

Framing Crisis and the Politics of Emotion: How Indonesian Online Media Manage Public Panic in Disaster Reporting

Ahmad Syarofi¹, Barokatus Sholihah²

STID Al-Biruni Babakan Ciwaringin Cirebon¹, Siber Syekh Nurjati Cirebon²

Email: ahmadsyarofi38@gmail.com, barokatussholihah86@gmail.com

Abstract

Disasters and crises are communication events that not only require the delivery of information but also the management of public emotions. In the context of digital media, news framing plays a crucial role in shaping both public perception and emotional responses to crisis situations. This study aims to analyze how Indonesian online media frame the flash flood crisis in Sumatra and how such framing functions in producing and managing public panic. This research employs a qualitative approach within a critical interpretative paradigm. The object of the study is news coverage of flash floods in Sumatra published by Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com during the period of November 25 to December 31, 2025. Data were analyzed using Entman's framing analysis model, with a focus on narratives of fear, risk emphasis, and the emotional solutions offered by the media. The findings reveal that online media not only define crises through the emphasis on threats, risks, and urgency, but also actively produce public emotions through dramatic diction, disaster metaphors, and threat visualizations. However, crisis framing also functions as a mechanism for panic management through strategies of normalization, rationalization, and emphasis on the role of authorities and symbolic solutions. These findings indicate that public panic is a media-mediated phenomenon, rather than merely a spontaneous response to disaster events. Theoretically, this study expands the concept of framing by integrating the dimension of the politics of emotion, positioning framing not only as a tool for constructing meaning but also as an instrument for managing public emotions in crisis communication. Practically, this study highlights the importance of strengthening crisis journalism ethics and developing media policies that are more sensitive to the emotional impact of disaster reporting within Indonesia's digital media ecosystem.

Keywords: media framing, politics of emotion, crisis communication, public panic, Indonesian online media

INTRODUCTION

The flash floods and landslides that struck the regions of Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra from late November to December 2025 represent one of the most devastating hydrometeorological crises in modern Indonesian history (Halomoan, 2026). Based on the latest data, this disaster has claimed hundreds to over a thousand lives, injured thousands, and forced hundreds of thousands to millions of residents to evacuate their homes during the crisis period. The National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) recorded that fatalities had reached hundreds by early December and continued to rise drastically, with end-of-year 2025 reports indicating a significantly high death toll and widespread socio-economic impacts across the three affected provinces. (CNN Indonesia, 2025)

In this context, disasters are not merely understood as natural events but also as complex communication events. Mass media, particularly online media, play a dual role in crisis situations: they not only report facts but also actively shape public perceptions of risk, government responses, and the urgency of crisis management. In the digital era, online media such as Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com have become primary sources of information for the public, especially as the speed and volume of reporting increase significantly during crises (Kirana & Saputri, 2026; Rizki et al., 2025; Romadhan et al., 2025). Therefore, the dynamics of media coverage between November 25 and December 31, 2025, reflect how crisis information is produced, disseminated, and intensively consumed by the Indonesian public.

The characteristics of digital media—particularly speed, repetition, and intensity of news consumption—play a central role in shaping public risk perception (Tsoy et al., 2021). The rapid updates provided by online media regarding casualty figures, disaster impacts, and institutional responses continuously expose the public to information (Liu et al., 2016). This intensity is often accompanied by repetitive narratives emphasizing the scale of casualties, infrastructure damage, and limited access to emergency services, which can emotionally trigger collective anxiety and uncertainty. In such conditions, the public tends not only to seek factual information but also to continuously monitor media narratives that may reinforce fear or panic about perceived risks, both locally and in other regions. (CNN Indonesia, 2025)

Public panic then emerges as a socio-emotional phenomenon influenced not only by the disaster itself but also by how the media conveys information (Nole & Sinaga, 2025). In large-scale disasters such as the flash floods in Sumatra, coverage focusing on rising death tolls, severe destruction, and reports on the readiness or delays of government responses can intensify public uncertainty and concern (De Priester, 2016; Priester, 2016). This condition shows that online media coverage does not merely deliver information but also manages public emotions during crises, which in some cases can amplify or mitigate collective panic.

Therefore, the 2025 Sumatra floods and landslides provide a strong empirical context to explore the role of Indonesian online media in managing public panic through crisis framing. This study examines how online media employ reporting strategies that not only inform facts but also construct emotional narratives that influence public responses in extreme crisis conditions.

In mass communication studies, media framing is not only understood as a process of

selecting facts and constructing meaning but also as a mechanism influencing the politics of public emotion. Media framing determines which narrative elements are highlighted, how events are portrayed, and what context is provided, directly shaping how audiences understand and emotionally respond to reported events (Hutagalung, 2025; Sahide et al., 2024; Setiawan et al., 2024). Previous framing studies have tended to focus on the cognitive dimensions of news (what is reported and how texts are structured), while emotional dimensions such as fear, anxiety, and uncertainty have received limited empirical attention. (Permadi, 2024)

During the late November–December 2025 floods and landslides in Sumatra, Indonesian online media such as Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com produced highly intensive coverage in terms of volume and frequency. Reporting included continuous updates on fatalities, missing persons, infrastructure damage, and government responses, delivered rapidly and repeatedly to the public. For instance, Liputan6.com reported daily increases in death tolls, reaching dozens to hundreds per day as BNPB updated data, including the expanding number of victims and widespread damage to public facilities and thousands of affected homes. (Liputan6, 2025)

The repetition of information related to significant losses, increasing casualties, and broad socio-economic impacts—including reports of thousands of affected homes and disruptions to community activities—creates the potential for emotional distortion among the public (Sheikhi et al., 2025). Such repetitive narratives can reinforce emotional reactions such as fear and anxiety, especially when similar information is continuously presented in headlines, updates, and emotionally charged narratives throughout the crisis period (Rozanov & Rutz, 2021). In mass communication studies, emotions such as fear and anxiety are seen as psychosocial responses to perceived threats, and media have the capacity to amplify, moderate, or regulate these emotions through word choices, narrative focus, and reporting rhythm (Dharmika, 2025).

The role of emotion in crisis journalism becomes crucial as media not only transmit objective information but also shape collective emotional experiences. In emergency contexts such as floods and landslides, news emphasizing uncertainty in casualty numbers, inaccessible areas due to damaged infrastructure, and perceived slow or inconsistent government responses can help the public understand the scale of the crisis while simultaneously deepening anxiety and concern. When such emotions are continuously managed and disseminated, media indirectly contribute to the formation of the politics of public emotion, where crisis news becomes a source of emotional influence on public attitudes, behaviors, and expectations. (Permadi, 2024).

Thus, in the context of the 2025 Sumatra disasters, online media reporting is not merely a recorder of facts but a critical factor shaping how the public perceives and reacts to crises—an aspect that requires comprehensive analysis through the frameworks of media framing and the politics of emotion to understand how media manage public panic in uncertain situations.

In mass communication studies, media framing is not only understood as a process of selecting facts and constructing meaning, but also as a mechanism that influences the politics of public emotion. Media framing determines which narrative elements are highlighted, how events

are portrayed, and what context is provided, thereby directly shaping how audiences understand and emotionally respond to reported events. Previous framing studies have tended to focus on the cognitive dimensions of news coverage (what is reported and how texts are structured), while emotional dimensions such as fear, anxiety, and public uncertainty have received limited empirical attention. (Permadi, 2024).

During the flash floods and landslides in Sumatra from late November to December 2025, Indonesian online media such as Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com delivered highly intensive coverage in terms of both volume and frequency. News reporting during this period included continuous updates on death tolls, reports of missing persons, infrastructure damage, and government responses, all of which were received rapidly and repeatedly by the public. For instance, Liputan6.com reported daily increases in fatalities reaching dozens to hundreds per day following BNPB updates, including the growing number of victims and widespread damage to public facilities as well as thousands of affected homes. (Liputan6, 2025)

The repetition of information related to significant losses, continuously rising casualties, and broad socio-economic impacts—including reports of thousands of affected homes and disruptions to community activities—creates the potential for emotional distortion among the public. The intensity of such repetitive narratives can reinforce emotional responses such as fear and anxiety, particularly when similar information is repeatedly presented in headlines, data updates, and emotionally charged narratives throughout the crisis period. In mass communication studies, emotions such as fear and anxiety are viewed as psychosocial responses to perceived threats, and the media have the capacity to amplify, moderate, and even regulate these emotions through word choice, narrative focus, and reporting rhythm (Dharmika, 2025).

The role of emotion in crisis journalism becomes crucial as media not only transmit objective information but also shape collective emotional experiences. In emergency contexts such as floods and landslides, news emphasizing uncertainty in casualty numbers, inaccessible areas due to damaged infrastructure, and perceived slow or inconsistent government responses can help the public understand the scale of the crisis while simultaneously intensifying feelings of anxiety and concern. When such emotions are continuously managed and disseminated, media indirectly contribute to the formation of the politics of public emotion, where crisis news becomes a source of emotional influence on public attitudes, behaviors, and expectations toward both collective and individual responses (Permadi, 2019).

Thus, in the context of the 2025 Sumatra disasters, online media reporting functions not merely as a recorder of facts but also as a critical factor shaping how the public perceives and responds to crises—an aspect that requires comprehensive analysis through the frameworks of media framing and the politics of emotion to understand how media manage public panic under conditions of uncertainty.

A number of mass communication studies in Indonesia have examined how media report crisis and disaster events through a framing perspective. For example, studies on media framing of disaster events indicate that mainstream media often adopt Entman's classical framing model

to analyze reporting on crises such as earthquakes, floods, or major accidents, focusing on problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation (Entman in various studies). One empirical study demonstrates how Kompas.com framed flood events in Sumatra using these dimensions, although the analysis tends to remain descriptive of textual patterns (Dharmika, 2025).

Other relevant studies include research on framing in the coverage of national disaster status declarations in online media, which emphasizes differences in how media present government policy perspectives and their implications for shaping public understanding of crisis news. Zahra Aulia Kartika Subiyakto (2025) Meanwhile, studies on flood reporting in South Kalimantan by media such as Detik.com and Tempo.co highlight how facts are presented according to editorial policies, though still largely focused on textual representation differences (Harnia et al., 2021).

Most crisis framing studies in Indonesia adopt descriptive, textual, and cognitive approaches, explaining patterns of news texts and comparing framing features across media without further examining the emotional implications of reporting on audiences. While useful for identifying emphasized aspects, such approaches tend to stop at content-level explanations without explicitly linking them to emotional experiences or psychosocial responses of the public in crisis contexts(Dharmika, 2025) .

In many of these studies, the primary focus remains on what is reported and how texts are structured according to framing categories, without systematically demonstrating how framing contributes to the formation or management of public emotions such as fear, anxiety, and panic. This limitation opens space for further research that not only analyzes textual structures but also examines emotional elements represented in crisis reporting—an aspect that constitutes the core focus of this study.

Although framing studies in the context of crisis and disaster communication in Indonesia have developed significantly, most research still positions framing as an informative and cognitive mechanism of meaning construction. Framing is generally understood in terms of how media define events, interpret causes, evaluate actors, and recommend solutions. While important, this perspective does not fully capture framing as a communication strategy that actively manages public emotional responses in crisis situations. In other words, crisis framing has not been explicitly examined as a tool for public panic management, despite panic being one of the most tangible social impacts of crisis communication in the digital media era.

Furthermore, attention to the politics of emotion in disaster reporting remains relatively limited in Indonesian communication studies. Public emotions such as fear, anxiety, and uncertainty are often treated as indirect consequences of disasters rather than as outcomes of structured media communication processes. As a result, the role of media in producing, amplifying, or mitigating collective emotions through framing choices has received insufficient critical analysis. In fact, within the online media ecosystem characterized by rapid information distribution and high consumption intensity, emotional management becomes an integral part of

crisis journalism.

Moreover, most framing studies in Indonesia still rely on conventional media paradigms, thus failing to fully consider digital media characteristics such as narrative repetition, real-time updates, and continuous audience exposure. This condition calls for an expansion of framing from merely a textual analysis tool to a framework for understanding how digital media simultaneously manage risk, uncertainty, and public emotions. Therefore, there is an urgent need to examine crisis framing in Indonesian online media as a communication practice that not only constructs meaning but also regulates collective emotions and social stability during disasters.

Based on this gap, this study offers novelty by positioning crisis framing as a strategy for public panic management within the domain of the politics of emotion in digital media. By examining the coverage of flash floods in Sumatra in Indonesian online media, this study aims to expand theoretical understanding of framing and provide empirical contributions to crisis communication studies in Indonesia.

Based on the research background, literature review, and identified research gap, this study aims to analyze the role of Indonesian online media framing in managing public panic during crisis and disaster situations. The focus is on how flood disaster coverage in Sumatra is constructed through specific framing that not only shapes event interpretation but also influences public emotional dynamics within the digital media context.

In general, this study aims to explain the function of crisis framing as a public panic management strategy in disaster reporting in Indonesian online media. Specifically, it seeks to: (1) identify framing patterns used by Indonesian online media in reporting flash floods in Sumatra; (2) analyze how framing elements—problem definition, causal attribution, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation—are constructed to respond to potential public panic; (3) explain how media framing contributes to the production, amplification, or mitigation of public emotions such as fear, anxiety, and uncertainty; and (4) formulate theoretical implications regarding the expansion of framing from a meaning-construction tool to an instrument for managing collective emotions in crisis communication.

This study is expected to contribute at three levels. First, conceptually, it expands media framing studies by integrating them into the politics of emotion perspective, positioning framing not only as a cognitive process but also as a communication practice that regulates public emotion. Second, empirically, it provides findings based on the Indonesian online media context, particularly in disaster reporting, enriching crisis communication literature in developing countries with distinct digital media characteristics. Third, practically, it offers critical reflections on crisis communication ethics, particularly regarding media responsibility in delivering accurate, proportional, and emotionally sensitive disaster information. Thus, this study not only explains how media frame crises but also examines the social and emotional implications of framing practices in maintaining public emotional stability during crisis situations.

METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a critical interpretative paradigm to analyze how Indonesian online media frame crises and manage public panic in disaster reporting. A qualitative approach is chosen because this study does not aim to measure frequency or causal relationships between variables, but rather to understand the meaning, processes, and symbolic logic behind media reporting practices. In communication studies, a qualitative approach allows researchers to examine media texts in depth as social and cultural products embedded with values, ideology, and interests (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

The interpretative paradigm is used to position news as a text that contains meaning and interpretation, rather than merely a collection of objective facts. Within this paradigm, social reality is understood as a result of symbolic construction shaped through language and communication practices (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). Therefore, disaster reporting is treated as a site of meaning production, where media construct specific narratives to help the public understand crisis events. This interpretative approach enables analysis of how media framing shapes public understanding of risk, threat, and responses to disasters.

In addition, this study is grounded in a critical paradigm, which views media as a non-neutral institution involved in symbolic power relations. The critical paradigm emphasizes the importance of uncovering how communication practices contribute to maintaining or challenging power structures, including in the management of public emotions (Fairclough, 1995). In this context, crisis framing is understood not only as a journalistic strategy, but also as a practice with political and ideological implications, particularly in determining which emotions are legitimized or normalized in the public sphere.

The selection of a critical interpretative paradigm is relevant because this study focuses on the politics of emotion in crisis communication, positioning media as active actors in the production and regulation of collective emotions. Several studies show that qualitative and critical framing analysis is better able to capture the emotional and symbolic dynamics in crisis reporting compared to quantitative approaches that tend to be reductionist (Entman, 1993; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019). Through this approach, researchers can examine how media narratives not only shape public cognitive understanding but also manage fear, anxiety, and panic in disaster situations.

Thus, a qualitative approach within a critical interpretative paradigm is considered the most appropriate to achieve the objective of this study, namely to explain crisis framing as a mechanism for managing public panic within the ecosystem of Indonesian online media. This approach enables a contextual, reflective, and sensitive analysis of the dimensions of meaning and emotion embedded in crisis communication practices.

The object of this study is news coverage from Indonesian national online media that reports on flash flood issues in the Sumatra region, with a focus on three major online outlets: Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com. These media were purposively selected because they represent highly readable online platforms with wide national reach and significant influence in shaping public opinion in Indonesia. In addition, each outlet has relatively distinct editorial

characteristics, allowing for a comparative analysis of framing and emotional strategies in crisis reporting.

The selection of online media as the object of study is based on the characteristics of digital media, which emphasize the speed of news production, the intensity of information updates, and the repetition of narratives, all of which have the potential to amplify the emotional impact of news on the public. In the context of crises and disasters, online media function not only as information providers but also as key actors in shaping risk perception and managing audience emotional responses (Pantti et al., 2012; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019).

The research data were collected from news articles published between November 25 and December 31, 2025, representing the early to advanced phases of flash flood coverage in Sumatra. This time frame was selected to capture the dynamics of crisis framing more comprehensively, from the escalation phase, emergency response, to the normalization of the situation. This temporal approach is important to observe how framing and emotional management evolve as the crisis develops.

The unit of analysis in this study is the news text, including headlines, leads, body text, and quoted sources presented in the reports. News texts are treated as symbolic constructions that contain fact selection, meaning emphasis, and specific emotional narratives. By focusing on text as the unit of analysis, this study examines how language, narrative structure, and diction are used by the media to produce, mitigate, or normalize public panic in crisis situations.

The selection of news text as the unit of analysis aligns with the tradition of framing and discourse analysis in mass communication studies, which view news as a representation of social reality that is neither neutral nor free from interests (Entman, 1993; Fairclough, 1995).

Through text analysis, this study seeks to uncover the mechanisms of crisis framing and the politics of emotion underlying Indonesian online media reporting practices.

The data collection technique in this study was carried out through the identification and collection of news texts published by Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com related to flash flood issues in Sumatra. The search for news was conducted systematically based on the crisis period, from November 25 to December 31, 2025, representing the phases of escalation, response, and ongoing disaster management.

The search process utilized internal search features on each media website, as well as keyword-based searches relevant to the research topic, such as flash floods, Sumatra disaster, evacuation, victims, displacement, and disaster response. This strategy aims to ensure that the collected news is directly relevant to the crisis event under study while minimizing the inclusion of peripheral or irrelevant reports.

In the data collection process, this study applied inclusion–exclusion criteria to maintain data consistency and quality. The inclusion criteria are:

1. News explicitly discussing flash flood events in the Sumatra region;
2. News published within the research period (November 25 – December 31, 2025);

3. News presented in journalistic text formats (hard news, straight news, or feature stories); and
4. News containing main narratives about disaster impacts, response efforts, or the social conditions of affected communities.

Meanwhile, the exclusion criteria include:

1. Opinion pieces, editorials, or column articles;
2. News that only briefly mentions the disaster without focusing on the flash flood event; and
3. Non-news content such as photo galleries, videos without narrative transcripts, or social media posts reproduced without adequate journalistic processing.

Each news item that meets the selection criteria is then documented and classified based on the media outlet, publication date, headline, and reporting context. This process aims to build an organized data corpus and enable systematic analysis of framing and emotional dimensions. This approach aligns with qualitative research practices in media studies, which emphasize transparency in data collection to ensure academic accountability (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

Through this data collection technique, the study seeks to ensure that the analyzed news texts genuinely represent Indonesian online media practices in constructing crises and managing public panic during disaster periods.

The data analysis technique in this study employs Entman's framing analysis model with a focus on the emotional dimension of crisis reporting. Entman's framing analysis is chosen because it provides a systematic conceptual framework to identify how media select, emphasize, and highlight certain aspects of social reality in news texts (Entman, 1993). This model is particularly relevant for analyzing disaster reporting as it allows researchers to examine not only what is reported but also how the meaning of a crisis is constructed through media narratives.

Operationally, framing analysis is conducted by identifying four key elements proposed by Entman: problem definition, causal diagnosis, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation. These elements are analyzed integratively to reveal patterns of crisis framing in flash flood reporting in Sumatra by Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com.

The analytical focus of this study is further sharpened on three main aspects related to the politics of emotion in crisis communication: fear narratives, risk emphasis, and emotional solutions presented by the media.

First, fear narratives are analyzed through how the media define the crisis problem and portray the impact of the disaster. The analysis focuses on diction, metaphors, and narrative structures that emphasize threat, suffering, and uncertainty. These fear narratives play a crucial role in shaping public emotional orientation toward the crisis, especially in the early phase when information is still developing and risks are not fully mapped (Gross, 2008; Pantti et al., 2012).

Second, risk emphasis is analyzed by examining how the media present potential future dangers, escalation of impacts, and worst-case scenarios. Within Entman's framework, this relates closely to the elements of causal diagnosis and moral evaluation, where media determine who or

what is positioned as the source of threat and how the urgency of the crisis is constructed. This emphasis contributes to the formation of collective anxiety and influences public perception of risk levels (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005).

Third, emotional solutions offered by the media are analyzed through the element of treatment recommendations, namely how the media present solutions, responses, or crisis management mechanisms that aim to calm or normalize the situation. These emotional solutions may take the form of emphasizing the role of government, disaster management authorities, social solidarity, or recovery narratives. In the context of the politics of emotion, such solutions function as strategies to mitigate public panic by shifting audience emotions from fear toward a sense of safety, hope, or trust (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Crisis Framing in Reporting the Sumatra Flash Flood Disaster

1. How the Media Define the Crisis

In online media coverage during the crisis period, the flash floods and landslides in Sumatra were defined as a large-scale humanitarian crisis with widespread impacts on society and social structures across three affected provinces: Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra. Repeated reporting emphasized the rising death toll, the number of displaced people reaching hundreds of thousands to millions, and the impact of infrastructure damage that hindered basic access for communities. For example, one media report stated that BNPB data showed fatalities had reached nearly nine hundred people, thousands were injured, and hundreds of thousands were displaced within the first few weeks of the crisis (Marthoenis, 2025).

The language of reporting also frequently used terms such as humanitarian crisis or devastating disaster to describe the event, rather than merely a local flood, thus creating the impression that the situation was beyond normal control (national scale). This definition leads to an understanding of the crisis as not only a natural event but also a socio-cultural urgency requiring collective response (Marthoenis, 2025).

2. Actors Highlighted in Coverage

News text analysis reveals that media tend to emphasize several key actors in the crisis narrative:

- a. Central Government and the President: Media often position the central government—especially presidential visits and strategic directives—as the main actor in handling the crisis, reinforcing the narrative that state authority plays a central role in disaster response (Ambisius News, 2025).
- b. Disaster Management Agencies (BNPB and BPBD): As official sources of data regarding casualties, affected areas, and emergency needs, these institutions frequently appear in news narratives. Their data often serve as the starting point for crisis framing and as the main reference for statistical reporting (Marthoenis, 2025).
- c. Affected Communities: Media also present their voices through quotes from affected

residents describing their direct experiences, strengthening the human dimension of the crisis (Ambisius News, 2025).

- d. Volunteer Communities and NGOs: Some reports also highlight non-state actors such as volunteers, humanitarian organizations, and CSR institutions involved in disaster response, illustrating collective action from civil society (Reddit, 2025).

3. Risks Amplified or Downplayed by the Media

a. Amplified Risks

- 1) Media emphasize the escalation of casualties and the widespread impact of the disaster as key indicators of the crisis scale. The continuously increasing death toll and the number of displaced people reaching hundreds of thousands to millions portray the crisis as extensive and uncontrolled (Marthoenis, 2025).
- 2) The focus on narratives of uncertainty—such as missing victims, isolated areas, or damaged vital facilities—leads the public to perceive the situation as an unresolved threat (Marthoenis, 2025).

b. Downplayed Risks

- 1) On the other hand, media also insert calming narratives by highlighting government and emergency response efforts as forms of control over the situation. Coverage often includes updates on concrete actions such as military/police mobilization, logistics distribution, and inter-agency coordination (Ambisius News, 2025).
- 2) Narratives of social solidarity—such as public donations, volunteer roles, and CSR support—are also used to present a sense of collective unity in facing risks, thereby balancing public fear (Reddit, 2025).

Overall, this framing pattern shows that online media not only report the facts of disaster impacts but also construct meaning regarding urgency and risk scale, while providing space for reassuring responses so that the public is not trapped in emotional uncertainty alone.

Framing and the Production of Public Fear

Analysis of reporting by Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com during November 25 – December 31, 2025 shows that crisis framing operates not only at an informational level but also actively produces and intensifies public fear. This occurs through the use of specific diction, threat metaphors, symbolic visualization of danger, and repeated urgency narratives.

At the language level, media tend to use emotionally charged diction such as sweeping away, devastating, striking settlements, or wiping out, which repeatedly appear in headlines and article bodies. These choices not only describe events factually but also reinforce the image of destructive and uncontrollable natural forces.

Threat metaphors are also used to frame the crisis as extreme and dangerous, such as portraying flash floods as natural terror or a latent threat to society. In framing theory, such metaphors function as tools of salience that guide readers toward specific emotional

interpretations (Entman, 1993). Studies show that disaster metaphors significantly shape fear and anxiety by associating natural events with existential threats (Gross, 2008).

Even though the unit of analysis is text, symbolic visualization appears through detailed and dramatic descriptions. Media narratives frequently depict victims, destroyed homes, and isolated areas in depth, creating vivid mental images for readers.

This symbolic visualization strengthens the emotional dimension of crisis framing, as readers are encouraged to imagine suffering and danger concretely. Pantti, Wahl-Jorgensen, and Cottle (2012) emphasize that narratives of human suffering are central in disaster journalism to evoke empathy and fear.

Public fear is further reinforced by consistent narratives of urgency and danger, such as the possibility of further flooding, ongoing extreme rainfall, and emergency status not yet lifted. These indicate that the crisis is ongoing.

Overall, crisis framing functions as a mechanism for producing public fear. However, this fear can both increase awareness and potentially trigger panic if not balanced with narratives of control and solutions.

Framing as Panic Management

In addition to producing public fear, the analysis of flash flood reporting in Sumatra by the online media Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com during the period of November 25 to December 31, 2025 shows that crisis framing also functions as a mechanism for managing public panic. The media not only amplify urgency and danger but simultaneously develop narrative strategies to normalize risk, rationalize the crisis, and direct public emotions toward a more controlled state.

One of the main strategies identified is risk normalization, which frames disasters as events that can be understood, predicted, and managed. Online media often associate flash floods with seasonal factors such as annual extreme rainfall, Sumatra's disaster-prone geography, or recurring natural patterns. Such narratives function to shift the crisis from an extraordinary event into something "reasonable" within the public's knowledge framework.

From a risk communication perspective, this normalization plays an important role in reducing panic intensity by providing a rational framework for audiences to understand threats (Reynolds & Seeger, 2005). Through this type of framing, media help the public negotiate uncertainty by placing risks within familiar and interpretable narratives.

In addition to normalization, media also employ crisis rationalization by emphasizing technical and procedural aspects of disaster management. News coverage consistently includes information about alert status, affected area maps, evacuation mechanisms, logistics distribution, and inter-agency coordination. This technocratic narrative shifts public focus from emotional fear toward a procedural understanding of what is being and will be done.

Within Entman's framing framework, this rationalization relates to the element of treatment

recommendations, where media not only define problems but also present systematic solutions. Studies in crisis journalism show that such procedural narratives function as tools of emotional stabilization, as they create the impression that the crisis is being handled within a structured institutional framework (Pantti et al., 2012).

Another key finding is the role of authority framing as a tool for controlling public emotions. Online media consistently highlight authoritative actors such as the central government, local governments, BNPB, the military, and the police as central figures in crisis management narratives. The presence of these authorities serves not only an informative function but also a symbolic one—providing reassurance and legitimacy to efforts aimed at controlling the situation.

The emphasis on authority functions as a symbolic emotional solution, where the presence of the state and official institutions is positioned as a guarantee that the crisis is not entirely beyond control. Wahl-Jorgensen (2019) argues that in crisis situations, media often act as emotional mediators by presenting authoritative figures to calm the public and direct emotional responses toward trust and compliance.

Overall, the analysis shows that crisis framing in the reporting of flash floods in Sumatra serves a dual function: producing fear while simultaneously managing public panic. Through strategies of risk normalization, crisis rationalization, and the highlighting of authority, online media guide public emotions to remain within controllable limits.

These findings reinforce the argument that crisis framing cannot be understood merely as a practice of presenting information, but rather as a form of collective emotional regulation within the digital public sphere. Media actively determine when fear needs to be amplified to increase awareness and when panic needs to be reduced to maintain social stability. Thus, crisis framing can be understood as both an emotional and political communication strategy in the context of Indonesian online media.

Comparison Across Online Media: Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com

A comparative analysis of flash flood reporting in Sumatra across Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com during the period of November 25 to December 31, 2025 shows that although all three report the same crisis event, there are significant differences in framing patterns, emotional strategies, and approaches to managing public panic. These differences reflect editorial characteristics, journalistic orientations, and each outlet's position within Indonesia's digital media ecosystem.

Kompas.com: Moderate Framing and Emotional Stability

Kompas.com tends to present a more moderate and emotionally stable framing of the crisis. In defining the crisis, it emphasizes the disaster's humanitarian impact while remaining relatively cautious in the use of dramatic or hyperbolic language. Fear-based narratives are present but are often balanced with rational explanations such as official data, geographical context, and reassuring statements from authorities.

In terms of highlighted actors, Kompas.com provides balanced coverage of government

institutions, disaster management agencies, and affected communities. Its emphasis on procedural responses and public policy serves as a strategy of normalization and rationalization. This pattern indicates Kompas.com's tendency to function as a stabilizer of public emotions, consistent with mainstream journalism traditions that prioritize caution and institutional credibility (Pantti et al., 2012).

CNNIndonesia.com: Intense Framing with Controlled Dramatization

CNNIndonesia.com presents a more intense and emotional framing of the crisis, particularly in the early stages of the disaster. It uses stronger diction, emphasizes escalating impacts, and highlights urgency and danger more prominently than Kompas.com. This approach produces a higher level of fear, aimed at drawing public attention to the scale and urgency of the crisis.

However, this dramatization remains controlled. CNNIndonesia.com consistently includes narratives of control by highlighting authoritative actors, rapid government responses, and coordination among disaster management agencies. This creates a contrasting framing dynamic: fear is amplified to build a sense of urgency, while simultaneously being mitigated through symbolic solutions and control narratives. This pattern reflects digital journalism practices that combine high news value with the need to maintain public trust (Gross, 2008; Wahl-Jorgensen, 2019).

Detik.com: Fast, Repetitive, and Update-Oriented Framing

In contrast, Detik.com presents a form of crisis framing heavily influenced by speed and continuous news updates. Its reporting is characterized by high frequency, concise headlines, and a focus on the latest developments (breaking news). In this context, fear narratives often emerge fragmentarily through updates on casualty numbers, affected areas, and evolving emergency conditions.

Risk is amplified through repeated crisis-related information, although without extensive narrative elaboration. At the same time, panic is mitigated implicitly through the regular presence of official statements and reports of rapid response actions. This pattern shows that Detik.com functions primarily as a real-time crisis information provider, where public emotion management occurs through the rhythm of fast and repetitive reporting rather than through deep, reflective narratives.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to analyze how Indonesian online media frame crises and manage public panic in reporting the flash floods in Sumatra by examining Kompas.com, CNNIndonesia.com, and Detik.com during the period of November 25 to December 31, 2025, finding that crisis framing not only constructs meaning but also functions as a mechanism of emotional politics that simultaneously produces fear through threat narratives, emotional diction, and the emphasis on risk, while also managing panic through strategies of risk normalization, crisis rationalization, and the highlighting of authority and solutions; comparatively, Kompas.com tends to be stable and moderate, CNNIndonesia.com intense yet controlled, and Detik.com fast and repetitive, indicating

that framing is strongly influenced by each outlet's editorial characteristics; theoretically, this study extends the concept of framing as a tool for public emotion management in digital crisis communication, while empirically confirming that public panic is a result of dynamic media construction, and practically emphasizing the importance of journalism ethics that are sensitive to emotional impacts, although the study is limited to textual analysis of three media outlets and a specific time frame, suggesting that future research should involve audience perspectives, social media, and mixed-method approaches to more comprehensively understand the impact of framing.

REFERENCES

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- De Priester, L. (2016). Emergency and Disaster Reports Monographic issue An approach to the profile of disaster risk of Indonesia. *Emergency and Disaster Reports*, 3(2).
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. SAGE Publications.
- Dharmika, I. G., & W. R. Y. (2025). Analisis Framing Media Kompas Terkait Banjir di Sumatra. *Jurnal Public Relations (J-PR)*, 6(2), 82-85.
- Halomoan, K. (2026). Integration of Indigenous Peoples' Protection with Environmental Sustainability as an Impact of Environmental Change. *PRAWO i WIEŻ*, 60(1). <https://doi.org/10.36128/xkyk8h78>
- Harnia, N. T., Pratama, R. T., & Setiawan, H. (2021). ANALISIS FRAMING PEMBERITAAN BANJIR DI KALIMANTAN SELATAN PADA DETIK.COM DAN TEMPO.CO. *Perspektif Komunikasi: Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi Politik Dan Komunikasi Bisnis*, 5(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.24853/pk.5.1.1-9>
- Hutagalung, M. (2025). Communica: Journal of Communication Media Framing in the Digital Age: A Narrative Review of Sociopolitical and Cultural Impacts. *Communica: Journal of Communication Citation*, 164(3).
- Kirana, A. S., & Saputri, S. B. (2026). Media Framing Analysis of Pertamina's Official Press Conference on the Adulterated Fuel Issue During Pre-Crisis, Crisis, and Post-Crisis Phases. *SHS Web of Conferences*, 227. <https://doi.org/10.1051/shsconf/202622702001>
- Liu, B. F., Fraustino, J. D., & Jin, Y. (2016). Social Media Use During Disasters: How Information Form and Source Influence Intended Behavioral Responses. *Communication Research*, 43(5). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0093650214565917>
- Nole, O. A., & Sinaga, D. N. (2025). Social Action after the Palu Natural Disasters in Max Weber's Perspective. *Socio Politica: Jurnal Ilmiah Jurusan Sosiologi*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.15575/socio-politica.v15i1.43988>
- Permadi, F. (2019). Optimalisasi Internet Hotspot Menggunakan User Management. *Jurnal Teknologi Informasi*, 1(2), 59-67.
- Priester, L. De. (2016). An approach to the profile of disaster risk of Indonesia. *Emergency and Disaster Reports*, 3(2).
- Reynolds, B., & Seeger, M. W. (2005). Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication. *Journal of Health Communication*, 10(1), 43-55.

- Rizki, S., Hastjarjo, S., & Alkhajar, E. N. S. (2025). From Strategy to Synergy: Evaluating the Evolution of Pertamina's Digital Crisis Communication in the Pertamina Adulteration Case. *Journal of Social and Political Sciences*, 8(4). <https://doi.org/10.31014/aior.1991.08.04.606>
- Romadhan, M. I., Pariyanto, P., & Suwandha, A. I. (2025). Critical Discourse Analysis of Pertamina's Press Release "Supported by the Attorney General's Office, Pertamina Ensures Pertamina Meets Specifications." *Journal of Scientific Research, Education, and Technology (JSRET)*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.58526/jsret.v4i2.741>
- Rozanov, V., & Rutz, W. (2021). Psychological Trauma Through Mass Media: Implications for a Current "Pandemic-Infodemic" Situation (A Narrative Review). *World Social Psychiatry*, 3(2).
- Sahide, A., Misran, & Maksum, A. (2024). Indonesian media framing against Trump in the 2020 presidential election. In *Multidisciplinary Reviews* (Vol. 7, Number 5). <https://doi.org/10.31893/multirev.2024097>
- Setiawan, A., Nurmandi, A., Usman, S., & Qodir, Z. (2024). INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION IN MEDIA FRAMING IN COVID-19 CRISIS POLICY. *Revista de Gestao Social e Ambiental*, 18(5). <https://doi.org/10.24857/rgsa.v18n5-174>
- Sheikhi, R. A., Javanbakhtian, R., & Heidari, M. (2025). Looting and antisocial behavior after disasters: a systematic review. In *BMC Public Health* (Vol. 25, Number 1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-025-21285-7>
- Tsoy, D., Tirasawasdichai, T., & Ivanovich Kurpayanidi, K. (2021). Role of Social Media in Shaping Public Risk Perception during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Theoretical Review. *THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE AND BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.18775/ijmsba.1849-5664-5419.2014.72.1005>
- Zahra Aulia Kartika Subiyakto. (2025). Analisis Framing Pemberitaan Tentang Penetapan Status Bencana Nasional Sumatra dan Aceh oleh Pemerintah Pada CNNIndonesia.com dan Detiknews.com. *Jurnal Public Relations (J-PR)*, 5(1).

Copyright holder:

Ahmad Syarofi, Barokatus Sholihah (2026)

First publication right:

Insight : International Journal of Social Research

This article is licensed under:

