Management of Alternative Media KawalCOVID19 as a Source of Information During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract. The world is currently plagued by the Covid-19 pandemic. This situation causes the need for information as an essential thing for the public. KawalCOVID19 is one of the alternative media that contains information, education, and verification purposes regarding the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, therefore good management of alternative media must be carried out by its managers. The purpose of this research is to find out how the management of KawalCOVID19 alternative media handles information about the Covid-19 pandemic. This research is a qualitative study with a descriptive method. The result of this study is that KawalCOVID19's alternative media management from the aspect of content, production, and distribution has a variety of unique features that distinguish it from mainstream media. In terms of content, KawalCOVID19 is neutral and offers a graphical display that makes it easier for readers to find out more information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the production aspect, the entire production process is carried out in full online collaboration of data, content, and technology teams. In the distribution aspect, KawalCOVID19 collaborates with various communities and NGOs, and uses social media to reach a wider audience. The management of KawalCOVID19 which is different from most other media, especially mainstream media during the pandemic shows that further studies are still viable regarding alternative media during the pandemic.

Keywords: alternative media, content, production, distribution.

INTRODUCTION

At this time, the world is plagued by the COVID-19 pandemic or also known as the coronavirus. A pandemic is a largescale epidemic that crosses international boundaries, and usually has a large effect on a large number of people (Porta, 2008). The coronavirus is spreading rapidly, and Indonesia is one of the countries affected by the swift spread of the virus.

There is a lot of confusing information related to the coronavirus. Most of them are fake news or hoaxes that are spread across various online media, such as websites, forums, and social media. Most of the hoaxes that are spread are fabricated by organized groups and not purely individual actions (Fardiah et al., 2020) This phenomenon is exacerbated by the seizure of the publicity stage by taking advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic so that many government officials have issued statements which contradict statements from other officials (Oktariani & Wuryanta, 2020). The extent of this contradictory statement is certainly very disturbing because it can confuse the public and lower their level of trust.

Poor communication, coordination, and uncooperative responses from the government lead to emotionally conflicting perspectives and reactions between leaders, which can lead to social chaos (Najih, 2020). This condition is not ideal because it can confuse the public and create distrust of the government. In addition, the government's lack of publication of information related to the coronavirus has also increased anxiety and confusion about the health risks posed by Covid-19.

Moreover, the lack of accessible data related to the development of Covid-19 that is open to the public, as well as the lack of government capability in managing data are serious problems for the government (Djalante et al., 2020). The lack of publicly accessible information has also led to the emergence of various new problems, such as negative stigma against positive corona patients and the exclusion of people with ODP status (Farizi & Harmawan, 2020). At this point, true information from experts and health authorities is needed and should be more widely publicized than hoaxes. For this reason, a community initiative finally emerged to facilitate the very high demand for information during Covid-19 by forming a citizen journalism media to disseminate various self-verified information. This not only helps reduce misinformation and public confusion but is also useful in providing information that is an alternative to information from the mainstream media which tends to dominate (Bailey et al., 2007).

In Indonesia, researchers found an alternative media that was specifically formed to provide information and news about the Covid-19 pandemic, namely KawalCOVID19, an alternative media that positions itself as a medium for information, verification, and education to the public regarding the confusion of information about covid in the community. Since its inception, KawalCOVID19 has currently offered more than 200 articles on its website. Therefore, proper management of alternative media is very important in maintaining the credibility and quality of alternative media.

As a different type of media from mainstream media, the management of

alternative media is different from the mainstream one. Dahlgren (Sokowati & Junaedi, 2018) states that alternative media are more concerned with social goals than informative purposes. Even so, Dahlgren argues that a comprehensive explanation of the alternative meaning of media is needed. Does the alternative have a meaning that means anti-mainstream, anti-capitalist, anti-dominant ideology, or vice versa. Therefore, it can be seen that what distinguishes alternative media management from mainstream media can be seen by analyzing the content, production method, and distribution of the content. (Sokowati & Junaedi, 2018)

Based on data from various previous studies, it can be seen that further studies related to alternative media management during the pandemic, especially in content management, production, and distribution are still needed. This research was conducted to see how a good alternative media management is carried out by media managers during the pandemic in order to continue to produce content that is of interest to the public.

METHOD

This research is qualitative research with a descriptive method. Researchers used descriptive methods in this study because descriptive methods can provide a clear picture of a situation without any treatment of the object under study (Kountur, 2007).

The research subject is used as a source of information in order to reveal the facts. On that basis, the research subject of this study is the KawalCOVID19 website. The object of research in this study is the administrators of KawalCOVID19 itself.

Data collection techniques used by researchers are in-depth interviews. Indepth interviews do not provide alternative answer choices and are carried out to explore information from an informant. Therefore, interviews were conducted repeatedly between the interviewer and the informant (Taylor, 1984). In this case, the researcher asked different questions to key informants, which aimed to clarify the information that had been obtained in the previous question or to explore things that had been obtained in interviews that had been conducted previously with an informant.

Researchers used data analysis techniques described by Miles and Huberman (Sugiyono, 2014). This technique divides analytical activities into four stages, namely data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion or verification.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION Content Management on KawalCOVID19

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the KawalCOVID19 alternative media has its own management procedures that make it one of the credible information dissemination media during the Covid-19 pandemic. In accordance with the research analysis unit, in this subchapter, the researcher will discuss the management of KawalCOVID19 in terms of content, production, and distribution.

In terms of content management, the first analysis is the ideological factor of KawalCOVID19's contents. Atton (Sokowati & Junaedi, 2018) argue that content in alternative media tends to be politically and socio-culturally radical, which adapts to the objectives of the alternative media. Elina Ciptadi, one of the informants of this research who is one of the co-founders of KawalCOVID19 stated that KawalCOVID19 has the principle of data-based information. It is this principle that makes KawalCOVID19 neutral towards certain ideologies. As long as the content to be created has valid and verified data, KawalCOVID19 will continue to upload it on their website, even if the content is critical of various

parties such as the government.

"We have, because we are not opinion-based, we are databased. We are always data-based, including those who accuse us, we say "where is your data? This is our data, where is your data?" So we still stick to that principle."

Elina then gave an example of the GeNose C19 case. GeNose C19 is a tool made by experts from Gajah Mada University (UGM) and is used to detect Covid-19 through breath detection. Many mainstream media reported that this tool was declared fit for circulation by the Indonesian Ministry of Health for use in Indonesia as a tool to detect Covid-19. Unlike the mainstream media. KawalCOVID19 has never once discussed and provided information regarding GeNose C19 to the public. This is because GeNose does not have research data that can be used to support their claims of effectiveness in detecting Covid-19. Elina said that so far the mainstream media has only distributed news based on claims without research data.

> "For example, why haven't we highlighted the GeNose news until now? Because where is the research data? The news that has appeared in the newspaper is very bombastic in its claims, reaching 99% or 97% effective, has many features, is affordable, etc. We don't care about affordability. There is no point in being affordable but not accurate. Where is the accuracy data? We should be able to research the clinical trial data, but it has never been published until now, so we have never highlighted it even though it is affordable."

KawalCOVID19 data sources come from scientific journals and research, open data from international health institutions, and other open data such as government data. Elina stated that they did some considerations before choosing a journal as a source of information.

> "We'll see where the journals come from. Then whether it has been peer reviewed or not. Then we examine various aspects of the journal, the validity of the journal, the scientists who conducted the study. Because many people pretend to have doctorates, professors and so on."

KawalCOVID19 is also looking for references from various verified international websites. This is a priority, especially in the early days of the pandemic, because many countries were earlier affected by Covid-19 than Indonesia, so there is quite a lot of conclusive research data available on various verified websites.

> "Meanwhile, we look for it in journals, we read Atlantic, our references come from, from the IMA, from WHO, from CDC America, from CDC in China, also from testimonials that continue to also from testimonials from the past such as Italy, England, Iran, China."

For statistical data sources such as the increase in Covid-19 patients and so on, KawalCOVID19 relies more on data sourced from local governments. According to Elina, this data was actually obtained through open sources for the public, so that anyone can check the authenticity of the data presented by KawalCOVID19. Elina stated that some of these data sources include data from the BNPB, the Ministry of Health, and the Regional Government. "From open source data. We got data from BNPB, from Ministry of Health data, from corona websites in provinces, regencies and municipalities. So we don't use back access or anything like that, special access or anything. We use data that is open to the public."

In addition to this data, content created based on the personal experience of KawalCOVID19 volunteers is also provided. The principle of data-based information is also based on the spirit of KawalCOVID19 in social change in society by educating to avoid hoaxes, which fits with the explanation that alternative media are media with the aim of social change (O'Sullivan, 1994).

Fiske (Atton, 2001) explains that the selection of content from alternative media is different from mainstream media, where mainstream media tends to display content based on the interests of certain parties such as power holders and the economy. Jankowski (Bailey et al., 2007) also explains that at the content level, alternative media can offer different ideologies, discourses, and representations of content originating from mainstream media. This definition is in line with the content selection made by KawalCOVID19 because they never create content based on the interests of certain parties due to its neutral and pure nature for the common good. In addition, some KawalCOVID19 content also tries to show differences in data regarding the Covid-19 pandemic issued by the central government, regional governments, ministries, BNPB, and other government parties so that they are media that are contrary to public belief. It can be seen that media that are managed personally and independently are often used as a medium for repressive content (Fuchs, 2010).

Artikel	🕫 Beranda In Panduan Bacaan Pil		Informasi Vaksi Check-list Infogral		Unduh Aplikasi ni FAQ	Hode warna Teran	ng Gelap Q	
Inform	ikel asi terkini menger r terpercaya.	nai COVID-19. 1009	% faktual, dari s	umber-				
Simak		Perlu Anda Ket		Simak dikelua		but Ibadah Idul A i uk menyambut ibadah Idul A n Agama		
19 Wabat menge lini, da	10 Cara Indonesia Tangguh Melawan COVID- 19 Walah COVID19 kembali menuncak. Naknya mobiltas masyarakat, mengendonya prozedur dan ketaatan kapa protokol kesehatar di semua lini, dan maaknya waina Alta dan Data yang ketih ogap ponyebaranya menyebabaha kapa posihi barian terare meningiti.				E-Participation against COVID-19: Case of KawalCOVID-19.id			

FIGURE 1: Grid Model Display on Article Subsection Source: https://kawalcovid19.id/category/artikel

The next analysis is the form of content. Atton (Sokowati & Junaedi, 2018) explains that the form of content in alternative media has its own characteristics. These characteristics can be seen from the graphic format design, visual language, and language style. KawalCOVID19 has some uniqueness in its graphic format, visual language, and content style.

In graphic format design, visual communication design must pay attention to the working principles of design to be able to display visuals that are creative, original, innovative, communicative, efficient, and effective (Anggraini, 2014). The first principle according to Anggraini is that there must be a balance to beautify the design. At KawalCOVID19, the balance in the graphic design of the website is felt with no one side looking denser or heavier than the other side. The grid model used by the website is also quite helpful in providing balance because it can minimize the risk of asymmetric lists being displayed in FIGURE 1.

The second working principle of design is rhythm, which means the repetition of a form or visual elements with a certain pattern consistently, to create an attractive impression (Anggraini, 2014). In terms of graphic design on the contents of KawalCOVID19, it can be seen that there are several elements that are always repeated and consistent, such as the placement of the article title which is always at the top of the page and followed by a summary of the article, the KawalCOVID19 logo which is always at the top of the page, and so on. Then, each article also has a certain emphasis on some of its elements. For example on the home page, the laying of a graph of the number of cases of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia as the first article seen by visitors is one of the highlights

<section-header><section-header><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item><list-item>

FIGURE 2. Article with Emphasis on Important Sentence Source: https://kawalcovid19.id/

by KawalCOVID19. Not only that, every sentence that is considered important is also written in bold (FIGURE 2). This is in accordance with the principle of emphasis, information that is considered important must be highlighted (Anggraini, 2014).

The last principle is unity, every visual element must be balanced to create complete harmony (Anggraini, 2014). In KawalCOVID19, all existing visual elements are displayed on the basis of the same idea. An example is the use of photos and illustrations in certain articles.

A further characteristic that sets alternative media practices apart from mainstream media is a commitment innovation and experimentation to in the form of content (O'Sullivan, 1994). The variety of uniqueness in the dissemination of information carried out by KawalCOVID19 is one of the innovations in presenting content. Some of them are the rubrication and the use of content supporting applications, such as the data wrapper application, google data studio, and electronic flipping books (FIGURE 3). In addition to using the things mentioned above, KawalCOVID19 also presents content using infographics,



FIGURE 3. Example of Electronic Flipping Book by KawalCOVID19. Source: https://online.fliphtml5.com/nwyyb/ grdh/#p=3

videos, broadcasts, IG Live, and articles. The presence of infographics and other forms of visualization in an article is quite effective as a medium to summarize the contents of the article, besides having an entertainment aspect (Pratiwi & Darmawan, 2019)

Production Process on KawalCOVID19

The next analysis is an analysis of production in alternative media. The first aspect to be examined is the editorial policy on KawalCOVID19. Editorial policy is the basis for consideration of a media to provide or broadcast news (Tebba, 2005). Therefore, the editorial policy of KawalCOVID19 is idealistic in selecting and compiling, as well as refusing or allowing an article to be published. The KawalCOVID19 content production process is carried out through three main teams. The first team is the technology team. Grace Survani, one of the volunteers who became a research informant stated that the task of this team is to prepare the technology infrastructure that will be used by KawalCOVID19, such as websites, UI, UX, and others. The existence of this data team is also adjusted to the development of needs. which are different from when it was first established and now

> "Initially we had a lot of IT teams. Because we build the system. Need graphics, visualizations, create website UX, and so on. Now we don't need as many IT personnel as when we were first established, because it's more about maintenance and security. Maybe occasionally when there is an update on the website, but if it's only for uploading content, non-IT personnel can also do it."

The second team is the data team. According to Grace, is the team

with the largest number of personnel in KawalCOVID19, about half of the total number of volunteer members. This team is in charge of controlling the development of issues, collecting information, analyzing the information, checking its accuracy, and processing data. Elina explained several tasks that the data team had to perform, such as finding information from various sources such as journals, central government data at covid19.go.id, comparing central data with data from regional websites, data broadcast by local recording governments. through their YouTube channel, checking data uploaded through government social media, comparing Ministry of Health data with BNPB, checking data from internationally verified websites, and so on.

> "For the data team. Of the 50 people, half of them probably work to collect data from the provincial web, in the district. We're not just waiting for the data center at covid19.go.id. We compare the website with the local government. Well, not all of them have websites at the district and provincial levels. Someone makes a live stream on YouTube every day, we listen, we take notes. Some publish news on their social media, some don't report data every day but we have to keep checking every day. Then the data on the BNPB website and the Ministry of Health turned out to be contradictory. So that's it, we have to check everything and compare."

Furthermore, the KawalCOVID19 data team generally seeks data from sources that are open to the public.

> "So once again, we don't use any back access, special access or anything. We use data that is

already publicly available. Maybe the way they visualize and convey the data is not easy to understand, so we help curate the data."

Last but not least is the content team. This team is responsible for writing and visualizing the data that will be presented to the public. Grace explained that the content team is also responsible for editing and approving content before it is uploaded.

> "Yeah, maybe so, hehe. That's the content team that approves, who makes infographics, who makes videos, who broadcasts, who performs Live Instagram, and who maintains our site."

The content team also helps simplify data from the data team to make it easier to understand, especially from volunteers with medical backgrounds who are less able to convey information that is easily understood by laypeople. This is very useful when creating content for laypeople. Even so, medical volunteers continue to review in the editing process to avoid mistakes.

> "Scientists, researchers and the medical community, usually when they speak to the public, they cannot use the language understood by laypeople. It's very difficult to connect when talking to professors, researchers, or something like that. Since the content editor is not a medical person, we will always ask, "Is this really true?" "Can we simplify it again?". So that when it is released, we hope that laypeople will immediately understand. At least laypeople in urban areas can immediately understand."

In addition to the technology team,

data team and content team, there are also volunteers with certain tasks outside the scope of the three teams. For example, there are people who always appear in the mass media, there are teams for webinars, and so on.

> "Even though we have a lot of volunteers, why are only certain people appearing in the mass media? Because the delegation is like that. We have another team for the webinar, the people who will appear in the webinar are A, B, C, D, E, for example. Again for what? Because they have been curating information in that field for a long time, so for example the opening of a school. Now we have another team, the school opening webinar team."

In the content production process, anyone is free to share ideas about what content should be created. The idea is then discussed and the data is searched by the data team. After that, the content team will process the data into content assisted by the technology team. After the content has been created, before being uploaded, all volunteers discuss the feasibility of the content. After the content is approved, the content team will upload it to the KawalCOVID19 website and social media.

> "If there are only 20 active people, we won't force the rest to be active. We don't know how busy each one was, they weren't busy at the time when they applied to be part of KawalCOVID19, but 2 weeks later "I have a project" and then he left. It is okay, we are okay with that, we don't have a target that 1 person has to work how many hours in a day, or in a week. We don't oblige, but we give a message like this, "if

you don't have time, don't say you can but you can't finish what you are responsible for. If you're really busy, be honest with us, we don't mind if you're really busy."

Editorial policy pays more attention to how aspects and ideal missions are described in terms of coverage, placement of news, reports, writings, and images that are in accordance with the interests and tastes of the community (Sumadiria, 2006). With KawalCOVID19's mission of trying to provide information, educating, and clarifying related to the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia, it can be seen that KawalCOVID19 is in accordance with Sumadira's statement, namely that there were negotiations regarding the feasibility of a content that had been produced. It can also be seen that every content produced must use language that is easy for laypeople to understand and educate based on data.

The next aspect is the politics of production space. Hamilton (Vatikiotis, 2005) explains that alternative media are deprofessionalized, decapitalized, deinstitutionalized media. That and is, alternative media must provide opportunities for ordinary people to participate and contribute without the presence of trained skills, excess money, and production processes that are different from the settings of established media institutions. This explanation is in line with the entire production process carried out by KawalCOVID19, because all production activities are carried out by non-professional journalists. Recruitment is carried out regardless of status and volunteers are not burdened with certain targets to be achieved. In addition, the production process is completely done online using social media and websites. Therefore, there is no special space for producing content created by KawalCOVID19.

KawalCovid19 Content Distribution

The last analysis is distribution analysis. The thing that most distinguishes alternative media from mainstream media in distributing content is the use of distribution networks that involve the community and readers in the dissemination of their content (Sokowati & Junaedi, 2018). The distribution of content by KawalCOVID19 is completely done virtually and online. Apart from being cheaper than offline, Severin & Tankard (Irwanto & Hariatiningsih. 2019) said that the internet offers the potential for better and more democratic dissemination of communication than mass media. Therefore, effective use of the internet by KawalCOVID19 is a good thing. Data and information that has been processed and valid for distribution, are then uploaded to various other online media.

KawalCOVID19 utilizes social media and websites to spread information. However, the use of these two media depends on the needs and nature of the content being distributed. The website itself is KawalCOVID19's main medium in disseminating content that they consider more important, while social media is used to more easily reach their target audience, namely the wider community.

KawalCOVID19 uses three social media platforms to distribute its content. The three platforms are Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. They realize that each platform has a different approach, so they adapt the content they create based on each social media platform.

> "That's what we usually use, different platforms, different target audiences. Instagram users are more dominated by adults, Facebook is dominated by people aged 30 and over, Twitter is dominated by intellectuals or those who want



FIGURE 4. KawalCOVID19 Instagram Source: Instagram @kawalcovid19.id

to be considered intellectual, and more diverse in age."

Alternative media are media that are close to the community and civil society (Bailey et al., 2007). Therefore, in addition to using social media and websites, KawalCOVID19 also participates as much as possible in online events held by various parties such as webinars, IG Live, and YouTube live streaming. According to KawalCOVID19, this participation is very useful in disseminating the information they have to community groups who may not be followers of KawalCOVID19.

> "Oh this one too, we are as many speakers as possible in webinars or Live Instragram or Live streaming events, we participate as much as possible. We participate because not everyone on social media is our follower, we have the opportunity to convey valid information to communities that may not be our followers,"

KawalCOVID19 also collaborates quite often with other groups and communities that have similar goals to theirs (FIGURE 5). In addition, their content also often appears in various

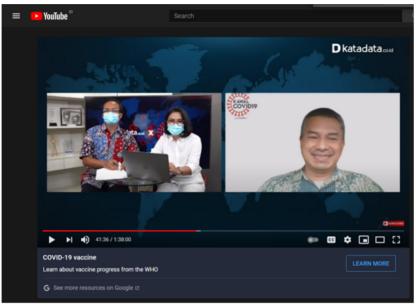


FIGURE 5. Article with Emphasis on Important Sentence Source: https://kawalcovid19.id/

mainstream media. It is not uncommon for KawalCOVID19 to be a speaker in the mainstream media.

CONCLUSION

This study seeks to explain how good alternative media management is carried out by media managers during the pandemic. KawalCOVID19 as an alternative media is managed in a different way from mainstream media in general. Especially with their existence as a media that aims to educate, provide information, and clarify about the Covid-19 pandemic in the community, they need proper management so that the information they publish can always be accounted for.

In terms of content management, KawalCOVID19 has а data-based information principle that makes its content not based on the interests of certain parties. A good graphic display also makes it easier for users to understand the content better. In the production aspect, KawalCOVID19's content production policy to always review content that has been created before it is uploaded to their website is one way they do to maintain the credibility of the content. The distribution of content carried out by KawalCOVID19

is also quite interesting by collaborating with various communities and NGOs, in addition to using websites and social media.

Because the pandemic is a problem that is happening for the first time in the current generation, there are still many phenomena related to alternative media that can be studied further. The findings of this study provide theoretical and practical understanding regarding the management of alternative media during the pandemic. Theoretically, analysis related to the content, production, and distribution of alternative media can be studied more deeply by media researchers in each of its elements, due to the increasing number of alternative media that have emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic. Meanwhile, practically, this research can help alternative media managers to be able to more precisely manage media in producing and distributing content according to the objectives of the alternative media during the pandemic. Researchers see that proper content management, production, and distribution will help alternative media to operate smoothly.

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