

Business and Newsroom Management of Indonesian Esports News Media

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ABSTRACT

Background: The popularity of esports in Indonesia has driven the emergence of esports journalism as an integral part of sports journalism. Unlike traditional sports, esports grew out of gaming culture, which makes esports journalism a distinctive practice. In Indonesia, this phenomenon has driven various digital-native media outlets focused on esports coverage. However, studies on how local media manage their editorial and business operations in this field remain limited.

Purpose: This research explored how IndoGamers—one of the pioneers of esports media in Indonesia—performs its newsroom and business management functions.

Methods: It used a case study method with primary data collected through interviews with four members of the newsroom team, along with secondary data, analyzed using the POAC management model (Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling).

Results: The results show that the editorial process no longer relies on conventional news values but is entirely driven by Google trends and SEO logic. Nevertheless, IndoGamers provides in-depth news coverage, especially concerning the benefits of esports. Therefore, it does not merely portray esports as a form of entertainment. The division of journalistic tasks based on specific game specializations—without involving external contributors—demonstrates the dominance of platform logic in newsroom management. **Conclusion:** These findings affirm that esports journalism requires a management model responsive to data, real-time trends, and digital visibility demands. It offers theoretical and practical contributions to digital media studies and newsroom management in the algorithm era. **Implications:** Thus, IndoGamers' practice of aligning editorial decisions with Google search trends and SEO logic demonstrates that data-driven strategies function not only to increase traffic, but also as a mechanism to maintain the relevance and accessibility of educational esports coverage while simultaneously fostering more positive and socially valuable narratives for audiences.

Keywords: esports; esports news media; IndoGamers; media business management; newsroom management

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INTRODUCTION

The global rise of esports as a mainstream entertainment has catalyzed the emergence of esports journalism as a distinct subfield within sports journalism (G. Perreault & Bell, 2020; Triantafyllou & Antonopoulou, 2022). It retains foundational elements of traditional sports, such as competition, teamwork, and individual performance (Carrani et al., 2022; Formosa et al., 2022). Deep entanglement with digital and gaming culture requires journalism practices tailored to online-savvy and participatory audiences (Oh et al., 2024; G. Perreault & Bell, 2020; Rogers et al., 2020). In Indonesia, where digital adoption is among the highest globally, the esports audience has become the largest in Southeast Asia (Millah, 2021). This shift has prompted the emergence of digital-native esports media outlets. Among these, IndoGamers stands out as the pioneering esports journalism outlet in Indonesia.

IndoGamers began as a gaming community in 2006 and has since transitioned into a full-fledged esports news outlet under the domain indogamers.com in 2013 (Meodia, 2024). IndoGamers, with its deep roots in local gaming culture and adaptability to evolving digital platforms, offers a compelling case for examining how esports journalism is developed and practiced, particularly in Indonesia. This evolution is relevant given the dynamic nature of the esports landscape, which spans commercial opportunities—such as sponsorships, media rights, and merchandising—enabled by global digital platforms (Navarro-Lucena et al., 2024; Newman et al., 2020; Nufer & Mariot, 2022), as well as the shifting dynamics of players and teams (Rong & Li, 2024) and frequent game updates (G. Perreault & Vos, 2019). In response to these demands, IndoGamers, as one of the esports journalism outlets, is expected to produce interactive, community-driven content, including gameplay guides, strategy tips, and analytical commentary (G. Perreault & Bell, 2020; G. P. Perreault & Perreault, 2021).

However, the rise in demand for esports news has also brought critical challenges. Esports journalism often operates close to the very brands and games it covers, which makes editorial independence more difficult to maintain and weakens traditional gatekeeping functions (Tang et al., 2020). Moreover, like in traditional sports journalism, the esports media now contends with the growing independence of stakeholders—event organizers, teams, and even players—in controlling their narratives (Rojas-Torrijos & Nölleke, 2023). Many of these actors have become self-publishers, directly communicating with audiences via platforms. In Indonesia, this trend is exemplified by the official Instagram account of MPL ID (@mpl.id)—one of the biggest esports tournaments, the Instagram accounts of teams like ONIC Esports (@onic.esports), and individual players like Jonathan Liandi (@jonathanliandi), who independently publish updates and stories (Indriana & Indriastuti, 2025; Widaya & Susilo, 2024).

The decentralization of information dissemination has challenged professional outlets like IndoGamers in asserting their authority, maintaining journalistic credibility, and distinguishing themselves within the highly competitive esports media ecosystem. Nevertheless, IndoGamers continues to occupy a leading position. A 2019 ranking by Game Prime listed it among the 15 most-visited gaming and esports news websites in Indonesia, alongside Duniaku, Kincir, and GGWP, all of which were established long after IndoGamers (Herdyanto, 2019). This recognition shows how IndoGamers—originally established within a gaming community and one of the oldest of its kind—has successfully maintained its relevance among esports audiences.

Since media businesses fundamentally depend on content production for revenue, discussions of business management are linked to newsroom operations (Prastya et al., 2022; Sonni et al., 2025). Media management as a field addresses the way media organizations operate within broad socio-economic and technological contexts (Prastya et al., 2022). At its core, management involves four interrelated functions: planning, organizing, actuating/directing,

and controlling (Ar Ridha, 2023, p. 108-109).

In practice, newsroom management refers to the management of news production activities by journalistic media. Newsroom management encompasses all activities related to journalism, including event coverage, news writing, and editing (Cholis & Wardiana, 2018; Prastya et al., 2022). Like many other news outlets, newsroom management in sports journalism also adopts four main stages, aligning with the four fundamental management functions. These stages, in order, are planning, organizing, actuating/directing, and controlling in the context of newsroom management (Cholis & Wardiana, 2018; Prastya et al., 2022). In esports journalism, these four functional stages are applied with different approaches, considering the nature of esports media and its strong integration with various digital platforms (G. P. Perreault & Perreault, 2021).

The planning stage in newsroom management involves newsroom team discussions to determine the types and themes of content to be delivered by the media (Prastya et al., 2022, p. 94). According to G. Perreault and Bell (2020), sports journalism serves five primary functions: 1) reporting facts; 2) narrating event-based stories; 3) providing entertainment and leisure; 4) educating audiences; and 5) offering analytical perspectives on sports-related developments. These functions remain relevant in esports journalism, where media outlets are expected to address a range of evolving issues within the industry. Such issues include integrity concerns like match-fixing and doping (Gupta et al., 2022; Kriglstein et al., 2022; Schöber & Stadtmann, 2022), as well as long-standing challenges related to gender inequality and financial instability (Jeong & Youk, 2023; Siuda et al., 2023). Cultural perceptions also influence how esports is received by the public, with scepticism surrounding its legitimacy as a sport persisting in several countries (Ervine, 2019), including Indonesia (Wali & Widiyanto, 2020). To ensure effective reporting on such issues, esports journalism outlets are expected to elaborate on multimedia strategies—integrating social media engagement, influencer-driven narratives, and in-depth reporting—to maintain their relevance and competitiveness in an increasingly saturated media landscape (Ceide et al., 2022; G. P. Perreault & Perreault, 2021).

The second stage in newsroom management is organizing. This stage involves a series of activities, including: 1) editorial planning and development; 2) determining the resources and activities needed to achieve newsroom goals; 3) assigning newsroom responsibilities; and 4) delegating authority to individuals (Prastya et al., 2022, p. 94).

Actuating/directing is the third stage in newsroom management. It refers to the news coverage process. There are three techniques for news coverage: 1) reporting by attending events in person; 2) interviewing sources; and 3) gathering data from documents, books, or the internet (Prastya et al., 2022, p. 94).

Controlling is the fourth and final stage of newsroom management. Media organizations conduct monitoring to ensure that editorial work aligns with planned objectives. At this stage, the editor-in-chief evaluates the news before it is published (Prastya et al., 2022, p. 94).

Esports journalism has attracted increasing scholarly interest across various contexts. Vikulov (2017) noted ethical issues in Russia, where entertainment often trumps accuracy. In the U.S., G. P. Perreault and Perreault (2021) promoted commercialization and cultural exchange, while Ceide et al. (2022) examined how European public broadcasters incorporate esports content. Painter and Sahm (2023) and Donder et al. (2022) exposed persistent gaps in representation, especially regarding gender. Rong and Li (2024) pointed to the insider role in supplying the media with information about player transfers and called for clearer journalistic standards. Meanwhile, Chiu (2025) observed that Hong Kong media tend to emphasize entertainment over esports' sporting aspects. Collectively, these studies reflect both the limitations and potential of esports journalism as it seeks maturity and credibility.

However, the above-mentioned studies focus solely on Western regions (USA and Europe) or East Asian contexts. Indonesia, as the largest esports market in Southeast Asia (Millah, 2021), remains underexplored. Although esports has been formally recognized as part of the national sports ecosystem (Irianto et al., 2022) little is known about how Indonesian media have adapted to this emerging field. The only focused study to date is the study by Marta et al. (2020), which examines the framing of Tirtoid and Kompas.com on esports agendas during the Covid-19 pandemic. The study found an imbalance in that Tirtoid emphasized government support while Kompas.com centered its coverage on public figures. Also, Atmam (2022) and Mulya et al. (2020) have offered some insights, yet the managerial dimensions of sports media remain largely unexplored. A study by Prastyia et al. (2022) on badminton-focused media provides a rare exception, though it lacks an in-depth analysis of business strategy and sustainability. The most comprehensive inquiry into newsroom and business operations was conducted by Cholis and Wardiana (2018), who investigated TopSkor, a football-focused newspaper navigating editorial and commercial tensions in the face of digital disruption. However, the context and challenges of esports journalism differ significantly.

This study aims to fill that gap by offering an in-depth analysis of newsroom and business management practices in Indonesian esports media. It employs a qualitative case study approach to analyze IndoGamers and formulates two central research questions: 1) How does IndoGamers manage its newsroom and commercial activities within the esports journalism ecosystem? and 2) What organizational strategies does it implement to ensure editorial productivity and business sustainability?

This study theoretically expands the literature on esports journalism, especially in Global South contexts. Practically, it provides actionable insights for Indonesian esports media navigating audience behavior shifts, platform dynamics, and competitive pressures. By focusing on IndoGamers, this study illustrates how a gaming community can evolve into a professional media organization that fulfills both editorial and commercial roles. It also reflects broad trends in media convergence, digital disruption, and audience segmentation in Indonesia's unique and dynamic media landscape.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative case study approach, which is particularly effective for investigating contemporary phenomena situated within real-life contexts, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are blurred (Gregory, 2020). As the study focuses on organizational practices in a dynamic and evolving media ecosystem such as esports journalism, a case study method enables in-depth exploration of IndoGamers as a unique case that embodies the convergence of digital media, niche content strategy, and newsroom management.

According to Musfiandy et al. (2024), a case study is valuable in organizational research because it allows the use of multiple data sources and offers rich contextual insight into the internal dynamics of a single organization. This study applies such logic by examining IndoGamers not merely as a media outlet, but as a site where editorial, commercial, and technological logics shape the production of esports reporting in Indonesia.

This study collected primary data through semi-structured interviews with four key members of the IndoGamers newsroom team. Informant selection was purposive, based on their roles and direct involvement in the newsroom's daily operations and strategic decisions. The editor-in-chief and chief editor were selected as key informants due to their authoritative roles in content planning and organizational oversight. Meanwhile, the two journalists provided

operational perspectives on topic selection, content production, and editorial routines.

All interviews were conducted face-to-face at IndoGamers' Yogyakarta bureau in May and June 2024. Semi-structured interview protocols were used to maintain thematic consistency while allowing flexibility for respondents to elaborate on specific aspects of their work. The inclusion of both strategic and operational actors was intended to capture the complexity of the organization's management from multiple angles.

Secondary data complemented the interviews, including published articles, social media content, and publicly accessible records. These materials not only corroborated the interview data but also enriched the contextual understanding of IndoGamers' newsroom practices and business management. Document analysis provided diachronic insights into editorial positioning and organizational shifts over time.

This research further applied data triangulation by cross-referencing insights derived from interviews and documentary analysis. Data triangulation enhances the credibility of qualitative findings by seeking convergence across diverse data sources and stakeholder perspectives (Musfialdy et al., 2024). Rather than aiming to verify isolated facts, triangulation in this context was intended to construct a coherent and layered narrative supported by multiple forms of evidence.

Data analysis followed the descriptive qualitative model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), comprising three iterative steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Itmam & Nur, 2025). After reducing and organizing the data, key findings were categorized and analyzed using the framework of newsroom and business management, which included planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling. This approach enabled the researchers to identify key themes and interpret the management patterns of IndoGamers in esports media production.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Planning

The planning stage serves as the strategic backbone of IndoGamers' operations. According to Ar Ridha (2023). This stage involves setting future organizational goals by formulating a vision and mission, establishing strategies to achieve them, and drafting a work program from those goals. IndoGamers exemplified this process through a major rebranding initiative in mid-2023. At that time, Radius Raswijaya "Aphay", one of the platform's founders, invited S. Wahyudi, a former journalist at IDN Times, was brought to help redefine the content focus of indogamers.com post-rebranding. This bold step was driven by the recognition that IndoGamers in 2013 focused on gadget and general gaming coverage, resulting in relatively low article productivity with an unclear focus. Following the rebranding, IndoGamers committed to publishing content centered on gaming and esports. Discussions about gadgets are still covered by IndoGamers, but they are presented as supporting tools for gaming and esports activities. IndoGamers also adopts a new vision: to become the largest and most reputable gaming community website in Indonesia. Its mission is to cultivate an inclusive space for gamers across all levels and game genres.

Fink (1996) emphasizes that planning in media management is not merely an administrative function but a strategic effort to position a media outlet within a specific editorial niche by considering audience potential and market competition. IndoGamers recognizes that the esports media landscape is already saturated with similar outlets. To stand out among its competitors, IndoGamers strategically focused its coverage on a single esports game: Mobile Legends:

Bang-Bang (MLBB). As the most popular esports game in the country, both in terms of player base and frequency of competitive events (Hosky & Wibowo, 2023; Marcella & Sazali, 2023), MLBB provides IndoGamers with a strategic foundation for ensuring sustained audience engagement through dedicated coverage. Rather than rendering the platform indistinguishable from other esports news outlets, this editorial specialization enables IndoGamers to offer in-depth, consistent, and relevant reporting. Therefore, it cultivates a distinct identity through content quality and the strength of its surrounding community.

Another editorial strategy employed by IndoGamers to distinguish itself from its competitors is the in-depth coverage of the positive aspects of esports. One of the issues that IndoGamers covers is the educational aspects of esports. As S. Wahyudi, Head of the Yogyakarta Bureau, elaborated:

IndoGamers sets itself apart in esports journalism through in-depth coverage, including a three-part series featuring Dr. Faidilah, a sports science lecturer at Yogyakarta State University (UNY), to demonstrate that esports shares values with traditional sports, such as competitiveness and sportsmanship. The outlet also highlights gaming's positive aspects beyond esports titles (S. Wahyudi, personal communication, May 10, 2024).

This reveals IndoGamers' strategic orientation toward a substantive form of journalism. Rather than following the footsteps of platforms that prioritize SEO-driven content and superficial virality, IndoGamers deliberately adopts an editorial approach centered on producing contextual, in-depth reporting. This reporting not only informs audiences about the latest developments in the esports scene but also situates esports within broad cultural and academic frameworks. The aforementioned series is a clear manifestation of this editorial logic—one that seeks to legitimize esports as a serious field of interest, particularly in the face of persistent public skepticism that continues to surface across countries (Ervine, 2019), including Indonesia (Wali & Widiyanto, 2020).

Viewed through the lens of editorial strategy, IndoGamers' approach demonstrates its role not merely as a conveyor of entertainment news but as a platform that embodies the core functions of sports journalism. As G. Perreault and Bell (2020) noted, sports journalism serves



Figure 1. Example of IndoGamers' coverage on positive aspects
Source: IndoGamers, 2025

to educate audiences and to provide analytical perspectives on the developments within sporting domains. IndoGamers adopts this function by offering content that considers the educational, socio-cultural, and even academic dimensions of esports. In doing so, IndoGamers contributes to reframing public understanding of esports.

IndoGamers also implements a strategy to compete with other esports journalism media by strengthening its newsroom personnel. Its newsroom team consists of professionals with solid backgrounds in journalism, both as journalists and as individuals with experience in online media. This is evident in its newsroom structure, where S. Wahyudi, the head of IndoGamers' Yogyakarta bureau, is a former senior journalist at IDN Times, while Efendi, the chief editor, was a senior journalist at the online media outlet Merdeka. Furthermore, IndoGamers' journalists are individuals with extensive experience in journalism, either as mass media journalists or university press members. This is supported by the statement of one of the sources, R.A. Majid, a journalist at IndoGamers:

Before joining IndoGamers, I spent nearly two years as a journalist at Tirta and Kompas—covering sports, especially football, at Tirta and more general topics at Kompas. My journalism foundation was built during my undergraduate years through active involvement in the university press (R.A. Majid, personal communication, June 7, 2024).

This strong journalistic foundation helps ensure that IndoGamers maintains professional standards in its reporting, even within the relatively young and rapidly evolving field of esports journalism. Such a strategic focus on human capital reflects what Fink (1996) describes as an essential component of organizational planning—namely, the effective deployment of qualified personnel to meet long-term goals.

To maintain newsroom productivity, IndoGamers applies three core work regulations: journalists must publish seven articles per day, log in to the website dashboard for attendance, and follow assigned shift hours—either morning (08:00–16:00 WIB) or evening (16:00–00:00 WIB). Despite not being overly rigid, these rules ensure consistent output and operational continuity, with six-day workweeks and staggered days off to maintain daily news coverage.

In the context of newsroom management, the planning stage also involves determining the types and themes of news to cover (Prastya et al., 2022, p. 95). This study finds that the IndoGamers newsroom applies three approaches to determine news types and themes.

First, the head of the bureau and chief editor conduct research on trending search keywords on Google using Google Analytics. This process is carried out periodically, either daily or weekly. They then identify the top five keywords related to gaming, esports, or gadgets with the highest search volume and discuss which topics should be reported. The final selected topics are then communicated to journalists via a WhatsApp coordination group. This approach results in soft news journalism. The scheme demonstrates that IndoGamers effectively caters to the needs of its audience. As previous studies have shown (Oh et al., 2024; G. Perreault & Bell, 2020; Rogers et al., 2020), the audience of esports journalism typically consists of gamers and digitally native individuals. By employing a data-driven approach to topic selection, IndoGamers ensures that its content aligns with the interests and expectations of its target readership. Second, the chief editor determines news topics based on an incidental scheme to cover current or unexpected events, producing hard news journalism. Third, an editorial scheme is used when the content is requested by third parties. This typically occurs when IndoGamers receives offers for product endorsements or reviews from specific brands.

Esports journalism products are inherently multimedia-based. As a result, esports journalism not only consists of textual content but also audiovisual materials, which often intersect with broadcasting practices. Therefore, media companies must also consider the 4P

concept (Product, Price, Place, and Promotion) in marketing strategies when planning content (Masduki, 2004). Product refers to content that appeals to audiences, price relates to the effort audiences must expend to consume content and production costs, place pertains to the optimal timing of content release, and promotion involves making the content a part of the audience's routine, ultimately attracting advertisers.

First, regarding the product aspect, since IndoGamers resumed operations after its 2023 rebranding until this research was conducted in mid-2024, the platform has sought to establish its niche market. IndoGamers identified this niche through Google Analytics research. The findings guided IndoGamers in producing reports on gaming and esports issues that are highly searched by internet users. Observations of the IndoGamers website indicate that IndoGamers offers news coverage categorized into various sections, as shown in Table 1.

The interviews conducted by the researcher with the IndoGamers newsroom team also revealed that IndoGamers focuses on producing news on the gaming topic. Based on Google search trends, the Resident Evil and Minecraft game franchises are among the most popular searches, so these two games receive dominant coverage. Meanwhile, IndoGamers' esports section primarily focuses on producing coverage related to tournaments and the latest updates on Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB).

However, IndoGamers does not limit its coverage of games or esports based solely on trending search keywords from Google Analytics. This was confirmed by several IndoGamers editorial team members during interviews.

IndoGamers does not only focus on esports issues, such as MLBB, which is indeed our primary coverage. Sometimes, when there are fewer developments or events related to our main focus, we also write about other esports. For example, when FIFA football games are trending, IndoGamers covers them (S. Wahyudi, personal communication, May 10, 2024).

We also frequently cover other esports games, such as Free Fire. This game often holds voucher code giveaways, so it is attractive for us to report on (H. Mulyono, personal communication, May 10, 2024).

Table 1. List of News Sections on the *indogamers.com* Website

No.	Section	Description
1	News	Latest updates from the gaming and digital entertainment industries.
2	E-Sport	News on esports matches, team/player profiles, game updates, and schedules.
3	Video	Video coverage of esports, gaming, and tech-related topics.
4	Gadget	Updates and news on the latest gadgets.
5	Mobile	News and recommendations on mobile games, releases, and events.
6	PC	News and recommendations on PC games, releases, and related events.
7	Konsol	News and recommendations on console games, releases, and related events.
8	Guides	Tips, tricks, and how-to guides on gadgets and gaming.
9	Community	Updates on anime, streamers, and gaming-related community events.
10	Reviews	In-depth reviews of games and gadgets.
11	Accessories	Info on gadgets and gaming accessories.
12	Infografis	Gaming tips, esports highlights, and industry updates in infographic format.

Source: Research Result, 2024

We also cover non-MLBB esports, especially when involving Indonesian athletes in major events (Efendi, personal communication, May 10, 2024).

This illustrates the organization's capacity for editorial agility—an essential trait in dynamic digital environments. This situational planning model allows IndoGamers to pivot based on emerging trends and journalistic judgment, including coverage of titles, such as Free Fire or Minecraft, when search volume suggests relevance. Moreover, the situational shift from a primary focus on a single major esports title to coverage of trending games demonstrates that IndoGamers also fulfils a key function of esports journalism—as an integral part of gaming journalism, that is, reporting on the latest developments and updates within the gaming ecosystem (G. Perreault & Vos, 2019).

IndoGamers' content planning also shows the broad genealogy of esports journalism, which grows out of gaming culture and intersects with lifestyle journalism. Drawing on the audience-centered logic of lifestyle journalism (G. P. Perreault & Perreault, 2021), IndoGamers integrates content such as game tutorials and play guides, particularly in the "Guides" section. These articles are expected to engage players directly and enhance their in-game experiences. However, such content makes up only a small fraction of its overall output. Most of IndoGamers' coverage remains grounded in conventional journalistic forms: team profiles, match results, and player dynamics. In this regard, IndoGamers distinguishes itself from esports media ecosystems, such as those in Russia or Hong Kong, where coverage skews more toward the business and entertainment aspects of esports (Chiu, 2025; Vikulov, 2017). IndoGamers, instead, balances entertainment with editorial seriousness, contributing to a more hybrid and reflexive model of esports journalism.

Beyond content agility, this study finds that IndoGamers also expresses concern about the presence of women in esports, whether as athletes, streamers, or influencers. Coverage of women's figures appears across different sections, with the "E-Sports" category showing the most frequent inclusion. This diverges notably from prior studies (Donder et al., 2022; Painter & Sahm, 2023), which reveal persistent underrepresentation of women in Western esports media. IndoGamers thus offers an alternative editorial model from the Global South, one that leans more toward inclusivity and progressive representation. However, while women's figures appear more frequently in IndoGamers' coverage, its depth and consistency remain limited—especially when compared to the outlet's total article volume.

Despite IndoGamers' strengths in trend responsiveness and representational inclusivity, this study also reveals gaps—particularly in investigative or watchdog reporting. Notably, IndoGamers has not reported on pressing global issues in esports, such as match-fixing, doping, or gambling (Gupta et al., 2022; Kriglstein et al., 2022; Schöber & Stadtmann, 2022). These issues may not be prominent in the Indonesian e-sports scene, yet their absence from IndoGamers' coverage could also suggest a more passive editorial stance or limited newsroom capacity. In contrast, several Western outlets actively pursue insider information and cultivate contributor networks, seen in their reporting on player transfers (Rong & Li, 2024). IndoGamers has yet to develop a similar journalistic infrastructure, potentially missing opportunities to strengthen its watchdog function—an essential pillar of journalism, even in specialized domains like esports.

Secondly, in terms of price, IndoGamers prioritizes esports news coverage of issues and events related to Mobile Legends: Bang Bang (MLBB). This decision is influenced by IndoGamers' exclusive media partnership with Moonton, the developer of MLBB. Due to this partnership, IndoGamers can accumulate information about MLBB—especially regarding tournaments—more efficiently and quickly.

Beyond the ease of reporting, IndoGamers places strong emphasis on audience accessibility by strategically utilizing multiple digital platforms. IndoGamers distributes the contents across various formats: textual, visual, and video features are hosted on its main website; short-form videos appear on TikTok; long-form video narratives are published on YouTube, while Instagram serves as a platform for sharing images and succinct article summaries. This multi-platform approach enables IndoGamers to engage different audience segments and broaden its reach.

In terms of temporal strategy, IndoGamers adopts a flexible publication schedule—even for hard news—favoring content quality over immediacy. Rather than pursuing breaking news in real-time, the outlet prioritizes well-researched, evergreen journalism. This deliberate timing strategy allows IndoGamers to maintain the relevance and value of its content beyond fleeting trends.

Promotional strategies further enhance IndoGamers' visibility. TikTok, in particular, is used to publish short, engaging videos on trending esports topics. One example is a video in which IndoGamers discusses government policies affecting the gaming industry in Indonesia. The video gained viral traction, reaching over a million views. This case supports the findings of G. P. Perreault and Perreault (2021), who argue that multimedia strategies—particularly the use of TikTok—can significantly enhance audience engagement, thereby strengthening the relevance and competitiveness of the very esports journalism outlet in an increasingly saturated media environment.

Complementing its TikTok presence, IndoGamers leverages Instagram to disseminate article announcements accompanied by short summaries in captions or visual posters. Additionally, internal staff members contribute to promotional efforts by sharing article links through their personal WhatsApp statuses, indicating a grassroots element in audience outreach.

In comparison to other digital-native sports media in Indonesia, which solely focus on one particular sport—such as *Majalah Bulutangkis* and *Bulutangkis.com*, which struggle with social media optimization due to staffing constraints (Prastya et al., 2022). IndoGamers exhibits a more developed and planning infrastructure. Its streamlined editorial workflow and division of labor demonstrate a level of professionalization in esports journalism that not only rivals but arguably surpasses traditional sports journalism in adapting to digital environments and audience demands.

Organizing

The second stage in media business management is organizing. This stage generally consists of activities carried out by managers or company leaders to establish the organizational structure, allocate company resources, and assign workloads and responsibilities to employees. Morrisan states that the process of structuring an organization consists of two aspects, departmentalization and division of labor. Departmentalization involves grouping work activities within the organization so that similar and interrelated tasks can be performed together. Meanwhile, division of labor is a managerial effort to detail tasks so that each individual within the organization has a sense of responsibility in carrying out a set of tasks within a limited time and with limited resources (Ar Ridha, 2023, p. 108).

In newsroom management, the organizing stage consists of activities, such as: 1) editorial planning and development; 2) determining the resources and activities needed to achieve editorial goals; 3) assigning editorial responsibilities; and 4) delegating authority to individuals (Prastya et al., 2022, p. 94).

IndoGamers adopts a departmentalization model by separating teams based on work functions, which are the business team and the production team. The business team operates in

Table 2. Organizational Structure of IndoGamers Newsroom Team

No.	Name	Job Function	Operational Area
1	S. Wahyudi	Head of IndoGamers Yogyakarta Bureau and Editor-in-Chief	Yogyakarta
2	Efendi A.W.	Chief Editor/Lead Editor	Yogyakarta
3	H. Mulyono	Assistant Editor, Journalist, and Writer	Yogyakarta
4	R.A. Majid	Journalist and Writer	Yogyakarta
5	Haris M.	Journalist and Writer	Yogyakarta
6	Yowan R.	Journalist and Writer	Yogyakarta
7	Ica J.	Journalist and Writer	Jakarta

Source: Research Result, 2024

Jakarta, with all its activities under the responsibility of Radius Raswijaya “Aphay.” Meanwhile, the content production team is based in Yogyakarta, with all activities under the responsibility of S. Wahyudi, Head of the IndoGamers Yogyakarta Bureau. However, some newsroom staff members also operate from Jakarta. The list of IndoGamers media staff in the newsroom team at both the Yogyakarta and Jakarta offices, along with their respective roles, as presented in Table 2.

This division of labor reflects strategic intent and practical considerations. Jakarta serves as Indonesia’s primary nexus for esports tournaments, industry stakeholders, and brand collaborations (Jiwandono, 2024), ideal for business development and real-time event coverage. On the other hand, Yogyakarta presents logistical and economic advantages, as it offers a lower cost of operations and serves as a talent hub, with a steady supply of young, tech-savvy graduates from local universities. This strategic value is reflected in the employment of R.A. Majid and H. Mulyono, two journalists at the Yogyakarta bureau who are graduates of two different state universities in the region.

By situating its business functions in Jakarta and editorial production in Yogyakarta, IndoGamers can optimize resource allocation while maintaining a broad geographic reach. However, this organizational model also demands consistent inter-city communication and collaboration to ensure alignment between editorial content and business objectives, especially in an industry where timing, coordination, and audience responsiveness are paramount.

Within the newsroom, IndoGamers further organizes its journalists based on issue-specific beats. From the platform’s rebranding in mid-2023 through the study period in mid-2024, coverage has been focused on three main content clusters: gaming trends (including viral titles like Resident Evil and Minecraft), esports tournament reporting, and technology reviews (primarily gadgets relevant to gaming). Journalists are assigned to one of these categories and are not permitted to write outside their designated beats—an editorial policy aimed at maintaining consistency in tone and style. As one journalist explained:

The division of journalists’ work at IndoGamers is based on issue focus. Mulyono is responsible for producing content about MLBB, especially the MPL tournament. Haris and I focus on trending games in Google Search. Meanwhile, Yowan is responsible for writing about gadgets (R.A. Majid, personal communication, June 7, 2024).

Meanwhile, journalist Ica J., who is based in Jakarta, is tasked with directly covering MPL tournament events, which are frequently held there. This assignment is not only efficient in terms of logistical coordination and reporting workflow but also reflects IndoGamers’ commitment to delivering timely and up-to-date coverage. Such a strategy aligns with the very nature of esports journalism, which is characterized by the need for rapid reporting and

real-time information delivery—crucial qualities for meeting the expectations of digitally native audiences who demand immediate access to esports news (Oh et al., 2024; G. P. Perreault & Perreault, 2021; Rogers et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the division of journalistic work is separated from that of content creators who produce material for platforms beyond the website, such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube. This separation shows IndoGamers' intention to allow its journalists to concentrate solely on delivering timely coverage and producing focused, in-depth narratives—without the added burden of having to plan or adapt their content to specific multimedia formats.

IndoGamers employs five in-house journalists. Three journalists focus on writing articles using secondary sources, while two—R.A. Majid in Yogyakarta and Ica in Jakarta—handle field reporting and also serve as photographers. The five internal journalists are responsible for producing and publishing seven articles per working day. However, this rule is flexible for field journalists; when on a particular day they are assigned to report in the field, their responsibilities for producing articles can be reduced to five per day.

Despite having a structured workflow, the Yogyakarta-based production team at IndoGamers adopts a hybrid working model. Team members are allowed to work remotely, while the team maintains a rented operational office located in the Tegalrejo District. This office, leased from a resident rather than owned by the company, serves as a coordination hub for daily operations. Beyond its logistical function, the office also plays a crucial role in fostering a sense of collective identity among the production staff.

Regular offline coordination meetings and content planning sessions help maintain a shared editorial rhythm. Most daily writing and content tasks can be completed remotely, but face-to-face interactions are scheduled monthly to ensure alignment—particularly when preparing for major tournament coverage or special reporting assignments. This combination of remote flexibility and periodic in-person coordination enables IndoGamers to remain agile in its operations while sustaining team cohesion and editorial consistency in the fast-paced landscape of esports journalism.

Organizing at IndoGamers also encompasses financial and operational resource management. The platform operates as a subsidiary of a national informatics and hardware firm (unnamed here for confidentiality), which provides the bulk of its funding. Nonetheless, IndoGamers actively diversifies revenue through digital advertising, event organization, and sponsored content. A notable initiative is Esports Campus Leader, a Mobile Legends tournament targeting university students in Yogyakarta.

On the expenditure side, major costs include office rent and employee salaries. For example, the Yogyakarta office incurs an annual rental fee of IDR 32 million under a two-year contract. Salaries follow regional minimum wage standards, differing between the Jakarta and Yogyakarta offices.

Actuating/Directing

The third stage in management functions is actuating/directing. At this stage, media companies strive to boost employee morale so they can carry out their duties and responsibilities effectively (Masduki, 2004). Thus, a directing process conducted by leadership is necessary. In the context of newsroom management, it is synonymous with mobilization practices, specifically the way the editor-in-chief guides journalists, from before conducting coverage to the publication of reports (Fink, 1996).

IndoGamers implements three news coverage techniques: 1) journalists directly present at the event location; 2) conducting interviews with sources; and 3) gathering data from documents, books, or the internet. Both on-site reporting and interviews with sources

are reflected in field coverage practices. Meanwhile, compiling reports based on documents, books, or internet sources is a practice undertaken by all IndoGamers journalists.

To ensure smooth coverage, the editor-in-chief, S. Wahyudi, assisted by the lead editor/ chief editor (Efendi A.W.), guides all internal journalists. Coverage begins with issue or topic selection, conducted every morning on workdays.

At 07:30 AM every day, Fendi and I discuss the most popular search keywords based on Google Analytics. We then determine which topics suit IndoGamers and communicate them to our journalists via the WhatsApp group (S. Wahyudi, personal communication, May 10, 2024).

Once the five journalists receive their assigned topics for coverage, they proceed with writing their reports. For field journalists, if they receive instructions during the morning briefing to cover an event or conduct an interview, they immediately proceed to the location. In such cases, they are provided with key information—such as the informant’s name and contact details—all of which have been gathered and determined solely by the editor-in-chief. This reflects IndoGamers’ policy that only the editor-in-chief and lead editor determine the coverage focus and data sources, limiting journalists’ roles solely to gathering materials from the field, interviews, or secondary sources.

In addition to deploying journalists for direct coverage, IndoGamers actively collaborates with various stakeholders in the esports ecosystem, including event organizers, teams, and community groups. These collaborations help streamline the data-gathering process, particularly when on-site reporting isn’t possible. In such cases, IndoGamers relies on press releases, social media content, and articles from organizers or relevant communities as primary materials. To enrich the coverage, they often follow up with interviews involving media representatives from these communities. At present, IndoGamers has a formal partnership only with Moonton, the developer of MLBB, and has yet to engage external contributors.

This collaborative strategy shows IndoGamers’ relevance amid a media landscape increasingly shaped by the autonomy of esports stakeholders—such as event organizers, esports teams, and professional players—in producing and disseminating their own content (Indriana & Indriastuti, 2025; Rojas-Torrijos & Nölleke, 2023; Widaya & Susilo, 2024). Rather than being displaced by these self-publishing practices, IndoGamers adapts by integrating stakeholder-generated content with professional journalistic practices. The partnership with Moonton, in particular, signals that stakeholders still value the credibility, editorial framing, and wider audience reach that established esports media outlets provide.

Regarding article production related to product reviews or endorsements, IndoGamers follows a distinct editorial approach. As explained by S. Wahyudi:

For endorsement articles, IndoGamers usually receives the product beforehand. These products are either loaned to us for a certain period or permanently given for free. However, there are times when we do not receive product samples, so we simply adapt press releases from the relevant gadget companies. These articles are written as advertorials (S. Wahyudi, personal communication, May 10, 2024).

This approach proves IndoGamers’ commitment to maintaining professional boundaries between journalistic content and promotional material. In the esports industry—where journalism often operates close to the very brands and games it reports on—editorial independence can easily become blurred, as Tang et al. (2020) noted. By clearly designating product-related content as advertorials, IndoGamers demonstrates a deliberate effort to separate objective esports reporting from promotional or review-based content. This distinction is important when covering topics such as game titles, gaming gadgets, or peripherals, which may otherwise compromise journalistic integrity if not clearly labeled as sponsored or branded content.

IndoGamers applies flexible guidelines for writing articles. Journalists are required to write at least 300–400 words per article. Moreover, IndoGamers encourages them to adopt a casual tone rather than a formal style to build a closer connection with readers. For accompanying images, journalists may source them from various platforms in addition to using their own photos, as long as they properly attribute the source.

One unique aspect of IndoGamers' newsroom management is that journalists can write whenever they want. In other words, writing reports—especially those that rely on online sources—can be done beyond regular working hours. However, articles can only be written after journalists receive daily instructions. As a result, when they start their work shift, they only need to log in to the indogamers.com dashboard and submit their drafts.

Once journalists submit their drafts, Fendi, the chief editor, immediately reviews and edits them based on several criteria, including SEO compliance, writing accuracy, and source verification. According to Majid, IndoGamers journalists are not strictly required to follow standard Indonesian language rules (*Ejaan Yang Disempurnakan/EYD*) to meet SEO demands. IndoGamers actively applies SEO strategies in news writing, as optimizing articles for search engines increases their chances of ranking higher on Google search results. This, in turn, boosts website traffic, which has economic benefits by attracting advertisers and endorsement opportunities. These SEO-driven practices show that IndoGamers, like other digital-native sports media outlets, must adopt strategies not only to make their content discoverable but also to sustain their presence through clicks and traffic performance.

Controlling

Controlling is the fourth and final stage in both business and editorial management. It is carried out to determine whether editorial operations are proceeding according to plan. At this stage, an evaluation of the news to release is conducted. Controlling is also useful for identifying the challenges and obstacles the media organizations have (Ar Ridha, 2023; Prastya et al., 2022).

In IndoGamers' operations, the controlling function is applied to journalists' performance. The primary focus is to ensure that journalists log in to the dashboard of indogamers.com according to their assigned work shifts and to check whether the required article quota has been met. Supervision is also conducted to ensure that the content of news articles adheres to journalistic writing standards. This process is carried out by Efendi (chief editor) during the article draft editing stage.

The editor-in-chief (Wahyudi) also conducts direct supervision. This process involves providing incidental feedback to journalists via the WhatsApp group whenever errors in writing or reporting are found. Additionally, the editor-in-chief or the head of the Yogyakarta bureau holds a regular monthly meeting to provide updates on the company's latest developments.

IndoGamers is a member of the Indonesian Cyber Media Alliance (*Aliansi Media Siber Indonesia/AMSI*) and the Press Council (*Dewan Pers*). As a result, IndoGamers journalists have been equipped with press cards. This makes the supervision process more manageable, as journalists already have a strong understanding of journalistic ethics that they must adhere to throughout their reporting activities.

CONCLUSION

This study has explored how IndoGamers, a niche esports media outlet in Indonesia, manages its newsroom and business operations amidst the growing demands of the digital esports ecosystem. At the core of its newsroom management is a lean organizational structure,

where Editorial roles are clearly defined and directed through centralized decision-making. This is complemented by a flexible work culture and daily editorial coordination, which allows the team to maintain productivity while responding to the esports trends. Commercially, IndoGamers maintains a relatively stable business model by leveraging its parent company's infrastructure while adopting SEO-driven content strategies to attract and retain audiences. However, beyond technical optimization, IndoGamers positions itself as more than a content aggregator by showing a consistent commitment to in-depth and narrative-driven reporting—especially on Mobile Legends and currently trending games. This focus is a deliberate audience-building strategy that touches editorial prioritization rarely discussed in studies of esports journalism.

Theoretically, this study contributes to discussions on digital media management by presenting small newsrooms' negotiation of editorial authority, resource allocation, and commercial viability. It challenges the notion that esports journalism is solely hype-driven, yet it lies within editorial logic and strategic decision-making. Practically, the findings offer insights for esports media start-ups balancing editorial integrity and financial sustainability. Future research could expand this study by comparing esports journalism formats, including informal collectives and livestream-based outlets, to better understand evolving newsroom dynamics in platform-driven environments.

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