

## Media Sustainability During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Business Differentiation Strategies by Tempo Inti Media Harian

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### Abstract

Economic pressures generated by the COVID-19 pandemic were a challenge for Tempo Media Group, especially in the aspect of media business sustainability. The biggest challenge for this media group is faced by Tempo Inti Media Harian, which is forced to accelerate digital transformation. Koran Tempo, which is a printed newspaper, as of 2021 has fully transitioned into Koran Tempo Digital. This change driven by digital disruption is considered necessary to maintain the media business. This article reviews how Tempo Inti Harian's efforts to survive the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of Michael Porter's business differentiation strategy. The research used a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. The research was conducted by interacting with and observing the object under study to gain experience to strengthen interpretation and analysis with an inductive approach. The author relates the research findings to the company's ideology in the form of Tempo Cultural Values: Trusted, Independent, and Professional with the basic framework of mass media-McQuaill and the Journalistic Code of Ethics. The results show that in terms of business differentiation strategy, Tempo Inti Media Harian's strength in surviving the COVID-19 pandemic is its consistency in adhering to media accountability and the Journalistic Code of Ethics.

**Keywords:** business differentiation strategies; COVID-19 pandemic; Journalistic Code of Ethics; media accountability; media sustainability

### Abstrak

*Tekanan ekonomi akibat pandemi COVID-19 menjadi tantangan tersendiri bagi Tempo Media Group, terutama untuk dalam aspek sustainability bisnis media. Tantangan terbesar kelompok media ini dihadapi oleh Tempo Inti Media Harian yang dipaksa untuk melakukan percepatan transformasi digital. Koran Tempo yang merupakan koran cetak per tahun 2021 beralih penuh menjadi Koran Tempo Digital. Perubahan yang didorong oleh disrupsi digital ini dianggap perlu dilakukan untuk mempertahankan bisnis media. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengulas tentang upaya Tempo Inti Harian bertahan di tengah pandemic COVID-19 dari sudut pandang strategi diferensiasi bisnis dari Michael Porter. Penelitian menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Penelitian dilakukan dengan berinteraksi dan mengamati obyek yang diteliti untuk memperoleh pengalaman guna memperkuat intepretasi serta analisa dengan pendekatan induktif. Penulis mengaitkan temuan penelitian yakni ideologi perusahaan berupa Nilai Budaya Tempo: Tepercaya, Merdeka, dan Profesional dengan kerangka dasar media massa-McQuaill dan Kode Etik Jurnalistik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa dalam sudut pandang strategi diferensiasi bisnis, kekuatan Tempo Inti Media Harian bertahan di tengah pandemi COVID-19 adalah konsistensi berpegang pada akuntabilitas media dan Kode Etik Jurnalistik.*

**Kata Kunci:** akuntabilitas media; Kode Etik Jurnalistik; pandemi COVID-19; strategi diferensiasi bisnis; sustainability media

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## INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted various elements of life in Indonesia, including the development of the media industry. According to The Press Company Union (Serikat Perusahaan Pers-SPS), 80% of print media have experienced decreased advertising revenue, compounded by reduced business activities with clients. Furthermore, the research discloses that of 44 media companies surveyed, 71% experienced a decrease in business revenue exceeding 40%; while 29% experienced a decrease in revenue of less than 40% compared to 2019 (Serikat Perusahaan Pers, 2020).

In response to the situation, the Indonesian Press Council has issued a circular letter emphasizing the importance of press companies and media associations taking initiatives to assist media workers affected by the economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in obtaining Social Safety Net (Jaring Pengaman Sosial, JPS) benefits. In Circular Letter Number: 01/SE-DP/IV/2020, the Press Council acknowledges the severe economic and social crisis brought about by the pandemic, affecting various sectors, including the national mass media industry. With declining business performance, layoffs have become increasingly apparent in media companies, mirroring the situation in other sectors.

The circular letter outlines five key points as follows: (1). The press council appeals to press companies to assist employees affected by the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as categorized above, in obtaining Social Safety Net assistance; (2). The press council appeals to journalist/journalist associations to assist their members affected by the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, as categorized above, in obtaining Social Safety Net assistance; (3). The service mentioned above may include data collection, socialization of the types of Social Safety Net programs, explanation of the eligibility criteria, registration assistance, and coordination with relevant agencies; (4). The Press Council urges press companies and journalist/journalist associations to coordinate with the Press Council regarding the aforementioned issues; (5). The Press Council assists in coordinating with relevant ministries in addressing any issues arising during the efforts to establish a Social Safety Net for media workers (Dewan Pers, 2020).

In addition, the government has taken steps to ensure that the media industry receives many incentives to mitigate the risk of press companies closing down and employees being laid off due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This statement about incentives was made by Finance Minister Sri Mulyani Indrawati, during a virtual meeting with Minister of Communication and Information Technology (Menkominfo) Johnny G. Plate, Chairman of the Press Council Mohammad Nuh, and many representatives of national mass media associations in Jakarta, on Friday, July 24, 2020. According to the outcomes of the meeting, the government has outlined the following details regarding the incentives provided by the government to the media industry: (1). Abolishing value-added tax (VAT) for newsprint, as previously promised by President Jokowi in August 2019. The Minister of Finance Regulation, which implements Presidential Regulation No. 72/2020, will expressly state that the government will cover VAT on printed media raw materials; (2). The Ministry of Finance will explore mechanisms to postpone or suspend electricity costs for the media industry; (3). A suspension of BPJS Employment contributions for 12 months for the press industry and other sectors will be implemented through a Presidential Decree; (4). Discussions will be held with BPJS Health regarding suspending BPJS Health premium payments for media workers; (5). Corporate Tax installments during the pandemic will be reduced from 30% to 50% to provide relief; (6). Employees earning up to IDR 200 million monthly will be exempt from income tax (PPh); (7). The government will instruct all ministries to shift their advertising budgets, particularly Public Service Announcements, to local media (Rahma, 2020).

On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the pace of digital disruption, necessitating mass media to adapt and undergo digital transformation to sustain their businesses. Consequently, several print media companies have been compelled to embrace digital platforms, discontinuing the production of printed newspapers and transitioning to digital formats. On the other hand, the COVID-19 pandemic is driving more vital digital disruption, so mass media needs to adapt and carry out digital transformation to maintain business (Bunyamin et al., 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has also made several print media companies adapt to digital, so they must stop producing printed newspapers and switch to digital (Hidayat & Anisti, 2015). This has also been happening from 2014 until 2021, as evidenced by the many print media that went out of business, such as Koran Tempo Minggu, Sinar Harapan, Tabloid Gaul, Suara Pembaruan, and many others (Cholis & Wardiana, 2018). It is in line with the findings of Nielsen Media Research in the Digital News Report 2021 by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, supporting the notion that 89% of Indonesians now prefer accessing daily news information through online media to print media (Newman et al., 2021). Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic contributes to a perception that the printed press serves as a medium for spreading the COVID-19 virus in Indonesia.

Digital disruption has become a significant concern for various stakeholders within the mass media. At the 2021 HPN Summit, the Chairman of the 2021 HPN Committee, Atal S. Depari, highlighted that the negative news of the economic crisis due to the pandemic has led to a decline in the performance of the media industry (Dewan Pers, 2020). While some companies have finally been forced to close down, others have managed to survive with their idealism by transitioning online and adapting to the changing landscape. The crisis is exacerbated by digital disruption as global technology platforms rapidly reshape the position of conventional media. According to Depari, the national press is facing an existential crisis due to digital disruption, with the pressure intensifying due to the growing presence of businesses by digital companies in Indonesia and worldwide (Dewan Pers, 2020). This attention to digital disruption persisted during the 2022 National Press Day Commemoration Summit. President of the Republic of Indonesia, Joko Widodo, speaking through a video conference from the Bogor Presidential Palace, acknowledged the immense pressure the national press industry has experienced over the past two years. In addition to overcoming challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the industry has had to contend with digital disruption and the influence of foreign tech giants that undermine mainstream media's economic potential and impact. Consequently, the national press industry should transform by leveraging technology to foster more innovations and address the pressure stemming from digital disruption (Rahma, 2020). President Joko Widodo emphasized the need for transformation to accelerate the growth of robust national media.

Digitization represents an incrementally competence-destroying technology change for legacy news companies (Lischka, 2019). The new discoveries of technology impact changes in terms of content and tools used by the mass media (Setiadarma & Rizkiansyah, 2021). Conversely, the internet development in technology and the number of users has brought significant societal changes (Pratopo, 2017). The strategies adopted by various media when switching to online media succeeded in preventing a decrease in revenue, especially in media other than mainstream media (Yu, 2018). This certainly impacts the development of the media business and advertisers, who are still growing positively (Hasni et al., 2019). The strategies are also in line with Nielsen Media Research in the Digital News Report 2021 by the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, which states that 89% of Indonesians access news information every day more through online media than print media (Newman et al., 2021). Interestingly, Tempo Media Group's technological adaptation has been introduced previously;

in fact, Lani Diana's research showed that Tempo no longer implements a convergence-integrated newsroom (newsroom 3.0). The reason is that there is a redefinition of the concept of convergence, cultural resistance, and an increase in the workload of journalists accompanied by a decrease in content quality (Diana, 2018).

The year 2020 posed significant challenges for media businesses, indicated by economic pressures due to the Coronavirus pandemic, concerns about fake news, and the threat of multiple legal provisions about criminal defamation (Newman et al., 2021). The pressure of disruption and the increasingly strong business of digital companies in Indonesia and the world appear. It was overcoming pressure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, digital disruption, and pressure from various foreign giant platforms that eroded mainstream media's economic potential and influence. For this reason, the national press industry needs to transform by increasing the use of technology to be more innovative to overcome the pressure caused by digital disruption (Rahma, 2020). Information that is fast and able to reach the audience has become necessary for society.

Digitalization and new media technologies have affected how many media firms have managed their business (Oliver, 2018). This situation is a challenge for Tempo Media Group, especially in the aspect of media business sustainability. Tempo Media Group is one of the twelve media corporations in Indonesia that controls almost all media channels in Indonesia (Hakim, 2016). This situation is a challenge for Tempo Media Group, especially in the aspect of media business sustainability. Furthermore, the digital disruption during COVID-19 encouraged the acceleration of digital transformation in Tempo media companies.

Tempo Media Group, one of the companies established for more than half a century, has also experienced adjustments during the COVID-19 pandemic. Koran Tempo, a printed newspaper as of 2021, has fully transitioned into Koran Tempo Digital. This phenomenon is rumored to be one of Tempo Media's efforts to maintain its business. According to Tomi Aryanto, Director of Tempo Digital Development, the complete digital transformation of Koran Tempo is considered more effective and efficient in cutting print production costs during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is deemed necessary to survive. SPS' Additionally, data from SPS reveals that 57% per cent of companies have undertaken various policies to sustain their business. These include enhancing financial efficiency, reducing print circulation and the number of pages in their printed media publication (Serikat Perusahaan Pers, 2020). Tempo Inti Media also did the same thing; Tempo Inti Media Harian maintains its Tempo Magazine pages but is accompanied by a rubric redesign based on popular rubrics among readers.

Technology and the implications of using technology that changes the vertical structure into a horizontal one make journalism problematic in many ways. The business model of media organizations, as seen from the concept of media management in producing news and journalistic ethics, are two topics that have always been discussed (Ginting et al., 2020). For media companies, the effort to implement this is certainly not easy. Experimentation and innovation with the use of existing communication technology to compile products become an option that media companies must run to reach consumers and have implications for advertisers. Elements of media product management are also one of the essential things to be able to maintain the existence of the media business (Viranda et al., 2018).

The efforts developed by Tempo Inti Media above showcase an intriguing subject to study the media industry's resilience amidst the existing challenges. This article aims to review the survival efforts of Tempo Inti Harian during the COVID-19 pandemic by focusing on its business differentiation strategy. The authors believe the press encompasses two dimensions: the ideal and commercial dimensions. These represent two spectrums involving the government's



influence and the role of press institutions in the dynamics of society as a whole. The press should uphold and prioritize its ideals while conducting its journalistic activities. On the other hand, it must ensure its growth and development (survival).

## RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses qualitative research procedures. This research methodology uses a descriptive methodology to determine the characteristics of the research phenomenon more naturally, transparently and in-depth. According to Moleong (2005), descriptive research is qualitative research conducted by collecting data in pictures, words and not numbers. The research primarily focuses on providing a detailed and thorough description of the mass media management work, specifically the Tempo Inti Media Harian management.

The research was conducted by interacting with and observing the object under study to gain experience to strengthen interpretation and analysis with an inductive approach. The inductive approach allows researchers to understand the meaning of organizational rules and the behavior of editorial team members. So that researchers are required to observe in detail. This means that qualitative analysis methods are used to understand a fact, not explain the fact. The data collection technique was carried out using in-depth interviews and supplemented with secondary data as a complement to data originating from company documents and news in the mass media.

The interviews were carried out directly in the researchers' original environment and were also carried out via Zoom for health considerations and policies that were in effect during the COVID-19 pandemic. Several Tempo Inti Media Harian professionals, including the director, chief editor, and marketing team, participated as the study's research subjects. Participation of research subjects was considered when choosing study participants for this research piece, which examined Tempo Inti Media Harian's media business strategy. This research was conducted from November 2022 to January 2023 at the Tempo Inti Media Harian office, Jalan West Palmerah No. 8, North Grogol, Kecamatan Kebayoran Lama, City of South Jakarta, Special Capital Region of Jakarta 12210.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

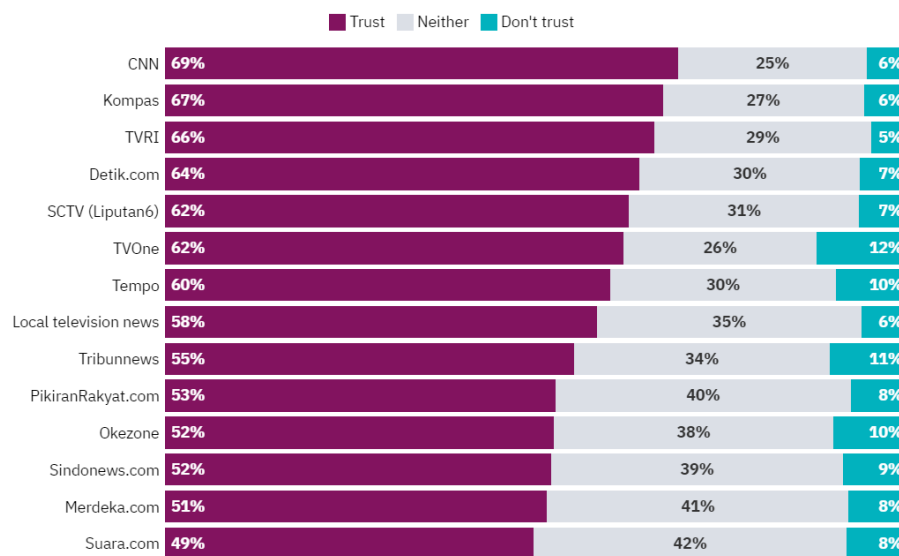
During the period of the development of the Indonesian press, Tempo Magazine has garnered significant popularity among the public due to its capacity to criticize social and political matters through numerous journalistic endeavors, primarily the one employing investigative journalism. Investigative reports require journalists to exert significant effort and uphold honesty, objectivity, and independence. In reality, only some media outlets consistently generate investigative reports to the extent seen in Tempo (Susanto, 2021). Tempo's investigative reporting often provides a new perspective on Indonesian journalism. The public has the right to obtain excellent and correct, and diverse information (Karman, 2014).

On the other hand, Tempo Magazine's relationship with the ruling regime has often been influenced by the transforming political life in Indonesia. During the New Order (Orde Baru) era, Tempo Magazine faced a strained relationship with the authorities, causing frequent bans due to its sharp criticisms of the regime at that time. Nevertheless, Tempo Magazine holds a significant place in Indonesia's mass media industry history. Tempo Inti Media Harian, which encompasses Tempo Magazine and Koran Tempo, is a subsidiary of Tempo Media Group, founded in 1971 by Goenawan Mohamad, Harjoko Trisnadi, Fikri Jufri, Lukman Setiawan, Usamah, and Christianto Wibisono (Susanto, 2021). Throughout its journey, Tempo Media Group faced a ban during the 1982 election for its coverage, which was deemed too critical of

the New Order regime and the Golkar party.

Furthermore, in 1994, Tempo Magazine faced a ban for its strong criticism of President Habibie and Soeharto regarding purchasing used ships from East Germany. Minister of Information Harmoko initiated the ban. Not only did this prohibition restrict Tempo from criticizing the government and producing news during the Soeharto era, but it also led to the dispersal of Tempo's journalists (Karman, 2014).

Following Soeharto's resignation on May 21, 1998, former Tempo magazine staff members convened to determine whether the magazine should be published again. Ultimately, it was decided that Tempo magazine would resume publication, and since October 6, 1998, the magazine has been under the auspices of PT Arsa Raya Perdana. In 2001, PT Arsa Raya Perdana underwent an initial public offering (IPO) and changed its name to PT Tempo Inti Media, Tbk (Susanto, 2021). The funds raised from the IPO were utilized for the publication of Koran Tempo, expanding the scale and reach of Tempo's media business. In the realm of media business, Tempo falls within the category of average or moderate mass media outlets in Indonesia. CNN, Kompas, and TVRI occupy the top three positions for the most trusted media in Indonesia. Based on the research results of The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021 (Newman et al., 2021), Tempo Media Group is ranked as the 7th most trusted media in Indonesia after SCTV and TV One. Meanwhile, the most trusted media in Indonesia is occupied by CNN, Kompas and TVRI as the top three rankings.

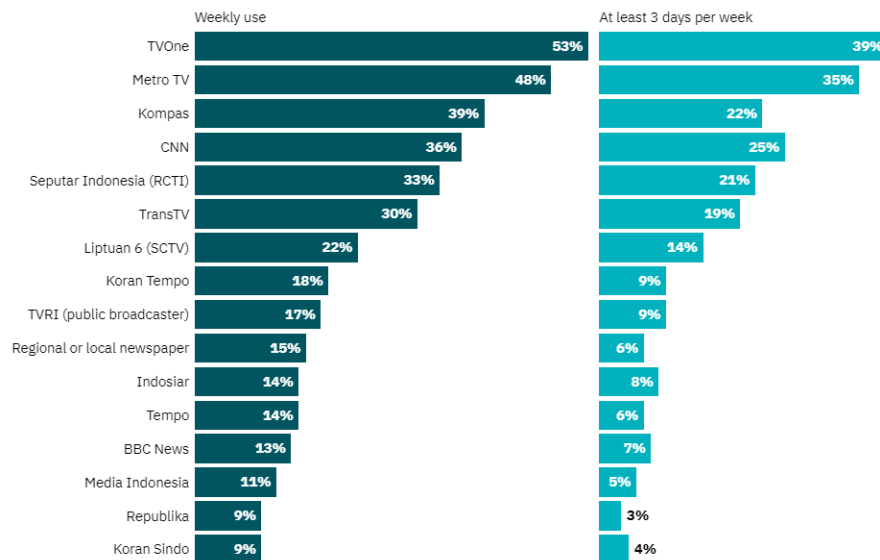


**Figure 1.** Brand trust scores  
Source: (Newman et al., 2021)

Tempo needs to show a prominent position even in the context of weekly reach for offline mass media. The findings from The Reuters Institute Digital News Report 2021 reveal that Koran Tempo is merely ranked eighth, while Tempo Magazine holds the twelfth position.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Tempo Inti Media Harian experienced an annual decline in advertising revenue of 7%. In 2014-2019, Toriq Hadad, as Director of Tempo Inti Media Harian at that time, also said that circulation revenue in that year continued to fall by 8.5% each year. This was exacerbated when the COVID-19 pandemic hit Indonesia and Impacted various sectors economically. As a result, Tempo Inti Media witnessed a significant decline in the company's revenue, amounting to 37.20% or approximately IDR 191.64 billion in 2020. This was greatly influenced by a decrease in revenue and advertising sales in print

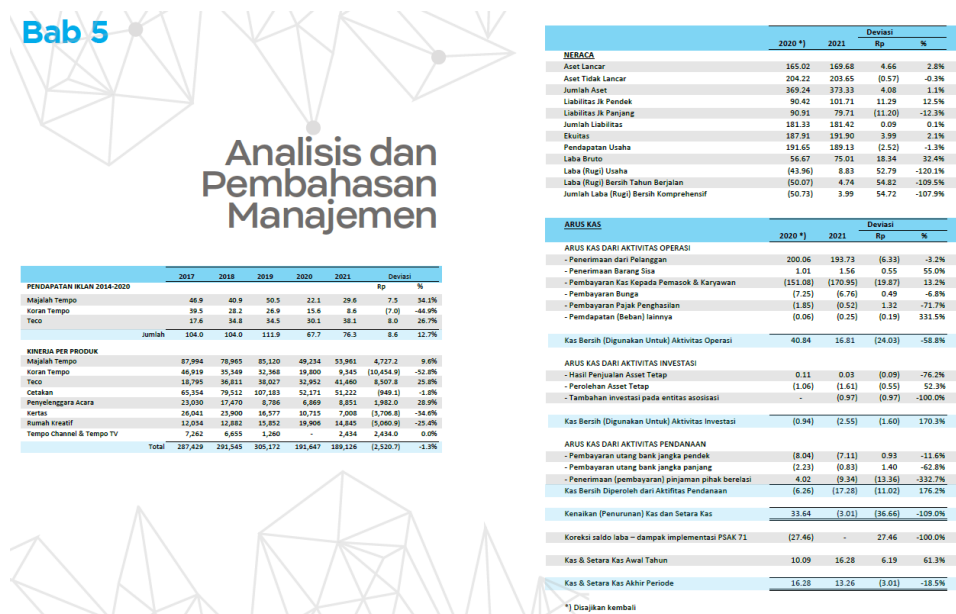
media by 48.15% per cent. This decline in revenue was most influenced by magazine revenue which fell 31.49%, newspaper revenue and newspaper advertising by 10.96% and a decrease in paper by 5.17%. To suppress this decline in revenue, Tempo Inti Media Harian managed to maintain the company's revenue by controlling its expenses and optimizing its digital products. As a result, Tempo managed to reduce the company's cost of revenue, which decreased by 31% year-on-year compared to 2020. This was also followed by a decrease in administrative expenses by 16.85%, marketing and sales expenses which also decreased by 13.23%.



**Figure 2.** Weekly reach Offline TV, Radio & Printed Media  
Source: (Newman et al., 2021)

Tempo Inti Media Harian also made a significant policy to respond to digital disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic by accelerating digital transformation through the whole transition of Koran Tempo into Koran Tempo Digital. Not only that, other policies such as strict cost control, cutting salaries according to the amount of each level, implementing Work from Anywhere, to changing marketing strategies to Integrated Communication Marketing by optimizing the distribution of news content on all digital platforms were carried out by Tempo to maintain its business. This is in line with Nurdin Sibaweh's finding that the Tempo Media Group is an adaptive media to the development of communication technology, where the Tempo Media Group can carry out media transformation as a result of technological changes in the current human communication system and media business (Sibaweh, 2022). At the same time, digital transformation provides new experiences for audiences. New media also presents content more interestingly using images, video and sound. The interactive nature can be felt when new media users directly interact with fellow content readers or the media company itself (Yunita & Salman, 2022).

The policies implemented by Tempo have succeeded in making Tempo's business survive during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is assessed by the revenue gain of 3.99 billion when compared to 2020. As for 2021, the company's profit increased by IDR 54.71 billion. In terms of overall revenue, in 2021, Tempo Inti Media Harian experienced a decrease in revenue from 2020. However, according to Arif Zulkifli as the President Director of Tempo Inti Media, Harian stated that in 2022 the overall operating income increased from what was targeted in 2021 with a target of 5%-10% (Dwijayanti, 2023). Based on this, Tempo Inti Media is considered capable of maintaining its business and successfully running the media industry business.



**Figure 3.** Tempo Media Group (Tempo Inti Media Harian's Holding Company) Income Financial Report 2017 - 2021  
Source: (Dwijayanti, 2023)

Tempo Inti Media Harian as one of the companies whose revenue decline was less than 40%, carried out various policies in order to adapt to the COVID-19 era, such as cutting employee salaries, accelerating employee retirement to the work from anywhere policy implemented to cut the company's administrative and operational costs. Tempo Media company has made various efforts to maintain its business. In addition to policies towards employees, Tempo Inti Media Harian also maximizes its digital content subscription features on Tempo Magazine and Koran Tempo. This approach is similar to the strategies Kompas Daily and The Jakarta Post adopted in their subscription features the strategies. Additionally, to overcome the 48.15% decline in print media advertising revenue compared to 2019, Tempo developed digital products to maintain revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic. This revenue is also evident in its creative house revenue increase by IDR 4.2 billion more than in 2019 (Dwijayanti, 2023).

### Business Differentiation Strategy

A company undertakes a differentiation strategy to shape market perceptions of the company so that it appears superior and different compared to other companies (Maulana et al., 2019). In this context, Tempo management asserts that they possess a significant differentiator compared to other mass media outlets in Indonesia.

"Tempo is different from the others. The brand value of Tempo is firm. So that decision-makers are still selective in placing advertisements. The value of trust in Tempo's products is integrity" (MS, Personal Interview, January 6, 2023).

The aforementioned brand value for Tempo refers to its corporate culture. Tempo's corporate culture is recognized as one of Tempo Inti Media Harian's differentiation strategies that sets it apart from other media companies. Meanwhile, according to Porter (1990), various indicators contribute to the realization of a differentiation strategy for a company. These include strong research capabilities, a favorable company reputation among the public, creative prowess, and market trust in the company. Market trust and a high reputation are pivotal in the media industry in their business development. A differentiation strategy focusing on a



company's uniqueness as a selling point encompasses the following indicators (Maulana et al., 2019).

**Table 1.** Differentiation Strategy Indicators

Generic Strategy	Common Skills and Resources Required	Typical Organization Requirements
Differentiation	Strong marketing capability	Strong coordination among research and development, product development and marketing functions
	Products Engineering	
	Creative Skills	Quantitative measurement and subjective incentives
	Strong capability in basic research	
	Company reputation for pioneering quality and technology	Facilities to attract highly skilled labor, scientists, or creative people
	A long tradition in the industry or a distinctive combination of skills acquired from other businesses	
	Close cooperation with distribution channels	

Source: (Maulana et al., 2019)

The differentiation strategy carried out by Tempo Inti Media Harian is reflected in the company's ideology which is claimed as Tempo Cultural Values, namely Trusted, Independent and Professional. Briandana (2019) stated that explained the ideology of the media as the ideology that forms the basis of the media's vision and mission. Understanding every organization member about media ideology is urgent for every organization (Fadilah et al., 2022). Trustworthiness is defined as upholding the values of honesty, integrity, and consistency. Freedom provides spaces for freedom, thinking, and expression, while professionalism emphasizes higher competence in their respective fields. These values are ingrained within Tempo and resonate with its consumers. It is making Tempo Media a preferred choice for its readers. It is evident in the brave manner in which Tempo criticizes the government and other institutions without considering other influences. Regarding this context, Tempo Inti Media Harian views its corporate culture and values as a differentiation strategy for Tempo Media Group, enabling it to withstand the unfavorable economic conditions encountered by the media industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"That is what makes Tempo survive, integrity, independence, freedom. The brand value of content makes the Tempo brand survive during the pandemic, gaining extraordinary trust" (MS, Personal Interview, January 6, 2023).

Tempo's cultural values are then derived from the journalism values adopted by the editorial team. Tempo's strong ideology set them apart from its competitors in the media industry. Tempo's strength lies in its ability to present investigative news, serve as a trendsetter in mass media coverage for its audience, and contribute to its development in the media business. In particular, Tempo's investigative prowess has significant value due to its fulfillment of the differentiation strategy indicator, which is conducting in-depth basic research by the editorial team. Tempo's editorial team consistently provides a different angle in each news story, offering some distinctive and fresh information compared to other media competitors. The long-standing ideology upheld by Tempo remains deeply inherent and unaffected by anything until now. Tempo frequently produces a wide range of specialized, in-depth, and critical information in its news delivery to cater to its readers' needs. This ideology aligns with its readers' requirements

met by the Tempo editorial team.

“We think one step ahead of other competitors. The news presented is not only a collection of events but also the meaning behind it and the consequences of this for the public and readers. We try to present that; the positioning is there. We do not prioritize technology quality so that it finally brings out the strength of business capital. But independence cannot be paid for or bought; fortunately, Tempo has that freedom” (JJ, Personal Interview, January 16, 2023).

Tempo produces a variety of specialized, in-depth and critical information in its delivery to cater to its readers’ needs. This ideology is what the Tempo editorial team holds, following what readers need (Dwijayanti, 2023).

“Tempo avoids news that, in terms of accountability, Tempo will not do. Factual data that is true, accurate, covers both sides and concerns the wider public interest” (MS, Personal Interview, January 6 2023).

MS added another thing done by Tempo Inti Media Harian to maintain business through differentiation strategy is the existence of a different distribution system. Tempo Inti Media Harian also employs a differentiated distribution strategy system to maintain its business. The company utilizes some channels for sales, such as agents, marketplaces, and direct distributors to the public. This activity aims to expand the market reach of Tempo products and assist in generating the company’s revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Sales are made through agents, marketplaces, and distributors, which will be distributed directly to the public. This activity is carried out to expand the market reach of Tempo products so that it can help the company’s revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic (MS, Personal Interview, January 6 2023).

### **Something New?**

The aforementioned steps taken by Tempo Media Harian demonstrate that ideology serves as a differentiation strategy in media business development. This differentiation strategy holds a selling value inherently. However, based on the perspective of mass media editorial management, this ideology could be more groundbreaking. Tempo’s ideology of Trust, Independence, and Professionalism aligns with the fundamental framework of mass media, particularly media accountability. Media accountability is essential to foster public trust in the media. Media accountability proposed by McQuail (2005) is a basic framework that needs to be considered by the mass media. The differentiation presented is not only in physical differentiation but also in terms of value or services that can be offered to consumers (Maulana et al., 2019).

Of the four frameworks, the first framework, which is the frame of law and regulation, is a framework that aims to create and maintain conditions of freedom and breadth of intercommunication in society, improve public needs, and limit potential violations that legitimize private and public interests. In the context of Tempo’s ideology, this is closely related to the element of Merdeka. The element of freedom is closely related to the aspect of independence. Independence means that journalists cannot be pressured by interference from any party, including the owner of the press company itself. This is closely related to the Journalistic Code of Ethics Article 1, which state, “ Indonesian journalists act independently and produce accurate, balanced news, and not in bad faith”.

The second frame is the market frame, which aims to facilitate the interests of media organizations and procedures with the interests of their clients and audiences. This is related to the different distribution systems as part of the differentiation efforts implemented by Tempo Inti Media Harian. Sales made through agents, marketplaces, and distributors directly to the

public are Tempo Inti Media Harian's steps to target the reader market directly. This activity is carried out to expand the market reach of Tempo products so that it can help the company's revenue during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The third framework reflects the frame of public responsibility, which considers media organizations to serve as social institutions with varying degrees of voluntary and explicit commitments to meet public obligations beyond their primary goals of generating profits and providing employment. This aligns with the ideology of Trust, related to Freedom of the Press. This element of trust is related to the aspect of Freedom of the Press Freedom does not mean unlimited freedom in conveying information, but responsible freedom. This is related to the moral and ethical foundation of the Indonesian journalism profession, namely the Journalistic Code of Ethics, which consists of 11 articles. Article 1 contains three essential parts related to the truth of journalistic news. First is independence, which means reporting events or facts without interference, coercion or intervention from other parties, including the press company's owner. Second, it is accurate, meaning that journalists can be trusted and objective in making reports. Third, balanced means that all parties get a chance in the news. Media journalists must not have bad faith and intention to cause harm to other parties.

The last framework is the frame of professional responsibility, emphasizing the professional aspects of media workers, including advertisers and public relations who are held to performance standards. It also includes media owners, editors, producers, and others with the responsibility to stand for the interests of the industry through self-regulation. Mechanisms and procedures typically consist of a set of rules or a code of ethics adopted by members of the media workers group along with some producers addressing complaints and claims against certain media actions (McQuail, 2005).

There are five things make up the attitude structure required for each type of profession covered by professionalism, including professional regards professional organizations or groups first: Professionals use professional organizations or groups as their primary reference group. Professional goals and aspirations extend beyond individual employers or local community status; loyalty lies with the professional field; Professional serves society well and prioritizes the public interest as an altruistic person; Professional has a commitment and a sense of calling in his field of duty. This commitment reinforces his responsibility in serving the community; Professional maintains a sense of autonomy, freely organizing his work under certain constraints and making professional decisions; and Professional is self-regulating and controls his behavior. In the face of complexity and skill requirements, only peers have the right and authority to make judgments (Pratopo, 2017).

The professionalism of Tempo journalists is created through the organizational work culture in the form of Tempo's corporate culture (ideology) as Tempo's Cultural Values, namely, Trustworthy, Independent and Professional, reflected in the news that is very brave in criticizing the government and other institutions without seeing who is behind it. The professionalism of journalists in producing journalistic works is shown through the investigative power of Tempo. This is in line with an informant's statement that the Tempo editorial team always provides a different angle in each news story to provide new information that is different from the media's competitors.

"To appear on the field requires a strategy; we apply one news issue from several angles. Not only can I get complete information but also important information, what is important to me. What are the consequences of the event or news for the reader, and what is the importance of people knowing this? If we have a few events but play more on issues. Tempo's branding is powerful as an investigative media. We serve readers with exclusive issues not worked on by other media. So, Tempo became a trendsetter for others" (JJ, Personal Interview, January 16, 2023).

Again, it is emphasized that the ideology held by Tempo since a long time ago is very inherent and has yet to be eroded by anything until now, becoming an essential element in the sustainability of this media business.

## CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that the management of Tempo Inti Media Harian claims the company's ideology in the form of Tempo Cultural Values: Trusted, Independent, and Professional as an internal business differentiation strategy that has brought the company to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. Trustworthiness is defined as upholding the values of honesty, integrity, and consistency. Freedom is providing space for freedom, thinking, and expression. At the same time, professionals have high competence in their field. These three things are familiar to Tempo. Tempo's ideology was already in place before the COVID-19 pandemic. Even from a journalistic point of view, Tempo's three ideologies are related to the basic framework of mass media, namely media accountability and the implementation of the Journalistic Code of Ethics. Tempo's ideology is a fundamental concept in journalism. This means that from a business differentiation strategy point of view, Tempo Inti Media Harian's strength in surviving the COVID-19 pandemic is its consistency in adhering to media accountability and the Journalistic Code of Ethics.

Based on this research, the researcher suggests Tempo Inti Media Harian maintain the company's ideology through Tempo Cultural Values. This is Tempo's strength that the company has long internalized. In the context of research development, the author suggests developing research related to business differentiation strategies developed by other media companies, either general mass media or mass media with particular segmentation on various platforms.

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