Framing Indonesian Women Leaders During the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Mass Media

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ABSTRACT
The reality of women in political leadership is constructed by the mass media, which is then conveyed to the public. Often, the media places women as sexual objects that focus on body shape. On the other hand, the media has the power to influence public opinion, which raises the question of how the media sees women in dealing with crises. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has become a challenge for leaders globally, including women leaders in Indonesia. For this reason, this study focuses on the framing of the handling of COVID-19 by female regional leaders in the Detik.com media in the period March 2, 2020 – September 30, 2021. This study seeks to find out how the framing of female regional leaders in handling COVID-19 in the Detik.com media. The aim is to see how Detik.com media frames women regional leaders in handling COVID-19. This study used a qualitative approach to reality construction and framing theory. Meanwhile, the method employed framing with the analytical model of Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki. The research analysis technique utilized four basic structures: syntax, script, thematic, and rhetorical. For validity, triangulation of data sources was used by comparing the findings from Detik.com with other sources, such as books, journals, the internet, and others. The study results revealed that the framing of female regional leaders by Detik.com contained gender stereotypes and marginalization. In addition, this study also found that women's feminine traits were useful in handling COVID-19. The significance of the research is to show the reality of the media as a result of selection, construction, and reconstruction so that the public must be more critical in receiving information.

Keywords: COVID-19, Framing, Gender, Regional Leader, Women.

1. INTRODUCTION

Women who run for regional heads are still very few compared to men. It can be seen in the contestation of the 2020 regional head election, where five women were running for the governor, 26 for mayors, and 128 for regents. Meanwhile, 45 men ran for governor, 126 for mayors and 1,102 for regents [1]. The data indicate that women have not participated in politics much, especially as regional heads. In fact, the leadership of women who occupy regional head positions is expected to know more about women, children, and family issues so that, in the world of politics, women are expected to appear as regional heads, such as governors, mayors, or regents, and not only in parliament [2].

In India, women as legislators are more active in speaking out on behalf of women and children and are more focused on rehabilitating victims [3]. In terms of being a leader, 2020 has been a challenge for leaders worldwide. It is due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a global problem experienced by many countries [4].

The spread of COVID-19 cases to various regions globally has occurred since it was first confirmed on December 29, 2019, to be precise, in Wuhan, China [5]. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, the first case was announced on March 2, 2020, four months after China's first case [6]. The case of COVID-19 then increased considerably in several other countries, and Joko Widodo, as the President of Indonesia, asked regional heads to work hard and seriously in handling it [7].

In handling the pandemic, women's leadership and communication styles are empathetic and more preventive. These characteristics are evidence of success in controlling the crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic [4]. Female leaders also show positive progress in controlling COVID-19 [8]; in countries with female heads of government, the percentage of deaths from the pandemic was 5.4%. Meanwhile, for male-led countries, the percentage was 7.0% [9]. From these data, the percentage of deaths was lower in countries led by women heads of government than men since countries led by women are qualitatively different from men [10].

1.1. Stereotypes of Female Politicians

Women in political leadership are often underestimated, and it is not something new. In addition, double standards and stereotypes are always given to female politicians [11]. Furthermore, in media coverage, women in politics often encounter gender biases perpetuating stereotypical narratives [12].

Even more, British newspapers often construct gendered, stereotyped, and essential women leaders, even though they are successful in several professions [13]. Meanwhile, in Indonesia, research related to the framing of female leaders, namely Tri Rismaharini, as Mayor of Surabaya by Detik.com and Tempo.co showed that reporting was still gender-stereotyped and often associated with the feminine, emotional, and domestic women [14]. Media coverage that emphasized gender in politics also accepted Hillary Clinton as the 2016 United States Presidential nominee, although she was also described as an established candidate. It denotes that media coverage of politics often reinforces gender norms [15].

Moreover, the media displays what men and women should do and their relationships. These relationships show that men are independent, powerful, and sex subjects, while women are dependent, powerless, and sex objects [16]. It is also inseparable from the existing patriarchal culture. In addition, women also experience marginalization. Because of the patriarchy, women have an image and position that does not have autonomy and independence in various fields, including politics. Although the number of women involved in the public sphere has increased in its development, their representation and participation in provincial, national, and government legislatures are still low [17].

Efforts to win female candidates in the regional head election are also considered to have greater difficulty than men since political culture is more accustomed to male leaders than female ones [18]. Even more, in situations of minimal political information, the public prefers male candidates over female candidates because of the belief that male leadership is much better [19]. It is coupled with the assumption that the world of politics at a practical level belongs to men. Furthermore, the community still holds the view that places women in the domestic sphere [20].

On the one hand, Indonesia has ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), through Law No. 7 of 1984, which was continued in Law No. 39 of 1999 on Human Rights, Law No.28 on Political Parties, and Law No. 7 of 2017 concerning General Elections [21]. In addition, Article 27 of the 1945 Constitution has guaranteed equality regarding the position between men and women [22]. However, legal regulations related to equal rights are not followed by equal opportunities for women to enter politics. This statement is supported by the discrimination experienced by women. In terms of

recruiting cadres and members, women are the number two choice for a political party. In addition, women are considered unable to increase the electability of political parties [23].

1.2. Media Coverage of Female Politicians

The existence of mass media can strengthen the socio-cultural construction, which places women from the side of affection and marginality and influences the image of women's roles in politics [24]. Besides, gender inequality in society is constructed by online media [25]. Media coverage in conveying events that include the dominant party will provide a bad framing for the less dominant party so that women, farmers, and laborers are often portrayed badly since they are less dominant parties [26].

As the less dominant party, women and children are still considered unpopular issues and do not sell. Therefore, news related to women and children is always oriented to things that make a scene. Sexy, beautiful, controlling, rude, and others are often used and highlighted in the news [27].

Also, women are identified with sexuality. It is also a woman's specialty used as a commercial facility [28]. The majority of the media make women sexual objects [29]. Furthermore, women in media coverage are also still focused on body shape. It can be seen from the title *"Five Beautiful Regents and Most Beautiful Mayors in Indonesia"* and others. On the other hand, according to the Ministry of Women's Empowerment and Child Protection (KPPPA), the mass media plays an important role in supporting gender equality in society as it should be [30]. The media is also the fourth pillar, which has a crucial role in providing information, controlling power, and public education [31].

In reporting on women politicians, the media still focuses on things that are not related to issues and can harm women in elections [11]. It is in line with the reporting of female politicians on the online news portals Detik.com and Kompas.com in a study. The research uncovered that female legislative candidates dared to run and enter politics because of their popularity [32]. In addition, a study by Mercy Ette entitled *"Where are the Women? Evaluating Visibility of Nigerian Female Politicians in News Media Space"* explained that women's involvement in politics was not reflected in media coverage. Meanwhile, the depiction reinforces marginalization and assumes that "only men do politics" [33].

Furthermore, in research on framing related to female politicians in parliament in the media Voaindonesia.com and Mediaindonesia.com, the research has proven that public trust was low on female politicians. It was due to minimal access to positions and the view that women are not competent and inconsistent [34]. This situation aligns with the assumption that women in politics will make a difference when they represent the perspectives, needs,

and interests of their people so that it is not easy for women to take up space through the voice of society that gives them public trust [31].

Therefore, this research is vital because of the media's strong position in influencing public opinion [31]. As a means of conveying news and an overview of assessments related to various matters, the media has a role in shaping public opinion. In addition, it can become a pressure group for an idea, which then can represent and put it in a more empirical context [26]. The media also have the power to shape people's views on issues beyond personal experience. Consequently, without the media, voters who do not meet in person are unlikely to have any information [33].

With this influence, it is hoped that the media will provide information on women politicians and change the public's perspective to a gender perspective since the media also influences the image of women's roles in politics [24]. In addition, a positive media image is to inspire female leaders and counter negative stereotypes [35]. Furthermore, the use of regional heads themselves in this study is based on the importance of local leadership since it is one of the stages towards national leadership [36].

1.3. Reality Construction and Media Framing

This research used the theory of reality construction and framing. These theories were employed to explain the framing of reality by the media through selecting and highlighting certain aspects. Reality construction focuses on processes related to events, values, people, and ideas formed in a way that leads to the construction of a larger reality [37]. These theories also analyze how ideology or media constructs facts [26].

Moreover, the framing of a particular event is related to journalists' points of view and thoughts, which are conveyed to readers through news texts. Every journalist has a different perspective in viewing an event [38]. This view can be seen from the construction of events compiled by journalists in the form of news texts. The text or news narration certainly contains a message [39]. The framing model used by the researchers was Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki, who have the view that every news item has a useful frame for the organization of ideas. This framing tool is divided into four major structures: syntactic, scripted, thematic, and rhetorical [26].

The syntactic structure is how journalists organize facts. Observed units are headlines, leads, background information, quotes, sources, statements, and closings. Next, the script structure is how journalists tell the facts related to the completeness of the news by observing the 5W+1H arrangement. The thematic structure is how journalists write news related to details, sentence intent, nominalization between sentences, coherence, sentence forms, and pronouns. Units are observed in paragraphs and propositions. Meanwhile, the rhetorical structure is

how journalists suppress facts related to lexicon, graphic, metaphor, and presupposition. The units analyzed are in the form of words, idioms, pictures/photos, and graphics [26].

In this research, the news becomes the object to be framed. According to researchers, news not only presents information but also provides an understanding of an event to the public. News has moved beyond seeking information, and journalists not only convey facts but also help understand, analyze, interpret, and comment on the data circulating [40].

Meanwhile, the researchers used online news media because it is the primary source of the younger generation in obtaining information, according to the Maverick Indonesia survey. The survey results revealed that 85% of respondents received information from online news portals. Meanwhile, from other sources, 84% were social media, 43% were conversation applications, 16% were television, and 6% were radio. Respondents from the survey aged 18-32 years totaled 453 people, with domicile in Jakarta and Bandung. The survey was conducted on September 22 – October 8, 2020 [41].

In choosing an online news portal, the researchers chose Detik.com to see how women's regional leaders are framed in dealing with COVID-19. The reason is that the news portal has the longest duration of visits and the most links to other sites, making it more popular, according to Alexa.com.

Furthermore, a previous study conducted by Loes Aaldering and Van Der Pas entitled *"Political Leadership in the Media: Gender Bias in Leader Stereotypes During Campaign and Routine Times".* In that research carried out in the Dutch media, it was shown that the communicative skills of male party leaders were discussed more often than female party leaders [42]. Another study entitled *"Gendering Leadership in Vietnamese Media: A Role Congruity Study on News Content and Journalists Perception of Female and Male Leaders"* revealed that even though women are in leadership positions, the media tend not to cover their expertise [43].

Meanwhile, in a study in Romanian media by Viorela and Aurora Iorgoveanu entitled *"Politics Still on the Beaten Path: How Gender Impacted the Coverage of Male and Female Romanian Candidates for European Office,"* the study showed that gender bias occurred on the part of the media. Female candidates often appear in the form of trivialization and framework issues, and the quantity and quality of coverage are detrimental to women politicians [44].

From the explanation above, the researchers are interested in examining how Indonesian female regional leaders frame, in handling COVID-19 in the Detik.com media from March 2, 2020, to September 30, 2021. This study used the framing model of Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki. The aim is to determine the framing of Detik.com media toward female regional leaders in

handling COVID-19. The researchers assume that in constructing the role of Indonesian women regional leaders in handling COVID-19, Detik.com media does not highlight issues, achievements, competencies, a gender bias and places women leaders in a marginal position. It should also be understood that Detik.com media is one of the online news portals in Indonesia, which certainly has its perspective in viewing an event.

As a result, this research is crucial because it can provide an understanding to the public regarding the reality presented by Detik.com, a reality from the framing of events handling COVID-19 by female regional leaders. The public is expected to understand more and more that reality is a social construction created by individuals [45]. In other words, the reality is not formed immediately but through a process built by individuals, which other individuals then accept. Thus, from this understanding, it is also hoped that the audience will be more critical in receiving information.

Apart from being useful for the public concerning receiving information, this research is also beneficial for women as leaders since it provides explanations regarding the right response when facing a crisis and knowing how to maximize the inherent nature of women who were initially considered weak to become a force that has an impact on the wider community.

2. METHOD

This research used a qualitative approach with constructivism paradigm. Constructivism is socially reality-oriented, which holds that the beliefs and meanings people create and use fundamentally shape reality [46].

The subject of this research was the news site Detik.com. Meanwhile, the research object was news texts related to female regional leaders handling COVID-19 on Detik.com from March 2, 2020, to September 30, 2021. The research stage began with collecting all the news for that period, classifying it, and analyzing it.

This study employed primary data, namely textual data obtained from the online news site Detik.com related to female regional leaders in handling COVID-19 for the period March 2, 2020 - September 30, 2021. Meanwhile, the researchers used supporting literature for secondary data, such as books, similar journals, and the internet under research. This secondary data is complementary, which complements and clarifies the primary data.

For primary data collection techniques, the researchers utilized documentation. The researchers collected news on the online site Detik.com for research. For secondary data, the collection technique was a literature study in the form of supporting literature.

The population of this research was all news published by Detik.com on March 2, 2020 - September 30, 2021. Furthermore, purposive sampling was used for the sampling technique. Several criteria were set to determine the sample to obtain data that represented the problems studied. The researchers determined the following criteria based on purposive sampling: news with the main object of female regional leaders in handling COVID-19 published by Detik.com during that period.

The analysis technique utilized framing with the model of Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki. The framing has four major structures to be analyzed: syntactic structure, script structure, thematic structure, and rhetorical structure. Furthermore, related to the validity technique, triangulation of data sources was used. This study then compared the findings from Detik.com with other sources, such as books, journals, the internet, and others.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research used news published by Detik.com by setting eight news samples according to pre-determined criteria. Following are the results and discussion of this research.

3.1. Results

For the first story, in the syntactic structure analysis, the headline used by journalists was *"The Regent of Sragen Confides, It Is Difficult to Spend PPE, Has Money but No Goods"*. The headline highlighted the Sragen Regent who poured out her heart regarding the handling of COVID-19. Meanwhile, the lead highlighted the difficulties faced by the regents in their efforts to deal with COVID-19. In addition, in closing, journalists wrote an excerpt from the statement of the Sragen Regent related to the obstacles experienced in handling COVID-19, such as the absence of technical instructions for the mechanism for providing subsidies. Furthermore, in the script structure, the 5W+1H elements were complete. Journalists emphasized the elements of *what* and *who*. In the *what* element, the journalist explained the Sragen Regent, who vented her anxiety in dealing with COVID-19. Meanwhile, in the *who* element, the journalist emphasized the identity of Kusdinar Untung Sukowati as Sragen Regent.

For the thematic structure analysis in this report, the journalist emphasized the difficulties faced by the Sragen Regent in handling COVID-19, namely that there were four out of nine paragraphs explained the difficulties of the Sragen Regent. In a rhetorical structure, the Sragen Regent photo was shown to support the news.

In the second article, in the syntactic structure analysis, the journalist wrote, *"Unwilling to Quarantine Home Comers, Sragen Regent Chooses to Deploy a Village Task Force"*. In the news headlines, the journalist emphasized that the Regent did not like the quarantine policy for home comers. The news lead emphasized the headline and the policy. Meanwhile, in the closing element, the journalist highlighted the handling of COVID-19 in Sambungmacan Village, Sragen Regency.

In the script structure analysis, which is related to journalists telling the facts in this news, the elements of *what* and *why* were highlighted. In the *what* element, the journalist highlighted the Regent's policy in the news. The *why* element then explained why the Regent chose not to make a quarantine location for home comers since it was considered dangerous.

In this news, related to the thematic structure, the journalist highlighted the readiness of the COVID-19 Task Force from the Sambungmacan Village. There were three paragraphs containing information from the village head supported by the next four paragraphs related to an explanation of the performance of the task force. In thematic analysis, this news has a clear and good purpose, sentence form, and coherence. The rhetorical element showed the Sragen Regent photo.

Furthermore, in the third story, in the syntactic structure analysis, the journalist used the headline in the form of *"Hand Sanitizer with the Regent's Sticker Makes an Upheaval, Klaten DPRD: Unethical."* Meanwhile, the news lead explained the response of the Klaten DPRD (Regional People's Representative Assembly) members related to the incident and emphasized it in the headline. The source element in the news reporters chose Triyono as the Deputy Chair of the Klaten DPRD and Darmadi as the Chair of the PAN faction of the Klaten DPRD. Furthermore, for the analysis of the script elements related to 5W+1H, the journalist highlighted the *what* element. The journalist highlighted the *what* element of the statement by the Deputy Chair of the Klaten DPRD, who considered that the hand sanitizer with the regent's sticker was unethical.

Then, the thematic element analysis highlighted responses in the form of statements from Triyono as the Deputy Chair of the Klaten DPRD and Darmadi as the Chair of the Klaten PAN faction. In this report, the two figures were featured in nine out of 14 paragraphs. Meanwhile, the Klaten Regent was only one paragraph in the closing section. Furthermore, the rhetorical structure analysis showed a bottle of hand sanitizer with a regent sticker to emphasize the news.

Figure 1. Hand sanitizer with the Klaten Regent's sticker

In the syntactic structure analysis, the fourth story used the headline *"Viral Action of the Beautiful Luwu Utara Regent Who Is Willing to "Off-Road" for the Sake of Delivering Basic Food."* In the news lead section, journalists explained the conditions in the field related to difficult road access for basic food distribution. Next, the background information was obtained by a journalist from netizen uploads and social media of the Regent of Indah Putri Indriani. Furthermore, for the script structure analysis, namely the completeness of the 5W+1H elements in the news, *where* and *when* elements were not explained in detail. Meanwhile, the elements highlighted were *what* and *who*. The journalists explained what happened by highlighting and comparing the physical and the actions of the Regent of Indah. In the *who* element, Indah Putri Indriani was explained as the North Luwu Regent.

Through the thematic structure analysis, the repetition of news was found related to explaining the physical appearance and unusual actions of the North Luwu Regent. Four paragraphs explained things related to her appearance and actions. In the rhetorical structure in the news, a photo of the North Luwu Regent was shown riding a trail bike.

Figure 2. The North Luwu Regent Riding a Trail Bike

Furthermore, in the syntactic structure analysis, the fifth story used the headline in the form of *"Bogor Regent Angry and Disappointed Rhoma Irama Still on Stage: Breaking the Commitment."* The news lead explained the reasons behind the angry and disappointed Bogor Regent. As a source in this news, the journalist chose Ade Yasin as the Bogor Regent. Meanwhile, in the script structure, the journalist highlighted the elements of *what* and *why*. In the element of *what*, the regent's response to Rhoma Irama's actions was explained. The element of *why* then explained why the Regent felt angry and disappointed.

Furthermore, in the thematic element, the report explained the reasons and background of the problem in five of the 12 paragraphs. In a rhetorical element, the news featured a photo of the Bogor Regent being interviewed.

For the sixth news, in the syntactic structure analysis, the headline *"About Risma who Prostrated Twice While Crying in Front of IDI."* The background information was obtained during the Indonesian Doctors Association

(IDI) hearings of East Java and Surabaya. In the script structure, the emphasis was on the elements of *what* and *who*. In the *what* element, the news explained that Risma was prostrating and crying in front of IDI. Meanwhile, the *who* element highlighted Tri Risma as the Surabaya Mayor.

For the thematic structure analysis, 14 paragraphs explained the chronology and causes of events. Five paragraphs explained the response from dr. Brahmin Askandar as Chair of IDI Surabaya. Furthermore, the rhetorical structure analysis showed Risma prostrating and surrounded by audience members who helped her.

Figure 3. The Surabaya Mayor Bows Down During Hearings

In the seventh news, in the syntactic structure, the headline was *"Governor Khofifah Apologizes for the Handling of COVID-19 in East Java Has Not Been Satisfactory."* The news lead explained the East Java Governor's apology related to the handling of COVID-19. In closing, a statement from the governor was written regarding her hopes and prayers. The script structure in reporting emphasized the *what* and *who* elements. In the *what* element, the journalist explained Governor Khofifah's apology because the handling of COVID-19 has not satisfied everyone. In the *who* element, the journalist explained the identity of the resource person, namely Khofifah Indar Parawansa as East Java Governor.

Furthermore, in the thematic structure analysis, the news emphasized the apology of the East Java Governor with details of three repetitions of a total of nine paragraphs. Meanwhile, the rhetorical element featured a photo of the East Java Governor chairing the meeting.

In the eighth news, the syntactic structure used the headline *"Up to PPKM Level 3, Pekalongan Regent Complains of Rare Vaccine Stock."* Furthermore, the lead in the news highlights the rising PPKM (restrictions on community activities) level and the complaining nature of the Pekalongan Regent because vaccines are scarce. The background information was obtained by the

journalist from the information from the Health Service and the Pekalongan Regent. In the script structure, the journalist highlighted the elements of *what* and *who*. In the element of *what*, the journalist explained the conditions in Pekalongan Regency related to the increase in PPKM levels and vaccination targets. The element *who* contained an explanation of the identity of the Head of the Health Service and the Regent of Pekalongan.

Furthermore, the thematic structure analysis emphasized the regent's complaint about the scarce vaccine stock that caused the increase in the level of PPKM. In detail, the journalist explained the reasons for the increase in the PPKM level in three paragraphs. In addition, related to the explanation of efforts to find vaccine stocks, the journalist wrote in one paragraph. In the next analysis on the rhetorical element, the news featured a photo of Fadia Arafiq as the Pekalongan Regent.

3.2. Discussion

From the research results described, two interesting findings were obtained: the stereotype and marginalization of female regional leaders and the feminine nature of women in leadership.

3.2.1. Stereotypes and Marginalization of Female Regional Leaders

A stereotype is a generalization related to the nature of men and women, stating that men are independent and rational, while women are dependent and irrational. Gender stereotypes make women synonymous with various forms of weakness. As the image of women as weak, emotional, and passive creatures, the stereotype of women is formed as illogical and subjective individuals [47]. In this case, the mass media has a role in shaping women's stereotypes [48]. Related to the stereotypes of women that develop in society, this study tries to see how Detik.com frames female regional leaders in handling COVID-19. Here is the discussion:

Detik.com used the vocabulary to confide in the news title *"The Regent of Sragen Confides, It Is Difficult to Spend PPE, Has Money but No Goods,"* published on March 30, 2020. Detik.com emphasized the word confide in the Sragen Regent, conveying her anxiety in handling COVID-19. The use of vocabularies, such as sad, tears, crying, and confide, indicates negative stereotypes of women brought into public spaces [49]. In this regard, most studies have shown that the most important news value is negativism [50]. As it should be, the condition of women can be reported by choosing a vocabulary that can

increase electability and build self-image. Because the media has a big role in shaping a certain image and mindset of the readers, women can be shown in important roles, including in politics [47].

In subsequent reports, Detik.com also used the vocabulary of *emoh* (unwilling) in the news entitled *"Unwilling to Quarantine Home Comers, Sragen Regent Chooses to Deploy a Village Task Force".* In the headline and lead, the use of the word *emoh*, meaning 'do not want to', was highlighted. The context in this news was the policy of the Sragen Regent, who refused to make a location for the quarantine of home comers. The emphasis on the word *emoh* was used to attract readers, but it can create stereotypes for women as leaders. In this report, women were described as rebellious and stubborn. Detik.com should be able to use gender-based coverage with better vocabulary selection.

In previous research, the Romanian media have in common with this finding that there is a gender bias, where women often appear in the form of disparagement that can be detrimental. Meanwhile, the difference is that previous research compared female and male candidates in the media coverage collection, while this finding focuses on the framing of female regional heads only.

In the next report, Detik.com wrote the headline *"Bogor Regent Angry and Disappointed Rhoma Irama Still on Stage: Breaking the Commitment."* published on June 20, 2020. In this report, Detik.com emphasized the use of angry and disappointed vocabularies. In the context of the news, the Bogor Regent was disappointed by the actions of Rhoma Irama, who sang at the celebration. The emphasis on the angry vocabulary in the news led to strengthening the grumpy female stereotype. Often, the media depicts the "perfect" woman as a loving, forgiving, compassionate woman and forgets the nature of anger, irritation, and fatigue [51] so that when these traits are highlighted in female regional leaders, it creates a negative perspective. The media should be able to focus on reporting on the human side of how female regional leaders deal with COVID-19.

In addition, the highlighting of the Bogor Regent character was also supported from each paragraph in the news. The paragraphs were dominated by the Regent's statements from interviews conducted by the journalist. As the only source in the news, the media explored the regent's response. Thus, the nature of anger and disappointment got more space, and the human side was not shown at all.

Furthermore, the stereotype of physical appearance was not missed by the media, as in the news entitled *"Viral Action of the Beautiful Luwu Utara Regent Who Is Willing to "Off-Road" for the Sake of Delivering Basic Food"* published on June 20, 2020. In the syntactic analysis, the word beautiful was highlighted in headlines and news leads. The word refers to an attractive physical appearance. Meanwhile, the context of the news was in the form of the regent's activity delivering basic necessities to people affected by the pandemic.

This finding has similarities with previous research in the Romanian media that the news of a female candidate in an article accentuated her appearance by using the word beautiful [44]. In a report, the media also puts forward the physical appearance of women rather than the quality and capability they have to attract the audience's attention [52].

The condition should be that if the media's framing of events focuses on issues, it can benefit the regent as a female regional head who cares about the condition of her community. It is undeniable that the audience's focus depends on how the message is framed [53], so it is hoped that the framing of female regional leaders will highlight their achievements and capabilities. It is expected to increase the chances of women occupying leadership positions. In a study by Eunike, it was found that the more women occupy strategic positions in the bureaucracy, the more gender-responsive development and policies are [54]. In addition, it should be realized that the lack of women in positions of power and authority also strengthens hegemonic masculinity at the institutional level and maintains the domination of men over women [55].

Furthermore, in addition to stereotyping, the discrimination experienced by women is marginalization, as in the report entitled *"Hand Sanitizer with the Regent's Sticker Makes an Upheaval, Klaten DPRD: Unethical."* In the syntactic structure, headlines and leads were shown, emphasizing the Klaten DPRD response in the form of unethical phrases. In the element of sources in the news, the DPRD members and the Faction Chair were selected to provide their responses. Meanwhile, the Klaten Regent was not chosen as a source. Furthermore, in the thematic structure analysis, it was shown that 13 of 14 paragraphs contained responses from officials who considered the action unethical. Also, only one last paragraph mentioned the Regent's response. In this case, Sri Mulyani, as the Klaten Regent, was not given equal space to explain.

In addition, the selection of images in the news featured a hand sanitizer with the Klaten Regent's sticker. It confirmed the news and further cornered Sri Mulyani.

It can be said that the Klaten Regent was marginalized in the news. This condition has also been explained in previous research that women still experience marginalization in terms of media coverage [52]. Another study showed digital media in Argentina that in gender reporting, there was an unequal distribution related to the theme of disparity as a source between men and women [56]. Furthermore, research on media in Vietnam revealed that journalists preferred male sources since they are considered better on all topics. Male leaders are considered more intelligent, authoritative, and decisive [43]. In fact, news sources are the most important factor in determining what information consumers receive [57]. Thus, news sources should be balanced, including reporting concerning female regional leaders so that there is no gender bias, which causes the gap between men and women to become stronger.

3.2.2. Feminine Traits of Women in Leadership

Feminine is a term often applied to women because of their gentle and passive affectionate nature, in which they are placed not superior to men [58]. This study found that feminine traits were used in the reporting of female regional leaders by Detik.com.

In the title *"About Risma who Prostrated Twice While Crying in Front of IDI,"* published on June 30, 2020, the context of the news was Risma's apology as Surabaya Mayor at that time to IDI Surabaya and PERSI. Risma, who cried and prostrated, reaped the pros and cons in society. This action is an expression of guilt because the protection provided has not been maximized.

Risma displayed feminine traits in her actions. As explained in previous research, international women leaders have succeeded in utilizing the role of domestic women to their advantage in the political field. Roles, such as caring for the sick to display other forms of feminine protectionism, benefit female leaders [59].

Still, in the same report, an image of Mayor Risma was shown bowing down and surrounded by audience members. A prostrate apology represents a great sense of guilt and great responsibility. Risma apologized after hearing complaints from the medical side. It can be said that Risma's actions are a form of leaders who are people-oriented or pay attention to the needs and interests of members.

These findings have similarities with research comparing women-led countries, namely Germany, New Zealand, and Taiwan, in handling COVID-19. All three have leadership characteristics from the feminine side in the form of calm and communication style, empathy, and people-oriented concern. Such leadership can be one of the keys to successfully controlling the COVID-19 crisis [4].

Next is the use of the "apologize" clause, which became the focus of the news with the title *"Governor Khofifah Apologizes for the Handling of COVID-19 in East Java Has Not Been Satisfactory."* The news highlighted Khofifah as the East Java Governor who apologized, which Detik.com emphasized in the headline and lead. In addition, the apology sentence in the news was repeated in three paragraphs.

An apology made by the East Java Governor was also made by the German Chancellor, Angela Merkel. She apologized because the COVID-19 death toll had soared [18]. Apologies are part of getting the message across. The messages of government leaders managed to influence citizens' reactions significantly [60].

In a study that analyzed the use of the language of leaders in several countries in speech related to COVID-19, it was shown that the rhetoric used between male and female leaders was different. Men tend to use "war rhetoric" as propaganda, while women use personal appeal and empathy [55]. These results have similarities with the researcher's findings, namely Khofifah's apology showing the use of empathetic rhetoric. On the other hand, the hallmark of femininity, namely being emotional through empathy, attracts a positive response and can encourage policy implementation [4].

From the description above, this study uncovered that female regional leaders got stereotypes in the news in the Detik.com media. Thus, this research is vital to show the public that the media constructs reality. The media also has its way of looking at an event. Furthermore, the feminine nature inherent in women could positively impact handling COVID-19. Approaches that use these characteristics by local female leaders are an advantage and differentiator from male leaders.

This research is useful for the public in the form of knowledge and understanding related to the construction of news and reality. The public must be more critical and not receive information completely. The public must also see reality, not only from the point of view of the media and journalists. Furthermore, this research contributes to adding useful literature for women leaders regarding the response to crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, the feminine nature of women is an advantage that can be utilized to deal with COVID-19 more deeply.

4. CONCLUSION

The purpose of the study was to find out how Detik.com, as one of the online news portals in Indonesia, framed female regional leaders in handling COVID-19. Based on the study results, two things were analyzed. The first was the stereotyping and marginalization of women regional leaders, such as emphasizing things that were not focused on issues. Detik.com emphasized using vocabularies, such as confide, complaining, beautiful, angry, and disappointed in female regional leaders so that stereotypes related to women are getting stronger. In fact, the media should use pronouncing words that can improve the image of women as leaders. In this case, Detik.com, as an online news portal in framing the handling of COVID-19 by female regional leaders, also still showed gender bias, including marginalization in reporting women regional leaders in terms of source

selection. Here, the media should be balanced in choosing news sources.

Second, the feminine nature of women's leadership is not always bad. A leader, who sincerely apologized and cried because she realized her mistakes, is not always bad. Rather, it can cool the atmosphere. Based on the results of this study, further research can be carried out by analyzing the audience to complete the study.

The researchers also understand the many research limitations, such as being limited to reporting from one media. Research also only focused on the use of texts and has not provided a broader and deeper understanding. For this reason, further research can be conducted, not limited only to female regional leaders but also female leaders who serve in the central government. In addition, interviews with journalists and media companies are also needed to complete the findings related to the ideology adopted. The hope is that it can provide a broader and clearer picture.

AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

Novi Setya Ningrum and Vinisa Nurul Aisyah understand the research idea. Novi Setya Ningrum designed the research, collected the data, and processed it. Vinisa Nurul Aisyah provided input from start to finish and supervised the research findings. All authors discussed the results and contributed to the final manuscript.

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