

The Mechanism of Newsroom and TV Journalist Work Routines during the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

A disease outbreak known as COVID-19 (Corona Virus Diseases 2019) is currently affecting virtually every part of the planet. The COVID-19 outbreak is a catastrophe that endangers and disrupts life, causes fatalities, traumatizes victims, and engenders a climate of threat and fear. The COVID-19 pandemic tragedy not only affected the number of sick and deceased individuals but also altered work schedules in the neighborhood. Additionally, COVID-19 has brought about changes in journalism, particularly in television journalism. The purpose of this study is to ascertain the mechanism governing the operational procedures of newsroom and television journalism during the COVID-19 pandemic. Expectancy Violation Theory and Judee K. Burgoon's Interaction Adaptation Theory were both used in this study. This research approach employed a constructive subjective paradigm and utilized a qualitative case study methodology. The subjects of this study were the journalists and editors of iNews TV and Metro TV. The study's finding show that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted how journalists work both in the workplace and in the field, causing disruption and changes to their routines. Nevertheless, the pandemic has also prompted an acceleration of the process of adapting how journalistic tasks are carried out, both in the newsroom and on the ground. Despite the acceleration, the COVID-19 epidemic has expedited the process of adaptation and adjustment. Finally, the transformation has resulted in new business strategies in the television industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keyword: acceleration process; adaptation process; COVID-19 pandemic; journalist television; newsroom mechanism

Abstrak

Wabah penyakit yang dikenal sebagai COVID-19 (Penyakit Virus Corona 2019) saat ini memengaruhi hampir setiap bagian planet ini. Wabah COVID-19 merupakan bencana yang membahayakan dan mengganggu kehidupan, menimbulkan korban jiwa, menimbulkan trauma bagi korban, serta menciptakan iklim ancaman dan ketakutan. Tragedi pandemi COVID-19 tidak hanya berdampak pada jumlah orang sakit dan meninggal dunia, tetapi juga mengubah jadwal kerja di lingkungan sekitar. Perubahan jurnalisme, khususnya jurnalisme televisi, juga dibawa oleh COVID-19. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengetahui mekanisme yang mengatur prosedur operasional ruang redaksi dan jurnalisme televisi pada masa pandemi COVID-19. Teori Pelanggaran Harapan dan Teori Adaptasi Interaksi Judee K. Burgoon keduanya digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Pendekatan penelitian ini menggunakan paradigma subjektif konstruktif dan metodologi studi kasus kualitatif. Wartawan dan redaktur iNews TV dan Metro TV menjadi subjek penelitian. Temuan studi menunjukkan bahwa pandemi COVID-19 berdampak pada cara kerja jurnalis di tempat kerja dan di lapangan, menyebabkan gangguan dan gangguan pada rutinitas mereka. Namun, pandemi juga mendorong percepatan proses adaptasi bagaimana tugas jurnalistik dijalankan di ruang redaksi dan di lapangan. Meski terjadi percepatan, wabah COVID-19 yang terjadi mempercepat proses adaptasi dan penyesuaian. Akhirnya, perubahan menghasilkan strategi bisnis baru di industri pertelevisian akibat pandemi COVID-19.

Kata Kunci: jurnalistik televisi; mekanisme ruang redaksi; pandemi COVID-19; proses adaptasi; proses akselerasi

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INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 outbreak is a crisis that threatens, disrupts life, and causes casualties. In accordance with the Law of the Republic of Indonesia Number 24 of 2007, a disaster is characterized as an event or a series of events that jeopardize and disrupt the lives and livelihoods of individuals. Such occurrences lead to consequences such as death, injury, environmental harm, loss of property, and psychological effects, arising from both natural and non-natural causes, encompassing both natural forces and those driven by human activities. In legal terms, catastrophes can be categorized into three groups: social, non-natural, and natural disasters. Natural catastrophes, often referred to as disasters caused by natural occurrences, include earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and flash floods. Meanwhile, non-natural disasters are catastrophes caused by human negligence, including fires, automobile accidents, disease outbreaks, and so forth. Moreover, human-caused catastrophes encompass societal unrest, terrorism, and similar activities. Hence, it can be asserted that the SARS-CoV-2 Virus is responsible for the COVID-19 epidemic, constituting a non-natural disaster (World Health Organization, 2020).

The COVID-19 virus is a rapidly spreading disease outbreak that significantly increases the mortality rate. Due to the widespread impact of the coronavirus, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared it a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020 (World Health Organization, 2020). Furthermore, COVID-19 had evolved into a catastrophe affecting the global population, prompting the WHO to declare it a worldwide pandemic on March 11, 2020 (Dong et al., 2020, p. 2).

According to a survey conducted by the Center for Economic Development Study (CEDS) at the Faculty of Economics and Business, Padjadjaran University, in collaboration with researchers from the Faculty of Psychology, Medicine, and Health Clinics at Padjadjaran University, 45,92% of journalists in Indonesia were affected by both psychological and health effects due to COVID-19 (Handayani & Katherine, 2021). Likewise, according to the survey, which involved 98 journalists, the COVID-19 pandemic led journalists to experience melancholic fear and disturbed sleep, eventually resulting in a sense of despondency (Masduki et al., 2020, p. 50).

In the latter half of March 2020, Americans witnessed a 32% surge in public attention following news about the coronavirus compared to data from two weeks earlier. The survey found that 57% of adults in the US were highly engaged in following the news about COVID-19, while the remaining 35% of the community were moderately active in following it. Moreover, 92% of Americans actively consumed news about the virus, in contrast to the 8% who consumed news sporadically (Casero-Ripolles, 2020, p. 6).

The tragedy of the COVID-19 pandemic not only impacted the number of sick and deceased individuals but also altered work schedules in the neighborhood. Hoak (2021) indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic had changed the physical working circumstances for journalists. The findings of a study conducted by Kent State University's assistant professor of journalism in America revealed changes in how people communicate with one another. According to the study, 60.4% of journalists used masks when performing their duties. During source interviews, 59.9% of journalists maintained their distance. Additionally, 40.5% of American journalists worked remotely (Hoak, 2021, p. 864).

Hoak found that journalists underwent significant changes while carrying out their journalistic duties. The most significance difference was that 83.8% of journalists worked in locations outside of newsrooms, where they used to physically work. Additionally, journalists no longer conducted interviews face-to-face, but instead, used telephone calls (77.9%) and

internet-based communication tools (64.4%, such as Zoom, Google Meet, and others). Nevertheless, 6.3% of journalists continued to work as usual before the outbreak (Hoak, 2021, p. 864).

Furthermore, Hoak (2021) examined a large number of American journalists and television reporters. There were changes in television reporting, with 91.9% engaging in journalism outside of the editorial office. 79.7% of interviews were conducted over the phone, and 86.5% were done using internet-based technologies. Meanwhile, 6.8% of reporters continue to connect with others using antiquated methods (Hoak, 2021, p. 863).

According to Informant 1, in Indonesia, the work schedules of journalists and television reporters often change due to the calamity brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

I induced a change in the working pattern of the Metro TV editor as well. The COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the convergence of technological and non-technical competencies (skills) in the reporting process. A reporter must be adept at using the current communication technologies. Reporters must be capable of gathering information, acting as a cameraperson to document an event, and editing information and images seamlessly. Most importantly, they should also be able to create news, capture images, and edit both news and pictures (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

This adjustment in work schedules is geared towards delivering daily news broadcast to the community, notwithstanding the global speed of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Reporting plays a crucial role in the community's crisis preparedness, crisis response, and crisis recovery efforts. Additionally, the media has played multifaceted roles during the crisis by disseminating crucial information about COVID-19. The news industry has witnessed substantial changes in its work pattern due to the evolving industrial process. Particularly, the Metro TV production method underwent a significant alteration at the onset of the pandemic.

The newsroom was evacuated as soon as the pandemic struck Indonesia. In 2020, newsrooms capacity was halved. However, despite this reduction, news creation continued on a daily basis, with consistent content being produced each day (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

Research on television journalism during the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia is referenced in several articles. Perreault and Perreault (2021) delve into the discursive construction of journalism during the COVID-19 crisis. Research articles utilizing discourse analysis suggest that reporters experienced increased difficulty in their reporting during the pandemic and endeavored to mitigate the challenges associated with the job. A notable distinction from previous research lies in the focus of prior researchers on the ecology of journalism during the COVID-19 crisis, while the current researchers concentrate on learning about television journalism in Indonesia amid the pandemic. Despite this difference, both sets of research share a commonality in examining the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (Perreault & Perreault, 2021, p. 982).

This research endeavors to uncover the production process employed by iNews TV and Metro TV amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Simultaneously, this research aims to elucidate the anticipated benefits, which are intended to serve as valuable references and guidelines for television journalism in times of disasters, especially non-natural disasters such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, this study draws upon Hoak's research (2021), which highlighted the transformative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on American journalists. Hoak (2021) also discussed the pandemic situation in order to explore journalist stress and the role of organizational assistance in addressing it. The conclusion of the article underscored the significant impact

organizational support on the stress levels and productivity of American journalists (Hoak, 2021, p. 867).

This research not only scrutinizes the condition of journalists in the field but also investigates the state of the newsroom. In addition to exploring the changes in journalists' conditions during news coverage, the study examines how newsrooms are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The research integrates the examination of both newsrooms and field coverage, emphasizing the interconnectedness between them under the purview of television journalistic editors.

Two theories were employed in this study. Firstly, Judee K. Burgoon developed the 'Expectancy Violation Theory'. The foundational concept of the expectation violation hypothesis is rooted in the idea that everyone harbors specific expectation regarding others' nonverbal behavior. When these expectations are breached, individuals react by forming positive or negative judgments based on the characteristics of the transgressor. Additionally, Judee K. Burgoon, Lesa Stern, and Leesa Dillman formulated the 'Interaction Adaptation Theory', also known as IAT. According to the interactional adaptation idea, individuals typically adjust to one another (White, 2021, p. 60).

The constructivism paradigm was used in this investigation. According to this perspective, humans construct their knowledge through interactions with things, occurrences, experiences, and surroundings. In line with constructivism, it is asserted that each individual must interpret knowledge for themselves rather than simply passing it along. Thus, the paradigm emphasizes that each person must actively participate in the creation of their knowledge (Bogna et al., 2020, p. 5).

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employed a qualitative case study methodology to comprehend and interpret phenomena by examining objects that had already existed in the natural environment (Gregory, 2020, p. 127). The primary aim of the qualitative research in this study is to elucidate how television journalists in Indonesia perceive the COVID-19 pandemic. Data for this study was gathered through interviews and literature reviews. The subject of this description research involved rigorous and in-depth observation and analysis of television journalists' perceptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. The case study was based on an in-depth assessment of individuals' past perceptions of the events resulting from COVID-19, exploring the underlying concepts that governed these perceptions (Yin, 2002). This research not only collected information from participants and key informants through in-depth interviews but also from individuals close to the research subject. Additionally, daily notes on the subject's activities or their past performance contributed to the comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon (Sadang et al., 2021, p. 119).

Inews TV and Metro TV are two television stations in Indonesia where research can be conducted. The COVID-19 pandemic impacted Indonesia, and the focus of research was the work processes of journalists and the operational mechanism of television news production. The research subjects included journalists and editors affiliated with Inews TV and Metro TV.

The data analysis technique employed in this study involved several stages. Firstly, the data underwent categorization and reduction, followed by data grouping, data interpretation, decision-making, data analysis, and verification of results with information. Moreover, field data, acquired through observations and interviews in the form of field notes and recordings, can be challenging for researchers to comprehend, necessitating data reduction. The reduced data was organized into narratives to form a meaningful sequence of information related to the

research problem. The grouped data was then interpreted and analyzed based on the structure of the compiled narratives. Finally, data verification was conducted by analyzing the results against information, drawing conclusions based on this process (Creswell & Creswell, 2009, p. 122).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Newsroom Work Disruption

The newsroom is the starting point for all news production. Each editorial team, comprising reporters, producers, the editor-in-chief, and various other sections, shares suggestions for news coverage during editorial meetings. Every potential news story discussed and selected in these meetings is then transformed into a news projection (Robotham, 2021, p. 1021).

The editor-in-chief typically serves as the host of editorial meetings, also known as projection meetings, held in the newsroom. The story that will become the day's headline is chosen during this editorial meeting. Morisson claimed that the news determination meeting was also referred to as the 'News Judgment'. News Judgment is the capacity to select or determine the news to be presented on television from a variety of accessible news sources.

According to Informant 2, the initial step was to hold an editorial meeting or projection meeting to determine which news would be covered and subsequently broadcast (Informant 2, personal communication, February 16, 2022). A similar statement from both Informant 1 and Informant 2 revealed that the first stage in the news flow on Metro TV involved conducting an editorial meeting. According to Informant 1, this projection meeting included discussions on news projections, news angles, and the identification of journalists who would conduct coverage in the field.



Figure 1. Television News Production Conceptual Framework

Source: (Informant 2, personal communication, February 16, 2022)

The topic of scheduled news is determined by the editor through the agenda setting, while incidental news is discussed in this projection meeting. The continuation (update) of an event that has already happened is considered during the projection meeting, emphasizing the ongoing interest in reporting such developments. Scheduled news pertains to the coverage of events planned by sources, such as reports on the president's working visit, DPR (House of Representatives) working sessions, product launch events, and other ceremonial occasions. However, news on the agenda is selected based on its relevance and the audience's interest.

Kurniawan (2020) described the projection of news with a specific agenda in his book, commencing with witnessing an event and events that had occurred or would occur. Additionally, the news was scrutinized to determine whether it held enough value for the editors to consider it significant and engaging for the audience (Kurniawan, 2020). Typically, significant news on the agenda revolves around matters of death, money, and disturbances that have occurred or will occur. What is intriguing is that the presented information might leave the audience in awe, find it amusing, odd, or unusual. Additionally, such exciting news frequently becomes a trending topic or the major subject of conversation in society, both online and in public places like coffee shops. Incidental news, on the other hand, is information about an unexpected event that happened on that day.

The conclusions drawn during the editorial meeting lay the groundwork for a journalist's coverage, encompassing both breaking news stories and upcoming broadcast. The outcomes of the editorial or projection discussion, as per KT, serve as the basis for the coverage coordinator's decisions on assigning journalists to specific locations. One tool used by journalists for news coverage is the projection of meeting outcomes. Journalists also have the flexibility to report on incidental incidents occurring outside the purview of their editorial work. Natural disasters, such as earthquakes, building fires, traffic accidents, and criminal actions that occurred on that day, along with other significant and noteworthy events, extend beyond the forecast (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the editorial meeting process involved face-to-face interaction. Each editorial team was physically present in the newsroom, where they discussed and debated news projections while exchanging ideas. However, the pandemic has significantly altered the operation of the newsroom. Currently, more than 50 percent of the editorial staff must be physically present, and the editorial team working in the newsroom must adhere to safety precautions such as wearing masks and maintaining physical distance. To comply with health guidelines, even the workstations of the editorial staff are set apart from one another. Consequently, only a small portion of the editorial staff was physically present, and the newsroom appeared nearly deserted.

By involving only the editorial staff on duty for that day, the pattern of editorial meetings shifted from being physically present and taking place face-to-face in the newsroom to being conducted online. Subsequently, online editorial sessions now utilize video conferencing tools such as Zoom or Google Meet. In this new set up, the editorial team, physically present in the newsroom but dispersed across various locations, follows the participants of the online editorial conference.

According to Informant 3, work rhythms had changed significantly due to interaction limitations and the adoption of health regulations. For instance, projection meetings are now held in locations outside the newsroom, and communication during these meetings are facilitated through Zoom. Similarly, interviews are no longer conducted face-to-face but instead utilize internet-based communication tools such as WhatsApp, Zoom, and others (Informant 3, personal communication, February 20, 2022).

According to Informant 4,

The MNC Group media team was taken aback when the COVID-19 outbreak hit Indonesia. The lack of expertise within the majority of the media team in managing the crisis posed a significant challenge. Situations such as crowd limitations, social distancing, and working from home had never been encountered before. Subsequently, the MNC Group media team had to discover ways to overcome and adapt to the circumstances. However, as television plays a crucial role in handling COVID-19 situation, the activity of transmitting news does not have to come to halt (Informant 4, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

The working habits of the newsroom underwent changes initiated by Metro TV management, which included a reduction in interaction and a cap on the number of people allowed to congregate in one area. The workplace, public spaces, and places of worship were reconfigured in accordance with the Metro TV Board of Directors' Decree. Following the COVID-19 health protocol, there is a recommended distance between journalists and newsrooms. As a sequence of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is now a 50% reduction in the number of editorial staff members working in the Metro TV newsroom.

Metro TV's administration has imposed physical restrictions on the number of participants allowed in editorial or projection sessions. In a strategic decision, Metro TV's management has

discontinued in-person meetings within the workplace, reserving meeting spaces exclusively for discussions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. To enhance productivity and efficiency in managerial operations, every Metro TV employee is required to utilize digital technology in their work. This approach allows editorial and projection meetings to take place anywhere, as the number of in-person attendees is limited to specified venues. However, the inclusion of additional participants is facilitated through digital-based communication technology programs such as Zoom, Skype, and Google Meet.

The use of internet technology for projection meetings is not without its challenges. According to Informant 3, issues with the internet network in some locations were noted during the Zoom projection meeting, with connectivity not matching the reliability of the newsroom. Communication problems surfaced in both editorial and projection meetings due to the weaker internet network in certain locations compared to the office. Informant 3 mentioned that numerous attendees in the projection meeting attempted to present pertinent facts for the agenda but were hindered by the erratic internet network. The transmission of picture and sound suffered, impacting the quality of communication (Informant 3, personal communication, February 20, 2022).

Due to the lack of extensive or in-depth discussion among the editorial staff during editorial meetings, the changes in the routine brought on by the epidemic have resulted in the decrease in their depth and essence. While the editorial staff can communicate via video conference programs, this technology cannot fully replace face-to-face communication during editorial sessions. Many meeting participants do not turn on their camera during editorial meetings, leading to a lack of tangible manifestations of facial expressions or body gestures that typically occur in those meetings. As a result, the concentration of meeting participants is less focused during online meetings, as some attendees may be preoccupied with other matters and not actively participating in the discussions.

Table 1. News Reporting Process during the COVID-19 Pandemic

No	Production Process	Before COVID-19 Pandemic	After COVID-19 Pandemic
1	Issues Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The identification information is derived from the results of observing events and news development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information is gathered through event observation. • Information is sourced from content that has gone viral on social media.
2	Projection Meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Editorial meetings take place in the designated meeting room. • All editors attend these meetings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer confined to one physical space. • Now accomplished through the use of communication technologies.
3	Field Coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News reporting is overseen by reporters and camera-persons. • Reporters are responsible for creating scripts. • Camera-persons handle capturing pictures and audio. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • News reporting is handled by reporters who may also serve as cameraperson. • Reporters are responsible for creating scripts. • Reporters are in charge of taking both pictures and audio.

(continued on next page)

Table 1 (continued)

4	Editing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script editing is overseen by producers. • Editors are responsible for managing script, pictures and audio editing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Script editing is managed by reporters under the guidance of producers. • Reporters, guided by producers, manage the editing of scripts, pictures and audio. • The final editing of the script, pictures and audio is handled by editors.
5	Live Broadcasting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is broadcasted in the studio and is attended by many audiences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is broadcasted in a studio with limited audience participation. • Health protocol procedures must be followed during the broadcasting process.

Source: (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022)

Journalists are Mentally Shaken

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly transformed both the working dynamics of journalists and the operational structure newsroom. Furthermore, the pandemic has taken a toll on the mental health of journalists, with many being taken aback by the unprecedented circumstances they have had to navigate. Numerous journalists now exhibit reluctance towards engaging in field reporting, particularly in locations such as hospitals, public health centers, and other areas, driven by a heightened fear of contracting the COVID-19 virus. This apprehension is often justified by labeling these locations as “red zone,” where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is elevated. The primary concern for these journalists is the potential infection with the virus, leading to an increased sense of vulnerability in their line of work.

In the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak, there was a palpable anxiety among reporters, particularly when it came to reporting from the frontlines of hospitals. In response, our leadership took proactive steps to explain the intricacies of the pandemic, aiming to ease the concerns of field journalist. I played a key role in this effort by being the first to brief leadership on the specifics of the coronavirus. I highlighted its unique features compared to other viruses, emphasizing that it is an RNA virus undergoing modification at a much faster rate than DNA viruses. This understanding helped provide a clearer picture of the situation and laid the groundwork for addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

Informant 1 advised Metro TV journalists that the risk of contracting an infection is negligible as long as they wear masks and adhere to safety precautions. Recognizing the challenge of making journalists fully comprehend COVID-19, the suggestion was to adopt a “learn by doing” approach, providing examples to illustrate proper reporting during the pandemic. Informant 1 even offered a specific illustration by covering patients infected with COVID-19 in hospitals, aiming to persuade Metro TV reporters to engage in breaking news reporting from such locations.

In April 2020, I engaged in direct reporting from the isolation wards at the Persahabatan Hospital in East Jakarta and Hasbullah Abdul Majid Hospital in Bekasi. Following the on-site reporting, I had to undergo a self-isolation period for a few days. However, amidst the current calamity of the COVID-19 pandemic, these efforts can serve as a tangible

example for fellow journalists on how to navigate and execute their responsibilities adeptly (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

According to a survey conducted by the Center for Economic Development Study (CEDS) of the Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Padjadjaran, in collaboration with researchers from the Faculty of Psychology, Medicine, and Health Clinics at the same university, 45.92% of journalists in Indonesia are experiencing psychologically effects from COVID-19 in addition to health effects. The survey, involving 98 journalists, revealed that the Pandemic has induced depression among journalists, manifesting in symptoms such as anxiety, insomnia, and others. Furthermore, the study highlighted that the pandemic has significantly impacted the quality of life for journalists (Handayani & Katherine, 2021). Despite grappling with anxiety and dread, journalists are compelled to report the news every day, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic (Informant 4, personal communication, February 25, 2022). The television industry demands daily news, photos, or visuals, necessitating the daily fieldwork of journalists

While Informant 5 said that

Revealing that although he initially grappled with dread, he emphasized the importance of approaching his work from a professional standpoint. Despite the existence of COVID-19, journalists must maintain professionalism when reporting on breaking news in the field. Even amid the pandemic, the process of seeking and obtaining information in the field will persist (Informant 5, personal communication, February 28 2022).

The restricted space for field reporting, imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, necessitates adherence to activity limits, avoiding crowds, and refraining from a direct interactions—an additional challenge encountered by journalists due the pandemic. Simultaneously, businesses overseeing journalists' work mandate that both journalists and other staff members minimize direct contact with other individuals. This measure is implemented to curb the spread of COVID-19.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly constrained mobility and engagement, resulting in a decline in direct interviewing and an increase in indirect interactions between sources and journalists. In fact, one source event canceled an interview due to concerns about contracting COVID-19. Crowds and the role of a journalist traditionally intertwine, as both necessitate proximity to and direct interaction with sources and events (Gong et al., 2022, p. 190).

The information gathered in the field during the pandemic has altered how the way journalists approach their work. In-person interviews, which were traditionally conducted face-to-face, have been replaced by online interviews. Utilizing video conferencing tools such as Zoom, Google Meet, or WhatsApp, journalists now conduct interviews remotely. This shift extends to reporters traveling to the areas they cover, as many essential activities, like press conferences and webinars, have moved to an online format, eliminating the need for physical presence. Journalists can now pose questions or interview sources via streaming video displays that are aired online, requiring only an internet connection.

During the pandemic, press conferences and other events cannot be held in person, according to news sources, including government organizations and businesses. Instead, activities are conducted through online video streaming services like YouTube and Zoom. However, this shift takes away from the core of reporting, which requires a journalist to investigate the claims made by sources. After informants supply information or statements, journalists are no longer able to conduct door-step interviews to intercept sources. Because there are few or no opportunities for follow-up questions, journalists must rely on information

from sources.

Journalist Work Adaptation

When covering an event or breaking news, a journalist is typically assisted by a cameraperson. The camera-person is responsible for recording audio and visuals of the ongoing news coverage. Masduki et al. (2020) asserted that the cameraman was in charge of all technical facets of photographing and recording photographs. While covering an event, journalists are tasked with gathering and recording any relevant data. The camera-person must ensure that the captured image is sharp (focused), the composition is clear and precise (framing), the color is true to the original (natural), the shot is optimal, and the sound volume is suitable. In order to produce high-quality news, journalists and camera-persons must be skilled and work together effectively (Masduki et al., 2020, p. 50).

However, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly altered how journalists work. The coverage that was typically conducted by a journalist with a cameraperson before the COVID-19 pandemic has undergone changes. While the cameraperson is out in the field capturing pictures, journalists are responsible for gathering information and creating news scripts. Nevertheless, the pandemic has necessitated that journalists acquire the skill of operating a camera independently. This means that, while reporting, a journalist must be capable of handling a video camera and create recordings. In a similar vein, a cameraperson must be able to perform journalistic tasks such as gathering data, conducting interviews, and writing news scripts. As a result, a cameraperson must also function as a journalist, and vice versa (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

The COVID-19 pandemic has compelled Metro TV journalists to acquire new skills, such as using video cameras and smartphone camera functions to record events and interviews while reporting. Additionally, journalists must now be adept at conducting independent reporting, which includes scheduling interviews with sources online utilizing video conferencing such as Zoom or Google Meet (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

The method of creating news must also change for journalists during a pandemic. Before the pandemic, producers or news editors would receive scripted news reports from journalists in the field, cut them into scripts, and add video coverage. The producer then sends the revised screenplay to the video editor, who processes it and turns it into news footage ready to air on news shows. This entire procedure happens in the newsroom. To review the coverage material they have gathered from the field with the producer, the journalist, and the camera-person must return to the office after reporting.

Due to the pandemic allowing them to work from anywhere, journalists no longer need to return to the office after reporting. They create news manuscripts at home or from other locations under the guidance and supervision of the coverage coordinator and producers, who provide direction on news angles and the questions to pose to informants. The producers and coverage coordinators utilize communication technology tools, including chat programs and video conferencing, to oversee and monitor journalists' work.

In addition to the ability to create new scripts, a millionaire journalist must also be capable of dubbing, editing photos, and creating news scripts without the need to visit the newsroom. Alongside authoring the allotted news narrative. Informant 3 claimed that the pandemic demands a journalist to be proficient in live streaming and editing cameras in the field. These programs simplify the process for journalists to edit images and sound on the go, allowing them to upload their video coverage material to the office. Furthermore, a journalist should be familiar with processing scripts and photographs using image editing software via smartphones. Online video distribution services like Google Drive or WhatsApp can be used

for submitting coverage content.

To set an example for Metro TV journalists, Informant 1 has undertaken the role of a mobile journalist. Informant 1 managed every aspect of independent reporting on the treatment of COVID-19 patients at the Hasbullah Abdul Majid Hospital in Bekasi and the Persahabatan Hospital in East Jakarta. This included shooting photos, conducting interviews, writing scripts, and editing videos. The entire news production procedure is executed at home, with the internet network being essential for sending video content to newsroom producers (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

The continuous online demands on journalists impose a substantial requirement on the availability of technology infrastructure, particularly internet networks. In order to develop a system and tool for journalists to work online and on the go, their party instructed the Metro TV Information Technology Department to begin by revising scripts, editing footage, and transferring videos from the field to the office for inclusion in news programs (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

Informant 1 claimed that several issues were brought on by the outcomes of the COVID-19 news production process. The quality of created videos was not as good as those from earlier news production. Similarly, due to limitations and social distancing, the communication and coordination process for news production were frequently disrupted and challenging to carry out. Because the pandemic emergency scenario made it necessary to forgive mistakes that were previously intolerable, the procedure was not as straightforward and seamless when using the internet network as it was when meeting in person.

Throughout the conversation, it was discovered that the field reporting method needed to be changed by utilizing Judee K. Burgoon's Expectancy Violation Theory. Shifting expectations causes many journalists to experience worry (shocked), stress, and other psychological stresses (expectations). Before the COVID-19 Pandemic, field coverage interactions adhered to the expected distance (proxemics) (Lowrey et al., 2019, p. 9). Due to constraints on engagement to prevent the spread of COVID-19, journalists' expectations change in the field. These limitations on interaction impact how journalists engage when reporting from the field (Informant 5, personal communication, February 28, 2022).

In the early stages of the epidemic, I found myself a bit stressed out. With the virus spreading widely and policies not being handled well, I had to go to risky places like the red zones. Being in those red zones for reporting brought about a lot of anxiety and worry. Not only that, as the number of COVID-19 cases, reports of patient deaths, overwhelmed medical facilities, and widespread layoffs kept increasing, it felt like the bad news just would not stop coming. I felt that exhaustion firsthand while working in the field, seeing how the pandemic was affecting society as a whole. The stress was also fueled by the rampant spread of hoaxes. Despite all this, I make a conscious effort to conduct myself properly because I understand it is part of my professional duty (Informant 1, personal communication, February 10, 2022).

The expectations of how journalists and editors perform their work have also evolved. A reporter must now be capable of creating scripts, filming footage, and editing sound and images. Another significant shift happened when reporters were required to use digital technologies to overcome interaction and communication limitations. Burgoon asserted that expectations had a substantial impact on how individuals engage with one another, how they perceive one another, and ultimately, how their interactions unfold.

According to the expectation breach theory, a television journalist may have previously held expectations about how to engage when reporting in the field based on their experience. However, government restrictions on interactivity and adjustments to work schedules led to a breach of the journalists' expectations. At the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, editors and journalists viewed changes in limitations negatively. According to Informant 4, scenarios

like crowd control, social exclusion, and Work from Home (WFH) had never been faced by journalists or editors before. Many journalists are now hesitant to report directly due to this unfavorable trend, especially in infected or dangerous locations, similar to a hospital during the COVID-19 outbreak. According to Informant 1, when the COVID-19 outbreak first started, reporters were incredibly anxious and afraid to report from the front of the hospital.

The Interaction Adaption Theory, developed by Judee K. Burgoon with Lesa Stern and Leesa Dillman, was employed to assess the adaptation process used by journalists. Five variables influence how a journalist adapts: needs, expectations, wishes, interaction process, and actual conduct (Lowrey et al., 2019). The television industry demands daily information to use as fodder for news broadcasts.

According Informant 4,

On television, you have got to have a programs airing in prime time, morning, afternoon, and evening every day. Both anchors and visuals are crucial to delivering late-breaking news. In reality, being out in the field is a must for television. Editors and my friends need to stay out there for that reason, and we need to make some adjustments (Informant 4, personal communication, February 25, 2022).

Additionally, the biological demand for consistency in work compels journalists to keep adapting to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Due to these demands, journalists have had to modify how they approach their everyday work to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic that has affected Indonesia.

The second factor is expectations. According to Burgoon, whether these expectations are met will impact how a person interacts with others, how they perceive others, and the duration of their relationships. Maintaining optimism also enhances one's ability to cope with issues like the COVID-19 Pandemic. Expectations are connected to societal, sociological, and cultural occurrences. The state of the neighborhood, especially for those exposed to COVID-19 and its effects, has prompted journalists to try to adapt by taking precautions. The business is also adapting to address and prevent the spread of COVID-19 and its consequences.

The third factor is wishes. Television is committed to delivering the top news for the community as it evolves into an industry that the general public uses as a knowledge resource. Journalists and editors work to inform the public about the dangers of COVID-19 and how to handle them during the television adaption process. They also serve to remind the government of its duty to ensure the citizens' health and safety. They were compelled to make adjustments during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Indonesia due to their goal of aiding the community and providing the best for their viewers.

The fourth factor is the interaction process. Journalists are compelled to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic through their interactions with the evolving conditions. They are expected to change how they use digital media in the implementation of coverage. They swiftly adjust to changes in their environment because they are accustomed to dealing with digital media.

Not just in the community where I work, but in terms of the reporting process and coordination, the transition has eventually shifted to digital. The adaptation process did not put too much pressure on the transformation for me, mainly because I happen to be close to and familiar with technological developments (Informant 5, personal communication, February 28, 2022).

The fifth and final adaptation factor of the Interaction Adaptation Theory is the individual factor. Even if there is no adaptation at all, the individual's daily behavior will determine whether the adaptation process takes place sooner or later. Individual aspects of adaptation include attitudes, such as likes and dislikes, as well as whether or not they desire to accept the

changes made. Therefore, the process of adaptation for journalists and editors focuses on their willingness, desire, and happiness to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the routines and working procedures of journalists, both in the newsroom and in the field. One unsettling development during the pandemic in Indonesia was that numerous journalists contracted COVID-19 and experienced depression or stress. Changes in labor patterns also happened as a result of interaction limits during the pandemic, influencing communication in the field and the production process. Journalists undergo a process of adaptation and adjustment as they carry out their journalistic duties in both the newsroom and the field. The pandemic has accelerated a journalist's learning of information technology. The need for additional talents beyond data collection and news script writing for television journalists is further hastened by the pandemic. The acceleration of technology knowledge and other skills may have been ongoing for a long time.

This study also concludes that the disruptions, adjustments, and the formation of new work patterns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in the development of new economic models for the television industry. As journalists now multitask and utilize cutting-edge communication and information technology to complete the production process, television journalism has undergone significant changes.

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