak Imin's call to pay attention to ecological aspects and comply with environmental regulations. Neutral news tone with a balanced approach, emphasizing the importance of collective awareness of the destruction of nature.
4	Jadi Topik Panas di Debat Cawapres, Seberapa Besar Peranan Nikel di Komponen Baterai EV?	Jawapos	Reviews the role of nickel in the electric vehicle industry and its impact on the environment. Neutral news tone with an emphasis on the relevance of this issue in the context of renewable energy and natural resource management challenges.
5	Jadi Tema Debat Cawapres, Bagaimana Kualitas Lingkungan Hidup di Indonesia?	Kumparan	Criticizes the lack of attention to environmental issues in previous debates. Neutral news tone, illustrating the need for a more in-depth discussion on the quality of the environment in Indonesia.
6	Mahfud MD Ungkap Data Deforestasi Hutan di Indonesia Capai 12,5 Juta Hektare, Menteri LHK Berikan Bantahan	Merdeka	Highlighted the deforestation data revealed by Mahfud MD and the rebuttal from the Minister of Environment and Forestry. Neutral news tone with a balanced approach, exploring the dynamics between the deforestation data and the government's response.
7	Angkat Isu Lingkungan, Debat Jadi Peluang Gibran Raup Suara Pemilih Muda	Sindonews	Highlighting Gibran's potential to attract young voters through his commitment to environmental issues. Positive news tone, highlighting Gibran's chances with a focus on sustainable development that appeals to the younger generation.
8	Nikel, Kendaraan Listrik dan Isu Kerusakan Lingkungan dalam Debat Cawapres	Suara	Discusses the impact of nickel mining and its relevance to electric vehicles and renewable energy. Neutral news tone, emphasizing the challenges of natural resource management in the context of sustainable development.

Table 1. List of News from digital media dailies published on January 21, 2024
Source: Digital Platform, 2024

Agenda setting theory explains that the media has the ability to determine what issues are considered important by the public. In the context of this news, the media explicitly highlighted environmental issues as the main theme associated with the vice presidential candidate debate in January 2024. Themes such as coal, nickel mining, deforestation, electric

vehicles, and sustainable development are consistently raised. In doing so, the media not only reports facts, but also shapes the collective perception that environmental issues are one of the top priorities that Indonesia's future leaders must deal with. For example, news from Kompas with the headline “Unfortunate, Crucial Coal Issue Missed from the Vice Presidential Debate” places the inability of the vice presidential candidates to discuss the issue of coal as a critical point. In this context, the media frames the coal issue as a strategic issue that has a major impact, not only on the environment, but also on the national economy. Phrases such as “missing from the debate” and “crucial issue” indicate that the media are directing public attention to the fact that the candidates have neglected this topic, despite coal being one of the significant yet controversial energy resources. Thus, the media agenda was directed to highlight the candidates' weaknesses in dealing with strategic issues.

Based on the table, the analysis shows that the coverage of environmental issues in the context of the 2024 vice presidential candidate debate covers a variety of perspectives and focuses relevant to public policy and sustainability. Overall, most news in various media has a neutral tone with a balanced approach, reflecting the media's tendency to provide objective information. However, some news raised sharp criticism, especially related to environmental and natural resource issues, as in the news on Kompas and Tribunnews which highlighted the inability of the vice president to discuss the issue of coal and the concerns of environmental activists about the impact of natural resource exploitation.

News with a positive tone was found in an article from Sindonews, which highlighted Gibran's opportunity to attract young voters through his commitment to environmental issues. In contrast, news such as in Kompas highlighted the vice president's inability to address the crucial issue of coal, giving a negative impression of the political discourse in the debate. The issue of nickel as a component of electric vehicle batteries was also highlighted, with neutral tones in various media such as Jawapos and Suara, signaling the importance of attention to the environmental impact of mining and new energy technologies.

In terms of news length, most articles were of moderate length, around 500-900 words, indicating that the media provided enough space to explore complex issues such as deforestation, renewable energy and ecological challenges. The most emerging topic is the exploitation of natural resources (nickel, coal) and its impact on the environment, which is relevant to renewable energy policies and sustainable development. In addition, the theme of the vice presidential debate as a political platform is also an important element in the news. News from Tribunnews and Jawapos raised specific themes such as nickel mining, palm oil

expansion, and its impact on indigenous forests and the environment. In the Tribunnews news, environmental activists are portrayed as actors who criticize the lack of recognition of customary forests and the adverse impacts of mining and industrial expansion. Phrases such as “concerns of environmental activists” and “lack of recognition of customary forests” show the media agenda to direct public attention to the imbalance between natural resource exploitation and environmental preservation. In the Jawapos news entitled “So Hot Topic in the Vice Presidential Debate, How Big is the Role of Nickel in EV Battery Components?”, the media chose to focus attention on the relevance of nickel mining to the global trend, namely electric vehicles. In doing so, the media positioned the issue as both a challenge and an opportunity for sustainable development.

Other articles, such as those from Kumparan and Tempo, also place environmental issues in the context of the vice presidential debate, but with different approaches. For example, Kumparan's article titled “Being the Theme of the Vice Presidential Debate, How is the Quality of the Environment in Indonesia?” implicitly criticizes the previous debate which was considered to have not highlighted environmental issues in depth. By highlighting the fact that environmental quality has not been the main focus in the debate, the media tries to encourage the public to demand more attention from the candidates on this issue.

Framing theory reveals how the media constructs narratives to shape the way the public understands an issue. In these news stories, the media uses a variety of framing techniques, ranging from negative framing to neutral and positive framing, depending on the editorial objective.

In Kompas news, negative framing is evident through the use of words such as “incompetence” and “missed” to describe the vice president who failed to discuss the coal issue. This framing shows the media's efforts to build the perception that the candidates do not have sufficient competence in dealing with crucial environmental issues. The media also links this issue to the vice presidential debate, creating expectations that candidates must be able to demonstrate understanding and concrete solutions to strategic issues such as this. Unlike Kompas, the framing used by Tempo is more neutral. In an article entitled “Second Vice Presidential Debate, Cak Imin Invites Ecological Repentance: Ojo Sak Karepe Dewe,” the media reported Cak Imin's statement without giving an emotional evaluation. The focus on the invitation to “ecological repentance” conveyed by Cak Imin reflects an effort to underline moral messages related to the need for behavioral changes in environmental management.

However, the article does not provide in-depth context on how this call can be applied in concrete policies, so this neutral framing leaves room for interpretation for the reader.

Meanwhile, the article from Sindonews uses a more positive framing towards certain candidates. In the news titled “Raising Environmental Issues, Debate Is an Opportunity for Gibran to Raise Young Voters' Votes,” the media framed Gibran as a vice presidential candidate who has a commitment to sustainable development. Phrases such as “positive opportunities for Gibran” and “attracting young voters” show the media's efforts to accentuate Gibran's positive image in the midst of political competition. This framing is clearly directed at building public perception that Gibran is a relevant candidate for young people who care about environmental issues. In other articles, such as those from Jawapos and Merdeka, framing is more directed at presenting facts with little editorial evaluation. For example, the article on forest deforestation data revealed by Mahfud MD and the rebuttal from the Minister of Environment and Forestry presented contrasting facts without giving a final judgment. In other words, this neutral framing serves to inform readers without directly influencing their opinions.

The media plays a significant role in shaping public agenda and discourse, especially in the context of environmental issues that have a strategic impact on Indonesia. By directing public attention to the relevance and urgency of these issues, the media encourages the public to evaluate the candidates' commitment to environmental sustainability and demand concrete solutions from them. This shows how the media is not only a conveyor of information, but also an important actor in the process of democracy and sustainable development.

The media highlights environmental issues from various perspectives, both as criticism of government policies and as an opportunity to attract public attention, especially the younger generation. This shows that political debates have become a strategic space to discuss environmental issues, although some news stories indicate that the discussion is still lacking depth or substance. It is important to note that the framing used by the media also reflects the agenda and perspective of each news outlet. While some articles sharply criticized the candidates, others highlighted the positive aspects of certain candidates. Thus, audiences need to read the news critically and consider various viewpoints to get a fuller picture of environmental issues in the context of national politics.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this analysis shows that the media plays a very strategic role in

shaping the narrative and public opinion regarding environmental issues in the context of the vice presidential candidate debate in January 2024. Using the agenda setting theory, it can be seen that the media not only chooses topics to report but also actively directs public discourse. The media consistently raises environmental issues as relevant and important themes, even though these issues are often not the main focus of national political discourse. By highlighting environmental issues in the news surrounding the vice presidential debate, the media shows concern over the lack of substantial discussion from the candidates regarding these strategic issues. Topics such as coal, nickel mining, deforestation, palm oil plantation expansion, electric vehicles, and sustainable development are the main highlights in the news, indicating that the media is trying to direct public attention to issues that have long-term impacts on the environment, society, and economy of Indonesia. The media frames these issues with various approaches, ranging from negative, neutral, to positive framing. Negative framing is seen in news such as Kompas and Tribunnews, where the media uses language that tends to be critical to highlight the shortcomings of the candidates or the negative impacts of certain policies. For example, news about the vice presidential candidates' "inability" to discuss coal in the debate highlights their weakness in dealing with strategic issues.

Neutral framing is also found in articles such as Tempo and Jawapos, where the media focuses more on presenting facts without giving emotional judgments or certain preferences. This neutral framing shows the media's efforts to maintain objectivity, although implicit bias may still exist in the selection of reported facts. On the other hand, positive framing is also found, especially in news about certain candidates, such as Gibran in the Sindonews article. By highlighting the "positive opportunities" for Gibran to attract young voters through focusing on environmental issues, the media actively builds the image of a relevant and progressive candidate. This suggests that the media can influence public perception of candidates by highlighting more positive aspects of their programs or personalities.

Overall, this analysis shows that the media not only reports facts, but also plays an active role in shaping the public narrative through topic selection and framing techniques. By highlighting environmental issues in the context of the vice presidential debate, the media has directed public attention to issues that are often overlooked in political discourse. This shows that the media has the power to determine the priorities of national issues as well as influence how society understands and responds to these issues.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who has supported and contributed to this research. Without the support and assistance provided by various resources, this research would not have been possible. We hope that the findings of this research will significantly benefit the development of knowledge and understanding in the related field.

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