

Detik.com and Kompas.com Media Framing Regarding Reporting the Alleged Assault of a Former Indonesian Oriental Circus Performer

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze two mainstream media outlets, detik.com and kompas.com, in framing the alleged exploitation and violence against former Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) performers. The analysis was conducted using the Pan and Kosicki framing method, which encompasses four structures: syntactic, rhetorical, thematic, and narrative. Furthermore, the 5W+1H approach was used to explore the basic elements of the reporting. The results show that the two media outlets present very different narrative constructions. Detik.com emphasizes the voices of victims with a human interest approach, framing the issue in the context of conflict between institutions and individuals, and calling for state intervention through human rights institutions. In contrast, kompas.com constructs a narrative of self-defense from the institutional perspective by emphasizing historical legitimacy, visual evidence, and a rhetorical approach focused on clarifying and restoring the reputation of OCI management. These differences in framing demonstrate how the media not only convey facts but also pay attention to public perception through the choice of language structure, narrative perspective, and specific communicative objectives. This research underscores the importance of critical awareness of media framing in issues involving moral conflicts, human rights and institutional interests.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The role of mass media in this digital era is crucial, given that it is not only a transmitter of information but also an agent in shaping social reality. Today's media not only present facts but also often frame and interpret events according to specific perspectives and interests. Therefore, the media has the power to shape public opinion and public perception on issues, including those concerning humanity and social justice.

From another perspective, mass media also plays a significant role in determining the direction of progress and the maturity of society's thinking. Various issues concerning economics, politics, culture, and religion can be learned through the media. Judging by the circulation of news reports, newspapers are a form of media with significant potential for shaping public opinion (Schramm, 2019).

According to Eriyanto (in Hikmatunisa & Setiawan, 2022), one approach in communication studies that discusses how media shapes reality is framing theory. Framing is

an approach to examining how reality is shaped and constructed by the media. The end result of this process is the emergence of certain, more prominent, and recognized aspects of reality.

The phenomenon of framing makes perfect sense when discussing the issue of human exploitation, particularly involving vulnerable groups like children. Recently, the public was shocked by the emergence of news reports regarding the alleged exploitation of a former Indonesian oriental circus performer. This case highlighted the resurfacing of human rights issues in the entertainment industry involving children and adolescents. The alleged exploitation involved alleged forced labor practices, forced underage labor, and alleged violations of the basic rights of artists who should receive legal protection (Hikmatunisa & Setiawan, 2022).

This case is complex because it involves various aspects: social, legal, economic, and cultural. On the one hand, the circus has long been viewed as part of the cultural heritage and popular entertainment. However, on the other hand, allegations of exploitation suggest that behind the entertainment stage, artists, especially children, experience inhumane practices. Therefore, how the media frames and presents the news about this case is important to examine critically (Hikmatunisa & Setiawan, 2022).

The media plays a role in voicing injustice, but media framing often creates bias or inequality in reporting. In many cases, the media can position victims in a weak light by marginalizing or minimizing their experiences, or, conversely, by framing the perpetrators sympathetically and diverting attention from the essence of the exploitation itself. Therefore, it is important to analyze how mainstream media outlets like Detik.com and Kompas.com report on this issue. Are they siding with the victims, neutral, or reproducing dominant discourses that undermine their position (Hikmatunisa & Setiawan, 2022).

In general, the media has a very important role in constructing a reality that occurs. The role of the media here is as a means or forum for how a reality that has been constructed is conveyed well to the public, which of course is a reality that is full of certain interests (Hikmatunisa & Setiawan, 2022).

Indonesia has a variety of online news portals, two of which are detik.com and kompas.com, which provide national news coverage from Sabang to Merauke. The news presented by detik.com and kompas.com covers a wide range of topics, including sports, politics, economics, and socio-cultural issues. The framing used in news creation on these two platforms can influence the public's perspective as readers (Hikmatunisa & Setiawan, 2022).

Each online media outlet employs a news framing technique to present information more prominently and thus draw the public's attention. In short, news framing is one way media outlets influence public opinion toward established facts. Framing aims to influence the audience's perspective on a news story, making complex and intricate events easier to understand (Hikmatunisa & Setiawan, 2022).

Reporting on alleged abuse cases is also inseparable from the framing employed by the authors. One example is the news about the alleged abuse of a former Indonesian Oriental Circus performer. Thanks to the journalist's framing, the case attracted attention and generated numerous opinions. In shaping public opinion, online media holds full control over society's social control. The framing used by the media can also significantly impact public behavior and trust in information. One social group vulnerable to the influence of framing in abuse news is women.

Framing is an approach to examining how reality is shaped and constructed by the media. The end result of this process is the emergence of certain aspects of reality that are more prominent and recognized (Eriyanto 2022).

According to Pan and Kosicki (Eriyanto 2022), the concept of framing has two interrelated concepts. Framing, in this concept, emphasizes how a person processes information internally. Framing relates to cognitive structures and processes, how a person processes information and is expressed in a specific schema.

The sociological view looks more at how social construction of reality. There are four structures of framing devices by Pan and Kosicki, including: (1) syntactic structure, related to how journalists organize events, opinions, quotes into the general structure of the news, (2) script structure, related to how journalists tell a story, (3) thematic structure, how to express their views into sentences that form the text as a whole, (4) rhetorical structure, how journalists emphasize certain meanings to the public by using word choices, idioms, images and others (Eriyanto 2022).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

The method used in this research is qualitative-descriptive which describes an incident, event, or symptom, then described in the form of a description (Creswell, 2016), qualitative research is a type of research that aims to explore and understand the meaning of many individuals or groups of people caused by social problems.

The data collection techniques used include: 1) collecting information related to the news of alleged abuse against a former Indonesian oriental circus performer on detik.com and kompas.com. 2) observing the use of vocabulary used by detik.com and kompas.com in writing the news. The data analysis techniques used are: 1) classifying news about the alleged abuse case against a former Indonesian circus performer on the detik.com and kompas.com news portals 2) reading and identifying ideas, 3) reviewing the news using framing analysis by Zondang Pan and Gerald Kosicki, 4) describing the results of the analysis, 5) drawing conclusions from the analysis

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There are four framing device structures by Pan and Kosicki, including: (1) syntactic structure, related to how journalists arrange events, opinions, quotes into news stories, (2) script structure, related to how journalists tell a story, (3) thematic structure, how to express their opinions in sentences that form the text as a whole, (4) rhetorical structure, how journalists emphasize certain meanings to the public by using word choices, idioms, images and so on (Eriyanto, 2002).

The results of the news framing analysis of the alleged assault case of a former Indonesian Oriental Circus performer are as follows:

Analysis of news coverage of the alleged assault case of a former Indonesian oriental circus performer on Detik.com

News title: Feud between former players and the safari park, including allegations of exploitation

Syntactic structure

In a story titled "feud between former performers and the Safari Park, leading to alleged exploitation," the former circus performers were explicitly framed as the main actors. The coverage begins with a depiction of complaints filed with the Ministry of Human Rights, accompanied by emotional testimonies from former performers who allege they experienced torture, electrocution, slavery, and separation from their families. Syntactically, detik.com uses numerous direct quotes from the victims to build reader empathy, while the management's response is presented concisely and descriptively, suggesting a power imbalance.

Thematic structure

Thematically, this news focuses on human rights violations and their impact on children. The involvement of the Ministry of Human Rights strengthens the legitimacy of the victims' reports and lends political and legal weight to the issues raised. Detik also clearly separates the responsibilities of the safari park and OCI, despite their management ties.

Narrative structure

In Detik news, the story moves linearly: starting with the victim's complaint, followed by management's reaction, and ending with the possibility of further investigation. This model reinforces the construction of conflict between the individual victim and the institutional institution, leading to a more in-depth investigation.

Script structure

<i>What</i>	A number of former circus performers from the Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) at the safari park were exploited
<i>When</i>	"Yesterday, I received an audience with victims of violence, harassment, and alleged slavery. Based on the statements from the victims, all of whom are women, it is suspected that human rights violations have occurred. This incident occurred decades ago at their workplace, a circus entertainment business," said Mugiyanto, in a post on his official Instagram account, seen Wednesday (April 16, 2025).
<i>Where</i>	They came to complain about the alleged exploitation, which is currently being investigated by the Ministry of Human Rights.
<i>Who</i>	"a number of former Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) performers at Taman Safari Indonesia..."
<i>Why</i>	"They admitted to experiencing violence and alleged slavery while being OCI players."
<i>How</i>	"The Ministry of Human Rights will summon the parties suspected of being involved in this act of violence to hear their statements in order to take appropriate steps to fulfill the victims' rights and prevent a recurrence of the same case," he said.

News title: TSI and OCI to the Ministry of Human Rights to encourage the circus case to be resolved amicably

Syntactic structure

Syntactically, this article uses language that emphasizes cooperation and calm. Phrases such as "appreciation if this case is resolved peacefully," "restorative justice approach," and "pre-mediation" emphasize mediation, not confrontation. The script's flow emphasizes the dialogic relationship between TSI, OCI, and the Ministry of Human Rights. Technical details such as compensation amounts and tracing the origins of the circus performers are presented as part of the fact-checking process, not as threats.

Thematic structure

This article highlights the ideas of reconciliation, institutional responsibility, and mitigating legal measures. Its main theme is amicable resolution, rather than punishment or dispute resolution. This is evident in the statement that Toko Bali is a family, "they are like his younger siblings," according to OCI founder Jansen, who demonstrates an emotional yet conciliatory attitude.

Rhetorical structure

Words like "happy if it's resolved peacefully" and "support for mediation by the Ministry of Human Rights" have a calming effect and build a positive image for OCI and TSI. The language attempts to defuse criticism, reassure the public, and affirm the corporate and state institutions' sincere intention to resolve the conflict through a persuasive approach.

Narrative structure

In the detik.com article, the narrative is constructed from the outset as an attempt at mediation and a peaceful resolution. OCI and TSI's attorneys, Hamdan Zoelva and Bambang Widjojanto, were highlighted for visiting the Ministry of Human Rights with the intention of resolving the alleged exploitation of the former circus performer amicably. Dialogue with the Director General of Human Rights Services showed that both parties presented their construction of the facts in the hope of a peaceful resolution without formal legal proceedings.

Script structure

<i>what</i>	"..., they are pushing for the alleged exploitation case filed by the former OCI player to be resolved amicably."
<i>when</i>	"... Munafrizal Manan, to journalists at the Ministry of Human Rights, Wednesday (7/5/2025)"
<i>where</i>	"... said Munafrizal at a press conference at the Ministry of Human Rights, Kuningan, South Jakarta."
<i>who</i>	"Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI)'s legal representative, Hamdan Zoelva, and PT Taman Safari Indonesia (TSI)'s legal representative, Bambang Widjojanto (BW)..."
<i>why</i>	<p>Meanwhile, Bambang is pushing for a family resolution, as TSI has been implicated in the case.</p> <p>"We want to push for the process (family resolution), why is that? Because the TSI is the one most impacted by this entire process," he said.</p>

<i>how</i>	<p>The Ministry of Human Rights also offered several options for resolving this case. These include restorative justice approaches and mediation. The Ministry of Human Rights, he said, is willing to act as a third party in mediation.</p> <p>"There needs to be regulations governing the management of the entertainment business, particularly the circus entertainment business, to prevent a recurrence of cases like this in the future," he said.</p>
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Analysis of the news coverage of the alleged assault case of a former Indonesian oriental circus performer on Kompas.com

Kompas.com: Defensive framing and reputation defense differ from detik.com; Kompas takes a highly defensive narrative approach. In the article titled "Tony Sumampau denies allegations of violence and exploitation at Indonesian Oriental Circus," the main focus is on the clarification of Tony Sumampau, founder of OCI and commissioner of Taman Safari. Through a press conference held on April 17, 2025, Tony denied all accusations directed at him and presented a number of visual evidence such as training videos, past photos showing the performers together, and narratives of discipline that are claimed to be normal in the context of professional training.

Syntactic structure

Kompas emphasizes Tony's direct quotes with assertive language, such as "it doesn't make sense," "slander," and "if electrocuted, it wouldn't be possible to walk." The use of these quotes reinforces Tony's image as confident and in control of the narrative. The addition of visual evidence provides further legitimacy, reinforcing that the narrative he follows is based not only on claims but also on documentation.

Thematic structure

Kompas's reporting tends to frame this issue as an attack on the institution's reputation, leading readers to believe that provocateurs are manipulating the victim's narrative. It emphasizes cultural and historical context, such as the assertion that harsh training with tools like rattan was commonplace in the 1970s and 1980s. This is part of an effort to frame the allegations as stemming from misinterpretations of past practices.

Narrative structure

This news story is structured in a systematic rebuttal: from accusations, clarifications, visual evidence, to threats of legal action against the reporters. This narrative demonstrates a defensive strategy that not only denies the accusations but also counters by alleging that the reporting was motivated by a third party.

<i>What</i>	"...providing clarification regarding the allegations of a number of female former performers at the Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) who claimed to have experienced physical violence, exploitation, and inhumane treatment."
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<i>Where</i>	“It's completely untrue. If it were true, it would have happened in 1997," he said in Cisarua, Bogor Regency.
<i>When</i>	Reported <i>between</i> (16/04/2025), responding to the accusations, Tony emphasized that the accusations were baseless.
<i>Why</i>	He said that if the incident as alleged had really happened, there should have been a report a long time ago.
<i>Who</i>	“One of the founders of Taman Safari Indonesia, Tony Sumampau, provided clarification regarding the accusations...”
<i>How</i>	He also asked the accusing party to show real evidence regarding the alleged violence that was allegedly carried out by Taman Safari Indonesia.

News title: OCI prepares bullets if former circus performers take legal action

Syntactic structure

The article mixes the language of family (“family approach... they are like younger siblings”) with the language of conflict (“counter”, “legal bullets”, “lawsuit”, “if... sue”) the structure of the script highlights the potential escalation: initially dialogue and mediation, then as tensions rise, the OCI is ready to enter the formal realm.

Thematic structure

This news story presents two parallel themes: a peaceful resolution and a potential legal confrontation. Despite the family's intentions, the dominant theme highlighted is readiness to face lawsuits and legal defense. This is reinforced by the context in which OCI feels hurt by negative social media narratives and is de-escalating the conflict through legal channels if necessary.

Rhetorical structure

Rhetorically, the metaphor of "legal bullets" carries aggressive and combat-ready connotations. This contrasts with detik.com's more calming rhetoric. Kompas.com and similar media outlets prefer to evoke tension with "counters," "lawsuits," and "ready for combat," creating a more explicit and dramatic framing of the conflict.

Narrative structure

The *kompas.com* article presents a different perspective. While OCI stated its priority was amicable resolution, it also prepared a firm legal strategy if sued. Attorney Ricardo Kumontahas stated that OCI would "counteract according to the law" and had prepared legal "bullets" to face the former circus performer's lawsuit. This statement creates a two-pronged narrative structure: amicable approach remains, but readiness for legal action becomes the key if the situation changes.

Script structure

<i>what</i>	"... stated that his party is ready to face any possible legal action taken by the former circus performer, including civil lawsuits and criminal reports."
<i>When</i>	Ricardo said, in a press conference at the Mulia Hotel, Monday (21/4/2025)
<i>where</i>	Ricardo said, in a press conference at the Mulia Hotel (Jakarta)
<i>who</i>	Oriental Circus Indonesia (OCI) legal team Ricardo Kumontas
<i>why</i>	According to him, legal action could be taken, but for now the OCI is holding back, considering the previous familial relationship. "Mr. Jensen (OCI founder) treated them like his younger siblings. So legal action was a last resort. He was actually devastated by the stories circulating on social media," said Ricardo.
<i>how</i>	However, Ricardo confirmed that if legal action cannot be avoided, OCI's legal team will be ready to fight in court. "Whatever happens, we will counter with applicable laws," he concluded

4. CONCLUSION

In reporting on the alleged exploitation and violence against former performers at the Oriental Circus Indonesia, two national media outlets, *Detik.com* and *Kompas.com*, presented strikingly different narrative constructions. These differences lie not only in the content or sources of the news, but also in the way they frame reality and shape public perception.

Detik.com tends to construct narratives from the perspective of the victims, namely former circus performers who filed official complaints with the Ministry of Law and Human Rights. The news presented focuses more on the emotional and dramatic confessions of the former performers who claim to have experienced physical violence, labor exploitation, separation from family, and even acts resembling slavery. *Detik* prioritizes direct quotes from the victims

and constructs the news in a linear format that shows the chronology of the reporting process through to the initial response from management. The narrative formed as a whole leads to framing the conflict between individuals (victims) and institutions (circus management), with the hope of legal intervention or further investigation.

Unlike Detik, Kompas.com presents a narrative that is more in favor of clarification and defense from the management, in this case Tony Sumampau himself as the founder of OCI and commissioner of Taman Safari. Kompas presents the news in a more argumentative and persuasive format, starting with a denial of the accusations, followed by the presentation of visual evidence such as training videos and past photos, and strengthening the argument that harsh training methods were commonplace at that time. Kompas also gives Tony ample space to confirm that the former performers have always been considered part of the extended circus family, so the accusations of exploitation are considered baseless. The structure of Kompas's news is rhetorical, aimed at convincing readers that the accusations are exaggerated, contain elements of provocation, and even lead to defamation. The framing constructed in Kompas's news is defensive and strongly protects the institution's reputation, using an approach of cultural legitimacy and defense of the traditional training system.

From an academic perspective, the differences in framing between the two media outlets, Detik and Kompas, demonstrate how the media's role is not simply to convey information but also to shape meaning and social reality in the public mind. Detik.com promotes the narrative and places the victim at the center, emphasizing the need for state attention to human rights violations. Conversely, Kompas.com systematically positions the institution as the party being slandered and in need of image correction. Both present facts and quotes proportionally, but with different goals: one demands justice, the other demands reputational rehabilitation.

In conclusion, the framing employed by both media outlets demonstrates that reporting on social issues such as child violence and exploitation is never truly neutral. Each media outlet presents a construction of reality that reflects a particular perspective, which ultimately influences how the public assesses truth, justice, and responsibility. Therefore, such an analysis is crucial to uncovering how narratives are shaped, who they side with, and how the media's symbolic power can shift the meaning of the actual facts on the ground.

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