

Framing structure of the news of the new COVID-19 variant in 2025, in Kompas.com

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Abstract

The mass media are expected to continue to play a role in educating the public about the development of the new variant of COVID-19 and its treatment. This study is conducted with the aim of obtaining an overview of how the framing built by the media Kompas.com in constructing ideas for the readers about the new variant of COVID-19. This research analysis uses Pan and Kosicki's framing, which consists of four structures. The results of the study find that the news is framed in the syntactic structure, and news leads are arranged from general to specific, starting with data about the increase in cases in three countries, to detailed information about the new variant. Moreover, source citations only come from the government, so the content of the news is not yet balanced. In the script structure, news is arranged by presenting the latest things that are considered important and new to the readers, followed by explanations and solutions. The thematic structure shows a selection of themes that attract the attention of readers but are deep with rationality. There are no nuances of overly emotional or sensational narrative. In the rhetorical structure, the emphasis on certain meanings in the news uses word choices that tend to be normative. The news writer employs idioms that are still felt general, with no specific emphasis. The construction of media framing is relatively reassuring to the public, who are still traumatised by the past pandemic.

Introduction

The 2019 coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic status in Indonesia was declared to have come to an end, based on Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 17 of 2023. However, after 2022, when the world's population has generally received the vaccine, and the pandemic has generally subsided, there has been an increase in COVID-19 in several countries, including Indonesia. The Ministry of Health of the Republic of Indonesia even issued a report on the resurgence of COVID-19 in December 2023 (Indonesia. Kementerian Kesehatan, 2023). If before 2020, COVID-19 had been an unexpected occurrence, then after

2022, COVID-19 is predicted to reappear in a new variant form (Amalia & Mashabi, 2023; Bangsa & Setyawati, 2022; Dos Santos et al., 2024). Now, in early 2025, several countries in Asia have seen an increase in COVID-19 patients (Kusumastuti, 2025). This means that the risk of this virus spreading is still looming over communities worldwide.

Several studies about the role of mass media during the COVID-19 pandemic have been summarised by the researcher. Mass media contribute greatly to conveying information about all things related to the pandemic. The problems caused by the COVID-19 pandemic were experienced globally, and they have the potential to trigger a new social order or reconstruction. Among other things, there are differences in attitudes of community groups in America towards the requirement for using masks and maintaining distance among people (Thapaliya & Dastgeer, 2023). Global studies also found differences in the dominant framing of news reporting between British and German mass media. British media emphasised changes in people's social behaviour in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, with more focus on articles about health protocols and medical articles. Meanwhile, German media emphasised the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the country's economy and the health issues (Anggraini & Saptatia, 2021).

Mass media also played a role in the process of securitisation of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia, namely as a vessel of existence for actors to build and maintain the situation (Rachmat, 2023). One publication recommends that the media should no longer disseminate sensational, useless and meaningless news in a pandemic situation. Mass media must present all kinds of information based on relevant facts and data (Sudrajat & Rohida, 2022). This is in line with other studies, which say that in a pandemic situation, mass media play an important role not only in countering hoaxes but also in presenting accurate information and preventing the public from becoming panicked. One publication, *Harian Sinar Indonesia*, experienced quite a burden to try to present true, accurate and not panic-inducing information during the COVID-19 pandemic because they faced strict social regulations and reduced media business revenue from advertising (Manalu & Simbolon, 2022).

Appreciation is given for a number of mass media, because they managed to be agents of socialisation, especially in sounding the call for vaccination in the pandemic to various levels of society, regardless of all the dynamics and obstacles that hindered their efforts (Mustofa et al., 2022). In the field of publication, Santoso and Salisah (2021), it was found that the role of mass media was quite comprehensive during the COVID-19 pandemic. Mass media as a partner of the government of Sidoarjo Regency had several roles. First, as a central source of information, the media provided a lot of knowledge to the public. Second, as a reflection of reality, the mass media presented the latest information about the real condition in the field concerning COVID-19. Third, as a filter, the media filtered out hoaxes or false information. Fourth, as a guide, the media directed the public to access the proper source of information. Fifth, as a forum, in which the media became a place for communities to give feedback on the information received. Lastly, as a communication partner, the mass media became a place for people to ask questions, make inquiries, or share their opinions/statements.

Meanwhile, according to the study from Permana and Ifah (2021), the media agenda concerning narratives in television media reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic generally includes, among other things, creating special programs about the pandemic, such as "Story" program to help the audience see positive things even in the midst of difficult conditions that resulted in so many negative impact. Mass media can educate the public by teaching values, ethics and applicable rules to viewers or readers, through drama, stories, discussions, and articles.

Media framing of the COVID-19 issues during the pandemic generally cited sources from the government, along with their policies (Aminuddin, 2023; Fahrimal et al., 2020; Ilahi & Syafuddin, 2021; Naqqiyah, 2020; Qudratullah, 2023), including how the West framed COVID-19 news in Southeast Asia (Morissan, 2023). Another aspect raised by the media is from a business perspective, in which the media discussed the decline in media existence (Junaidi & Arafah, 2022) and media management during the COVID-19 pandemic (Parwati, 2021).

On the other hand, social media used by the public to obtain information about COVID-19 during the pandemic is studied more thoroughly (Sadayi & Suswanta, 2022; Simanjuntak & Marlina, 2021). Often, public opinion on social media is posted as a reaction or statement on a controversial issue. Many different opinions emerge in the communities because of discussions about various issues.

In such a situation, mass media as a means of conveying information to the public play an important role in shaping public opinion. They must be fully responsible for all information given to the public. This explanation is in line with the concept put forward by Turow (2014) regarding the use of media by society for surveillance and interpretation. Surveillance might be satisfied by reports from different parts of the globe, and interpretation might flow from stray comments by the reporters and those they interview about what ought to be done to solve problems.

During the pandemic, even though the use of social media was very high, it turned out that people also used online media to find more reliable sources about COVID-19 (Pratama & Yuliani, 2021), and the online media usage increased significantly. This is confirmed by the findings of Susanto et al. (2021), that the usage of online media or social media to access information about COVID-19 reached 63%. This means that there were still around 30% of people who used electronic media like television, print media like newspapers and their online versions as sources of information about COVID-19. The public still relies on these media as they are considered more credible sources of news, because the news is carefully curated. This condition is in line with the thoughts of Turow (2014), who stated that media representations play a role in the way society understands its reality. People may like what they see about their society, or they may complain about it. They may want people to view media images about themselves and others, or they fear that others will be influenced by presentations (for example, stereotypes and violence) in ways that could cause problems. Even with an active audience, then, mass media hold crucial importance for society's visions of itself.

Mass media also have the opportunity to use more themes in persuading the public about certain perceptions or to take action (Campbell et al., 2016). So, in the context of the new variant of COVID-19, the media needs to prioritise discussions about new things that can make the public perceive COVID-19 as endemic, including the perception of the long-term impacts on the social and cultural lives of the community. From the perspective of the functionalist group, this condition is very relevant to their argument.

Functionalism states that society cannot function without the media, and that the media exist to serve the needs of our societies and cultures Wright, 1974, in Straubhaar et al. (2021). Based on the findings of previous studies, so far, no studies have been found that examine how the framing of the news about the new COVID-19 variant in 2025 is carried out by *Kompas.com* as a media outlet. By using the framing method, it is hoped that a clearer description can be obtained about the central role of the media in constructing the ongoing COVID-19 phenomenon for readers.

In research on the news about the new COVID-19 variant in 2025, what is needed is an analysis that emphasises the "how" aspect rather than the "what" aspect. Regarding

the framing concept, Straubhaar et al. (2021), who quoted the opinions of Altheide and Gitlin, also emphasise several important things. Whereas the media's agenda setting tells us what topics to think about, the framing of issues tells us how to think about those topics. Framing theory examines how writers frame or present a story. Reporters decide what to include within the view, or frame, of a story and what to leave out, much as a painter chooses what to put on the canvas of a painting. They decide which tone, words, and facts to include, but also the conceptual framework, context, and interpretation of the facts.

Method

This study utilises two news items from the media Kompas.com, published in May 2025. The researcher's consideration in deciding to use news from Kompas.com is because this news site is part of the Kompas print media, which is a reputable news outlet and has long existed. This is in accordance with what is stated by Straubhaar et al. (2021). A huge diversity of online news forms is growing to meet a staggering number of would-be writers and readers. As with many aspects of the Internet, it helps a newspaper online to have a long reputation based on a successful existing newspaper. Many online readers are drawn by the brand name and credibility of existing media, particularly the elite national newspapers. Readers also use online editions of community newspapers for news of former hometowns, universities, or other places that interest them.

In addition, the researcher has several arguments for selecting several news items from this media. First, the number of patients of the new variant of COVID-19 in mid-2025 has increased in three countries in Asia, which are near Indonesia. Second, during the process of selecting the news, the researcher found several news stories that generally have the same content, so only one news story is chosen to represent. Third, the diverse types of news observed by the researcher provide an opportunity to find various aspects of the news reporting on the new variant of COVID-19.

The framing analysis of media reporting uses the framing method from Pan and Kosiscki (1993), which has four structures, namely syntax, script, thematic and rhetoric. Syntactic structure is how journalists arrange incidents and occurrences. Script structure is how journalists tell or narrate events in a news format. Thematic structure is how journalists express their views on events into propositions, sentences or relationships between sentences that form the text, and lastly, rhetorical structure is how journalists emphasise certain meanings in the news.

The selection of this analysis tool is considered appropriate because during the previous COVID-19 pandemic, many aspects have been made known to the public. So now the public needs more specific and different information.

Results and Discussion

The validity of framing, as stated by Pan and Kosiscki, (1993) does not only rely on the researcher's ability to read news texts. Furthermore, there is a systematic procedure for collecting text data from news to identify elements that are likely to be used by readers. Below is the identification process of elements in the text that was implemented by the researcher using the four framing structures.

In the initial part of the results of this study, the narrative and sources of four news items from Kompas.com throughout May 2025 are listed. Of the news items published on Kompas.com at the end of the week in May 2025, five are related to the new variant of COVID-19 and three are related to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Other news,

which is still related to the COVID-19 pandemic, talks about its impact on the world of business that is felt to the present day, and about conspiracy theories related to the pandemic. So overall, readers can get information not only about the health aspect but also about the business aspect and other aspects of COVID-19. The selection of objects in the four news reports about the latest variant of COVID-19 is based on the diversity of the news content.

Tabel 1. Structure of News Elements : The Increase in Covid-19 JN1 Variant in Asia
(Kusumastuti, 2025)

Sentence	Proposition	Syntax	Script	Thematic	Rhetoric
S1	Covid-19 cases again have increased in several Asian countries.	Lead paragraph	Setting	Covid-19 increased in Asia	Use of number and time.
S2	Case in Spore, Hongkong, and India	Reference	Setting	Subtheme 1 : The increase of cases in three counties.	Use of raise cases
S3	Government hasn't declared, the public is advised to remain vigilant.	Supporting paragraph	Setting	Subtheme 2 : The percentage increase in case and deaths	Use of per centage of cases.
S4-S7	The emergence of a new, more contagious variant etc.	Quotation and secondary information	Characteristic of the new	Subtheme 3 : Cause of infection	
S8-S11	People who have previously been infected or vaccinated are now experiencing decreased immunity over time.	Secondary information		Subtheme 4: Support subtheme 3	
S12-S15	The symptoms and severity of the new sub variants.	Secondary background		Subtheme 5: Symp-toms experienced	Severe symtoms
S12-S15	Interestingly, symptoms of loss of smell and taste.	Transition background		Subtheme 6: Support subtheme 5	Severe symtoms

Sentence	Proposition	Syntax	Script	Thematic	Rhetoric
S16-S17	There is no evidence that this variant causes more severe symptoms.	Atribution		Subtheme 7: Support subtheme 6	Severe symptoms

Tabel 2. Structure of News Elements : Jakarta Health Office Prepares Three Strategies to Restrain Covid-19 Cases
(Rachmadina & Bustomi, 2025)

Sentence	Proposition	Syntax	Script	Thematic	Rhetoric
S1	Jakarta Health Office, have prepared strategies to contain the potential spreading of Covid-19.	Lead paragraph & quotation		Prepared three strategies	Prepared three strategies
S2	The anticipatory measures for the spreading of the virus are implemented	Supporting information		Anticipatory measures	There are 35 positive cases
S3	Jakarta Health Office busy ensuring the readiness of facilities	Supporting information & quotation	Action	Ensuring readines	Three steps to protect community
S4	Education on Clean and Healthy Living Behavior (PHBS) is being intensified.	Secondary information	Setting	Clean and healthy living behaviour	
S5-S7	There were 35 cases, zero deaths, the peak increase in Jan with a total of 25 cases, and the rest were spread until May	Lead paragraph information and quotation	Context	Subtheme 1 : Jakarta relatively save	Use raises cases
S8-S11	Has been no trend of of increasing cases in Jakarta	Secondary information		Support subtheme 1	There are no deaths reported

Sentence	Proposition	Syntax	Script	Thematic	Rhetoric
S12-S15	Resident who wants travel abroad must comply with health protocols	Supporting Information	Context	Subtheme 2 : Vulnerable groups advised additional protect	

Syntactic structure emphasises how the journalists arrange the order of events--with statements, opinions, quotes, and observations of events--into a general form of news structure. This can be observed from the news chart (lead used, background, headline, quotes taken, and so on). In essence, from this syntax, one can observe how journalists understand an event, and that can be seen from the way they organise facts into a general form of news.

In the syntactic structure of the news on Kompas.com about the increase in cases of the new variant of COVID-19, the news content is composed of general statements, then narrowed down to specific matters. It starts with the order in which countries reported the cases, what percentage of the increase in the number of cases, and over what period, what is the condition of the patients, what are the causes of the cases, and what is the government's attitude in responding to this increase in cases. Furthermore, more specific things are developed by detailing what characteristics are found in the patients of the new variant of COVID-19. Another thing that is considered important for readers is what distinguishes this new variant from the Omicron variant and the Delta variant. Some of the news contents also retell the pandemic situation in the past, which aims to remind readers to always be vigilant.

The arrangement of news content using a deductive method provides readers with a broad contextual description of the global situation of the new COVID-19 variant. On the other hand, if journalists use the inductive method by starting from the cases or the sufferers, the story content cannot be generalised to a larger context, especially because the number of cases up to May 2025 is relatively small.

On the other hand, regarding the conditions in Indonesia, the media reported that there are a number of cases, and they also reported how the response is carried out by the capital city government. The news sources are quoted from authorised parties such as government officials or health experts. In both news stories, there are no quotes from patients or COVID-19 sufferers regarding the symptoms that they experienced, the treatment that they received, and so on. There are also no quotes from expert observers of endemic diseases or field officers.

The focus of the script structure is to see how journalists tell or narrate events into news forms. This structure examines how the storytelling or narrative strategies are being employed by the journalist in arranging events into news forms.

In the script structure, it is observed that the news published by Kompas.com describes which countries have experienced the new variant of COVID-19, and the news contains facts in the form of numbers and figures. In the following narrative, the causes of the increase in the new variant of COVID-19 are presented, beginning with general information and progressing to specific details. The journalist's storytelling method also compares the situation between COVID-19 during the pandemic and the new variant COVID-19, the differences in the escalation of the virus, the level of malignancy, and the differences in symptoms experienced by sufferers.

In the final part of the four news items, the content generally states what the public should do at this time. Furthermore, there is a description of what the Indonesian government is doing to anticipate a spike in sufferers. Overall, the news content strategy is packaged by presenting a number of information but with a calming tone for the public. The news content is deliberately made not to be too sensational, with telling things that can cause anxiety, or for example, highlighting the lack of competence of the medical services in handling patients. In another part of the news content, it also describes healthy living behaviour during the pandemic, and this helps the public to reflect. In another news report about the government's readiness to anticipate an increase in cases, it appears that Kompas.com uses a calm-inducing information strategy.

The next analysis about the thematic structure is related to how journalists express their views on events into propositions, sentences, or relationships between sentences that form the text as a whole. In this discussion of structure, it will be observed how that understanding is realised in a smaller form.

In the thematic structure, although the news raises a theme that attracts readers' attention, the information about the increase in victims of the new variant of COVID-19 is delivered with a rational tone. There are no emotional or sensational approaches, which are tactics typically used by journalists to make the news more intriguing to the readers/viewers. Through the perspective of journalists by connecting sentences between texts that are deep in a rational approach, readers could notice that there is no dramatisation of the news.

The content of the news generally emphasises aspects of the symptoms which occurred in several countries, the causes of the increase in the number of COVID-19 victims, the handling that is implemented, and public service announcements. Sources of information are quoted from the government and relevant experts. There are efforts to discuss health protocols that were widely circulated during the previous COVID-19 pandemic. News content that partly reminds the public about the pandemic can lead to public opinion regarding the COVID-19 vaccination. This means that the moment when there is an increase in the victims of the new variant of COVID-19, the situation can also be used by the media to raise public attention about the importance of continuing to maintain health protocols.

The second news item discusses the readiness of the provincial government. They utilise the theme of the mitigation approach. The Jakarta municipal government has anticipated an increase in cases; therefore, in terms of the theme, this news provides a sense of relief for readers.

The rhetorical structure is related to how journalists emphasise certain meanings in the news. This structure sees how journalists use choice of words, idioms, graphics, and images that are used not only to support the writing, but also to emphasise meanings to readers. The particular meaning that is emphasised by the journalists is the element of revealing facts about the increase in the number of cases. In each news report, there is information about the government's handling of the situation, so that the news does not cause anxiety to the audience. Because in those news reports, the information given is not only about the causes of the increase in COVID-19, but also about the response and management by the governments in several Asian countries.

The rhetorical structure that sees how journalists emphasise certain meanings in the news uses word choices in the headline that tend to attract the attention of readers. The words used in the headlines are "a spike in cases", "a new, more contagious variant", "rising again in Asia", and "an increasing number in Singapore". The choice of words in

the news headlines that give the impression of provoking readers is needed in order to lead readers to be interested in finding out more about the news. However, in the headlines, there are words which are quite moderate, such as “recognise the variants”, “the government prepares three moves”, and “to increase vigilance”. So that there is a balance in the titles of the news. Even though the headlines might invite concern for readers, at the same time, a solution is also offered.

There are no images or graphics that support the narrative about the increase or spike in cases. However, the expected vigilance regarding the increase in cases is still narrated with detailed information, such as the characteristics of sufferers, the nature of the variant which is different from the previous variants (Omicron and Delta), what are the causes of the increase in cases, who is at risk of this new variant, what must be done by the society to prevent virus transmission, and also, what measures of anticipations have been prepared by the government.

The idioms which are used are still common and general. There is no special emphasis on idioms. Kompas.com seems to be quite careful with their wordings, trying not to provoke the public's emotions, because many people are still traumatised by the pandemic. This can be seen by the words or phrases chosen in the news content, for example, “increasing vigilance”, “the new variant of COVID-19 is monitored as safe”, “the health office has planned three moves”, “the monitoring system has been tightened in all health centers”, “there have been no deaths”, “the situation in Jakarta is considered to be relatively safe”, “there is no trend of increasing cases”, and “ensuring that health protocols are implemented properly”.

In almost every news report, there are terms that are already widely known during the pandemic. Those words are still used now, such as vaccines, health protocols, vulnerable groups, the elderly, comorbidities, risks and so on.

Therefore, from the framing context, Kompas.com appears to construct the new variant of COVID-19 as something that only needs to be watched out for, but does not need to be too worried about. There is no sensational, heroic or demonstrative wording which aims to simply attract the attention of readers.

From their news broadcast about the new variant of COVID-19 to the public, Kompas.com tends to have formed a reality from the results of the construction of a pandemic reality that is now endemic. The formation of the construction of reality is that Covid-19 still exists, and it needs to be watched out for, and the government is ready to anticipate. Also, the distribution of construction that can be observed is that Kompas.com is broadcasting news earlier than other media, such as Detik.com and Radio Elshinta, which are usually responsive in broadcasting newsworthy events. The distribution of construction can also be seen from the news broadcast about Covid-19, and there were consecutively up to eight news items in May 2025. The formation of the construction of reality that can be observed is that this new variant of COVID-19 is not a threat that needs to be worried about excessively. This construction is formed by supporting narrative data, such as the number of cases, areas where cases were found, symptom characteristics of sufferers, and the nature of the COVID-19 variant. Unfortunately, the confirmation requested by Kompas.com is limited only to middle-ranking government officials. There are no other parties, such as patients, experts in healthcare observation, or field medical personnel.

The results of the study show that Kompas.com frames the news in a syntactic structure with data in the form of the number of sufferers in three Asian countries, and also with headlines and news leads that attract attention. The structure of the news script on the new COVID-19 variant by Kompas.com is told with a rational approach, not only

from the health aspect (the number of sufferers, the causes of the increase in the number of sufferers in several countries and the anticipation made by the government, as well as an appeal to the public).

The four structural dimensions used as the tool for analysing the news of the new COVID-19 variant in Kompas.com have formed a theme that links the elements of the news narrative in a global coherence. The framing structure about the emergence of the new COVID-19 variant is reported with an explanation from the general to the specific and detailed.

The framing model assumes that every news story has a frame that functions as a centre for organising ideas. In this study, the framing elements in the news text, consisting of source citations, background information and wordings, are connected into the text as a whole with a rational organisation of ideas.

The rationality of the news is evident from the following things. First, the dominant source quotes are taken from the government, as they have the most data available. However, the news framing does not present comprehensive information because there are no interviews with patients, even though several cases have been found in Jakarta. Second, the background information begins with data on the increase in the number of cases in three countries in Asia and the characteristics of the virus variants. Third, there is an explanation about the handling of this situation in each country and the mitigation effort planned by the Jakarta government. At the end of the news, there are usually suggestions for the audience to take some precautions.

The past pandemic still leaves traumatic recollection for the communities, with the high number of deaths, medical services that experienced overwhelming workload, severe downturn in the economic sector, and drastic changes in people's lifestyles. This is in line with Budirahayu's publication, which positions the pandemic as a disaster. According to Rodríguez et al., (2007) a disaster in the social dimension is an occurrence that damages the social order, disrupts normal activities and causes collective stress caused by threats or sources of damage, both tangible, such as natural disasters or man-made disasters, or intangible, such as a pandemic (Budirahayu et al., 2022).

Now, with the emergence of the new variant of COVID-19, several news items on Kompas.com are still using content related to the previous COVID-19 pandemic, especially about the characteristics of the virus and its spread. It is apparent that Kompas.com is trying to remind its readers about the details related to the past pandemic, and what has been done so that the public heeds the warning. When media journalists could compile information responsibly, this is a positive contribution to shaping the minds of readers. The construction of the framing that is desirable to build is alert but not too worrying.

Kompas.com's responsibility in dispensing information on the new variant of COVID-19 data succeeds in presenting those important facts as well as calming the readers. It is certainly a different challenge to present correct, accurate and reassuring data of the new variant of COVID-19, compared to the past pandemic. Nowadays, the battle for information in the media is rife with various political, social and economic issues both domestically and internationally. This can easily divert public attention from health issues.

The researcher took notes from the script structure, namely, there are no quotes from sufferers of the new COVID-19 variant. New quotes are taken solely from the government. According to the Indonesian government, they are preparing things in stages to anticipate a spike in the number of victims. This makes the news source about the new COVID-19 variant only from one side, or not balanced. The researcher quotes the explanation from Campbel et al., (2016) in the context of news containing conflict, about what balanced news

is. Balance means presenting all sides of an issue without appearing to favour any one position. The quest for balance presents problems for journalists. On the one hand, time and space constraints do not always permit representing all sides. But in practice, this value has often been reduced to “telling both sides of a story”.

Therefore, although there might be a risk of conflict of opinion if there were quotes from sufferers of new COVID-19 variants, this information is needed by the public so that they can obtain information from different parties. From the previous COVID-19 phenomenon to the emergence of new COVID-19 variants, mainstream media have given an abundance of lessons for their readers. Quoting from Turow (2014), information from the media provides opportunities for the public to know more about happenings in other parts of the world that were previously unknown to them. In the case of new COVID-19 variant proliferation, the public obtains information about the type of disease and the growth of its variants, what was the responses of the communities in other countries where the cases increased in number beforehand, and how the governments of other countries handled or attempted to mitigate the increasing number of victims.

Since the 2020 pandemic hit, mass media have also played an important role in disseminating new findings in the health sector. For example, news related to vaccines, supporting equipment for medical personnel, or the management of large numbers of patients. Quoting from the concept initiated by Rogers on the diffusion of innovation, Straubhaar et al. (2021), the role of mass media in the growth of new COVID-19 variants is important, regarding some innovation in detecting new variants and especially findings in health technology.

Individuals and society also have the power to influence the success of media technology. The diffusion of innovations theory has its roots in sociology and helps us understand why people adopt new communication behaviors (Rogers, 2003). Diffusion is a process by which an innovation—a new way of doing things—is communicated through media and interpersonal channels over time among the members of a community.

As part of digital media, Kompas.com has been playing a role as a watchdog for the community. Until May 2025, Kompas.com is among the fastest of all online news outlets in reporting the new variant of COVID-19. The speed in reporting news by Kompas.com is one of the media's responsibilities in helping the community and government to be vigilant, while the cases in Indonesia have not yet increased in numbers. This role is in line with the concept of surveillance put forward by White (2014) in his discussion of digital media. The issue of surveillance is considered important, especially in the current era of contemporary society, where technology provides so many facilities. Every individual can obtain information from anywhere across regions and networks.

Conclusion

In the situation of increasing cases of new variants of COVID-19, mass media such as Kompas.com have the same important role as in the previous pandemic. Media disseminate information about the type of virus, the increase in the number of cases from time to time, the risk of the spreading of the new variants, and the government's readiness at various levels to anticipate the increase in cases. On the other hand, mass media are also fully responsible for all information presented to the public, so that the news construction makes the public feel relieved and calm with the information presented. One of the roles of mass media is to educate and increase public awareness, so that media framing, which can construct the minds of readers, will contribute to becoming one form of early education that targets the wider community effectively and efficiently. Public opinion,

which is now heavily influenced by social media and often triggers controversy, needs to be counterbalanced by the mass media, especially online media. Mass media as a means of conveying information to the public play an important role in forming an increasingly rational public opinion about the new variant of COVID-19. In addition, Kompas.com also fulfils its strategic responsibility in disseminating information about the new variant of COVID-19 faster than other news outlets.

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