

# Mastery of information technology and strengthening collaboration between editors and marketing: Local media strategies for surviving during Covid-19 pandemic

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## Abstract

There was a global pandemic with the emergence of the Covid-19 virus from 2019 until 2022. The pandemic affected all aspects of life, including the press/media world. Media crews had been facing tough challenges during the midst of a pandemic situation. Journalists were required to do work in the field to produce quality content. The business division was required to continue to generate revenue for the company in order to produce quality journalistic works. On the other hand, they had to protect themselves from contracting the plague while carrying out their duties with all the challenges and risks. Since the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, local media revenue has continued to fall. Newspaper sales dwindled, advertising sales slumped, events could not run. While operational costs were not reduced but instead increased. Local media also had to struggle with their own strategies to survive. Mastery of information technology to strengthen collaboration between the editorial department and the marketing department was the key to succeed.

**Keywords:** media, local media, pandemic, Covid-19, media strategy

## INTRODUCTION

In 2019, the world was shocked by the emergence of a new virus, which was later named Sars-Cov-2 or commonly called Covid-19 (corona virus disease). The number 19 indicates the year in which the virus began to appear. The World Health Organization (WHO) and Chinese authorities stated that the Corona Virus first appeared and spread in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and played a role in the initial amplification of the outbreak (World Health Organization, 2020). WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus at that time said that the naming of Covid-19 originated from four words, namely Corona (CO), Virus (VI), Disease (D), and 2019 (19), namely the first Covid-19 virus. appeared in 2019 (Utomo, 2020). According to the WHO website, Corona Virus is a large family of viruses that can cause disease in animals or humans. The World Health Organization (WHO) has determined the naming of Covid-19 to refer to the Corona virus which is endemic

throughout the world. In January 2020, WHO declared the outbreak caused by the Covid-19 virus a public health emergency of International Concern (Jahangir et al., 2020; WHO, 2020).

This pandemic spread rapidly throughout the world, including in Indonesia. Covid-19 not only threatens human life but also has an impact on all aspects of human life, from health, social, political, security to what is most felt is the economic sector. The positive case of Covid-19 in Indonesia was first detected on March 2 2020. The transmission of this virus continues to spread to infect many residents in all regions in Indonesia where on April 9 2020, the virus has spread to 34 provinces with the areas of DKI Jakarta, West Java and Java Central is the region that has the highest level of exposure to the Corona virus in Indonesia (Jaya, 2021).

The Covid-19 virus pandemic has caused a multidimensional crisis, including the media business. The economic crisis due to the Covid-19 pandemic has also had an impact on the mass media business in the country. The issue of media viability due to the impact of the pandemic is a very crucial factor for the sustainability of the media business. The economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the vitality of many regional media. There was a decrease in media company revenue due to difficulties in getting advertisements which is the main income for a media institution in supporting the running of the press company organization. The media also has difficulty organizing various profit-making events.

So the media has difficulty accessing potential business benefits due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Reduced audiences who are willing to spend money to “buy” the information presented by the media, reduced advertisers, reduced product promotion activities and other income have caused the media industry to walk towards the brink of bankruptcy and closure (Widarini et al., 2021).

Data from the Global Conference on Media Freedom states that revenue through advertising will decline by 70 percent in 2020 (Widarini et al., 2021, p. 13). Advertising spending in mid-January - July 2020 was recorded at IDR 122 trillion, but the trend has slowed down from month to month, due to the impact of the Covid-19 virus pandemic. Executive Director of Nielsen Media (Indonesia), Hellen Katherina stated that in 2012 there were fluctuations in advertising spending in Indonesian mass media and tended to experience a downward trend in the middle of the year when the number of cases of the Covid-19 outbreak was increasing (Supriyatna, 2020). As a result of declining revenues, many media companies have implemented various strategies to survive. Apart from having an impact on the sustainability of the media, the Covid-19 pandemic has also had an impact on journalistic practices (the news production process). In this pandemic condition, it is very challenging in journalistic practice but on the other hand it is very difficult for the sustainability of media operations. Because in the midst of the onslaught of the Covid-19 pandemic, editors are still required to carry out their duties of conveying information at the forefront quickly, accurately and completely. The media as a business institution must also be demanded to live and run normally while there are many obstacles to earning income during the Covid-19 pandemic. In general, there were three problems faced by the Indonesian press during the Covid-19 pandemic. First, the problem with the sustainability of the media business. Second, the problem is the professionalism of journalists' performance, and third is the protection of media crew from the transmission of the corona virus (Nuh, 2021, p. 6; Pambudy, 2021, p. 18).

That's why media workers from both the editorial and business or marketing sectors are also experiencing disruptions due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The breath of local media, since the arrival of the Covid-19 pandemic, has become increasingly congested. Not only did the number of subscribers continue to dwindle, the advertising sales that had become the support of his life also began to decline. The drop in revenue from advertising immediately drained the media's financial foundations. While operational costs are not reduced but also increased. The decline in media advertising revenue not only reduces profit potential, but also affects the smooth running of production and reduces the quality of journalistic work. Not only in the national media, the crisis situation of the Covid-19 outbreak has an impact on regional (local) media which is confused by the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Until three months into the running of Covid-19, there has been almost no concern policy aimed at the press in Indonesia. So they also have to struggle independently with their respective strategies in order to survive. Local media revenues have not only decreased, but have plummeted and partly plunged. This causes the media business in the regions to experience contractions

and disruptions which have an impact on the sustainability of the media.

During a pandemic, the existence of news in the media is very valuable. The public's need for information has increased dramatically. This situation requires the media with journalists and their teams to work professionally and continue to produce quality and fast work amidst the limitations due to the Covid-19 pandemic. So important is the presence of the media with its professional journalists in this Covid-19 pandemic situation. The results of a study from the Reuters Institute found the fact that 60% of respondents in six world countries admitted that journalism-based mass media helped them understand the situation of the Covid-19 pandemic because the information conveyed was much more accurate than on social media (Pollack et al., 2020).

The mainstream media is expected to be a trusted source of information in the pandemic era. The mainstream media has a role in presenting explanations regarding Covid-19 starting from the intricacies of the virus, its spread, prevention steps to government policies that must be followed by the community. This demand is certainly not easy to fulfill during the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition to the risk factors that must be accepted by journalists or editorial staff because of the potential for exposure to viruses, another factor that affects the quality of content is the economic condition of the media which has disrupted its income so that it has an impact on reducing human resources (Human Resources). As a business entity, the media must also obtain a supply of income to support media operations in carrying out their functions ideally as desired by the public and protected by law.

Based on the background above, the researcher wants to further examine how the mass media strategy is in dealing with the media economic crisis due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, especially regional media in the Central Java and Yogyakarta Special Region (DIY) regions. So that they can still produce quality journalistic works in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The press or the media, exists as an institution that has ideals of educating society and also as social control. The mass media or the press has an important role in the era of democracy. The press is a forum for people's expression, a bridge for communication and of course the press is a tool for monitoring the people in the life of society, nation and state. The function of the press in a country is important in the process of forming a democratic society in a country. For this reason, the press has an important function for the development of a country towards the life of a democratic nation and state.

Law Number 40 of 1999 concerning the Press in Article 6 regulates the role of the press, namely:

- a). Fulfill the public's right to know information.
- b). Uphold the basic values of democracy.
- c). Encouraging the realization of the rule of law and human rights.
- d). Respect diversity.
- e). Develop public opinion.
- f). Supervise, criticize, correct and suggest.
- g). Fight for justice and truth.

This Law also regulates the functions of the press, namely as follows: Medium for Information, Medium for Education, Medium for Entertainment, Medium for Social Control, Medium for Economic Institutions.

The critique function of the press is also accepted by a democratic society. In Indonesia, after the New Order, it is undeniable that the press has played a major role in overseeing Indonesia's democratization which has been rolling fast until now. Based on that, the Indonesian press really deserves the title as the fourth pillar of democracy. It can be concluded that the presence of the press/media in a society has enormous benefits, especially in a democratic society. That is the idealist role and function of the press/media in society.

On the other side of this idealistic role and function, the press is also faced with an economic role, namely to act as a business profit panner. The press/media also moves with a business orientation to support the running

of the organizational activities of press companies. This economic role will also have an impact on the role and function of the idealism of the press. In order for the role and function of idealism to run well, of course it must be supported by good media economic conditions. If the economy of media/press companies is good, then the press can also carry out its role of idealism well. On the other hand, if the economy of media/press companies is disrupted or downturns, then the idealism role of the press will not run optimally.

The media economy or press institution business will experience contraction when the economy of a country or region experiences problems. As is currently happening around the world including Indonesia with the Covid-19 pandemic it has also had an impact on economic sustainability, including the information or media sector.

Almost all business entities have experienced a downturn due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the media business sector is no exception. As a business institution, the media is also greatly affected, so that it directly impacts the running of the media organization, both national media and regional media. One month since Indonesia was first declared infected with the Corona virus and there were restrictions on citizens' mobility, the media has almost experienced a contraction in terms of its business endeavors and editorial performance in carrying out the idealistic mission of the press. The economic impact of the media continues and gets worse along with the increase in the health crisis due to the Corona virus in the country. The ideal editorial performance in presenting news is also experiencing problems.

Disruption of the media economy disrupts the operational performance of the press in playing its function in society in an ideal manner. The media has a strategic role in society. The media is an important force in overseeing the work of government and society. The media also has a humanitarian role, an educational and informational role. Without the presence of the media, there is no balance for the government and society. The media is also a clearer of misinformation that appears in society, for example, related to the pandemic. In the midst of misinformation that has sprung up in society, both in the form of narratives and memes, it is necessary to have a media that continues to provide it correctly. The press has a role as a balancing force, a power of education and dissemination of correct information. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, the presence of the press is really needed.

The presence of the Covid-19 pandemic undermined the existence of local media and threatened the important roles of the press in this society. So what the media does is keep trying hard to survive with their respective strategies so that they can play an important role for society. The condition of the Covid-19 outbreak hit the press in the area hard. Each press company has its own strategy in order to survive amid the impact of the economic crisis due to the Corona pandemic.

In the editorial field, the pandemic has had an impact on the reporting process in obtaining news material. Reporting during the Covid-19 pandemic has very high risks, just like reporting on the battlefield. Given the threat is also life. That is a challenge and a separate strategy for journalists when reporting during a pandemic. Journalists are at the forefront of reporting on the life-threatening situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. Given their important role, the security and safety of journalists must be ensured (Pollack et al., 2020). Performance to seek media revenue also faces obstacles. Advertising offers and presentations as well as other forms of business cooperation were also disrupted. Media marketing cannot be maximized in carrying out business cooperation offers with clients.

The press institution is required to be professional in carrying out its role as a conveyer of accurate information to the public. The press also plays a role in bridging the process of communication and information flow so that the public avoids confusion over news related to the Covid-19 pandemic case. On the other hand, the press is sheltered by industry-based companies that must count with business management. When their business interests are disrupted and under tremendous pressure, it will have an impact on the role they have to carry out. In this position, the press is also at the forefront of efforts to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. So, saving the fate of the press in a situation where the impact of the pandemic has become an investment and a very important step.

## **Communicative Ecology Theory**

According to Ball-Rokeach et al. (Broad et al., 2013) communication ecology can be defined as a network of communication resource relationships built by communication agents in pursuit of certain goals and in the context of the individual's communication environment (pp.4). Individuals, organizations, communities or the media are agents that form networks in the communication ecology. The relationships formed in the communication ecology can function for various purposes, for example exchanging and receiving various kinds of information (Spialek et al., 2016).

According to Seoul et al. (2016), communicative ecology theory (CET) is a conceptual framework in the field of media and communication in which this concept focuses on dynamic interrelationships connecting technology, content, and social interaction. CET theory provides a holistic approach by considering not only technical infrastructure, but also discursive content and communicative social interactions that occur (Seol et al., 2016, p. 742). Foth and Hearn (2007) proposed communicative ecology as a concept that integrates the three dimensions of online and offline, global and local, as well as collective and network. There are three layers in CET, namely the technological layer, the discursive layer (content) and the social layer.

The technology layer consists of information technology devices and media that connect people and enable communication and interaction between them. Devices and applications within the technology layer can be differentiated according to the communication model they facilitate. Some applications, such as public chat rooms, encourage one-to-many and many-to-many communication styles, whereas instant messaging such as SMS (short message service) or Whatsapp chat allow one-to-one and peer-to-peer communication that is more like a network than a network. homogeneous group. The use of information communication technology in this layer depends on the purpose and content of the interaction, some devices and applications may be more appropriate than other applications in achieving the desired results (Foth & Hearn, 2007; Seol et al., 2016).

While the social layer consists of people in the communication process which may include people, structures and social networks that connect them ranging from informal structures that include individuals and groups of friends to more formal community associations, such as managers and employees in formal organizations. (Davison et al., 2014; Foth & Hearn, 2007; Seol et al., 2016).

Focusing on communicative ecology theory, this research focuses on technological and social layers in media communication. How does the news media use information communication systems and technology and how many devices and platforms are considered more appropriate to use, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the technology layer, technology acceptance theory is presented to examine the extent to which news media accept technology or information systems that can meet expectations and can provide benefits and convenience from the use of information and communication technology, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic. At the social layer, this research presents the theory of media ecology which has an idea of how much potential a media environment has in providing sources of life for the sustainability of the media industry, especially during the Covid-19 virus outbreak.

## **Technology Acceptance Model**

Explanation of usage behavior and intention to use information communication technology has become one of the most important fields in various research fields, especially in the field of communication science. Behavior and intention to use technology are examined to understand the reasons why someone accepts or rejects new technology. Studying the adoption, acceptance and use of information technology and information systems has been recognized since the 1970s (Momani et al., 2017). Davis, Bagozzi, and Warshaw (Momani et al., 2017, p. 1) define technology acceptance as the application of software and hardware technology within an organization to increase productivity, competitive advantage, increase processing speed and make information quickly available.

Technology acceptance theory was developed to study people's acceptance of technology and to demonstrate their ability to adopt new technologies depending on behavioral psychology and sociology and their influence

on technology use. The theory of technology acceptance (technology acceptance model/TAM) is an extension of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) where TRA is the earliest theory of technology acceptance developed in the field of social psychology by Arjen and Fishbein in 1967. Although this theory does not specifically study the acceptance of technology but this theory shows that individual intentions to perform certain behaviors are determinants of direct and indirect effects of changes in behavior and social influence felt by people who are important to individuals (Davis, 1985).

According to Davis (1985&1989), the attitude of potential users towards the use of a particular system or technology determines whether they (media users) actually use the technology or not. Attitudes toward media use are a function of two main beliefs, namely perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. Perceived usefulness can be defined as the extent to which a person believes that using a particular system will improve his performance and provide benefits to his users. Meanwhile, perceived ease of use refers to the extent to which a person believes that using a particular tool will be free from difficulties. Tools or technologies that are easier to use than other technologies will be more easily accepted by their users (Davis, 1985, 1989). In a technological context, the ease obtained and perceived from using a particular medium has a causal effect on perceived usefulness (Davis, 1985, pp. 24-25). People tend to use or not use technology to the extent that they believe that technology can or will help them do their jobs better and also provide convenience in using the technology (Davis, 1989).

The purpose of these theories and models is to convey the concept of how users, especially media, can understand and accept new technologies and how they can use them. To accept a new technology, there are many aspects that affect a person's decision-making process about how and when to use it. With a focus on the use of the media by the news media. In this layer, the researcher wants to analyze what factors are driving the use of new media by the news media in their journalistic practices, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic and why they chose that media.

### **Niche Theory (Media Ecology)**

Niche theory is a theory that is used to see how much potential an environment has in providing sources of life. Niche theory adapts concepts from ecology-biology which are designed to explain how media use the same and limited resources and carry out similar functions in a competitive but coexisting ecological community (Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984, p. 105; Monicaningsih, 2017, p. 67). In terms of terminology, niche is often interpreted as a "divine" or "living space" where this refers to processes, characteristics, relationships, and interactions between populations in an effort to maintain their lives (Herawati & Budi HH, 2013). Niche theory is abstract and general, the substance of this theory is a set of concepts and propositions about competition and coexistence. Although this theory was born from a biological theory, this theory can be formulated to describe and explain competition and coexistence among populations (Dimmick, 2003, p. 24). In the context of media studies, niche theory can be applied to the analysis of competition among mass media industries (Dimmick & Rothenbuhler, 1984). This theory analogizes the population as a media industry such as radio, television, newspapers, magazines and online media that compete with each other with the aim of maintaining their existence in an environment/ecology, namely the market.

### **METHODS**

This research is a type of qualitative research that aims to describe and interpret certain phenomena comprehensively and in more detail. This type of descriptive research aims to describe the facts found in a systematic, factual, and accurate manner (Kriyantono, 2006). This study aims to explore participants' experiences of certain situations. Qualitative research aims to explain a phenomenon in detail through in-depth data mining, because this research does not prioritize population size, but takes a limited number of samples (Kriyantono, 2006). This research emphasizes the depth or quality, not the quantity of the sample, because if the sample taken can explain the population, then there is no need to look for additional. In this case the quality or depth of the data is more important for analysis than the amount or quantity.

In qualitative research the researcher is an integral part of the data that determines the type of data to be

obtained. Thus, researchers become instruments that must participate in research, which makes research results subjective, not to be generalized. All data collected depend on the references of researchers, so that research designs can change according to developments. Even research can be carried out even though the researcher does not have a specific design, which means that the research proceeds naturally.

The purpose of qualitative research generally includes information about the main phenomena explored in research, not showing correlated variables or comparing certain categories as in quantitative research (Boman et al., 2017). Data collection in this study was carried out using in-depth interviews. Interviews are one method of collecting data in qualitative research which is conducted to obtain information directly from sources (Kriyantono, 2006). In-depth interviews are a way of collecting data or information directly face to face with informants in order to obtain complete and in-depth data. Data collection was carried out in the period November 2022-December 2022.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The Covid-19 pandemic hit media conditions, including local media. In interviews with three local media, namely Suara Merdeka, Kedaulatan Rakyat and Solopos, the tone was the same that Covid-19 had hit their economy, in fact almost all media in the region. What differs is the level of impact felt, the programs and strategies undertaken to survive.

From the editorial side, the impact of the pandemic has disrupted ideal news production and reduced the quality of information. Meanwhile, from the media business/business side, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic hit the media economy side because revenues fell and even stagnated. Local media managers are also struggling to carry out a number of steps and strategies so that the media continues to exist, carrying out the functions of the press and its business. At least the following are a number of steps and strategies taken by local media managers in Central Java and DIY (Special Region of Yogyakarta):

### **Safe Working**

The situation and conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic also made it very difficult for media workers, both the editorial team and the business division. Journalists in their work belong to the category of groups that are vulnerable to contracting the virus or in terms of People at Risk (ODR), because they do work that intersects with other parties during Covid. Media workers must take good care of themselves so they don't catch the plague while carrying out their duties with all the challenges and risks.

For this reason, Suara Merdeka, Kedaulatan Rakyat and Solopos have jointly created a policy that regulates working hours for media crews when carrying out their duties during the pandemic. This policy was adopted as a strategy so that all employees remain safe and do not contract Covid, which could threaten the sustainability of the media. They are worried that if many people get infected with Covid, it will affect media operations. Although some have been infected until someone died.

The policies implemented include: (a). Restricting Office Entries and Work From Home (WFH). At the beginning of Covid, Solopos had also implemented office hours for workers in the office, which were divided into two sessions. The first session is from 08.00 to 12.00 and the second session is from 13.00 to 16.00. This is to avoid direct interaction between employees. Sovereignty of the People applies 1 day to office, 1 day WFH. Then Suara Merdeka and Solopos implemented 3 days in the office, 3 days WFH. However, along with the escalation of the spread of the corona virus which is as dangerous as when it was the Delta variant, the full WFH policy was taken, namely 5 full days working from home.

(b). Making Guidelines for Coverage and Work During Covid. The three local media asked all of their crew to comply with government regulations in preventing Covid such as wearing masks, washing hands, and using hand sanitizers. Therefore they also provide hand sanitizers, masks and hand washing facilities in strategic places for employees. Then there are also those who make guidelines for reporting and work during the Covid

pandemic. As was done by Solopos which issued SOP for Coverage and Work Guidelines for employees during the Covid pandemic.

(c). Employee Vaccination. Local media in Semarang, Yogyakarta and Solo require all workers to vaccinate regularly and in an orderly manner. There are vaccination programs that are carried out in offices or included through government programs.

### **Business Extensification and Innovation**

So far, the local media is very dependent on revenue from advertising and organizing events. The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic has caused revenue from advertising to drop dramatically because companies or institutions have reduced or even stopped spending on advertising or promotion costs. The decline in advertising revenue in Solopos, Kedaulatan Rakyat and Suara Merdeka varied between 40-65 percent. The decline in advertising revenue was felt in March 2020 and continued to fall in April-May-June until mid-2021. They began to breathe easier when there was an advertorial program from government agencies, especially BNPB (Badan Nasional Penanggulangan Bencana/Indonesian National Disaster Management Agency) regarding handling Covid-19.

The event also cannot run because the company or institution has stopped the event promo. In addition to this, the government issued a ban on gatherings or physical face-to-face meetings to prevent transmission of COVID-19. Solopos Business Director, Suwarmin said, for example, that his party had to cancel a number of events that had been scheduled for the first quarter of 2020. One of them was the Didik Kempot stage event with an electronic product.

Not only revenue from advertisements and events has fallen, but also other revenues, one of which is revenue from newspaper circulation and other communication services. From interviews with the managers of Solopos, Kedaulatan Rakyat and Suara Merdeka, both stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, they practically could not sell newspapers. This was caused by two things: the existence of government regulations limiting the mobility of citizens so that no one could sell newspapers anymore, and secondly there was concern among residents that newsprint was a medium for transmitting the Covid-19 virus.

The loss of revenue from regular business has forced the managers of Solopos, Kedaulatan Rakyat and Suara Merdeka to develop a strategy to find other sources of income outside of advertisements and events. For example, the three local media have created a paid webinar program containing outreach and education programs regarding the handling of Covid-19 by government agencies. There are also those who have extended their business innovations beyond the main media business, such as what Solopos did by selling roasted chicken, selling hampers for religious holidays, selling services for Covid-related products and other products.

Solopos and Suara Merdeka also make podcasts and virtual talks containing product campaigns from clients. Solopos even created a mini studio for virtual podcasts and talk shows because the demand from clients for these programs was very high. Suara Merdeka also has a mainstay during a pandemic, namely virtual writing training for teachers in Central Java in collaboration with education offices in the regions.

### **Mastery of New Technologies**

In the first-third month of the Covid attack, we were still confused about finding work patterns because everything had completely changed. Mobility is limited, people start not wanting to meet, the threat of virus transmission, so all teams are confused about how to find new systems and work patterns. At that time, to connect with sources or clients using WhattaApps (WA).

Finally, management at Suara Merdeka, Kedaulatan Rakyat and Solopos forced all of their crews to master information technologies that were starting to be widely used, such as Google meet, zoom, podcasts and so on. All of these local media crews were forced to quickly use this new technology at work due to the situation and circumstances during Covid. The new technology was then used by the local media crew to support news production and seek income. Advertising presentations and collaboration with other parties are carried out via



Google Meet, Zoom and others. Thus, product campaigns and program socialization were born through webinar events, podcasts, virtual talk shows and the like. Interviews and press conferences also use zoom or google meet and so on. In fact, the use of this technology is still being used even though the Covid pandemic has far lessened its threat.

Local media crews were also forced to quickly learn how to operate new technologies such as zoom meetings, YouTube, live streaming, virtual talkshows and the like which were used to work on virtual events during the Covid pandemic. Moreover, the demand for webinars, virtual talk shows is also increasing.

### **Collaboration and Creating New Divisions**

The Covid-19 pandemic forced media in the regions to adapt to the existing situation and conditions. Included in the search for a working model in their internal. Among them is strengthening collaboration between editorial and business divisions. One of the results is the formation of a webinar team, podcast team, virtual talk show team which aims to serve clients in the form of virtual promos to generate income. The Marketing Team or Business Division is in charge of making cooperation offers to clients, while the Editorial Team is in charge of designing themes and materials for webinars, podcasts, and virtual talkshows to host them.

The Chief Editor of Kedaulatan Rakyat, Octo Lampito assigned an editorial team to back up the marketing team in formulating webinar material designs, then becoming hosts or moderators. Solopos and Suara Merdeka did the same. Suwarmin, Business Director of Solopos, said that there was a new strategy for earning income through webinars during the Covid period. They created a webinar event as a means of finding food during the Covid pandemic. So a webinar team was created, a joint editorial team and marketing team. The editorial team and marketing team collaborated to create a strategy for generating income for media cash through webinar programs. According to Suwarmin, the results are quite capable of supporting the company's revenue. It must be admitted that discussion and outreach activities such as this webinar made quite a high contribution during the covid pandemic. Can sustain life.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Solopos even created a new division, namely the Multimedia Division to serve business promotions that have turned virtual. Including the outreach program from the institution. This new division is a combination of editorial and marketing personnel.

### **Overhauling HR Structures and Accelerating Digital Transformation**

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic has also affected the arrangement of existing Human Resources (HR). Suara Merdeka, for example, had to carry out part of the employee restructuring, for those who were nearing retirement, they had to retire earlier. Print media crews are partly empowered to other divisions. Solopos also repositioned human resources by shifting most of its print media team to other places, considering that newspapers had reduced their pages during the Covid pandemic until now.

Rini Yustiningsih, Editor-in-Chief of Solopos, said that the Pandemic made them aware of accelerating digital transformation. If before Covid, almost most of the human resources were in printed newspapers, then during the pandemic it was completely changed. Previously, 70 percent of human resources were in print, now on the other hand, only 30 percent are in charge of print, of which 70 percent are in the digital and online divisions. "The existence of this pandemic has made us more aware and has accelerated the transformation of HR management towards digital. Actually, we already have a roadmap to work on digitizing the work system in Solopos. However, this will only focus on work during 2022-2023. But the arrival of the pandemic made us all speed up the transformation of this work pattern," Rini said.

This is also a strategy to deal with a pandemic situation where information consumption patterns and product promotions are carried out online/virtually. There are demands from outsiders, both information consumers and business clients who want journalistic products to be enjoyed online as well as the business side who want virtual promotions such as virtual talk shows, webinars, live streaming, outreach videos and others. So all local media products, both information and product/program promos, are forced to be virtual based.

## Reducing Newspaper Print Pages

Reducing the number of prints is the quickest choice made by print media managers in the regions, namely Kedaulatan Rakyat, Suara Merdeka and Solopos. All reduced the number of newspaper pages since the first three Covid attacks, and have not recovered until now. In addition to cutting operational costs, the reduction in printing was also caused by decreased purchases of newspapers and the number of subscriptions cut off.

## CONCLUSION

The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an economic crisis in all sectors, including the media industry. If the press is disturbed, it will affect the quality of the role and function of the press in society. So in the end, the losers are the people because they don't get optimal, varied and quality information. The impact of the economic crisis due to the pandemic has eroded revenue in almost all regional and local press. So concrete strategies must be put in place so that the press in the regions can survive the economic crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic so that they can play the function of the press well in society.

A number of strategies were adopted by regional media including those carried out by Kedaulatan Rakyat in Yogyakarta, Suara Merdeka in Semarang and Solopos in Surakarta, Central Java. The Covid-19 pandemic forced these three local media to further adapt to digital culture in obtaining and producing news as well as earning company income. Running safe work according to government regulations starting from social distancing, WFH which is manifested in the form of work guidelines for media crew during a pandemic. The pandemic has also strengthened awareness that editorial collaboration and business divisions are crucial for the sustainability of local media.

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