

Framing Earthquake and Tsunami Disasters in Local Online Media: A Comparative Study of Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng

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Abstract: This study examines how local online media Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng frame news about earthquakes and tsunami disasters in Indonesia. The aim of the study is to understand how the framing of the media affects the public's perception and awareness of disaster management. A qualitative content analysis was carried out using Urs Dahinden's framing model to analyze 16 to 20 news stories from each portal, covering different dimensions such as conflict, economy, progress, ethics, and personalization. The results show different framing strategies: Serambi Indonesia emphasizes the disaster recovery process and government responsibility, while Radar Sulteng focuses more on the experiences of individual victims and the role of personal and government efforts in disaster recovery. Both media outlets highlight issues such as slow disaster management, a focus on physical losses, and reliance on religious explanations for disasters, often neglecting scientific perspectives. These findings suggest that while local media play a crucial role in informing the public, there is a need for better integration of scientific knowledge and a focus on disaster preparedness. The study helps to understand the role of the media in shaping public awareness and political discourse on disaster risk reduction

INTRODUCTION

Disasters, particularly natural calamities such as earthquakes and tsunamis, constitute some of the most catastrophic events impacting communities. These occurrences result in profound consequences, including loss of life, destruction of infrastructure, and enduring economic challenges[1]. In recent decades, the role of mass media has become increasingly pivotal in shaping public understanding, managing responses, and facilitating recovery efforts following such disasters. The media fulfils functions that extend beyond mere reporting; it plays a crucial role in educating the public, providing timely warnings, and empowering communities to take decisive action during crises. Consequently, understanding how media outlets frame and present disaster-related information is imperative for enhancing disaster preparedness and response strategies [2].

This study specifically investigates the role of local media in disaster reporting and its influence on the communities they serve, with an emphasis on two local newspapers in Indonesia: Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng[3]. These newspapers were selected due to their proximity to disaster-prone regions and their substantial influence on local public perceptions regarding disasters such as earthquakes and tsunamis[4].

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of how local media contributes to disaster risk management and community resilience [5]. A considerable portion of existing research on disaster communication emphasizes national and international media coverage, often overlooking the critical role of local media outlets in shaping disaster narratives [6]. Local media, being closely connected to the affected communities, possess a unique opportunity to provide localized, relevant, and actionable information that larger national outlets may neglect. In particular, local media can serve as a conduit

between global and national narratives and the specific needs of local communities, delivering content that is more accessible and culturally pertinent[7].

Although extensive research has been conducted on the general role of media in disaster communication, there is an urgent need to examine the ways in which local media outlets frame disaster-related events. This framing can significantly influence public perceptions and subsequent actions [8]. The manner in which a disaster is portrayed in the media—whether focusing on human suffering, governmental failures, community resilience, or recovery efforts—can shape the public's understanding and trust in disaster management. For instance, an emphasis on governmental inadequacies may foster a perception of insufficient disaster preparedness, whereas a focus on community resilience may cultivate hope and motivate collective action[9]. Furthermore, religious and cultural narratives, such as interpreting a disaster as divine retribution or a warning, can profoundly impact individual and community responses to these events[10].

This study specifically aims to analyze the framing techniques employed by *Serambi Indonesia* and *Radar Sulteng* in their coverage of earthquake and tsunami disasters. The primary objective is to examine how these two local newspapers report on key disaster-related issues, including government accountability, disaster preparedness, and the recovery process [11]. By focusing on these aspects, the study seeks to uncover how local media not only inform the public but also shape perceptions of disasters, which is crucial for fostering resilience and promoting effective disaster management. Furthermore, the research will explore how both newspapers incorporate various elements such as human-interest stories, victim personalization, and progress in post-disaster recovery, assessing whether these elements contribute to a more comprehensive and empowering narrative for the community[12].

The relevance of this research is heightened by Indonesia's significant vulnerability to natural disasters. Situated in the Pacific Ring of Fire, Indonesia ranks among the most disaster-prone countries globally, facing frequent earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, and other calamities. Despite governmental efforts in disaster preparedness and response, numerous local communities remain inadequately equipped to manage the aftermath of such events [13]. In this context, local media can play a crucial role in providing immediate, relevant information, guiding the public on how to respond, and promoting community-driven recovery efforts. Moreover, local media have the potential to act as a watchdog, holding the government accountable and highlighting areas in need of improvement in disaster management practices[14].

This study will utilize qualitative content analysis as its primary methodology, focusing on articles from *Serambi Indonesia* and *Radar Sulteng* that cover earthquakes and tsunamis over a designated time frame [15]. Through a meticulous examination of these articles, the study aims to identify key framing techniques employed by journalists, such as highlighting human suffering, economic losses, or the government's role in disaster mitigation. Additionally, it will explore how these newspapers engage with religious narratives, personalize victims, and depict progress and recovery efforts[16]. The research will also assess how disaster coverage affects public attitudes toward preparedness and resilience, as well as the media's influence on shaping disaster-related policies and responses[17].

A crucial aspect of this study is the acknowledgment that local media can provide a more direct and intimate connection to the communities they serve compared to national outlets [18]. This proximity enables local journalists to comprehend the unique challenges faced by their audiences, including cultural and socioeconomic factors that affect how disaster information is received and acted upon [19]. By comparing the coverage from *Serambi Indonesia* and *Radar Sulteng*, this study will offer valuable insights into how different local media outlets tailor their messages to address the specific needs of their audiences, thereby contributing to a deeper understanding of local disaster communication practices [20].

In conclusion, this study will emphasize the significance of local media in disaster risk reduction and management. By analyzing how *Serambi Indonesia* and *Radar Sulteng* frame their coverage of

earthquakes and tsunamis, the research will enhance our understanding of the vital role local media can play in informing and empowering communities during and after disasters [21]. The findings will highlight the necessity for improved coordination among media outlets, government agencies, and disaster response organizations to ensure that disaster coverage is accurate, timely, and supportive of long-term community resilience [22]. This study also aims to contribute to the broader field of disaster communication by elucidating the challenges and opportunities faced by local media in disaster-prone regions[23].

METHODOLOGY

Research Design This study employs a qualitative content analysis design to examine how two local Indonesian newspapers, *Serambi Indonesia* and *Radar Sulteng*, frame disaster coverage related to earthquakes and tsunamis. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth exploration of media narratives, themes, and framing techniques, providing insights into the portrayal of government responses, community resilience, human interest stories, religious interpretations, and recovery efforts.

Participants and Sampling the sample consisted of a total of 30 articles—15 from *Serambi Indonesia* and 15 from *Radar Sulteng*—that directly discussed earthquake and tsunami events and their aftermath. Articles were selected based on specific inclusion criteria: relevance to the disaster events, publication within a four-year timeframe, publication in the online editions of the respective newspapers, and written in Bahasa Indonesia. The sampling was purposive to ensure that the selected articles accurately represented the media coverage related to the disaster events, offering a balanced and comprehensive perspective.

Data Collection Data collection involved retrieving relevant articles from the official online platforms of *Serambi Indonesia* and *Radar Sulteng*. The articles were gathered through a systematic search using predefined keywords such as "gempa bumi" (earthquake) and "tsunami," along with specific date ranges to cover the period following major disaster events. All articles were downloaded and organized for subsequent analysis. To ensure consistency and thoroughness, a comprehensive review was conducted by multiple researchers to identify and select articles that met the inclusion criteria.

Instrument Used The research utilized a coding scheme developed based on a review of existing literature on media framing, disaster communication, and community resilience. This coding scheme categorized articles into themes such as government response, community resilience, victim narratives, religious framing, and progress in recovery. The scheme included clear definitions and subcategories for each theme to guide the coding process. Two independent researchers performed the coding to enhance reliability, using the scheme as a standardized instrument for consistent data categorization.

Data Analysis The data were analyzed through a deductive thematic content analysis approach. The coded data were examined to identify patterns and differences in how each media outlet framed disaster-related issues. The analysis involved comparing the frequency and emphasis of specific themes across the two newspapers, assessing framing strategies such as focus on government actions, victim stories, religious narratives, and recovery progress. Cohen's kappa statistic was employed to measure inter-coder reliability, which resulted in a high agreement score of 0.82. Discrepancies between coders were discussed and resolved through consensus, ensuring the validity of the coding process. The findings were then interpreted within the context of media framing theories and disaster communication frameworks to understand their implications for public perception and disaster resilience.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the analysis of disaster coverage in *Serambi Indonesia* and *Radar Sulteng*, with a focus on the framing of disaster reporting, particularly regarding the roles of government, community resilience, human interest narratives, and religious contexts [24]. The discussion interprets these findings in light of previous research and addresses the broader implications

for disaster communication, media roles, and community engagement.

Government Response in Disaster Reporting

Both Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng extensively covered the government's response to disasters, with a focus on rescues, preparedness, and recovery processes. However, the framing of these answers differed significantly between the two newspapers. In Serambi, Indonesia, government actions were often described critically, with articles highlighting delayed responses, inadequate preparedness, and a lack of coordination [25]. This framework is consistent with research by Tierney et al. (2006), which suggests that the media often emphasizes the shortcomings of disaster management systems. For example, Serambi Indonesia reported the slow distribution of aid and its failure to address the needs of vulnerable populations in the aftermath of the disaster. Radar Sulteng, on the other hand, portrayed the government's efforts more favorably. The newspaper emphasized logistical efforts such as the relocation of displaced populations and the construction of temporary shelters,[26] framing these steps as signs of progress. Although the newspaper acknowledged some challenges, the overall tone was positive. Such an approach may reflect regional dynamics, where local media outlets often tend to highlight the government's progress in disaster management in order to maintain a positive relationship with local authorities [27].

Table 2. Government Response Framing in Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng

Newspaper	Government Response Framing	Key Themes	Frequency of Mention
Serambi Indonesia	Critical framing of government actions	Delayed aid, insufficient preparation, lack of coordination	High
Radar Sulteng	Positive framing of government actions	Relocation, temporary shelters, recovery progress	Moderate

Community Resilience

Both newspapers emphasized the importance of community resilience, but the framing differed in their portrayal of resilience. Serambi Indonesia focused more on the individual stories of disaster survivors, often highlighting their personal suffering and struggles. These human-interest stories were framed to evoke empathy in the audience by drawing attention to the emotional and psychological impact of the disaster [28]. This is in line with Sobur's (2004) concept of "empathy from framing", where the media creates an emotional connection between the audience and the victims of disasters. On the other hand, Radar Sulteng emphasized collective community efforts and local organizations involved in recovery. The newspaper reported on grassroots initiatives and the mobilization of community groups to help recover from disasters. This framework suggested a more collective approach to resilience, emphasizing the role of community collaboration and volunteering in post-disaster reconstruction.

Table 3. Community Resilience Framing in Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng

Newspaper	Community Resilience Framing	Key Themes	Frequency of Mention
Serambi Indonesia	Individual stories of survival	Personal struggle, emotional toll, perseverance	High
Radar Sulteng	Collective community resilience	Volunteerism, community-based recovery efforts	Moderate

Human Interest and Victim Narratives

Both newspapers employed human interest framing, but Serambi Indonesia placed more emphasis on victimization, focusing on the personal suffering and losses experienced by disaster survivors. This type of coverage is effective in generating empathy and encouraging public support for disaster relief efforts[29]. As seen in Table 3, Serambi Indonesia focused heavily on victim narratives, with stories describing tragic losses, displaced families, and emotional responses to the disaster.

In comparison, Radar Sulteng balanced human interest coverage with a focus on recovery and rebuilding. Victims were portrayed not just as passive recipients of aid but as active participants in the recovery process[30]. This framing highlighted the agency of disaster survivors, focusing on how individuals and communities took steps to rebuild their lives. This aligns with the findings of previous studies, which suggest that media frames focused on recovery and resilience contribute to a sense of hope and optimism in the aftermath of a disaster.

Table 4. Human Interest and Victim Narratives in Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng

Newspaper	Human Interest Framing	Key Themes	Frequency of Mention
Serambi Indonesia	Victimization and personal loss	Personal tragedy, displacement, emotional impact	High
Radar Sulteng	Recovery and rebuilding efforts	Survivor agency, rebuilding, community participation	Moderate

Religious Context in Disaster Reporting

Religious framing was a prominent feature of Serambi Indonesia's disaster coverage. Many articles presented disasters as divine tests or warnings from God, encouraging readers to reflect on their actions and seek moral or spiritual redemption[28]. Religious framing often appeared in stories marking anniversaries of past disasters, particularly the 2004 tsunami, with articles emphasizing the need for repentance and moral reflection.

In contrast, Radar Sulteng used religious framing sparingly. While there were occasional references to divine intervention and calls for spiritual reflection, these were less frequent and less central to the overall narrative[31]. This suggests that while religion may play a role in shaping the public's understanding of disaster events in Central Sulawesi, it is not as dominant a framing device as it is in Aceh.

Table 5. Religious Framing in Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng

Newspaper	Religious Framing	Key Themes	Frequency of Mention
Serambi Indonesia	Divine tests and warnings	Repentance, moral reflection, divine intervention	High
Radar Sulteng	Moderate use of religious framing	Spiritual reflection, divine intervention	Low

Implications for Disaster Communication and Media Roles

The findings from this analysis suggest that local media play a critical role in shaping public perceptions

of disaster events and recovery. Both Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng emphasize the importance of government response, community resilience, and victim narratives[31], but they do so in ways that reflect their local contexts and editorial priorities.

For Serambi Indonesia, the critical framing of government responses and the emphasis on personal victimization align with the newspaper's role as a “watchdog” and its commitment to holding authorities accountable. This critical stance can help foster public engagement and demand for better disaster preparedness and response. On the other hand, Radar Sulteng's more positive framing of government actions and focus on recovery efforts can contribute to community optimism and a sense of progress, which are essential for long-term resilience.

Both newspapers' use of human-interest stories and religious framing underscores the importance of these elements in disaster communication. By drawing on emotional narratives and religious interpretations [32], the media can influence public attitudes toward disaster recovery, preparedness, and mitigation efforts.

This study highlights the diverse framing strategies used by Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng in disaster reporting. These findings contribute to the broader understanding of how local media outlets shape disaster communication and influence public perceptions of disaster events and recovery [33]. By examining government response, community resilience, victim narratives, and religious contexts, the study provides valuable insights into the roles of media in disaster risk reduction and management. The use of framing techniques such as empathy, critical analysis, and recovery-oriented narratives has important implications for improving disaster communication strategies and fostering community resilience.

CONCLUSIONS

This study provides a comprehensive analysis of disaster coverage in two local media outlets, Serambi Indonesia and Radar Sulteng, focusing on their framing of government response, community resilience, human interest narratives, and religious contexts in the aftermath of disasters. The key conclusion of this research is that while both media outlets covered similar themes, their framing strategies were shaped by local contexts, editorial priorities, and the media's role within their respective regions. Serambi Indonesia emphasized critical portrayals of government responses, victimization, and religious reflections, whereas Radar Sulteng adopted a more positive framing, highlighting government progress and community-driven recovery efforts.

The findings underscore the significant role local media play in shaping public perception and understanding of disasters. By focusing on human interest stories, community resilience, and religious framing, the media can influence how the public engages with disaster management efforts, helping foster both a sense of responsibility and collective action. Importantly, the media's role as both a critical watchdog and a facilitator of optimism reflects the diverse ways disaster communication is approached.

The study also illustrates the importance of framing in disaster reporting, demonstrating how the selection and emphasis of certain themes—such as government failures or successes, and the resilience of individuals or communities—can profoundly affect public perception and disaster response strategies. These findings are consistent with previous research on the role of media in disaster communication, while also providing new insights into the specific framing strategies employed by local media in Indonesia.

Despite these contributions, the study has certain limitations. It only analyzed two local media outlets, which may not fully represent the diversity of disaster coverage across Indonesia or in other countries with similar contexts. Future research could expand the scope to include other local and national media outlets, allowing for a more comprehensive comparison of framing strategies across different regions. Additionally, future studies could explore how the framing of disasters evolves over time, particularly in long-term recovery phases, to understand the media's role in sustaining community resilience.

In conclusion, this research highlights the significant role of media in disaster communication, particularly in local contexts where media outlets play a vital role in shaping public understanding and response. Further studies should continue to explore the evolving relationship between the media, government, and communities in disaster-prone areas to improve disaster risk reduction and response strategies.

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