

## Framing of the Covid-19 Infodemic on Topics and Tones of News Headlines in Indonesian and Malaysian Online Newspapers

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, the mass media was critical in conveying information about public health concerns and initiatives by the government aimed at mitigating the pandemic. This study used content analysis to determine how the COVID-19 news was framed in Indonesian and Malaysian media published between January and March 2021. This study examined the *Republika* and *The Star* newspapers. According to the findings of the data analysis, the results of this research found five general topics in both newspapers: public health, government policy, economics, politics, and culture and religion. The *Republika* newspaper publishes the most articles on public health, whereas *The Star* newspaper publishes the most articles on government policy, economy, politics, culture, and religion. However, public health and government policy are more popular topics in both countries. Meanwhile, based on the two newspapers, there are five types of news tones: solutions, fears, impacts, suggestions, and conflicts. A fearful tone is prevalent in *Republika* news, while the other four news tones may be found in *The Star*. The high prevalence of news with a fearful tone in the *Republika* newspaper is due to the high death rate caused by COVID-19, as well as the emergence of a new variant of COVID-19, even though news in Malaysia is widely broadcast using a solution tone and positive messages to readers.

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## Introduction

In 2024, the COVID-19 pandemic is still having a significant global impact. New viral types keep appearing, resulting in a surge in cases that causes governments to constantly adapt their health policies (Alisherovna, 2024). Vaccination is, without a doubt, the most effective weapon against this virus. According to study, vaccination can

help lessen the symptoms of long-term COVID for many people. However, because vaccination rates differ among countries, achieving herd immunity becomes more challenging (Pooya et al., 2024). Furthermore, many people continue to exhibit COVID-19 symptoms, such as persistent fatigue and respiratory issues. Proper rehabilitation is required to assist them in returning to their normal activities (Chuang et al., 2024). Economic uncertainty caused by the pandemic remains a big issue. The global job market and economic stability have been disturbed, and many nations are still trying to recover from the effects of prior lockdowns. Governments must implement effective policies to promote economic recovery and alleviate the disparities caused by the pandemic. Despite tremendous progress in managing the pandemic, the remaining problems demonstrate that collaborative efforts are still required to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.

The Covid-19 pandemic is having an impact practically everywhere in the world, including Indonesia and Malaysia (Mustofa et al. 2022). The two countries have attempted to prevent and control the Covid-19 pandemic to avoid catastrophic joint destruction (Johnson, 2021). One of the most critical aspects of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic in the two countries is information exchange (Morissan, 2023). In this scenario, the media plays an important role in informing the public about Covid-19 (Giffari and Mohamed, 2021). The news media can assist the public in dealing with health emergencies by framing and structuring the reality of life (Adekunle and Adnan 2016). undoubtedly, news in the mainstream media, particularly online newspapers, has a greater influence on people's understanding and responses to COVID-19 (Mutua and Ong'ong'a, 2020). During the Covid-19 pandemic, complex and fast-developing media depictions impacted public awareness of dangers, disease-control methods, immunisations, political discourse, and related policies (Ball and Maxmen, 2020; Rosella et al., 2013). The formation of public perception of the current pandemic conditions is based on the amount, content, and tone of news reporting (Mach et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, not all media display news headlines properly. Several online tabloid newspapers utilise vague and fear-inducing terminology (Yuniawan et al., 2020), such as labelling Covid-19 as a "deadly disease" and spreading misleading information whose truth cannot be justified (Balakrishnan, 2022). Misinformation content related to Covid-19 that emerges in online news is rapidly increasing (Barua et al., 2020) and the WHO refers to this situation as a 'tsunami' of information on social media, which is highly risky for public health and public policy (Shaw, Kim, and Hua, 2020). This occurrence demonstrates that the Covid-19 pandemic has not only had an impact on public health and the global economy but has also attacked the grammar system. As a result, significant linguistic alterations, such as meaning changes and the production of new words, phrases, or connotations (neologisms), have occurred in Covid-19 reporting in online newspapers (Aziz, 2022).

Headlines, in particular, provide readers with a rapid and accurate comprehension of issues or events in the news (Lee and Chen, 2022). Readers can choose which news to read based on headlines (Dor, 2003). Furthermore, it influences whether or not the selected news is read through (Andrew, 2007). A good headline will certainly influence the reader's perception of the message captured from an event (Baum and Rahman, 2021) because the headline can influence the verbal evaluative mechanism, allowing the reader to consider the relevance or truth value of the information in the context in which it is presented (Ferrari et al., 2020). Furthermore, the appearance of new phrases

in the headlines of the Covid-19 news conveys an emotion that influences each reader's view (Aslam et al., 2020). As discovered by (Gligorić et al., 2021) the type of emotional reaction induced by a text might alter its success in grabbing the interest of readers. The most widely used emotional reactions to a news tone include anger, fear, confusion, and sadness (Rozado, Hughes, and Halberstadt, 2022). Psychologically, news tones elicit stronger emotions and have a more concrete effect on establishing impressions of news content (Brady et al., 2017).

This study intends to collect research objects throughout Indonesia and Malaysia. This occurred because Indonesia and Malaysia are both a part of the same family. However, because of disparities in collective historical experiences during the colonial period, both exhibit traits of two distinct countries (Clark, 2013). Malaysia has a peninsula as its primary geographical region, whereas Indonesia has islands (archipelago) as its main geographical area (Ramadania, Gunawan, and Rustam, 2015). Nonetheless, ethnicity, culture, language, and religion form a heterogeneous mosaic in Indonesia and Malaysia (Chong, 2012). Furthermore, the populations of Indonesia and Malaysia are both Muslim (Hasyim, 2019) and both are also experiencing the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prihatini and Halimatusa'diyah's previous research on the framing of the COVID-19 infodemic revealed that as many as 539 articles in Indonesian newspaper media, namely the Jakarta Post, focused their coverage on government policies in managing the economic crisis caused by COVID-19 (Prihatini and Halimatusa'diyah, 2021). Amani stated the same thing, that the majority of the contents of web news headlines are tied to state politics, such as disease, health, and treatment for pandemics, and economic turmoil caused by COVID-19 (Lusekelo, 2021). Meanwhile, another study conducted by Shafizan and Syed found that during the COVID-19 pandemic, Malaysian newspapers, including The Star and Malaysiakini Bahasa, frequently highlighted news headlines linked to the Malaysian economy (Mohamed and Idid, 2022). The majority of this research was conducted in a single country and focused on a single issue thought to be the most influential on Covid-19. Meanwhile, this study looks at how COVID-19 news is framed across five issues, as well as the tone that emerges in Indonesian and Malaysian newspapers.

According to Rana Naji's research, a headline is an important aspect of newspapers, whether online or offline (Aziz, 2022). The text has strength and uniqueness that allows it to serve a varied purpose. News headlines, according to Shi and Mengdan Fan, are news headlines that allude to news content and are frequently printed in bold (Shi, Fan, and Fan, 2018). This is reinforced by Kristina Gligoric et al's claim that news headlines are particularly designed to influence readers' psychology so that they are interested in reading the available information (Gligorić et al., 2021). According to Rotimi, the headline is the opening portion of the news that is strategically presented to capture the reader's attention (Taiwo, 2007). The headlines that are created are often quite relevant to local culture or current events. This means that, despite being a rich and precise source of information, readers may struggle to grasp headlines if they are unfamiliar with the news context, particularly if the news contains allusions to a person or organisation. As a result, headlines are crucial in comprehending a news piece. Fareed and Abid showed news headline analysis as a summary of all new material, but cleaner and more appealing (Al-Hindawi and Ali, 2018). When readers get information, headlines can pique their interest. As a result, news headlines are also

defined as items that are produced in such a way that there is a constant flow of information from the editor to the reader.

Studying news headlines is critical in the domains of communication and journalism. Headlines serve not just as a summary of the news, but also as a tool for capturing readers' attention and shaping their impressions of a topic. An engaging headline can entice readers to read more and better understand the news content. There are various studies that look at the headline of a news story. Fatima et al. (2023) did a study titled Improving news headline text production quality using frequent POS-Tag pattern analysis. The study investigated how examining common POS tag patterns could improve the quality of news headline content production. The findings revealed that understanding the linguistic patterns commonly utilized in headlines, as well as the algorithms that feature frequently, can result in more intriguing and informative headlines. In addition, Ebrahim (2022) examined the framing of web news headlines regarding the COVID-19 pandemic in Italy, the United States, and South Africa. The findings revealed that headlines frequently employ spectacular and emotional language to capture readers' attention, potentially influencing public perception and response to the pandemic. Studying news headlines is crucial because they influence public perception. Effective headlines can help readers grasp crucial problems, such as health policies during a pandemic, and make better judgments. Furthermore, headlines can impact public opinion and influence social discourse, affecting public policy and behavior (Rozado et al., 2022).

In parallel, Rens and Liesbet argue that the media often frame news based on what is conveyed by sources, even so, journalists are required to be able to develop the framing of news headlines into something interesting and sustainable (Vliegthart and Zoonen, 2011). As a result, framing can be regarded as the outcome of a negotiation between the media and its sources. According to George Lakoff, framing is used to gather news that includes components of causes, predictions, remedies, and source responsibility for an incident (Lakoff, Dean, and Hazen, 2004). Like a song, news framing has a tone of voice that is supported by the use of figurative language analogies as well as words that fear or comfort. According to Semetko and Valenburg, news framing is divided into five frames: conflict, responsibility, economic implications, human attraction, and morality (Semetko and Valkenburg, 2000). Metaphors are employed to make news appear 'alive,' yet the large number of media outlets that use metaphorical language in framing pandemic news headlines raises public health concerns. Chien and Mei in their study confirmed that pandemic news headlines that use metaphorical words often only focus on the worst scenario of a pandemic with emotionally charged and sensational language (Lee and Chen, 2022). News tone refers to the affective component (like or dislike) of the construction of media messages and the presentation of an event in a positive/good, neutral, or negative/bad way (Newhagen, 1994). Tamir stated in his study that news tone (tone) is created to demonstrate that journalists and their sources of information have an attitude (positive or negative) towards an event and persons involved in it (Sheafer, 2007). When producing news, the media might convey a specific tone. Tone can be used as an emotive feature in news to alter the public's perception of the world. The public supports or rejects something not based on facts but on the tone (positive or negative) set by the media (Abney et al., 2011). In general, a report has an alarming tone when a situation is described as risky. A news has a reassuring tone when it downplays risk, such as health authorities' preparedness support. Meanwhile, a

statement is neutral if it contains both of these tones or if the tone is doubtful (Morissan, 2023).

Several research have been conducted to better understand how speech and framing are used in news headlines. Abed and Bort-Mir (2024) examined how Iraqi migrants are depicted in macro-semantic news headlines. They discovered that headlines frequently contain stigmatizing language, which can promote unfavorable stereotypes and influence overall public attitudes. Tourni et al. (2024) devised a method to detect framing in news headlines and primary images about gun violence in the United States. They utilized a machine learning system to detect framing patterns, and the findings revealed that the mix of graphics and text had a substantial impact on influencing news narratives and readers' perceptions of gun violence. Golo et al. (2024) did a critical discourse study of mainstream news headlines about the Panama verdict in Pakistan. Their findings revealed that the media frequently employed biased language to affect public perception. They also discovered that headlines tend to compress complex situations into more understandable, although occasionally false, narratives. Nabi et al. (2024) investigated the emotional framing of health news headlines and its impact on scientific credibility. This study discovered that headlines with emotional framing can either boost or decrease readers' faith in scientific material, depending on the emotional tone utilized. For example, headlines that instill dread in readers tend to erode trust. Alhamid and Abd (2024) examined opinion headlines from American newspapers, demonstrating how language is used to shape attitudes and impact readers' perceptions. They discovered that headlines frequently employ rhetorical strategies and powerful word choices to affect readers' political and social perspectives, emphasizing the need of critical language analysis in media.

Although many research have explored into framing and discourse analysis in news headlines, there are several holes that need to be filled. For starters, most research focus on a single country or topic area, making cross-national comparisons difficult. Second, studies frequently take a qualitative approach without include quantitative analysis, which can provide a more complete picture. Third, there is a dearth of information about how different groups react to various framings in news headlines. This study is significant because it addresses these gaps by investigating how media in Indonesia and Malaysia frame news about the COVID-19 pandemic in their headlines, as well as the impact of this framing on public perception. By analyzing news headlines from both countries, this study offers a unique comparative perspective not found in earlier literature. Furthermore, this study blends qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more thorough and comprehensive analysis.

As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate how news headlines in Indonesian and Malaysian online media frame information on the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as how this framing influences public perception. In addition, this study seeks to discover variations and similarities in how the two countries present pandemic news. The research questions that were asked are as follows:

1. How do news headlines in Indonesia and Malaysia frame information about COVID-19?
2. What are the differences and similarities in the framing approaches of news headlines in both countries?
3. How does framing in news headlines affect public perception of the COVID-19 pandemic?

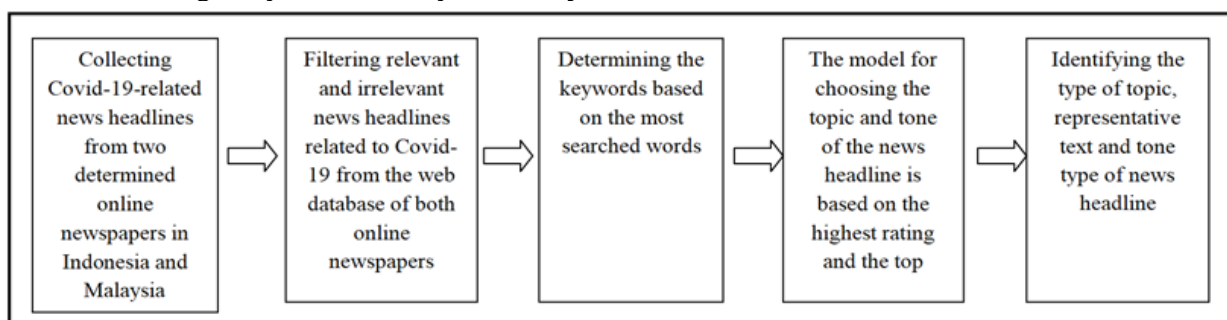
## Method

The analysis in this study was adopted from the research of Zafri et al. (2021) who examined content analysis and news management related to Covid-19 in three newspapers in Bangladesh. Articles for this study were gathered from two leading and familiar national newspapers in Indonesia and Malaysia, namely "Republika" and "The Star." The newspaper "Republika" is solely accessible in Indonesian, however, the newspaper "The Star" is also available in English. Due to the well-organized nature of this newspaper web portal, it is relatively simple to categorise relevant newspaper articles and retrieve related article data from the portal using filtering techniques. The keywords 'coronavirus', 'Covid-19' and 'pandemic' were used to sort a total of 3,585 articles from the database of the two selected newspapers during the period 1 January - 31 March 2021. Data was collected from January 1, 2021, because Republika and The Star have become a source for COVID-19 pandemic coverage after the pandemic's identification. Only newspaper articles about public health, government policy, economics, politics, and religious culture were chosen.

The article selection system used the highest and highest ratings. Articles that do not contain Covid-19 elements are deemed irrelevant and are not used. In this study, a total of 1,831 articles from the daily "Republika" and 1,754 pieces from the newspaper "The Star" were used. Following the selection of the most appropriate model, the dominating topic and the percentage of its contribution to each newspaper article were determined. Headlines and representative texts of each of the five identified topics have been written by the top keywords as well as reviewing some of the most representative newspaper articles on the respective topics (the representative texts have been copied directly from the newspaper articles). Furthermore, after reviewing each headline and representative text, the selection of newspaper articles is adjusted to the tone that is popular amid the Covid-19 pandemic, namely hopes/solutions, fears/concerns, suggestions/instructions, impacts/effects, and conflict. After filtering, 3,230 articles were found that met the criterion, with 1,477 articles from the daily "Republika" and 1,753 articles from the newspaper "The Star" meeting the criteria.

### Picture 1

*The methodological framework of this study*



## Results and Discussion

### *Topic 1 - News Headline Category*

Headline Frame for Reporting on COVID-19 in Online Newspapers in Indonesia and Malaysia

The analysis in this study was done on the Republika Newspaper. Republika is a national Indonesian newspaper founded by the Muslim minority. The newspapers of

Republika are supposed to represent national mass media. During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Republika newspaper also participated in broadcasting Covid-19-related news to the public. In Malaysian newspapers, The Star Newspaper attempts to analyse five news frames. The Star is a Malaysian English-language daily situated in Petaling Jaya that began in 1971 as a regional newspaper in Penang. According to the Circulation Audit Bureau, The Star newspaper is the largest paid English-language newspaper in Malaysia. During the Covid-19 pandemic, The Star newspaper also took part in broadcasting news related to Covid-19 for the public. The comparative distribution of the number of each news frame is presented in Table 1 below.

**Table 1**

*Analysis of the Topic Category of the Covid-19 News Headline in the Republika and The Star newspapers*

No	The Topic Category	Indonesia		Malaysia	
		The Number of News Title	Percentage (%)	Number of News Title	Percentage (%)
(January - February - March)					
1.	The Frame of Public Health	1.454	79,41	1.117	63,68
2.	The Frame of Policy	250	13,65	405	23,09
3.	The Frame of Economy	47	2,57	98	5,60
4.	The Frame of Politics	40	2,18	88	5,01
5.	The Frame of Culture and Religion	40	2,18	46	2,62
	Total	1.831	100	1.754	100

According to the data analysis results reported in Table 1, there are 1,831 headlines framing the Covid-19 infodemic in the Republika newspaper. From this data, more public health frames are used in reporting on Covid-19, namely 1,454 news headlines or 79.41% of all news. The policy frame of 250 news headlines, or 13.65%, is in the second frame category. The economic frame comprises 47 news headlines or 2.57% of the total. The Political and Cultural/Religious frames are the same, with 40 news headlines or 2.18%.

Meanwhile, based on the results of data analysis in Table 1, it is shown that there are 1,754 headlines framing the Covid 19 infodemic in The Star newspaper. From this data, more public health frames are used in reporting on COVID-19, namely 1,117 news headlines or 63.68% of all news. For the second frame category is the policy frame of 405 news headlines or 23.09%. The economic frame is 98 news headlines or 5.60%. For the cultural/religious frame, there are 88 news headlines or 5.01 per cent and for the political frame, there are 46 news headlines or 2.62%.

**Table 2**

*Comparison based on COVID-19 news topics in Indonesian and Malaysian online newspapers*

No	Country	Public Health	The Government Policy	Economy	Politics	Culture and Religion
1	Indonesia	v				
2	Malaysia		v	v	v	v

According to table 2, the Indonesian newspaper "Republika" is the most often aired source of public health news. This was inextricably linked to the worsening status of Covid-19 at the time, thus many media concentrated on dealing with the pandemic and public safety. Meanwhile, "The Star" newspaper primarily broadcasts news about government policies, economics, politics, culture, and religion. The cause is the Covid-19 condition in Malaysia, which is thought to be better than in Indonesia even though both are being affected by the second wave of Covid-19. Furthermore, news is distributed more evenly in the newspaper "The Star" than in the newspaper "Republika."

According to table 1, the Republika newspaper publishes more Covid-19-related news than The Star newspaper. The public health news frames published by Republika differ by 15.73% from the news frames published by The Star. Government policy frames are the second most frequently published news frames in Republika and The Star publications. The Star newspaper, on the other hand, contains 9.44% more government policy frames than Republika.

According to Table 1, the public health frame has the biggest amount of news publications in Malaysia. This was because the condition of Covid-19 in Malaysia was having the biggest growth in cases since the disease was discovered for the first time in the country during this period. Indeed, according to Our World Data data, Malaysia has been hit by a second wave of COVID-19, with a bigger increase in cases than India, since the beginning of 2021. As of March 31, 2021, at least 345,500 Malaysians had been infected with Covid-19, 1,272 had died, and over 700 were receiving intensive care at the hospital (Aw et al. 2021). This is the biggest increase in cases recorded since January 24, 2020. The increase in COVID-19 cases has certainly become the headline news that the people of Malaysia have been waiting for, and this has caused a lot of news to cover this phenomenon. Every day, news about the condition of Covid-19 is broadcast so that the public and government can determine the next appropriate policy. Furthermore, in response to the growing number of COVID-19 cases, the Malaysian government has decided to implement a variety of policies, including a temporary lockdown, requiring residents to vaccinate, closing red zone schools, cancelling all public events and religious celebrations, restricting visitors to restaurants and malls, and imposing strict sanctions on violators of the Covid-19 health protocol. Because of policies like this, public policy news is the second most searched for and published by The Star newspaper.

The policies put in place have a significant impact on Malaysia's economic conditions. The Star newspaper carried economic news as well as the lockdown policy, which caused state revenue to decline by 17.1%. Based on these conditions, news of economic progress in numerous areas, particularly tourism, appeared. The rise in Covid-19 instances has also had an impact on the country's political conditions, such as the cancellation of the 2021 elections and the suspension of opinion polls, resulting in a lot of political news being published. Meanwhile, The Star newspaper's culture and religion coverage focuses on the abolition of traditional events and the shift of many types of celebrations from offline to online.

Meanwhile, Table 1 reveals that the public health framework has the biggest number of news publications in Indonesia. This occurred because, between January and March of this year, a new variation of the Covid-19 virus, known as the Delta type, was found, which is more lethal for the elderly than the prior variant. The Delta type is 60% easier to transmit than the Alpha variant, according (Shiehzadegan et al. 2021). (Rashedi et al. 2022) stated the same thing, that the Delta variant is 1,000 times more harmful



than other variants. Furthermore, according to data on confirmed Covid-19 cases compiled by the Republic of Indonesia's Covid-19 Handling Task Force from January to March 2021, the greatest increase in cases was in children, particularly school-age children (6-18 years) as much as 83.1%, namely from 68,304 to 125,084 cases. Other cases increased by 79.7% at the age of five (0-5 years), from 20,957 to 37,660 cases. During this period, the number of cases among the elderly increased by 76.6%, from 81,499 to 143,913. News about a rise in cases is highly important to share with the public. People, on the other hand, are still hoping for effective government policies for dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, public policy frames are the most often reported and sought-after news headlines. The top issue of government policy is news on the government's Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policy, which limits people's activities outside the home to prevent Covid-19 transmission throughout society. PSBB news is always linked to the lockdown policy implemented by various local governments in Indonesia as a result of their regions approaching the Covid-19 red zone. News about PSBB always raises pros and cons in society, particularly among business actors who believe the policy is disrupting the course of economic activity in Indonesia, forcing many companies and MSMEs out of business due to their inability to survive in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. In practice, Indonesia had 0.44% inflation from January to March 2021, representing a 1.37% increase over the previous year (Badan Pusat Statistik 2021). High inflation is linked to Indonesia's poor population, which is growing as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the March 2021 period, the number of poor people in Indonesia increased to 27.54 million people (10.14%). This represents a 1.12 million (0.36%) increase in the number of poor people in Indonesia as a result of Covid-19 (Badan Pusat Statistik 2021). The primary subjects in the economic news frame are inflation, poverty rates, and cases of bankruptcy of business actors. The following item of interest to the public is political news concerning Covid-19 in Indonesia. Political concerns that are currently arising in the period January - March 2021 are due to widespread corruption in Covid-19 social assistance provided by regional social institutions. Furthermore, the politicisation of the Covid-19 vaccination was making headlines at the time. Further news that is of interest to the public is related to culture and religion, such as the suspension of various cultural activities and religious celebrations due to the PSBB.

**Table 3**

*Category of Covid-19 News Headlines in "Republika" and "The Star" Online Newspapers*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Topic Title</b>	<b>Representative Text</b>
Public Health	<i>The Vice Minister of Health: The Early Diagnose of Covid-19 Can Prevent Death</i>	The Deputy Minister of Health highlighted that early diagnosis accuracy can lower the number of Covid-19 deaths.
	<i>The Professor of UII Introduces Nanoparticle to Become Covid-19 Solution</i>	The professor from UII said that nanoparticle technology might be an effective solution for a variety of diseases, including Covid-19.
	<i>1,8 Million Sinovac Vaccine Stage 2 Arrived in Indonesia</i>	Indonesia's government imported the Sinovac vaccine from China.
	<i>Groups call for more effective awareness programme on screening</i>	An effective screening programme can effectively detect Covid-19 cases.

	<p><i>Health Ministry: Record number of 21 deaths, 3,455 new Covid-19 cases</i></p> <p><i>Ismail Sabri: 125 arrested for breaching Covid-19 SOP, 14 remanded</i></p>	<p>The Malaysian Ministry of Health noted that on 2 February 2021, there were 3,455 new cases and 21 cases of death due to Covid-19 in Malaysia.</p> <p>There were 125 people arrested and 14 people detained for violating the Covid-19 Health Protocol</p>
<p>The Government Policy</p>	<p><i>Bekasi The New Regulation of Citizen Activity Limitation in The City</i></p> <p><i>Regional Police of West Sumatera Dispersed 1.189 Times Weekend Crowd</i></p> <p><i>The Government of Sleman Regency Extended The Emergency Response of Covid-19 Packed cafes ordered to close during new year revelry</i></p> <p><i>Perak launches programme to help needy students facing public exams</i></p> <p><i>Covid-19: Penang urges Education Ministry to consider closing schools with cases</i></p>	<p>The Bekasi City Government has established six major rules for the community's social restriction policy.</p> <p>There were 1,189 crowds from all regions in Payakumbuh, Padang City and Padang Pariaman which were disbanded by the West Sumatra Regional Police.</p> <p>Extension of the seventh COVID-19 emergency response period in Sleman Regency from January 1 to 31, 2021</p> <p>Order for cafe closure on New Year's Eve 2021</p> <p>The Perak State Government launched a scholarship assistance program for underprivileged students to take public exams at schools during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>The Penang government is putting pressure on the Malaysian Ministry of Education to close schools where Covid-19 has been confirmed.</p>
<p>Economy</p>	<p><i>BPS: The Inflation of January 0,26 Percent, The Impact of Covid Still Feels</i></p> <p><i>2 Million MSME Entered Digital During The Pandemic</i></p> <p><i>The Death of Hijab Producer and Exclamation of Hate Towards Foreign Product</i></p> <p><i>Ministry out to revive local tourism</i></p> <p><i>Traditional CNY market in Sabah canceled, assemblyman offers online market</i></p> <p><i>Najib admits he did not use MySejahtera app, will accept fin</i></p>	<p>The weakness of the economy during the Covid-19 pandemic caused Indonesia to experience inflation.</p> <p>Innovation through digitizing MSMEs is one of the solutions that keep MSME players afloat and able to meet public needs.</p> <p>The decrease in hijab manufacturers is due to the constant presence of international products and the President of the Republic of Indonesia's plea to love native MSME products.</p> <p>Malaysia's Ministry of Tourism is trying to revive tourism weakened by Covid-19.</p> <p>The CNY traditional market in Sabah which was scheduled for February 10, 2021, had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. On the other hand, the government is offering the public to try online marketing to prevent transmission of Covid-19 in the community.</p> <p>The Prime Minister of Malaysia, Najib Razak, asked all people to use the MySejahtera application before entering restaurants in Kota. Those who do not use will be fined.</p>

Politics	<i>KPK Deepens The Initial Stage of Social Aid Procurement Plan for Covid</i>	There are strong allegations of corruption in the COVID-19 social assistance carried out by PT Mandala Hamonangan Sude and PT Agri Tekh Sejahtera
	<i>PSBB Can Effectively Press Covid-19 If The Government is Firm</i>	Members of the DPR comment to the government to act decisively in carrying out the PSBB program
	<i>Indonesia-Romania Agree to Improve Economic Cooperation After The Pandemic</i>	Economic cooperation agreement between Indonesia and Romania to boost the country's economy again after the Covid-19 pandemic.
	<i>Muhyiddin outlines five main priorities for 2021</i>	Members of the Malaysian Council outlined five top priorities for 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic.
	<i>No state election until after Emergency, say Sarawak parties</i>	Members of Sarawak's Parliament will not hold general elections until the Covid-19 emergency period is over.
	<i>Sarawak will hold state polls if Covid-19 situation improves and Emergency is lifted, says CM</i>	The Sarawak government will hold an opinion poll once the emergency period is lifted
Culture and Religion	<i>Minister of Religion and Cross Religion Figures Pray for Indonesia to be Free of Covid-19 Still Pandemic, The Minister of Religion Requested Imlek To Be Celebrated Simply</i>	The government and interfaith leaders are working together to recover Indonesia from the Covid-19 pandemic Minister of Religion's appeal for Chinese New Year 2021 to be celebrated simply to reduce the spread of Covid-19 between congregations.
	<i>JHS Bosowa Bina Insani Held Culture Day 2021</i>	Indonesian cultural performance conducted by SMP Bosowa Bina Insani online.
	<i>Covid-19: No Thaipusam events in Selangor this year</i>	The Cancellation of the Thaipusam tradition in Selangor in 2021.
	<i>Staying connected their way this Valentine's Day</i>	Despite Covid-19, Valentine's Day celebrations in Malaysia are still carried out online without meeting face to face.
	<i>No going back: Covid-19 has changed the workplace forever</i>	Implementation of a new work culture during Covid-19.

According to Table 3, the public health framework in Indonesia is dominated by the accuracy of early Covid-19 diagnosis, nanomedicine technology, and the arrival of the Covid-19 vaccination. The government's policy framework pertains to the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB) policy, the West Sumatra Regional Police's dispersal of weekend crowds, and the prolongation of the COVID-19 emergency response period in Sleman Regency. Headlines with an economic frame are dominated by news about inflation in Indonesia as a result of COVID-19, digitization of MSMEs in Indonesia, and the demise of local hijab manufacturers as a result of foreign product entry into Indonesia. Furthermore, news headlines with political frames connected to corruption in COVID-19 social aid, House of Representatives engagement in PSBB implementation, and cooperation between Indonesia and Romania in increasing the country's economy. Meanwhile, in the cultural and religious framework, there are collaborative prayers between the Ministry of Religion and interfaith leaders, simple Chinese New Year festivities, and online Indonesian cultural performances by school students.

Meanwhile, according to Table 3, the public health frame in Malaysia is dominated by effective Covid-19 screening programmes, an increase in new Covid-19 cases, and arrests of those who breach the Covid-19 health protocol. The policy framework of the government pertains to the closure of cafés on New Year's Eve 2021, government scholarship aid programmes for needy students, and the closure of schools in Penang owing to the COVID-19 pandemic in the state of Perak. Headlines with an economic frame are dominated by news from the Malaysian Ministry of Tourism attempting to revitalise the tourism sector, cancelling traditional Chinese New Year market events, shifting business activities to online marketing, and using the My Sejahtera app when entering restaurants and other public places. Furthermore, political news stories refer to the Malaysian government's priority in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the cancellation of elections in Sarawak during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the suspension of opinion polls until the COVID-19 emergency period is lifted. Meanwhile, in the cultural and religious framework related to the abolition of the Thaipusam tradition in Selangor in 2021, Valentine's Day celebrations are carried out online, as well as implementing new work cultures such as Work From Home and Hybrid for workers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Current Conditions**

In recent months, COVID-19 headlines in Indonesian and Malaysian online media have declined dramatically. Politics, sports, economics, and other social issues are now the dominant topics in the news. In Indonesia, for example, political news regarding elections and other political topics is more common, whereas economic news and government policies are more prominent in Malaysia. This demonstrates a shift in media focus, with other issues taking precedence as COVID-19 instances fall and immunization becomes more prevalent (Nugroho & Syarief, 2021). Nonetheless, several news pieces remind us to be watchful about new COVID-19 variations that continue to mutate. Despite the fact that the number of active cases has dropped, several articles continue to underline the significance of following health standards. This state demonstrates that the dynamics of news, which were previously dominated by the pandemic, have become more diverse.

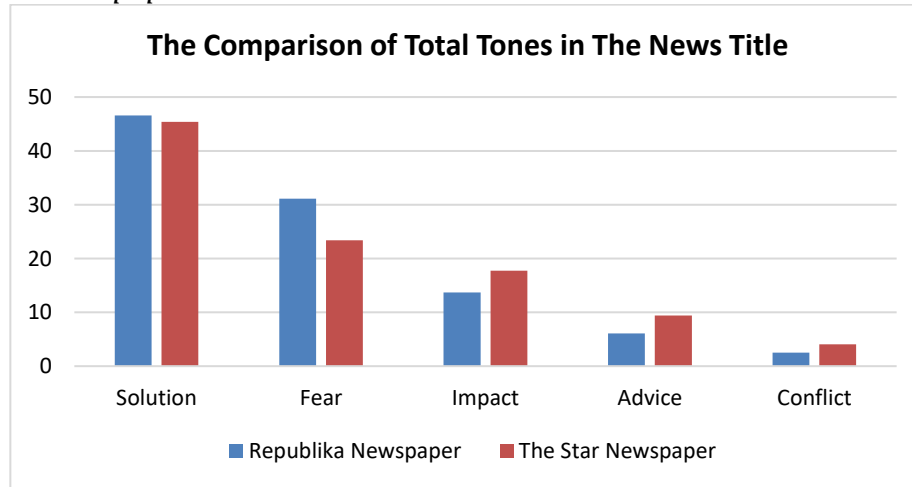
It might be stated that present conditions indicate that COVID-19 headlines have reduced significantly. Statistical data reveal that the quantity of articles discussing the pandemic has decreased. This drop also indicates that the media is now focusing on material that is seen more relevant to readers. Furthermore, people's behavior has altered; they are wearing less masks and are not adhering to tight health procedures. People are beginning to adjust to new circumstances, in which COVID-19 is no longer a major threat. However, it is crucial to recognize that the threat of new variations persists, and public health must remain a priority.

### ***Topic 2 - Types of Tones in News Headlines of Online Newspapers in Indonesia and Malaysia***

The tone of news coverage related to COVID-19 has many variations, not only in the form of hopes and solutions, but news with overly made headlines (metaphors) often creates fear about the worsening pandemic conditions.

**Picture 2**

*Comparison of the number of tones of the Covid-19 news headlines in “Republika” and “The Star” Online Newspapers*



Based on a comparison of the percentage tone of the Covid-19 news headlines in the Republika newspaper in Figure 2, there are 46.58% of the news headlines contain solutions; 31.14% of news headlines contain fear; 13.68% of news headlines contain an impact tone; 6.09% of news headlines contain suggestions; and 2.51% of news headlines contain conflict tones. Meanwhile, based on a comparison of the percentage of tone for the Covid-19 news headlines in The Star Malaysia newspaper in Figure 2, 45.40% used tone solutions; 23.4% in the form of fear; 17.74% contained impact; 9.41% contained suggestions; and 4.05% contains conflict.

According to Figure 2, the solution tone was ranked first as the news tone that was transmitted the most during Covid-19. The tone of the news regarding solutions in Indonesia has led to optimism from different parties, including health personnel and the general public, that COVID-19 will end in Indonesia. The news tone connected to solutions is due to the appearance of several ideas to deal with the COVID-19 issue, such as mass vaccinations for the Malaysian population. Fear News tone was ranked second in the Republika and The Star newspapers. However, the publication of news with a fearful tone is more common in Indonesia than in Malaysia. The increasing number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in Indonesia has caused the graph of Covid-19 cases in Indonesia to never slope, contributing to the high level of worry. Meanwhile, Malaysian news with a fearful tone ranks lower than Indonesia. This was due to the second wave of Covid-19, which prompted a spike in Covid-19 cases throughout the country. News with a more impactful tone is found in The Star news in Malaysia compared to Republika's newspaper. This occurred as a result of the imposition of a temporary lockdown which affected the pace of the economy and the country's foreign exchange reserves. Meanwhile in Indonesia, news with an impact tone is due to the existence of the PSBB policy which has caused a domino effect in all sectors of life, but the one that has felt the most impact is the economic sector. Tones of encouragement and appeal are more commonly found in Malaysia. On the other hand, only a few stories with a tone of encouragement and appeal were found in the Republika Indonesia newspaper. Furthermore, The Star Malaysia newspaper published further news with a conflicting tone, which is inextricably linked to the conflict between Malaysian parliament members regarding perceptions of the use of the COVID-19 vaccination. Aside from that,

the conflict was also tied to Malaysia's political situation, which was preparing to have elections at the moment. Meanwhile, conflict-related news is being shown less frequently in Indonesia. In general, conflict-related news in Indonesia is dominated by the use of various types of vaccines, both from abroad and within the country.

**Table 4**

*Comparison of the tone of the Covid-19 news headlines*

No	Country	Solution	Fear	Impact	Advice	Conflict
1	Indonesia		v			
2	Malaysia	v		v	v	v

According to Table 4, the Indonesian "Republika" newspaper primarily broadcasts news with a fearful tone. The various tones of fear in Indonesian newspapers are due to an increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases between January and March 2021, therefore there is a lot of news about the death rate due to COVID-19 and the new form of Covid-19, which produces panic among the population. Fearful news is frequently accompanied by figurative terms that trigger anxiety. Meanwhile, the tone of news related to impacts, suggestions, and conflicts is mostly broadcast in "The Star" newspaper. The reason is that newspapers in Malaysia prefer to broadcast good news without excessive words. To find out the types of headlines and news tones used in the online newspaper Republika Indonesia, see Table 5 below.

**Table 5**

*Tone interpretation of the Covid-19 news headline in the Indonesian online newspaper "Republika"*

The News Title	Tone
1,8 Million Sinovac Vaccine Stage 2 Arrived in Indonesia	Hope / Solution
The Death Rate of Covid Broke The Record Again, 387 Cases per Day	Fear / Worry
Bogor Regent Requested Cibogo Homestead To Be Activated for Isolation	Advice / Instruction
Covid-19 Caused The Economy of East Kalimantan Decreased 2,85%	Impact / Effect
Civil Service Police Unit Prepared Heavy Sanction for Brotherhood Bar	Conflict / Contradiction

Meanwhile, Table 6 shows the tone interpretation of the COVID-19 news headline in The Star Malaysia Daily.

**Table 6**

*Tone interpretation of the Covid-19 news headline in the Malaysian newspaper "The Star"*

The News Title	Tone
Govt may give single-dose Covid-19 vaccines to those in rural areas	Hope / Solution
Covid-19: 2,063 new cases, five more fatalities bring death toll to 1,153	Fear / Worry
Covid-19: Remain united and comply with SOP	Advice / Instruction
Covid-19: Seven new clusters, five linked to workplaces, another to an aged care home in Sentul	Impact / Effect

According to the tone analysis in Table 6, the vaccination programme in Malaysia dominates the news with a solution tone. Furthermore, news with a fearful tone is dominated by an increase in Covid-19 cases in various states in Malaysia. The impact of Covid-19 on changes in work culture from office to work-from-home dominates the news with an impact tone. Then, news with a suggestion tone refers to the government's request to the public to follow health procedures and be aware of the Covid-19 virus's existence. Meanwhile, the tone of conflict contains news related to the massive screening test for Covid-19 and the increase in cases of Covid-19 in Malaysia.

### ***News Topic Framing Work***

Public health is the most discussed topic of news because the information conveyed is related to the safety of the lives of the population in both Indonesia and Malaysia. Public health news is critical in giving updated and accurate information on developments in the Covid-19 case in Indonesia and Malaysia. The displayed news is inextricably linked to the current state of the COVID-19 case graph, accompanying symptoms, the discovery of the most recent COVID-19 virus variant, and the development of various technologies to prevent, reduce symptoms, and halt the rate of increase in COVID-19 cases in both countries. (Ophir and Jamieson, 2020) revealed that the way the media emphasizes or focuses on one aspect and hides other aspects has proven to raise public perceptions of the transmission of the virus. Despite the fact that media coverage is gender-based, this study shows that media coverage can have a significant impact on public understanding of health risks and emergencies. If the media makes mistakes and deceptions about health crisis information, the public will be unprepared to handle health crisis conditions, and it has been discovered that media coverage has an impact on public perception of a public health issue (Chang, 2012). The media has the potential to make errors in reporting on Covid-19, putting the public at risk (Bursztyn et al., 2020).

To overcome the Covid-19 pandemic, public health must work in tandem with proper and timely government interventions. The reason for this is that ineffective policies will simply increase the pandemic. As a result, many government policy frameworks are published and sought after by the general public. Even though they appear to be the same at first glance, there are distinctions between Malaysian and Indonesian government policies. If the government policy frame in Indonesia is more concerned with the main PSBB rules and the imposition of the COVID-19 emergency period, it is more varied in Malaysia, which closes all cafes on New Year's Eve, closes schools, and provides free school assistance to students affected by Covid-19 who cannot afford to pay school exam fees. During a pandemic, the framing of news coverage reflects how newspapers frame and mediate information flow, reinforce positive support for government policies, emphasise individual responsibility, and use local message frameworks to assert a country's sovereignty in dealing with a global pandemic (Lee and Basnyat, 2013).

The tone of the news in both Indonesian and Malaysian newspapers is one of solution and fear. The tone for solutions is related to the advent of new technologies and vaccination programmes suspected of improving the body's protection against Covid-19 infection, therefore news about this vaccination programme has appeared frequently

in both publications. The rest of the news, which is largely about the reopening of tourism and the digitalization of MSMEs to strengthen the economy and lower inflation in both countries, is mostly published in both *Republika* and *The Star* publications. Currently, the level of public uncertainty is rising. High levels of uncertainty are associated with higher anxiety. The Covid-19 pandemic, which has been labelled a national disaster, necessitates a tone or narrative that promotes hope and provides public remedies. The tone of optimism and practical answers for the public and government. The tone of hope and solutions gives a route out of an uncertain circumstance for the general people. The tone of hope and solutions from the government is useful for sustaining and strengthening public trust. Steps and initiatives taken by the government can be implemented properly with public trust. By (Lundgren and McMakin 2013) a trusted government will find it easier to manage crises and adopt crisis management strategies. The government must be able to manage public trust through collaboration with the media so that the framing and tone of the news can be guided to persuade the public to trust the government's actions in disaster management.

Meanwhile, fearful news occurred due to a spike in Covid-19 cases in the two countries, which alarmed the public, particularly those with comorbid diseases. The media uses this narrative in a worried tone to report on the growing number of positive people for COVID-19, the scarcity of personal protective equipment for medical professionals, the impact of Corona on the Indonesian economy, and the maze of legislation dealing with COVID-19 in Indonesia. The result is that news written in a tone of worry produces excessive fear, causing readers to experience anxiety, stress, and other psychiatric issues. This is consistent with (Ebrahim, 2022) research, which found that Covid-19 headlines have the potential to negatively impact people's mental health. News that is poorly presented or has a fearful or anxious tone may damage the mental health of individuals who read it. The media can impact public fear by creating this fear narrative. Especially for the general populace with limited media literacy. Fear stories have two consequences. On the one hand, it has the potential to improve community readiness (Wu et al., 2020). Reading frightening information allows people to assess what they have not prepared for the worst-case scenario. Fear narratives, on the other hand, and this is the most significant consequence, will simply breed more fear. In this context, information disorder develops as a result of a misunderstanding of messages and information, resulting in an incorrect response. Media news that emphasises fear and concern narratives can affect information disorder (Fahrimal, Husna, and Islami 2020). T Especially now, when communication exchanges on social media are at an all-time high. Covid-19 news from media outlets such as *Republika* and *The Star* is particularly easy to replicate and amplify on social media. (See Appendix 1)

### **Current Conditions**

The overall tone of news about COVID-19 in Indonesian and Malaysian web media has also shifted substantially. Previously, many news items were written with a fearful tone and offered answers or advice for dealing with the pandemic. However, this tone in the news is becoming increasingly rare. In Indonesia, for example, news with a fearful tone about rising cases or lockdowns has been mostly replaced by optimistic news about economic growth and social activity. In Malaysia, the primary tone of news has shifted to the government's goal to recover the tourism and economic sectors, lowering the too worried tone associated with the pandemic. Only a few articles continue to adopt a warning tone or offer solutions for the new COVID-19 variety, showing a shift in



reporting focus. However, fear-based journalism continues to exist, but it is no longer about COVID. The news is primarily about wars such as the Middle East and Ukraine, demonstrating that, while coverage of COVID-19 has diminished, concern remains in other contexts (BBC Indonesia, 2022a; BBC Indonesia, 2022b).

Evaluations suggest that the tone of COVID-19 news has shifted dramatically, becoming more optimistic and recovery-oriented. News that was once alarming or provided answers to the pandemic is no longer dominating, having been replaced by news that promotes optimism and progress in the pandemic's recovery. This shift in tone can influence public perception, as individuals begin to feel safer and assume that the situation is improving. However, it may result in a disdain for still-important health protocols. This review demonstrates that, while news concerning COVID-19 is reducing, it is critical for the media to continue to offer balanced information and warn the public of the threat that remains.

## **Conclusion**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a wide-ranging impact, notably on literacy and journalism. Covid-19-related news has emerged in Indonesian and Malaysian newspapers, alongside pandemic conditions that are compromising public safety and health. When the news about Covid-19 is grouped, it includes information about public health, government policies, economics, politics, culture, and religion. Among these five topics, public health news dominates the headlines in both countries, followed by the other four. Popular news headlines in Indonesia and Malaysia during the COVID-19 pandemic related to the current state of the COVID-19 case, government policies in dealing with the pandemic, the domino effect caused by COVID-19, the postponement of elections and the participation of parliament in determining public policy, the elimination of various types of events in public spaces, shifting offline activities to online and implementing a new work culture in various industrial sectors.

Each news headline that emerges has a distinct tone. There are at least five types of tones found in the Covid-19 news in the two newspapers, including solutions, fears, impacts, suggestions, and conflicts. Of the five tones, the types of news related to solutions, impacts, suggestions, and conflicts are mostly found in Malaysian newspapers. Meanwhile, fearful headlines were more common in Indonesian newspapers. The volume of news that has emerged has undoubtedly created both positives and cons among the general public. If the news is not framed with a headline that is not good or too metaphorical, it is feared that it will cause fear in the community. The complexities inherent in online newspaper headlines in both Indonesia and Malaysia can be used practically to influence and instil public perspectives about disease and encourage people to live a healthy lives.

This study has some limitations that must be noted. First, this analysis only looks at online media in Indonesia and Malaysia, thus it may not be representative of media in other countries. Second, this study focuses on headline content rather than visual features, which can alter how news is framed. Furthermore, the method adopted is more descriptive and may be less thorough in investigating the framing's social influence. Future research should include a broader comparison examination with media from various countries to acquire a more global perspective. Researchers can also combine visual and textual analysis to gain a more comprehensive understanding of framing. Furthermore, extending the qualitative study can help understand how framing effects people's views and behavior in more detail.

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**Appendix 1  
Picture 3**

*Framing work diagram of news topics and tones in online newspapers "Republika" and "The Star"*

