

Media Framing of Disaster Governance in Indonesia: A Pan and Kosicki Analysis of Tempo's "High Prestige of Emergency Disaster"

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Abstract

This study examines how Tempo magazine framed the 2025 Sumatra flood disaster by applying the framing analysis model proposed by Pan and Kosicki. Using a qualitative approach, the research analyzes ten news articles published in Tempo's cover story package "High Prestige of Emergency Disaster" (December 8, 2025 edition), encompassing editorial, political, environmental, and human-interest sections. The findings show that Tempo consistently constructed the disaster not as a purely natural event, but as a governance-driven crisis shaped by ignored early warnings, delayed political decision-making, and long-term environmental degradation. Through evaluative headlines, causal narrative structures, thematic coherence, and rhetorical strategies emphasizing moral responsibility, the magazine foregrounded state accountability and challenged official narratives that normalized the disaster as unavoidable. This framing positioned anticipatory failure, rather than emergency response alone, as the central problem in disaster management. The study contributes to framing theory by demonstrating the continued relevance of Pan and Kosicki's model for analyzing complex disaster coverage and enriches scholarship on media, risk governance, and environmental communication in Indonesia. The findings highlight the role of critical journalism in shaping public understanding of disasters and underscore the importance of anticipatory governance and transparent risk communication in disaster-prone societies.

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INTRODUCTION

Devastating hydrometeorological disasters struck the Indonesian provinces of Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra in late November 2025, resulting in catastrophic impacts on human life, infrastructure, and livelihoods. Triggered by a combination of prolonged intense rainfall, seasonal monsoon patterns, and the rare passage of Tropical Cyclone Senyar near Sumatra, these extreme weather conditions produced widespread flash floods, river overflows, and landslides across the northern and central regions of Sumatra. By early December 2025, the disaster had resulted in hundreds to over a thousand confirmed fatalities—

with some reports indicating more than 1,100 deaths—and displaced hundreds of thousands of residents, while millions were ultimately affected by inundation, destruction of homes, and disruption of essential services (Reuters, 2025).

The statement by members of the Indonesian House of Representatives (DPR) that the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) had issued an early warning about potential flooding in Sumatra eight days in advance exposes a recurring problem in Indonesia's disaster governance: early warnings that stall within bureaucratic corridors. During a working meeting with the government, lawmakers revealed that the warning was effectively ignored by several local governments, as

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no concrete preventive measures were taken. This lack of response and political will allowed the hazard to evolve unchecked, ultimately escalating into a major disaster that claimed lives and caused widespread damage (Tribunnews, 2025).

The 2025 Sumatra disaster has been described as one of the deadliest natural calamities in Indonesia since the 2018 Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami, underscoring not only the severe humanitarian toll but also the persistent structural challenges in disaster preparedness, early warning, emergency response, and environmental management. The scale of the catastrophe highlights the need for comprehensive research into both the physical drivers of such events and the socio-institutional frameworks that shape disaster risk governance in Indonesia.

President Prabowo Subianto's decision not to declare the late-November 2025 Sumatra hydrometeorological catastrophe as a national disaster became a focal point of intense public and political controversy. Despite widespread destruction of infrastructure, displacement of populations, and calls for elevated emergency status, the government maintained that the situation remained manageable through existing regional and national response mechanisms without invoking a legally designated "national disaster." This stance drew sharp criticism from civil society groups, lawmakers, and community activists who argued that the scale and severity of the impacts—such as extensive damage to vital facilities, disruptions in connectivity, and overwhelming local capacities—met internationally recognized criteria for national emergency declaration (Antara, 2025).

The reluctance to elevate the formal status of the crisis reflects broader tensions between humanitarian obligations and political-administrative considerations within the governance of disaster response in Indonesia. Critics contended that a national disaster declaration would enable more robust mobilization of central resources, streamline intergovernmental coordination, and legitimize requests for international assistance, aspects crucial for effective recovery in regions where local capacities were severely constrained. On the other hand, government representatives, including President Prabowo and senior officials,

emphasized that the state had the capacity to manage the disaster without additional legal escalation, citing Indonesia's ability to direct aid and operational assets to the three affected provinces—Aceh, North Sumatra, and West Sumatra—through routine disaster management channels.

From a legal-institutional perspective, Law No. 24 of 2007 on Disaster Management provides that the authority to declare a "national disaster" rests with the President and involves not only technical assessment but also political judgement about the scale of impact, distribution of resources, and national political priorities. The academic and policy literature highlights that such declarations function as political instruments that signal state responsibility and mobilize comprehensive socio-economic interventions beyond immediate emergency rescue, raising questions about how risk governance frameworks are applied in practice and the legitimacy of executive decision-making in conditions of prolonged crisis (BNPB, 2025).

In its December 7, 2025 edition, *Tempo* magazine published a lead report titled "High Prestige of Emergency Disaster" that critically examined the stance of the government under President Prabowo Subianto, which was widely perceived as reluctant to designate the severe flooding across three Sumatran provinces as a national disaster. The report highlighted significant delays in the central government's response, the apparent disregard for early warnings issued by the Indonesian Agency for Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysics (BMKG), and the broader political implications of the administration's decisions. Rather than merely recounting the sequence of events, *Tempo's* in-depth coverage built a narrative that interrogated the relationship between political power, political prestige, and public safety in the context of one of Indonesia's most consequential hydrometeorological crises of the decade (Tempo, 2025).

For decades, scholars have recognized that news media shape public understanding of events in multiple ways, such as determining which issues become public priorities (agenda setting), guiding audiences to consider particular issues when assessing political leaders (priming), and influencing support for specific political candidates. Beyond these effects, the media also

play a crucial role in framing how issues or events are interpreted by the public (Fridkin, 2025).

Mass media plays a powerful role in shaping public opinion. In relation to this influence, Noelle-Neumann argues that the media often fails to present events in a comprehensive and balanced manner, leading audiences to perceive reality in a limited and selective way (Morissan, 2021). Analyzing patterns in news coverage is therefore essential to understanding how public discourse is constructed around key social, cultural, and political issues. News content serves as an important indicator of which topics are emphasized and how such emphasis can affect public attitudes, opinions, and behaviors. By prioritizing certain issues, the news media guides audiences in determining what matters most in the public sphere (McCluskey, 2017).

Understanding how news media are interpreted can be viewed as a process in which the degree of applicability is central. From a psychological perspective within framing theory, a consideration—such as a value or belief—will influence information processing and attitude formation only if it is stored in memory, readily accessible, and perceived as relevant to the particular evaluative context (Lecheler & de Vreese, 2018).

As a media institution known for its tradition of investigative and critical journalism, *Tempo* occupies a strategic position in shaping public opinion and policy discourse. The magazine's choice of language, narrative structure, emphasis on particular actors, and use of data and quotations in the "High Prestige of Emergency Disaster" report reflect a framing of government policy that goes beyond neutral description. Drawing on established understandings in media studies that the press does not simply mirror social reality but actively constructs it, the *Tempo* report can be read as a deliberate framing of the disaster and state response from a particular editorial perspective. This aligns with broader scholarly observations of how Indonesian media have framed major hydrometeorological events in recent years, including the 2018 Sulawesi earthquake and tsunami, the 2021 Jakarta floods, and a series of extreme weather events throughout the early 2020s, where journalistic narratives often intersect

with questions of governance, accountability, and risk perception (Harnia, 2021).

The analytical importance of this case lies in understanding how *Tempo*'s reportage contributes to wider discourses on disaster governance in Indonesia and how media framing during the 2016–2026 period arguably influences public debate, political legitimacy, and policy prioritization. The reluctance or hesitancy to invoke a formal national disaster designation during the late-2025 Sumatran floods was not only a matter of bureaucratic classification but became, through media narration, a politically loaded issue that spotlighted tensions between humanitarian imperatives and political calculations. Media framing thus emerges as a crucial lens through which to examine the interplay between media institutions, state power, and societal expectations in periods of profound crisis (Husni, 2025).

This study adopts the framing analysis approach of Pan and Kosicki, which conceptualizes framing as a discourse structure in news reporting that can be systematically analyzed through four primary devices: syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures. In this model, framing is understood not merely as a selection of facts but as a process through which media organize and emphasize particular elements of news texts—from headline and lead to the arrangement of sentences, narrative sequencing, and stylistic choices—to construct specific meanings and guide audience interpretation. The syntactic structure examines how journalists arrange facts, quotes, and events within a news text; the script structure explores narrative storytelling and informational completeness; the thematic structure addresses how propositions and links between sentences shape coherence; and the rhetorical structure focuses on choices of lexicon, idioms, and visual elements that highlight particular aspects of the issue (Eriyanto, 2022).

Pan and Kosicki propose a comprehensive methodological framework that breaks down news texts into four interconnected structural components—syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical—enabling a detailed analysis of how meaning is constructed through linguistic choices and narrative organization (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Shoemaker & Reese, 1996).

By applying the Pan & Kosicki model to analyze the framing of the news report “High Prestige of Emergency Disaster” in *Tempo* magazine’s December 7, 2025 edition, this research aims to reveal how media shape public perception of government responsibility in disaster management. Rather than treating news as a transparent mirror of events, framing analysis highlights the discursive constructions that influence how readers understand the relationship between state power, accountability, and humanitarian urgency. Prior studies using this model in Indonesian media have shown that framing can reflect editorial perspectives and affect how political, environmental, or socio-cultural issues are communicated to the public, underscoring the importance of language and narrative structures in shaping meaning (Busthomy, 2024).

Most research on media framing in disaster contexts has focused on emergency response phases or post-disaster reporting, often emphasizing humanitarian aspects and risk mitigation. Such studies typically analyze how the media highlight victim narratives, relief efforts, and calls for accountability in the aftermath of disasters, reinforcing established patterns of humanitarian framing in communication scholarship. However, there remains a gap in the literature regarding media framing of non-decision policies—situations in which governments choose not to adopt certain disaster policy measures (such as not declaring a national disaster) even when empirical indicators of vulnerability and impact clearly warrant such actions. This absence of policy action, a form of non-decision or non-decisionmaking, has been identified as a blind spot in policy studies and media research because it involves silences and omissions that can be as politically significant as affirmative decisions.

The novelty of the present study lies in its focus on the framing of disaster news linked to symbolic politics and political prestige, as articulated in *Tempo* magazine’s lead report “High Prestige of Emergency Disaster.” While previous framing research in Indonesian disaster communication has concentrated on how the media report the physical impacts of calamities or humanitarian interventions, this study analyzes how the media construct meaning around

governmental non-actions—in this case, the choice not to declare a national disaster despite substantial evidence of systemic damage. By applying the Pan and Kosicki framing model, which examines the syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures of news discourse, this research goes beyond identifying frame elements to reveal how *Tempo* builds critical meanings around relationships between public policy, leadership image, and public safety.

In addition, this study offers contextual empirical contributions by analyzing coverage during the early period of the Prabowo Subianto administration, a leadership phase that has received relatively limited attention in the existing communication and media studies literature. By doing so, the research broadens media framing studies in disaster contexts by positioning the media as a critical actor in scrutinizing state policy choices, instead of merely as an intermediary in disaster information flows. It underscores the media’s role in political accountability and public discourse formation, particularly in times when absence of formal policy becomes a topic of public concern.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the media’s role in shaping public discourse and fostering political accountability, particularly in moments of uncertainty when institutional responses are perceived as inadequate or undefined. In such contexts, media framing not only informs the public about unfolding events but also structures debates about responsibility, governance, and state capacity, thereby influencing how disasters are understood as political as well as humanitarian phenomena.

METHODS

In this study, the type of study used is descriptive research with a qualitative approach. This research is situated within the hermeneutic approach, which emphasizes interpretation and meaning-making rather than the description of lived experience alone (Morissan, 2021).

The data for this study consist of ten news articles published in *Tempo* magazine’s December 8, 2025 special report titled “High Prestige of Emergency Disaster.” These articles were selected because they represent the magazine’s

comprehensive coverage of the Sumatra floods, including political analysis, environmental investigation, and human-interest reporting. The analysis followed several systematic steps. First, all ten articles were collected and read repeatedly to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the narrative structure. Second, each article was coded according to the four structural dimensions of Pan and Kosicki's framing model: syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures. Third, relevant textual elements such as headlines, leads, quotations, narrative sequencing, lexical choices, and metaphors were identified and categorized within these structural dimensions. Finally, patterns across the articles were compared to identify dominant frames used by *Tempo* in constructing the disaster narrative and attributing responsibility.

Rooted in the philosophical tradition of hermeneutics, this approach seeks to understand social reality through the interpretation of texts, symbols, and discourses. In the context of this study, hermeneutics is particularly relevant as it allows for an in-depth analysis of news texts by examining how meaning is constructed, negotiated, and situated within broader socio-political and cultural contexts. Unlike phenomenology, which emphasizes individual consciousness and lived experience, the hermeneutic approach foregrounds interpretive processes, recognizing that meaning emerges from the dynamic interaction between text, context, and the interpreter (Gadamer, 2004; Ricoeur, 1981; Creswell, 2013).

Therefore, a hermeneutic perspective allows this research to systematically interpret media narratives and framing practices, highlighting how subjective interpretations, ideological positions, and power relations are embedded in news discourse (Morissan, 2021).

The research is grounded in a constructivist paradigm, which understands social reality not as something naturally given, but as a reality produced through human interpretation and construction (Eriyanto, 2022). Within this perspective, Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki's framing analysis is situated in constructivist thought, emphasizing that knowledge is not simply uncovered but actively constructed through individuals' interactions with

their social and cultural contexts. In media and communication studies, constructivism posits that social reality is not objective or neutral; rather, it is continuously shaped and reconstructed through media discourse and representational practices.

The constructionist perspective has been widely applied in research on news production. As argued by Molotch and Lester (1974), public events do not become news solely because of their intrinsic or objective significance. Rather, the process of selecting and filtering events is socially constructed and shaped by both professional and non-professional considerations (Heider, 2008). Prior scholarship has demonstrated that news selection is influenced by multiple factors, including journalists' personal backgrounds, organizational structures, newsroom routines, and pressures originating outside the media (Yan, 2020).

Shoemaker and Reese (1996) contend that media content contains multiple layers of meaning derived from journalists' perspectives, organizational routines, and broader cultural frameworks. From this standpoint, a phenomenological orientation is valuable for examining how such subjective elements become embedded in news texts. Phenomenology thus complements framing analysis by linking observable textual patterns to the interpretive horizons of media actors. Accordingly, there is no methodological inconsistency, as phenomenological framing does not seek to directly capture individual consciousness, but instead aims to interpret how meaning is constituted within mediated representations of social experience. This approach is consistent with the constructivist foundations shared by both phenomenology and framing theory (Eriyanto, 2022; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Within the constructivist perspective, framing is understood as a central process through which mass media select, highlight, and organize information in ways that guide audience interpretations of an issue. Consequently, media reality is not a neutral reflection of events, but a constructed version of reality that shapes how individuals perceive and make sense of the social world.

The unit of analysis in this study consists of ten news articles published in *Tempo* magazine's

special report titled “High Prestige of Emergency Disaster.” The unit of analysis represents a crucial stage in the research process, as it is through this stage that the collected data are systematically organized and interpreted into meaningful information that supports the validity and robustness of the research findings (Elviera, 2021).

This study deliberately focuses on *Tempo*’s print edition to maintain analytical depth and methodological coherence. While acknowledging the growing hybridization of journalistic discourse across digital and social media platforms (Chadwick, 2017), the print version remains the institutional core of *Tempo*’s editorial identity and the most stable site for examining its tradition of investigative and critical journalism. The printed texts embody *Tempo*’s editorial deliberation, narrative coherence, and linguistic framing prior to algorithmic amplification or participatory reshaping in online environments (Carlson, 2015).

Focusing on this corpus enables a precise and systematic application of Pan and Kosicki’s

(1993) framing model, particularly in analyzing how syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures are mobilized to construct critical interpretations of disaster governance and state responsibility. Although this focus limits cross-platform generalization, it deepens interpretive understanding of how legacy print journalism in Indonesia—exemplified by *Tempo*—continues to function as a normative anchor for credibility, political accountability, and reflective public discourse during periods of crisis (Lim, 2012; Steele, 2018).

For the qualitative data material, the researcher collected data from news articles published by *Tempo* magazine in the special report titled “High Prestige of Emergency Disaster.” This selection was made to ensure the completeness of the research material and to minimize potential bias in the research process.

TABLE 1.1 News Articles in *Tempo* Magazine’s “High Prestige of Emergency Disaster” Special Report

No	Edition	News Title
1	December 8, 2025	Cara Amatir Menangani Bencana (Amateurish Disaster Management)
2	December 8, 2025	Pengejar Konten di Lokasi Bencana (Chasing Content at Disaster Sites)
3	December 8, 2025	Melihat Banjir Sumatera dari Dekat (A Closer Look at the Sumatra Floods)
4	December 8, 2025	Cerita di Balik Kelabakan Pemerintah Merespons Banjir Sumatera (Behind the Government’s Chaotic Response to the Sumatra Floods)
5	December 8, 2025	Nestapa Banjir Sumatera: Keluarga Hilang, Rumah Pun Rata Tanah (The Misery of the Sumatra Floods: Families Lost, Homes Leveled)
6	December 8, 2025	Warga Bantu Warga dalam Banjir Sumatera (Residents Helping Residents During the Sumatra Floods)
7	December 8, 2025	Apa Perbedaan Bencana Nasional dengan Daerah (What Is the Difference Between National and Regional Disasters?)
8	December 8, 2025	Politik Distribusi Risiko Bencana (The Politics of Disaster Risk Distribution)
9	December 8, 2025	Jejak Kayu Gelondongan di Tengah Bencana Sumatera (Traces of Timber Logs Amid the Sumatra Disaster)
10	December 8, 2025	Dari Mana Datangnya Gelondong Banjir Sumatera (Where Did the Flood-Borne Logs in Sumatra Come From?)

In line with the framing analysis approach, news texts produced by the media play a crucial role in shaping the eventual research findings. The collected data are subsequently analyzed using framing analysis techniques. The analytical model developed by Pan and Kosicki divides framing into

four main structural dimensions—syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical—providing clear analytical guidance for researchers in examining media texts. This structural division allows the analysis to be more focused, systematic, and methodologically transparent, reducing excessive

subjectivity often associated with purely interpretive framing approaches.

Framing analysis is employed to examine how Tempo journalists construct and frame disaster-related news in Tempo magazine's special report "High Prestige of Emergency Disaster." This analytical choice is methodologically grounded in the framing analysis model proposed by Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki, which

offers a scientifically robust framework for uncovering how meanings, emphases, and interpretations are embedded within news discourse.

TABLE 1.2 Zhongdan Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki Model Analysis

Struktur (Structure)	Perangkat Framing (Framing Device)	Unit yang Diamati (Observed Unit)
Sintaktis: Cara wartawan menyusun kata. (Syntactic: The way journalists arrange words).	Skema berita. (News Schema).	Headline, lead, latar, informasi, kutipan, sumber, pernyataan, penutup. (Headline, lead, background, information, quotes, sources, statements, closing).
Skrip: Cara wartawan mingisahkan fakta (Script: The way journalists narrate facts)	Kelengkapan Berita (News Completeness)	5W + 1 H
Tematik: Cara wartawan menuliskan fakta. (Thematic: The way journalists write facts)	Detail, maksud kalimat. (Detail, sentence meaning/intent).	Paragraf, Proposisi. (Paragraph, Proposition)
Retoris: Cara wartawan menentukan fakta. (Rhetorical: The way journalists determine facts).	Leksikon, Grafis, Metafor. (Lexicon, Graphics, Metaphor).	Kata, Idiom, Gambar/Foto, Grafik. (Word, Idiom, Image/Photo, Graphic)

The data in this study are limited to the coverage contained in Tempo magazine's special report "High Prestige of Emergency Disaster," comprising ten news articles. Through this research, the news texts are analyzed using the framing analysis model developed by Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki, enabling readers to understand how media institutions and journalists construct and frame disaster-related issues.

Framing analysis allows audiences to recognize how particular messages are structured, emphasized, and communicated in news reporting, as well as how these constructions influence public interpretation and responses to the information presented. By applying this model, the study reveals the mechanisms through which Tempo frames the disaster narrative and shapes

readers' understanding of state responsibility and disaster governance.

Framing and Agenda-Setting

Framing theory is frequently discussed in relation to agenda-setting theory, as both contribute to explaining how media influence public understanding of social reality. Agenda-setting research initially examined the extent to which media shape public perceptions by determining which issues are considered important. Subsequent studies have consistently demonstrated that issues receiving frequent and prominent media coverage tend to be perceived by the public as more salient (McCombs, 2018; McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). In other words, the media not only direct attention toward certain

issues but also influence how those issues are cognitively prioritized by audiences.

Later developments in agenda-setting research expanded this perspective by distinguishing between the selection of objects (issues) and the selection of attributes associated with those objects. This distinction highlighted the media's role not only in telling people what to think about but also in shaping how to think about it (McCombs, 2018). This extension, commonly referred to as second-level agenda setting or attribute agenda setting, emphasizes the transfer of attribute salience from media to the public (McCombs, Shaw, & Weaver, 2014; McCombs, 2018).

At a conceptual level, the focus of framing on how issues and events are represented in media discourse appears to overlap with second-level agenda setting. On this basis, some scholars have argued that framing can be subsumed under attribute agenda-setting, viewing the two as theoretically equivalent (McCombs, 2018; McCombs & Valenzuela, 2020). Both approaches emphasize how media highlight particular aspects of an issue rather than merely determining which issues receive coverage, and both involve the salience of specific issue attributes (Weaver, 2018).

However, attempts to equate framing with attribute agenda-setting have been widely challenged in more recent scholarship. A growing body of research argues that the two concepts differ fundamentally in their assumptions, mechanisms, and analytical focus (Chong & Druckman, 2017; Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2018; Weaver, 2018). Critics contend that while agenda-setting is primarily concerned with issue and attribute salience, framing focuses on interpretive processes and meaning construction.

One key distinction lies in their theoretical foundations. Attribute agenda-setting is rooted in a memory-based model of information processing, which assumes that individuals form judgments based on information that is most accessible in memory (Scheufele & Tewksbury, 2018). In contrast, framing theory draws from cognitive and sociological perspectives, emphasizing how individuals rely on underlying interpretive schemas or "frames" to make sense of social reality (Goffman, 1974; Chong & Druckman, 2017). Framing effects arise not simply because certain

attributes are made more salient, but because different frames encourage distinct interpretations, evaluations, and causal understandings of issues.

Thus, while second-level agenda-setting explains how media influence what attributes people associate with an issue, framing theory explains how those attributes are organized into coherent narratives that shape public interpretation. This conceptual distinction underscores why framing should be treated as a related but analytically independent theory rather than as a subset of agenda-setting research.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study investigates how *Tempo* magazine framed the 2025 Sumatra flood disaster through ten selected news texts using the framing model developed by Pan and Kosicki. The analysis demonstrates that *Tempo* constructed the disaster not as an episodic natural phenomenon, but as a systemic crisis embedded in political decision-making, institutional inertia, and long-term environmental mismanagement. Across different sections and genres—editorials, political reporting, environmental investigations, and narrative reportage—the magazine articulated a unified interpretive framework that emphasized accountability, causality, and structural responsibility.

At the level of syntactic structure, *Tempo*'s framing was immediately evident in the formulation of headlines and leads. Headlines frequently contained evaluative language that signaled criticism and moral judgment, framing the government's actions as amateurish, hesitant, or performative. Rather than neutral descriptors of flooding or rainfall intensity, the textual entry points foregrounded political actors and policy failures, thereby directing readers' attention toward governance issues from the outset. Leads typically reinforced this orientation by highlighting ignored early warnings, delays in emergency designation, and the discrepancy between official statements and conditions on the ground. Through selective quotation practices, *Tempo* privileged expert assessments, civil society perspectives, and eyewitness accounts, while positioning government voices within contexts that often exposed contradiction, defensiveness, or

inadequacy. This syntactic configuration established a critical frame before readers engaged with the detailed narrative, predisposing interpretation toward institutional accountability.

For instance, the article titled “*Cara Amatir Menangani Bencana*” (Amateurish Disaster Management) immediately signals a critical evaluation of the government’s response. Rather than emphasizing the magnitude of rainfall or the unpredictability of natural hazards, the headline attributes the crisis to the manner in which authorities handled the situation. Similarly, in the report “*Cerita di Balik Kelabakan Pemerintah Merespons Banjir Sumatera*” (Behind the Government’s Chaotic Response to the Sumatra Floods), the lead paragraph describes how early warnings about extreme rainfall had already been issued days before the disaster escalated, yet preventive measures were not effectively implemented. This narrative structure foregrounds institutional delay and policy inaction as central explanatory elements of the disaster.

Evidence of framing is also visible in the script structure, particularly in how the news narratives organize causal explanations through the elements of “why” and “how.” In several reports, the disaster is narrated as the culmination of a sequence of events rather than a sudden natural occurrence. For example, the article “*Cerita di Balik Kelabakan Pemerintah Merespons Banjir Sumatera*” recounts how meteorological agencies had issued warnings about extreme rainfall several days prior to the flooding. However, the narrative explains that local authorities failed to translate these warnings into preventive measures such as evacuation preparation or river monitoring. By structuring the story around the sequence of early warnings, delayed decisions, and escalating impacts, the report emphasizes the causal relationship between bureaucratic inaction and the magnitude of the disaster. This narrative arrangement prioritizes the “why” and “how” of the event, guiding readers to interpret the floods as the result of governance processes rather than purely environmental forces.

Textual evidence of thematic framing can be observed in how different articles consistently link disaster impacts with broader discussions of environmental management and political responsibility. For instance, the investigative

report “*Dari Mana Datangnya Gelondong Banjir Sumatera*” traces the presence of large timber logs carried by floodwaters to deforestation and weak enforcement of forestry regulations. Through this thematic connection, the article expands the meaning of the disaster beyond immediate rainfall or river overflow, situating it within long-term patterns of environmental exploitation. Across multiple articles in the special report package, references to early warnings, policy hesitation, and environmental degradation repeatedly appear, creating thematic coherence that frames the disaster as a systemic governance issue.

The script structure further strengthened this framing by organizing events in a causal and sequential manner. Rather than presenting the floods as sudden or unforeseeable, Tempo consistently traced a narrative arc beginning with early meteorological warnings issued by state agencies, followed by political hesitation and bureaucratic inaction, culminating in large-scale human and material losses. The prominence of the “why” and “how” elements over the “what” underscored the magazine’s explanatory intent. Disaster impacts were repeatedly linked to prior decisions, non-decisions, and regulatory failures, producing a sense that the catastrophe was neither accidental nor unavoidable. This scripting strategy reinforced the interpretation of the floods as preventable events whose severity was amplified by governance failures, thus shifting the locus of responsibility from nature to political institutions.

Thematic patterns across the ten articles reveal a coherent and layered narrative that extended beyond immediate crisis response. Editorial pieces framed the disaster as a manifestation of state paradox, in which political authority and symbolic power were abundant, yet operational capacity and anticipatory governance were lacking. Political reports focused on debates surrounding the declaration of national disaster status, budgetary implications, and concerns over international assistance, portraying these deliberations as evidence that humanitarian urgency was subordinated to political image management and fiscal calculation. Environmental reports expanded the thematic scope by situating the floods within broader processes of deforestation, extractive economic practices, and weak law enforcement, framing the

disaster as the cumulative outcome of environmentally destructive development trajectories. Human-interest narratives complemented these structural analyses by centering the lived experiences of affected communities, thereby grounding abstract policy failures in tangible human suffering.

At the rhetorical level, *Tempo* employed a range of linguistic and symbolic strategies to reinforce its framing. The use of emotionally charged diction, vivid sensory descriptions, and metaphorical expressions intensified the moral gravity of the disaster. Political elites were often depicted through ironic or critical language, while victims and local volunteers were portrayed in empathetic terms, creating a moral contrast between state actors and citizens. Visual and textual references to social media performances by officials, such as staged visits or symbolic gestures, further underscored the theme of performative governance. At the same time, the incorporation of scientific data, satellite imagery, and expert testimony lent epistemic credibility to claims regarding environmental degradation and risk production, strengthening the magazine's counter-narrative against official denials or minimization.

Taken together, these framing devices indicate that *Tempo* consistently constructed the Sumatra floods as a governance-driven disaster rather than a purely natural calamity. The magazine emphasized responsibility and blame by linking disaster outcomes to political choices, institutional arrangements, and dominant development models. This framing aligns with a constructionist understanding of disasters as socially mediated events, in which risk is produced and distributed through policy, power relations, and economic priorities. By highlighting ignored warnings and delayed action, *Tempo* advanced a frame of anticipatory failure, suggesting that the core problem lay not only in emergency response, but in the state's inability or unwillingness to act upon available knowledge.

In this sense, *Tempo*'s coverage moves beyond conventional disaster reporting and contributes to a broader critique of risk governance in Indonesia. The floods are framed as part of a recurring pattern in which environmental vulnerability, political calculation, and institutional fragmentation intersect to produce

disproportionate harm to ordinary citizens. Through this sustained framing, *Tempo* invites audiences to reinterpret disasters as politically consequential events that demand accountability and structural reform, rather than as unavoidable acts of nature. Such framing has significant implications for public understanding, as it encourages a shift from sympathy-driven responses toward critical reflection on governance, development, and the distribution of environmental risk.

These findings are consistent with previous research on disaster communication that shows how media framing often shifts the interpretation of disasters from natural hazards to governance failures. For instance, Husni (2025) found that Indonesian media coverage of flooding frequently highlights institutional responsibility and environmental mismanagement rather than purely meteorological causes. Similarly, the findings of this study are consistent with the framing framework proposed by Pan and Kosicki (1993), which emphasizes that media framing can be identified through the structural organization of news discourse, including syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical elements. In *Tempo*'s coverage of the 2025 Sumatra floods, these structures collectively construct a governance-centered interpretation of the disaster. The syntactic structure is evident in evaluative headlines and leads that foreground government actors and policy decisions. The script structure organizes the narrative around causal sequences linking early warnings, delayed political responses, and escalating impacts. The thematic structure reinforces coherence across articles by consistently connecting disaster impacts with institutional responsibility and environmental mismanagement. Finally, rhetorical elements—such as critical diction, metaphors, and contrasting portrayals of political elites and affected communities—strengthen the moral dimension of the narrative. Together, these structural devices frame the disaster as a product of governance failure rather than merely a natural phenomenon.

These findings also resonate with broader scholarship on media framing and disaster communication, which emphasizes that disasters are rarely interpreted by the media as purely natural phenomena. Instead, news narratives

frequently connect environmental crises with questions of governance, policy failure, and institutional responsibility. As noted by Robert M. Entman, framing operates by selecting certain aspects of perceived reality and making them more salient in order to define problems, diagnose causes, and suggest moral evaluations. In the case of Tempo's coverage, the disaster is framed not simply as an outcome of extreme weather conditions, but as a consequence of ignored early warnings, delayed policy responses, and structural environmental degradation. This interpretive emphasis reflects what scholars of disaster communication describe as the politicization of disaster narratives, in which media discourse shifts attention from immediate humanitarian impacts toward the broader institutional conditions that produce vulnerability.

Furthermore, the patterns identified in this study are consistent with prior research indicating that journalistic coverage of environmental disasters increasingly highlights issues of accountability and risk governance. Within the framework developed by Zhongdang Pan and Gerald M. Kosicki, such patterns can be observed through the interaction of syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures that collectively shape how audiences interpret crisis events. By foregrounding political actors, causal sequences, and moral contrasts between state institutions and affected communities, Tempo constructs a governance-centered frame that encourages readers to interpret the floods as the product of policy decisions and institutional dynamics rather than as an unavoidable natural calamity. In this sense, the findings reinforce the argument that media framing plays a crucial role in transforming disasters into sites of political debate and public accountability, thereby influencing how societies understand the relationship between environmental risk, governance capacity, and state responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how Tempo magazine framed the 2025 Sumatra flood disaster by applying the framing model of Pan and Kosicki to ten selected news texts. The findings demonstrate that Tempo consistently constructed

the disaster not as an isolated natural occurrence, but as a socially and politically produced crisis rooted in governance failures, institutional inertia, and environmentally unsustainable development practices. Through coherent framing across multiple journalistic genres, the magazine advanced an interpretive narrative that emphasized responsibility, accountability, and structural causality.

The analysis reveals that Tempo's framing operated through an integrated use of syntactic, script, thematic, and rhetorical structures. Evaluative headlines and leads foregrounded state actors and policy decisions, while causal scripting connected early warnings, delayed political responses, and escalating human losses. Thematic coherence across editorials, political reports, environmental investigations, and human-interest stories reinforced the interpretation that the severity of the floods was neither accidental nor inevitable. Rhetorical strategies, including moral contrasts, critical metaphors, and the strategic use of expert knowledge, further strengthened this framing by delegitimizing performative governance and highlighting the gap between official narratives and lived realities.

By emphasizing ignored early warnings and delayed decision-making, Tempo articulated a frame of anticipatory failure, shifting the focus of disaster discourse from emergency response to the politics of prevention. This framing challenges dominant narratives that naturalize disasters and instead positions the state as a central actor in the production and distribution of risk. In doing so, the magazine contributed to a constructionist understanding of disasters, aligning with broader theoretical perspectives that view risk as socially organized and politically mediated rather than purely environmental.

The findings also underscore the role of critical journalism in shaping public understanding of disasters. Tempo's coverage illustrates how media can function not merely as conveyors of information, but as interpretive agents that question official claims, expose structural vulnerabilities, and amplify marginalized voices. Such framing has the potential to influence public discourse by encouraging audiences to view disasters through the lens of governance, power,

and accountability, rather than through episodic or sensationalist narratives.

In theoretical terms, this study contributes to framing research by demonstrating the continued relevance of Pan and Kosicki's model for analyzing complex, multi-genre disaster coverage. Empirically, it enriches scholarship on disaster communication in Indonesia by providing a detailed examination of how a leading national magazine constructs meaning around environmental crises. Practically, the findings highlight the importance of anticipatory governance and transparent risk communication, suggesting that failures to act on early warnings can become central objects of media scrutiny and public contestation.

Future research may extend this analysis by comparing framing patterns across different media outlets, platforms, or disaster contexts, or by examining audience interpretations of governance-centered disaster frames. Such studies would further illuminate the relationship between media framing, public perception, and policy accountability in societies increasingly vulnerable to climate-related risks.

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