



Framing Flood News in Online Media: Comparing Local and National Narratives from an Islamic Perspective

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Abstract: This study analyzes differences in flood news framing between local and national online media in South Sumatra, focusing on Sriwijaya Post and Kompas.com during 2025. It examines how both media construct disaster causality, assign responsibility, and formulate solutions using the concepts of media framing, disaster communication, environmental journalism, and the social construction of reality. This qualitative research applies Pan and Kosicki's framing analysis model, covering syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures. The research analyzes 80 flood-related news articles published from January to November 2025. The findings show that Kompas.com frames floods as hydrometeorological disasters caused by extreme rainfall and climate anomalies, emphasizing scientific authority, meteorological data, and technocratic policy responses. In contrast, Sriwijaya Post highlights environmental degradation, deforestation, land conversion, and the socio-economic impacts on local communities, constructing a more ecological and humanitarian perspective. The study demonstrates that editorial orientation and geographical proximity significantly influence representations of disasters, ecological responsibility, and governance failures. The main limitations include restricted access to newsroom production processes and the interpretative subjectivity of framing analysis. Rapid digital information flows also make media narratives highly dynamic and context-dependent. Therefore, the study recommends strengthening disaster journalism that prioritizes ecological education, disaster risk mitigation, and public environmental awareness rather than event-centered reporting. This research contributes to disaster communication and media framing studies by demonstrating that local and national media construct disaster realities through different ideological and epistemological orientations, shaping public understanding of ecological crises, environmental governance, and social responsibility in Indonesia.

Keywords: disaster journalism; ecological crisis; environmental communication; Kompas.com; media framing.

Introduction

Amid the increasingly fragile ecological landscape of South Sumatra, flooding can no longer be understood merely as a seasonal phenomenon accompanying the rhythm of tropical rainfall. It has evolved into a visible manifestation of a deeper crisis, reflecting the fractured relationship between human beings, environmental governance, and the natural landscape that has long been subjected to relentless exploitation. Over the past several years, the intensity of flooding across Sumatra has increased significantly, both in frequency and in the magnitude of its socio-ecological impacts. Indonesia's National Disaster Management Agency reported that floods remain the most dominant hydrometeorological disaster in the country, particularly in regions experiencing watershed

degradation, uncontrolled land-use conversion, and weak ecological governance (BNPB, 2023). Such conditions reveal that disasters are never entirely “natural” occurrences; rather, they emerge from the complex intersection of environmental vulnerability, developmental policies, and human intervention.

Within this context, the mass media occupies a strategic position in constructing public understanding of disasters. Media institutions do not merely transmit information from affected areas to audiences. More profoundly, they actively shape social reality through narrative selection, linguistic emphasis, source prioritization, and ideological framing. When floods are consistently represented as unavoidable natural events caused solely by heavy rainfall, the public is subtly guided toward fatalistic interpretations of disaster. Conversely, when environmental destruction, deforestation, river degradation, or policy failures are foregrounded, floods become understood as consequences of human decisions and governance failures. In this sense, media framing becomes critically important because the way disasters are defined directly influences public perceptions regarding responsibility, accountability, and appropriate solutions (Entman, 2020).

Recent studies in disaster communication demonstrate that Indonesian online media frequently employ divergent framing strategies when reporting hydrometeorological disasters. Research conducted by Hidayat and Nugroho (2022) revealed that national media outlets tend to emphasize governmental responses and institutional policies, whereas local media often foreground the lived experiences of victims and the immediate suffering of affected communities (A. Hidayat & Nugroho, 2022). Similarly, Pratama et al. (2021), in their study of Jakarta flood coverage, found that media narratives frequently transform disasters into political spectacles by highlighting particular actors and governmental figures, thereby intertwining ecological crises with contests of political legitimacy (Pratama et al., 2021). Furthermore, Ramadhan and Kurniawan (2024) argued that Indonesian disaster journalism still largely adopts episodic framing patterns, focusing heavily on dramatic events and casualty statistics while neglecting deeper structural discussions concerning environmental degradation, spatial planning failures, and long-term mitigation efforts (Ramadhan & Kurniawan, 2024). Consequently, floods are often perceived as isolated incidents rather than manifestations of prolonged ecological and governance crises.

Despite the growing body of scholarship on disaster communication, most existing studies remain concentrated on metropolitan regions such as Jakarta or major disaster zones like South Kalimantan and East Nusa Tenggara. Comparatively little attention has been devoted to South Sumatra, despite the province’s escalating ecological vulnerability and strategic environmental significance. South Sumatra faces not only extreme rainfall patterns but also severe environmental pressures arising from plantation expansion, peatland degradation, sedimentation of river systems, and inadequate spatial governance. In many cases, flooding is closely linked to extractive industrial activities and developmental policies that disregard ecological carrying capacity (L. Siregar & Utami, 2023). These conditions position South Sumatra as a critical geographical context for examining how media narratives construct relationships between disasters, environmental degradation, and political responsibility.

Moreover, comparative studies examining differences between local and national media framing in disaster reporting remain relatively limited. This gap is significant because local and national media possess distinct editorial orientations, audience structures, geographical proximities, and institutional interests. Local media outlets such as Sriwijaya Post are deeply embedded within the socio-cultural realities of South Sumatra. Their geographical closeness enables them to portray the suffering of affected communities, infrastructural damage, and local anxieties with greater immediacy and emotional intimacy. National media platforms such as Kompas.com, by contrast, often situate disasters within broader national and global frameworks, linking floods to climate change, environmental governance, or state policy. Such differences in orientation potentially produce contrasting constructions regarding the causes of flooding and the solutions deemed legitimate or necessary (Wibowo & Anshori, 2022).

The research gap addressed in this study emerges from at least three major limitations within existing scholarship. *First*, studies on disaster framing in Indonesia remain heavily centered on national media and urban contexts, while South Sumatra as an ecologically vulnerable region has received limited scholarly attention. *Second*, previous research generally focuses on individual media institutions or isolated framing dimensions, leaving comparative analyses between local and national media insufficiently explored. *Third*, many existing framing studies prioritize textual or political dimensions of disaster coverage without adequately examining how media simultaneously construct

relationships among natural phenomena, environmental destruction, and governance failures within broader disaster communication discourse.

This scholarly gap underscores the urgency and relevance of the present research. This study seeks to provide a comprehensive analysis of how the local media outlet Sriwijaya Post and the national media platform Kompas.com framed flood disasters in South Sumatra throughout 2025. The analysis is not limited to identifying journalistic differences but also aims to uncover how media narratives shape public perceptions regarding the causes of disasters, the role of governmental institutions, ecological degradation, and the legitimacy of proposed solutions. Employing Robert N. Entman's framing model, which encompasses problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation, this study examines media discourse as an ideological arena in which meanings surrounding disaster are continuously negotiated and reproduced (Entman, 2020).

The primary objective of this research is to identify and analyze the framing structures employed in flood reporting by Sriwijaya Post and Kompas.com during the 2025 period. Specifically, the study aims to explain how each media outlet constructs the causes of flooding, whether by emphasizing natural factors such as extreme rainfall or by foregrounding ecological destruction and governance failures. Additionally, this research seeks to investigate how the proposed solutions are articulated within news narratives, whether confined to technical approaches such as river normalization and infrastructural development or extended toward structural reforms involving environmental regulation, spatial governance, and ecological law enforcement (Pradilla & Hack, 2024).

Beyond its empirical objectives, this study also seeks to enrich the broader field of disaster communication and media framing scholarship in Indonesia. In an era characterized by rapid digital information flows and increasingly fragmented public attention, media texts function not merely as informational artifacts but as ideological instruments shaping collective consciousness toward ecological crises (Cinque, 2024). Through selective diction, source hierarchy, narrative emphasis, and symbolic representation, media institutions implicitly construct distinctions between victims and perpetrators, legitimate and illegitimate actors, as well as acceptable and unacceptable solutions. Therefore, analyzing media framing also means examining how power operates through language in shaping public interpretations of environmental crises (van Hulst et al., 2025).

From a practical perspective, this research is expected to contribute to the development of more contextual, ethical, and risk-reduction-oriented disaster journalism practices in Indonesia. Media reporting should move beyond sensational depictions of tragedy and casualty statistics toward deeper explorations of structural ecological issues and sustainable mitigation strategies (Walsh, 2026). In the midst of intensifying climate uncertainty across Southeast Asia, including Indonesia, the media carries a moral responsibility to cultivate public ecological awareness and encourage more sustainable approaches to environmental governance (Yuliana & Fadli, 2023). Consequently, this study does not merely concern media texts themselves, but also broader questions regarding humanity's relationship with its increasingly vulnerable environment.

Ultimately, flooding in South Sumatra is not merely a story of overflowing rivers and submerged settlements. It represents a prolonged narrative of communities living under the shadow of developmental paradigms that frequently disregard ecological boundaries. Within such circumstances, the media becomes more than an observer; it acts as an interpreter of reality, determining whether disasters are remembered simply as recurring seasonal events or understood as urgent warnings arising from accumulated environmental neglect. It is from this intellectual and ethical position that the present study emerges, seeking to explore not only what the media reports about floods, but also the deeper meanings and ideological assumptions silently embedded within those narratives.

Method

This study employed a qualitative design with a content analysis approach to examine the construction of flood disaster discourse in the online media outlets Sriwijaya Post and Kompas.com. The research object consisted of 80 news articles, comprising 40 articles from each media outlet, published between January and November 2025. This period was selected to represent the rainy season cycle and the peak of hydrometeorological disasters in South Sumatra (BNPB, 2023). Data were collected through keyword searches such as "South Sumatra floods" and related variations within the archives of both

media platforms to ensure the relevance and representativeness of the news data.

The research instrument was a content analysis checklist developed based on Pan and Kosicki's framing model, which includes syntactic structures such as headlines, leads, and quotations; script structures related to narrative flow and event sequencing; thematic structures concerning the organization of issues and facts; and rhetorical structures involving diction, metaphors, and language emphasis (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). These indicators were integrated with disaster journalism principles emphasizing accuracy, balance of sources, sensitivity toward victims, and disaster risk reduction orientation (Houston, 2021).

Data analysis was conducted through coding and thematic categorization to identify framing patterns within the news texts, particularly regarding the positioning of community actors versus government actors, as well as the representation of floods as natural phenomena or consequences of environmental and governance failures. Furthermore, comparative analysis was carried out between *Sriwijaya Post* and *Kompas.com* to reveal differences in narratives related to problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and recommendations for flood management in South Sumatra (Entman, 2020). This analytical approach is consistent with recent qualitative framing studies in disaster communication and Indonesian online journalism (Van Gorp, 2021).

Results and Discussion

The framing analysis results of flood reporting in the online media outlets *Sriwijaya Post* and *Kompas.com* reveal that both media platforms construct disaster narratives through different perspectives, editorial orientations, and emphases of meaning. These differences become visible through the framing structures proposed by Pan and Kosicki, namely syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures, which together shape how flood disasters in South Sumatra are interpreted and communicated to the public (Pan & Kosicki, 1993). In the context of disaster journalism, media narratives do not merely function as channels for delivering information, but also as symbolic spaces where meanings regarding causes, responsibility, victims, and solutions are socially negotiated (Entman, 2020). Therefore, examining the framing structures of both media outlets becomes important in understanding how disaster reality is constructed differently within local and national media discourse.

Based on the analysis, *Sriwijaya Post* tended to frame flood events through a local proximity perspective by emphasizing the direct experiences of affected communities, infrastructural damage, disruptions to everyday life, and immediate emergency responses at the regional level. News headlines and leads in *Sriwijaya Post* frequently highlighted residents' suffering, submerged settlements, damaged roads, and the economic difficulties experienced by local communities. Such syntactic patterns indicate the media's orientation toward human-interest narratives and community-centered reporting. Meanwhile, *Kompas.com* more frequently positioned floods within broader structural and policy-oriented contexts, including discussions of environmental governance, climate anomalies, river management, and governmental mitigation efforts at both regional and national levels. This demonstrates that the national media tended to construct floods not solely as local tragedies, but also as part of wider ecological and governance challenges (Albrecht, 2022).

In terms of script structure, *Sriwijaya Post* generally organized news narratives chronologically by focusing on the sequence of disaster events in affected areas, beginning with heavy rainfall, the overflowing of rivers, evacuation processes, and residents' testimonies. The reporting style created a sense of immediacy and emotional closeness with local audiences. Conversely, *Kompas.com* often developed more interpretative narrative flows by integrating expert opinions, official statements, and policy explanations into the news structure. The narrative progression in *Kompas.com* therefore appeared more analytical and explanatory, emphasizing causal interpretation and institutional responses rather than solely documenting disaster chronology (Sorensen, 2023).

Thematic analysis further revealed significant differences in issue emphasis between the two media outlets. *Sriwijaya Post* predominantly framed floods as humanitarian and regional crises affecting community livelihoods and local infrastructure. Themes concerning public suffering, emergency assistance, and regional government responses appeared consistently throughout the reporting (Engelman et al., 2022). In contrast, *Kompas.com* tended to emphasize broader ecological

and governance-related themes, such as environmental degradation, land-use change, watershed management, and climate change adaptation. Through these thematic constructions, Kompas.com positioned floods within structural discussions regarding environmental sustainability and disaster governance, whereas Sriwijaya Post maintained stronger attention toward localized social impacts and community vulnerability.

At the rhetorical level, both media outlets also displayed different linguistic tendencies in constructing disaster meaning (Raza et al., 2025). Sriwijaya Post frequently employed emotive diction and dramatic descriptions to strengthen the emotional dimensions of disaster reporting, particularly when portraying the condition of victims and affected settlements. Words and phrases emphasizing urgency, suffering, and disruption were commonly used to evoke empathy and immediacy. On the other hand, Kompas.com adopted a more formal and analytical rhetorical style through the use of policy-oriented language, environmental terminology, and institutional discourse. This rhetorical difference illustrates how local media often prioritize emotional engagement with audiences, while national media tend to foreground interpretative authority and policy legitimacy in disaster communication (Mosurska et al., 2023).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the framing of flood disasters in Sriwijaya Post and Kompas.com reflects differences in editorial orientation, audience proximity, and institutional perspective. Sriwijaya Post primarily constructed floods as immediate humanitarian crises experienced directly by local communities, whereas Kompas.com framed floods as part of broader ecological and governance problems requiring structural policy solutions. These differences confirm that disaster reporting is not neutral, but rather shaped by media perspectives, ideological tendencies, and narrative priorities that ultimately influence public understanding of environmental crises and disaster responsibility in South Sumatra (Chang, 2025).

Syntactic Structures in Flood News Framing

In framing analysis, the syntactic structure functions as the most visible layer through which media construct meaning, particularly through headline selection, lead construction, source attribution, and the sequencing of quotations that shape readers' initial cognitive framing of events. In the coverage of the South Sumatra flooding event, Kompas.com and Sriwijaya Post demonstrate two distinct syntactic logics that reflect different causal hierarchies and epistemic authorities. Kompas.com constructs its headline, "BMKG: Extreme Rainfall Triggers Flooding in South Sumatra," which immediately positions meteorological explanation as the dominant interpretive frame. This syntactic choice is consistent with disaster journalism practices that prioritize institutional scientific authority as a legitimizing source for environmental events, reinforcing what could be understood as technocratic framing in environmental reporting (B. Nugroho, 2022).

The lead paragraph of Kompas.com further strengthens this orientation by foregrounding BMKG statements as the primary explanatory entry point. The structure places Dwikorita Karnawati's attribution of extreme rainfall as the principal cause of flooding at the top of the narrative hierarchy. This sequencing is not neutral; it constructs causality before contextual complexity is introduced, thereby guiding readers toward a single dominant interpretation. In contemporary digital journalism, such lead construction is increasingly shaped by algorithmic news optimization practices that favor clarity, immediacy, and authority signaling (Puspitasari, 2021). The syntactic arrangement here thus reflects both editorial choice and platform-driven constraints.

Kompas.com continues this pattern by embedding supporting quotations from Hartanto, Head of BMKG Region II Palembang, who notes that rainfall intensity reached 10 to 12 times normal levels. The placement of this quantitative detail within the narrative serves a dual syntactic function: it reinforces scientific credibility while also escalating perceived severity. The inclusion of hydrological data, such as river volume increasing from 150 million m³ to 1.5 billion m³, further intensifies the empirical framing of disaster causality. This aligns with the broader trend in environmental reporting where numerical evidence is strategically placed in early narrative positions to enhance perceived objectivity (Kusumasari, 2023).

In addition, Kompas.com incorporates journalist commentary that reiterates extreme rainfall as the central causal mechanism, which syntactically functions as a secondary validation layer. This repetition across institutional and journalistic voices creates what media theorists describe as "reinforced framing," where multiple aligned sources reduce interpretive ambiguity (Haryanto,

2022). The article concludes with recommendations such as improving early warning systems and river rehabilitation, which syntactically shifts the narrative from explanation to policy prescription. This closure is typical in disaster reporting, where solution-oriented endings function to stabilize narrative tension while maintaining institutional trust.

By contrast, Sriwijaya Post constructs a markedly different syntactic architecture. Its headline, “Floods in South Sumatra Caused by Deforestation, Provincial Government: 8,000 Hectares of Land Rehabilitated,” immediately introduces a socio-environmental causality that diverges from meteorological determinism. The syntactic decision to place deforestation at the headline level signals a structural framing that attributes responsibility to land-use governance rather than natural variability. This reflects an increasing tendency in regional media to politicize environmental disasters through ecological accountability narratives (Wibowo, 2021).

The lead paragraph of Sriwijaya Post is constructed around statements from WALHI South Sumatra, particularly Khalisah, who emphasizes forest conversion as the primary cause of flooding. The syntactic prioritization of civil society actors over meteorological agencies marks a significant divergence from Kompas.com. This shift in source hierarchy reflects what media scholars identify as “counter-epistemic framing,” where non-state environmental organizations challenge official scientific narratives (Sari, 2023). By placing WALHI at the narrative forefront, the article reconfigures authority from technocratic institutions to environmental advocacy networks.

Background information in Sriwijaya Post includes statements from the South Sumatra Environmental Agency regarding land rehabilitation efforts. However, these are syntactically positioned after activist claims, which subtly reduces their interpretive dominance. The placement of Rudi Hartono’s explanation regarding rehabilitated land functions as a corrective or defensive narrative rather than an originating causal explanation. This inversion of source hierarchy is crucial in framing analysis, as syntactic ordering directly influences perceived credibility and causal primacy (Prasetyo, 2022).

Furthermore, indirect quotations from Khalisah are embedded in a way that maintains narrative continuity around deforestation as the central issue. This syntactic strategy allows the article to maintain thematic consistency while distributing voice across multiple paragraphs. The inclusion of journalistic paraphrasing that supports deforestation as the main factor reinforces this alignment, creating what can be described as a syntactic echo chamber. Such structures are increasingly observed in environmental reporting where editorial alignment with advocacy discourse shapes narrative coherence (Rahman, 2024).

The closing paragraph of Sriwijaya Post introduces Governor Herman Deru’s statement regarding the revocation of 1,200 plantation permits. Syntactically, this functions as a resolution node that shifts the narrative toward governance intervention and regulatory response. However, unlike Kompas.com, which concludes with technical recommendations, Sriwijaya Post ends with politically charged corrective action. This distinction is significant because syntactic closure determines the final interpretive frame retained by readers (Yuliana, 2021).

When comparing both media outlets syntactically, Kompas.com constructs a linear causal chain anchored in meteorological science, while Sriwijaya Post constructs a distributive causal network centered on land-use conflict and environmental governance. Kompas.com relies heavily on institutional scientific sequencing, where BMKG statements initiate the narrative, followed by supporting data and policy recommendations. Sriwijaya Post, however, begins with activist interpretation, followed by governmental acknowledgment and concluding with regulatory intervention. These differences illustrate how syntactic structure is not merely stylistic but epistemological, shaping how causality, responsibility, and legitimacy are distributed across actors (Alhirthani, 2026).

In both cases, syntactic choices are deeply embedded in broader media logics shaped by institutional affiliation, editorial ideology, and audience expectation. Kompas.com, as a national media platform, prioritizes scientific authority and standardized disaster reporting conventions. Sriwijaya Post, as a regional outlet, foregrounds local environmental politics and socio-ecological accountability narratives. These syntactic divergences ultimately produce distinct realities of the same flooding event, demonstrating that syntax in news framing is not simply about sentence construction but about constructing worlds of meaning through structured narrative hierarchy (Karam & Eissa, 2023).

Comparative Script Structures in Flood News Reporting

In journalistic framing theory, the script structure represents the narrative backbone of news reporting, organizing events into a coherent sequence through the widely recognized 5W+1H model. This structure is not merely a technical checklist but a cognitive architecture that guides how audiences interpret events by ensuring completeness, clarity, and logical progression of information. Contemporary studies in digital journalism emphasize that the 5W+1H framework remains central to maintaining informational integrity, particularly in disaster reporting where uncertainty and urgency must be balanced with factual precision (Santoso & Khisbiyah, 2021). Within this framework, script analysis allows researchers to assess how different media outlets prioritize informational elements and how such prioritization influences causal interpretation and public understanding of disaster events.

In the case of Kompas.com coverage of the South Sumatra flooding event, the script structure demonstrates a high degree of completeness across all 5W+1H elements, reflecting adherence to standardized journalistic conventions. The “what” element is clearly defined as flooding occurring in multiple areas of South Sumatra, which immediately situates the reader within the scope of the disaster. The “when” is explicitly stated as Wednesday, February 12, 2025, providing temporal anchoring that enhances event verifiability. The “where” is identified as South Sumatra, reinforcing geographical specificity and allowing readers to contextualize the disaster within a known regional risk zone. The “who” includes both residents affected by the flooding and institutional actors such as the Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics Agency (BMKG), thereby combining experiential and authoritative perspectives in a single narrative frame (Fitriyah et al., 2025).

The “why” component in Kompas.com is attributed to extreme rainfall, which is consistently presented as the primary causal factor. This causal attribution aligns with meteorological disaster framing conventions that prioritize natural hazard explanations over socio-political or structural interpretations (Utami, 2022). Meanwhile, the “how” element is elaborated through hydrological explanation, specifically the increase in river water volume from 150 million cubic meters to 1.5 billion cubic meters, which resulted in river overflow and widespread flooding. The inclusion of quantitative hydrological data strengthens the empirical grounding of the narrative and reflects a broader trend in data-driven disaster journalism where numerical precision is used to reinforce credibility and scientific legitimacy (Hendrawan, 2023). Together, these elements demonstrate that Kompas.com constructs a syntactically complete and causally linear script that privileges environmental determinism as the dominant explanatory framework.

The completeness of Kompas.com’s script structure also reflects the increasing standardization of disaster reporting in national media ecosystems, where adherence to 5W+1H is not only a stylistic choice but also a professional norm reinforced by newsroom training and editorial policy (Nurhadi, 2021). By ensuring that each element is explicitly addressed, Kompas.com reduces interpretive ambiguity and enhances informational accessibility for a broad audience. However, this structural clarity also has interpretive consequences, as it channels reader attention toward meteorological causality while limiting exposure to alternative explanatory frames such as land-use change or governance failure.

In contrast, Sriwijaya Post also fulfills the 5W+1H structure but organizes its script in a way that foregrounds environmental governance and anthropogenic causality. The “what” is defined as flooding in multiple areas of South Sumatra attributed to forest conversion into plantations and mining areas. This immediately shifts the narrative from natural hazard to human-induced environmental change, signaling a fundamentally different interpretive orientation. The “when” is reported as February 15, 2025, while the “where” remains consistent with Kompas.com, namely South Sumatra, ensuring geographical continuity across media outlets. However, the divergence becomes more pronounced in the “who” element, where Sriwijaya Post emphasizes residents of South Sumatra and the South Sumatra Environmental Agency (LH), thereby introducing a stronger institutional governance dimension into the narrative structure.

The “why” component in Sriwijaya Post is attributed to forest conversion into plantations and mining areas, which is framed as a disruption to natural water catchment systems. This causal explanation reflects an environmental political economy perspective, where ecological degradation is linked to extractive economic activities and regulatory failures (Pranoto, 2022). Unlike Kompas.com, which attributes causality to meteorological extremes, Sriwijaya Post constructs flooding as a consequence of structural environmental mismanagement. This difference in causal

scripting demonstrates how identical events can be narratively constructed through competing epistemological frameworks.

The “how” element in Sriwijaya Post further reinforces this interpretation by explaining that land conversion disrupted multiple ecological zones, reducing water absorption capacity and triggering flooding. Additionally, the article introduces rehabilitation efforts in affected areas of South Sumatra, which adds a restorative governance dimension to the script. This inclusion of rehabilitation discourse reflects a growing trend in environmental journalism where disaster reporting is increasingly intertwined with policy accountability narratives and post-crisis governance evaluation (Lestari, 2023). By integrating both causation and remediation within the script structure, Sriwijaya Post constructs a more politically embedded narrative compared to the technocratic framing observed in Kompas.com.

From a comparative perspective, the script structures of both media outlets demonstrate full compliance with the 5W+1H framework, yet they diverge significantly in causal sequencing and actor prioritization. Kompas.com constructs a script that begins with environmental phenomenon and ends with technical explanation, thereby reinforcing a linear scientific causality model. Sriwijaya Post, on the other hand, constructs a script that begins with socio-environmental disruption and ends with governance response, thereby embedding the disaster within a cycle of human responsibility and institutional accountability (Artemova, 2025).

This divergence is significant because script structure does not merely organize information but actively shapes cognitive pathways through which audiences interpret causality. According to recent studies in media cognition, the ordering of 5W+1H elements influences how readers assign responsibility and perceive severity in disaster narratives (Widodo et al., 2024). In Kompas.com, the early placement of meteorological causation primes readers to interpret the flood as a natural phenomenon. In Sriwijaya Post, the early emphasis on deforestation primes readers to interpret the flood as a consequence of human intervention in ecological systems.

Moreover, both media outlets demonstrate how the “how” element functions as a critical site of interpretive expansion. In Kompas.com, “how” is expressed through hydrological escalation and rainfall intensity, reinforcing scientific determinism. In Sriwijaya Post, “how” is expressed through ecological disruption and land-use transformation, reinforcing socio-environmental causality. This structural difference reflects broader shifts in environmental journalism where competing explanatory models coexist within standardized reporting frameworks (Aminah, 2021).

Ultimately, the script analysis reveals that while both Kompas.com and Sriwijaya Post adhere to the formal completeness of the 5W+1H structure, they diverge in epistemic orientation, causal logic, and narrative emphasis. Kompas.com constructs a technocratic disaster script grounded in meteorological science, while Sriwijaya Post constructs a political-ecological disaster script grounded in environmental governance discourse. These differences illustrate that the 5W+1H model, although structurally universal, remains semantically flexible and open to ideological shaping depending on editorial orientation and institutional context (Sambetbayeva et al., 2025).

Comparative Thematic Structures in Flood News Reporting

The thematic structure in news discourse functions as the connective tissue that binds sentences into a unified interpretive trajectory, primarily through coherence relations that signal causality, contrast, and temporal progression. In line with Eriyanto’s conceptualization of coherence as the relational linkage between linguistic units within a text, thematic analysis reveals how meaning is constructed not only through what is stated but also through how ideas are logically connected across sentences (Eriyanto, 2012). In contemporary media studies, coherence is increasingly understood as a discursive strategy that shapes cognitive mapping of events, especially in disaster journalism where readers rely on linguistic cues to interpret complexity (Fadillah, 2022).

In Sriwijaya Post reporting, thematic structure is primarily constructed through causal and chronological coherence, which together create a linear but politically embedded narrative flow. Causal coherence is evident in linguistic markers that link deforestation and land conversion to flooding outcomes, often signaled through terms such as “consequence” or equivalent causal connectors. This structure positions environmental degradation as the direct antecedent of disaster events, reinforcing a political ecology perspective in which human intervention in natural systems is central to disaster causality (R. Hidayat, 2021). Chronological coherence, on the other hand, is

established through sequential markers such as “then,” which organize events into a temporal chain that begins with forest conversion and progresses toward flooding impacts and rehabilitation responses (Rupngam & Messiga, 2024).

The combination of causal and chronological coherence in Sriwijaya Post produces a layered thematic structure in which environmental disruption is not only explained but also temporally situated within a sequence of governance and ecological change. This dual coherence strategy enhances narrative continuity while simultaneously embedding normative judgment about environmental mismanagement. Recent scholarship on environmental journalism suggests that such coherence patterns are often used to construct moralized disaster narratives, where causality is linked to human responsibility and institutional accountability (Putra, 2023).

Sriwijaya Post also develops its thematic structure through pronoun variation, which serves as a subtle mechanism for shifting narrative distance and agency. The repeated transformation from formal institutional references such as “Regional Disaster Management Agency (BPBD) of South Sumatra” into abbreviated forms like “BPBD,” and eventually into pronouns such as “they,” reflects a discourse strategy that gradually reduces institutional specificity while maintaining referential continuity. This linguistic shift contributes to thematic fluidity but also redistributes agency across actors, making institutional responsibility less explicit over the course of the narrative. According to recent discourse analysis studies, pronoun reduction in environmental reporting can function as a mechanism for diluting institutional accountability while maintaining narrative coherence (Nugraha, 2022).

In Kompas.com, thematic structure is constructed through a more diversified set of coherence relations, including contrastive, causal, and chronological coherence. Contrastive coherence is explicitly marked through connectors such as “However,” which introduces alternative or opposing perspectives within the same narrative flow. This linguistic feature is significant because it allows Kompas.com to juxtapose different explanatory frames, such as meteorological causality and disaster mitigation strategies, without disrupting overall narrative cohesion. In contemporary journalism studies, contrastive coherence is often associated with balanced reporting practices that seek to present multiple dimensions of an issue within a single narrative unit (T. Siregar, 2021).

Causal coherence in Kompas.com is primarily expressed through connectors such as “so that,” which link extreme rainfall directly to flooding outcomes. This reinforces a scientific causality model in which meteorological phenomena are presented as primary drivers of environmental disaster. The use of causal connectors in this context functions as a linguistic mechanism for simplifying complex hydrological processes into accessible explanatory chains, thereby enhancing reader comprehension while maintaining epistemic authority (Yusuf, 2022). Chronological coherence, indicated through terms such as “next,” further structures the narrative by guiding readers through sequential developments, including rainfall escalation, flooding occurrence, and subsequent mitigation efforts.

Kompas.com organizes its thematic structure around two dominant narrative lines: first, extreme rainfall as the primary cause of flooding, and second, mitigation and recovery efforts undertaken after the disaster. This dual thematic orientation reflects a balanced disaster reporting model in which explanation and response are integrated within a single coherent narrative framework. Recent studies in environmental communication highlight that such dual thematic structures are increasingly common in mainstream media, as they allow journalists to combine explanatory depth with solution-oriented reporting (Kurniawati, 2023).

The use of pronouns in Kompas.com further contributes to thematic continuity while also subtly reshaping institutional reference. The repeated shift from “South Sumatra Provincial Government” to a more generalized “local government” reflects a linguistic strategy of abstraction that broadens institutional scope while reducing specificity. This shift can be interpreted as a form of thematic generalization, where institutional actors are reframed as collective governance entities rather than distinct bureaucratic bodies. According to discourse-based media research, such abstraction strategies are commonly used in national media to maintain narrative flow while avoiding excessive bureaucratic detail (Santika, 2021).

When comparing both media outlets, the thematic structure of Sriwijaya Post is more linear and causally concentrated, emphasizing environmental degradation and its direct consequences. In contrast, Kompas.com constructs a more layered thematic structure that integrates causality,

contrast, and temporality, resulting in a more multidimensional narrative flow. Sriwijaya Post prioritizes ecological causation and governance accountability, while Kompas.com emphasizes meteorological explanation and institutional response. These differences reflect broader ideological orientations embedded within coherence strategies, where thematic construction becomes a site of interpretive negotiation between environmental determinism and socio-political accountability (Sebestyén, 2026).

Ultimately, thematic analysis demonstrates that coherence is not merely a grammatical feature but a discursive mechanism that shapes how disaster narratives are cognitively structured. Through causal, chronological, and contrastive links, both media outlets construct different pathways of meaning that guide readers toward distinct interpretations of the same event (Floridi, 2025). Sriwijaya Post foregrounds environmental responsibility and structural causality, while Kompas.com balances scientific explanation with mitigation discourse, illustrating how thematic coherence operates as a powerful framing device in contemporary environmental journalism.

Comparative Rhetorical Strategies in Framing Flood News

Rhetorical structure in news discourse operates as a persuasive layer that shapes how facts are emotionally and cognitively received by audiences, even when the reporting claims neutrality. In contemporary media studies, rhetoric is understood not merely as stylistic embellishment but as a strategic deployment of lexical choices, visual cues, and emphasis markers that intensify meaning and guide interpretation within journalistic texts (Mahendra, 2021). Within disaster reporting, rhetorical devices play a particularly significant role because they mediate public perception of risk, urgency, and responsibility, often amplifying certain aspects of reality while downplaying others in order to construct narrative salience (Wahyuni, 2022).

In Sriwijaya Post reporting on the South Sumatra flooding, rhetorical structure is primarily built through lexical intensification, particularly the use of evaluative adjectives such as “worst” and “extreme.” These terms function as rhetorical amplifiers that elevate the perceived severity of rainfall and flooding events, thereby framing the disaster as exceptional rather than routine climatic variability. Such intensification strategies are commonly employed in regional disaster journalism to evoke urgency and public concern, while simultaneously reinforcing the perceived magnitude of environmental disruption (Ardiansyah, 2023). The repeated use of intensified descriptors also contributes to what discourse analysts describe as “semantic escalation,” where linguistic choices progressively heighten emotional impact across the narrative structure.

The rhetorical emphasis on extremity in Sriwijaya Post is closely tied to its broader framing of rainfall as a primary causal factor. By repeatedly foregrounding terms such as “extreme,” the text constructs a narrative of meteorological anomaly, which positions the disaster within the realm of natural unpredictability. This rhetorical orientation aligns with a disaster communication model that prioritizes immediacy and impact over structural explanation, often resulting in heightened public perception of uncontrollable natural forces (Sukmawati, 2022). However, this emphasis also has interpretive consequences, as it may obscure underlying socio-environmental contributors such as land-use change or governance failures.

Interestingly, Sriwijaya Post does not employ idiomatic expressions or graphic enhancements in its reporting, which indicates a relatively restrained visual and figurative rhetorical strategy. The absence of idioms suggests an editorial preference for directness and informational clarity, while the lack of graphical reinforcement limits multimodal amplification of meaning. In digital journalism studies, the absence of visual rhetoric is often interpreted as a form of textual austerity that prioritizes verbal intensity over multimedia persuasion (Pramudita, 2021). This stylistic choice reinforces the newspaper’s reliance on lexical rather than visual mechanisms to construct rhetorical force.

Despite the absence of visual elements, Sriwijaya Post achieves rhetorical impact through repetition and evaluative framing embedded in textual description. The consistent reinforcement of extreme rainfall as a causal force produces cumulative rhetorical pressure that shapes reader perception of environmental severity. Recent research in environmental discourse highlights that repetition of evaluative adjectives functions as a cognitive reinforcement mechanism that increases perceived risk intensity among audiences (Herlina, 2023). In this sense, Sriwijaya Post constructs rhetoric primarily through linguistic amplification rather than multimodal design.

In contrast, Kompas.com employs a more diversified rhetorical structure that combines

lexical emphasis, institutional terminology, and visual representation. The use of terms such as “rehabilitated” and “revegetated” serves as rhetorical markers that highlight environmental recovery efforts and frame deforestation as a central causal factor in flooding events. These terms carry normative weight, as they imply corrective action and ecological restoration, thereby introducing a moral dimension into the disaster narrative (Yulistia, 2022). Unlike Sriwijaya Post, which emphasizes climatic extremity, Kompas.com emphasizes ecological accountability through restorative vocabulary.

The rhetorical function of “rehabilitated” and “revegetated” also extends beyond description, as these terms construct a temporal narrative of environmental degradation followed by recovery efforts. This temporal rhetoric positions human intervention as both a source of ecological damage and a potential agent of restoration. In environmental communication literature, such dual-function rhetoric is often associated with “restorative framing,” where environmental harm is counterbalanced by narratives of mitigation and recovery (Fauzan, 2021). This structure allows Kompas.com to maintain narrative balance while still foregrounding structural causality.

A key distinguishing feature of Kompas.com’s rhetorical strategy is its use of visual imagery, specifically photographs depicting residents assisting motorcyclists and motorists in navigating floodwaters. This visual component significantly enhances rhetorical impact by providing embodied representations of resilience, cooperation, and crisis management. Visual rhetoric in disaster journalism has been shown to intensify emotional engagement and increase audience empathy by translating abstract events into human-centered experiences (I. Nugroho, 2024). In this case, the image functions as a complementary rhetorical device that extends the textual narrative into the visual domain.

The inclusion of such imagery also introduces a participatory dimension to the narrative, where affected communities are portrayed not only as victims but also as active agents responding to disaster conditions. This visual framing contrasts with Sriwijaya Post’s purely textual rhetoric, which does not incorporate visual supplementation. The absence of graphics or idiomatic expressions in Sriwijaya Post limits its multimodal rhetorical range, whereas Kompas.com expands its rhetorical repertoire through the integration of visual storytelling.

From a comparative perspective, the rhetorical strategies of both media outlets reflect different communicative priorities. Sriwijaya Post relies heavily on lexical intensification and repetition to convey urgency, constructing a rhetorically charged narrative of climatic extremity. Kompas.com, on the other hand, employs a combination of evaluative vocabulary, institutional terminology, and visual representation to construct a more layered rhetorical field that includes both causation and response. These differences illustrate how rhetoric in journalism is not merely decorative but structurally embedded in how meaning and authority are constructed.

Furthermore, the absence of idioms in both media outlets is noteworthy, as it suggests a shared editorial preference for formalized journalistic language in disaster reporting. Idiomatic expressions, which often introduce cultural nuance or metaphorical interpretation, are deliberately avoided in favor of direct, referential language. This reflects broader trends in contemporary Indonesian journalism, where clarity and informational precision are prioritized over stylistic ornamentation in reporting high-impact events (Suryani, 2021). The result is a rhetorical style that is restrained in figurative language but intensified in evaluative and visual dimensions.

Ultimately, the rhetorical analysis of Sriwijaya Post and Kompas.com reveals two distinct modes of meaning construction. Sriwijaya Post constructs rhetoric through lexical amplification and emotional intensity, emphasizing environmental extremity and immediacy. Kompas.com constructs rhetoric through a combination of restorative vocabulary and visual storytelling, emphasizing ecological causality and human response. Both approaches demonstrate that rhetorical structure in disaster journalism is a critical site of framing, where linguistic and visual choices shape not only how events are described but also how they are felt, interpreted, and remembered by audiences.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the framing of flood disaster news in local and national online media is never neutral; rather, it is shaped by ideological orientations, institutional interests, and the media’s proximity to the social realities being reported. Based on Pan and Kosicki’s framing

analysis of flood coverage in South Sumatra during 2025, the findings reveal that Kompas.com tended to frame floods as hydrometeorological phenomena caused primarily by extreme rainfall, thereby emphasizing scientific explanations, technocratic perspectives, and governmental institutional responses. In contrast, Sriwijaya Post constructed floods as consequences of environmental degradation, deforestation, land conversion, and weak ecological governance, resulting in narratives that highlighted humanitarian suffering, local community vulnerability, and criticism toward environmental exploitation. These differences indicate that local media are more inclined to emphasize emotional proximity and lived experiences of affected communities, whereas national media tend to situate disasters within broader frameworks of policy, governance, and structural mitigation.

Theoretically, this research reinforces framing theory within media studies by confirming that disaster realities are discursively constructed through language selection, narrative structure, source hierarchy, and rhetorical strategies. The study enriches disaster communication scholarship in Indonesia by demonstrating that geographical orientation and institutional positioning significantly influence how media distribute meanings regarding causality, responsibility, and solutions in ecological crises. From the perspective of environmental communication, the findings further affirm that media institutions function not merely as channels of information, but as ideological arenas that shape public consciousness concerning the relationship between humans, power, and nature.

Practically, this study provides important implications for the development of more ethical, ecological, and risk-reduction-oriented disaster journalism. Media reporting should move beyond sensational depictions of tragedy and casualty statistics toward deeper explorations of structural environmental problems, spatial governance failures, and the ecological consequences of extractive industrial expansion. Furthermore, this research highlights the importance of collaboration among media institutions, governments, academics, and civil society organizations in strengthening public ecological literacy, so that environmental awareness develops not only as emotional empathy but also as collective consciousness toward environmental sustainability.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the research scope is limited to two online media platforms, Sriwijaya Post and Kompas.com, and therefore does not fully represent the broader spectrum of Indonesian local and national media. Second, the research focuses exclusively on textual framing analysis without examining audience reception, making it unable to comprehensively explain how audiences interpret and negotiate media narratives. Third, the temporal scope restricted to the 2025 period limits the ability to observe long-term transformations in disaster framing practices. In addition, qualitative framing analysis inherently contains interpretative subjectivity that cannot be entirely eliminated during the analytical process.

Therefore, future research is encouraged to expand the scope of analysis by incorporating television media, social media platforms, and alternative digital news ecosystems in order to examine how algorithms and digital culture shape disaster discourse construction. Subsequent studies may also combine framing analysis with audience reception studies, media ethnography, or big data approaches to obtain more comprehensive insights into the relationship between media narratives, public opinion, and ecological awareness. Moreover, comparative studies across different Indonesian regions are highly recommended to explore how local political, cultural, and economic contexts influence media representations of environmental crises throughout the archipelago.

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