

Analysis of News Coverage on COVID-19 in Indonesia by Australian Media

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Abstract

At the time of writing this article, Indonesian health system has collapsed due to the spread of COVID-19. As a close neighbour to Indonesia, Australia is reflecting the importance of Indonesia in its news coverage. How do Australian newspapers report Indonesia's struggle in tackling the health crisis? This paper aims to answer that question by examining seven Australian dailies, including two nationally distributed papers and five state-based media. The findings indicate that stories on COVID-19 in Indonesia are dominated by travel restriction, vaccines, and corruption scandals. In particular, the Australian press tends to highlight the lack of strong leadership during the current pandemic. In addition, some minor topics emerged such as the release of an Islamic cleric, natural disasters, and a plane crash. The framing of terrorism continues to display how the Australian media is portraying Indonesia as a hotbed for radicalisation.

Keywords

Australia, Indonesia, news coverage, COVID-19, media.

1. Introduction

The spread of COVID-19 has received worldwide attention since early 2020. Molla (2020) reported how Coronavirus took over social media with the number of articles with coronavirus-related terms have exploded, with nearly 20 million on March 11. The Google Trend also shows how coronavirus search volume replaced Trump, music, and video. Citing Simon Rogers, a data editor on the News Lab team at Google, "people are not panicking, but they just want to know how long they have to wash their hands" (Molla 2020). This exponential growth of the number of searches may lead readers to "infodemic." Infodemic means too much information, including false or misleading information in digital and physical environments during a disease outbreak (World Health Organization 2020). The solution to prevent infodemic during a pandemic is "risk communication." Risk Communication refers to the real-time exchange of information, advice, and opinions between experts (World Health Organization 2020). This type of communication provides education and protective behaviors (Gesser-Edelsburg et al. 2014).

Infodemic also took place in a relatively advanced economy such as Australia. A report by the University of Canberra (2021) suggests that general concern about false and misleading information online in Australia is high (64%), and much higher than the global average (56%). Almost 60 percent of Australians also say they encountered misinformation in the last week. Experience of misinformation about COVID-19 was the highest (38%) followed by politics (33%) and climate change (23%). The report also finds local news continues to be an important part of Australia's news diet, confirming a significant role of local newspapers in generating a sense of community.

Australians' interest in reading local news may also be the reason why only few stories report COVID-19 in other countries. Even if the media are reporting the pandemic overseas, Ross Tapsell (2021) asserts that the coverage has been Western-centric with 62% of stories are about the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States (US). Using samples from six Australian media channels; *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Australian*, *West Australian*, *The Guardian Australia*, *ABC 7.30*, and *ABC 7 PM News*, the data suggests that Southeast Asian countries only comprise 3%. This staggering gap indicates Australian media companies are less interested in reporting what is happening in the country's nearest neighbours, including Indonesia.

1.1. Objectives

This paper aims to examine how Australian newspapers report Indonesia's struggle in tackling COVID-19, particularly from seven dailies, including two nationally distributed papers and five state-based media.

2. Literature Review

A study by Indriyani and Prasanti (2020) shows that Australian media tend to portray Indonesia as an unorganized, chaotic place for pedestrians and commuters. Indonesia is also seen as a country full of disasters and conflicts. Although the Australian press constructs a negative connotation of the reality of Indonesia, respondents in their study continue to believe that there are more positive sides of Indonesia than reported.

Similarly, in a comparative study on media coverage of terrorism in Indonesia, Inez Mahony (2010) asserts that while the Australian media's framing of issues relating to terrorism and Islamic groups in Indonesia generates a hegemonic Orientalist image of Indonesian Muslims, Indonesian media treatment of the same issues is more moderate, presenting a very different picture. She further argues that the way racism insidiously operates in these articles reflects Australia's racist past and also a symptom of resurgences of cultural nationalism in the contemporary climate of global fear of terrorism. De Vreese (2005) defines media framing as a process and it outlines an integrated process model of framing that includes production, content, and media use perspectives. Frames in the news may affect learning, interpretation, and evaluation of issues and events. Media framing during a crisis is known as a sense-making and coping mechanism for individuals, but it also can lead to stigmatization of an affected group (Thomas et al. 2020).

The framing process is often described as the inclusion or exclusion of certain information, which shapes possible interpretations available to the audience. Over time, societal understandings of the issue are suggested to narrow around the most dominant or consistent frame(s) presented by the media. The frame repertoires which exist in the media then circumscribe people's way of understanding the world. Framing analysis aims to examine and make visible the processes through which frames emerge, are communicated, and then naturalized (Foley et al. 2019). Previous study on how an Indonesian anglophone newspaper framing COVID-19 finds that the very nature of the Indonesian economy, which is heavily relying on the informal sector, making the decision to apply a full lockdown rather dilemmatic (Prihatini and Halimatusa'diyah 2021). It also suggests that the national-local political dynamics are at play as it shapes the communication of crisis management in Indonesia.

3. Data and Methods

To examine the patterns of news coverage of COVID-19 in Indonesia by the Australian press, the authors traced back news articles published between February 13, 2020—February 13, 2021. The content was collected using an online information and research database, Factiva. The words "Indonesia" and "covid" were entered into the search bar, using the operator command "and." The option "In the last year" was selected from the 'Date' drop-down menu, and the 'Duplicates' drop-down menu has opted "off." In the 'Source' column, "The Sydney Morning Herald," "The Age," "The Australia," "Herald-Sun," "The West Australia," "Daily Telegraph," and "The Australian Financial Review" were inserted using the operator command "or". The default settings of "All Authors," "All Subjects," "All Industries," and "All Regions" were left untouched. The raw data consists of 887 items. However, 664 articles were not deemed relevant to COVID and Indonesia, and another 46 articles were found as duplications. Hence, the final corpus included in the analysis is 177 articles.

The newspapers were selected for their high readership and representing almost all states in the country. These media platforms constitute a large sector of the Australian population across a broad demographic and geographic spread (Mahony 2010). The background of the closeness of Indonesia and Australia, Australian newspaper's framing can affect the stereotypes of Australians towards Indonesia. The frame might affect both bilateral country relationships. A report on the level of trust towards the media among Australians, indicates "although over the last five years

Australians trust in traditional and digital media has decreased, but Australians still trust our media channels more. Trust appears to be fuelled by widespread fake news and doubts about media intentions” (Elliott 2019).

After collecting the raw data from Factiva, the authors used a qualitative method in the form of numerical decomposition (numbers) for data presentation, checking, and extraction of COVID-19 news in selected online newspapers and analysis framing. Furthermore, these articles were coded via an induction approach, categorizing the media ownership, categorizing the type of media and the date, the news title, sort of the news title into general topics, keywords, the name of the quote, etc. affiliate. Those codes were to identify the analysis framing of perspectives from Australian newspapers reporting how Indonesia was dealing with COVID-19. These eight coding are detailed in such a way as to obtain the results of the numbers presentation and showing how media frame cover news about how the Australian media's perspective on Indonesia handling COVID-19. The results of the coding will be discussed in the next section, showing each of seven newspapers framing their coverage on COVID-19 in Indonesia.

4. Findings and Discussions

4.1. Media Ownership and Articles Contribution

The first analysis looks at how the Australian newspapers are reporting on the pandemic in Indonesia and governments' performance in tackling the crisis. For this purpose, the authors divide the distribution of the seven selected newspapers based on their ownership. Commercial media in Australia has the highest concentration, so that the media may impact the decision-making and opinions of both the government and the public (Jolly 2014). To further comprehend the impact of each media platform, this study is using the most current readership data provided by a market research and analysis company Roy Morgan (2021).

There are three dominant media companies in Australia, namely News Corp, Fairfax, and Seven West Media. Of these three media companies, News Corp, which owns *The Australian*, *Daily Telegraph*, and *Sydney Morning Herald*, has the biggest readership. Australia has two national and ten state-level dailies. *The Australian* and *Financial Review* are included as national newspapers, while the *Daily Telegraph*, *Herald Sun*, *Sydney Morning Herald*, *The Age* and *West Australian* are distributed in respective states.

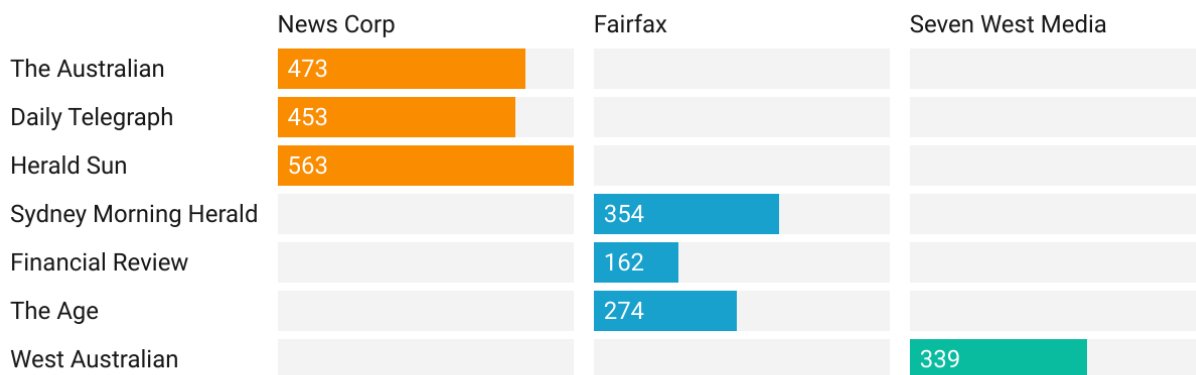


Figure 1 Australia's Print Newspapers Audience by Ownership in 2020 (in thousands)

From seven newspapers observed in this study, two are published nationally (figure 1): *The Australian* and the *Financial Review*. The rest of the papers are distributed at the state level. Figure 2 displays *The Australian* is the biggest contributor of all articles reporting COVID-19 in Indonesia, followed by the *Financial Review*. The smallest contribution came from *Herald Sun*. Two national newspapers consistently dominated the coverage throughout the observation period.

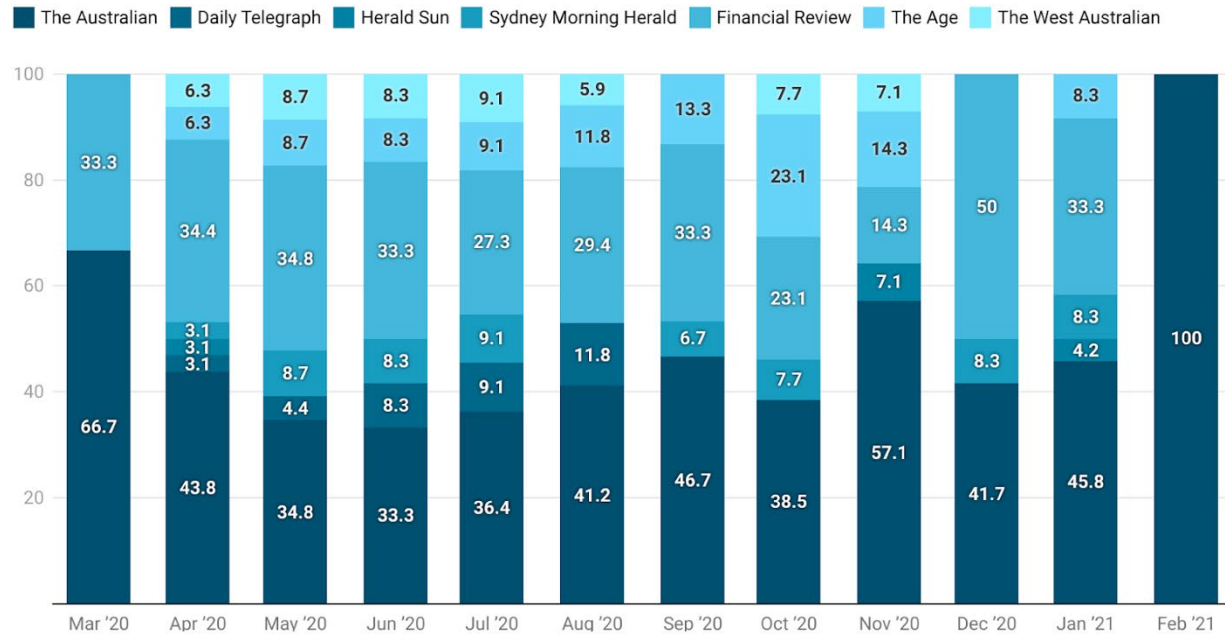


Figure 2. Articles Contribution by Newspapers during March 2020-February 2021 (in percentage)

4.2. Framing COVID-19 in Indonesia

The data analysis suggests that there are sixteen topics covered by articles that discuss the current health crisis in Indonesia. These topics include travel restrictions, vaccines, and trade (see Figure 3). The news topic on "travel restrictions" occupies the top spot in the Australian newspaper with 26 news articles. Travel restrictions are the first policies that can be enforced during this pandemic, including in Indonesia. The restrictions by the Australian government have been imposed since Indonesia announced its first case.

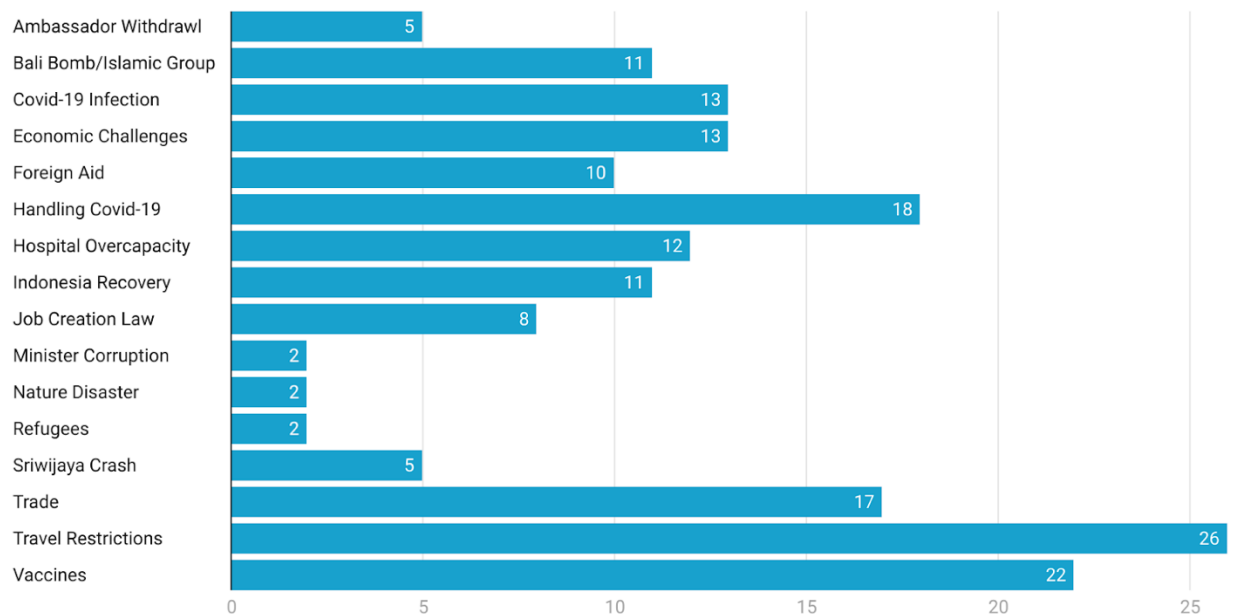


Figure 3. Distribution of Topics

These travel restrictions pose significant impacts, especially on students and tourism. The effect on the close relationship between the two countries in the field of education was covered by *The Australian* "travel ban treat to studies" containing the continuity of the ACICIS program of the two countries, which was hampered by the closure of the two countries. The tourism sector accounts for half of the "travel restrictions" reporting. Australia in early April highlighted Jokowi's decision to restrict foreign arrivals to Bali and the implementation of protocols by security officers in collaboration with the local government of Bali, citing the need for extra handling because Balinese people perceive the virus as only a conspiracy. In line with the news published by the *Financial Review* entitled "living lockdown Bali style," which explores the point of view of Australians who are comfortable living in Bali, "even though people don't wear masks, they also don't say this is a conspiracy."

The second topic category is "vaccine," with 22 news articles. *The Australian* highlighted the decision to administer vaccines in Indonesia by publishing the news "Jokowi to launch Chinese jab" containing information that Indonesia became the first country outside China to use the SinoVac vaccine. Quoted from WHO, vaccines work by forming antigens in the body and encourage immunity in the body (World Health Organization 2020). However, Jokowi's action, which wants to immediately improve the national situation by speeding up the vaccine implementation, has received opposition from several medical personnel. The *Financial Review* reported an article in 2020 with the title "Indonesia's doctor warns on vaccines". Worries arise considering the need for clinical trials in Indonesia and questioning its success, considering that many medical personnel have died during this pandemic.

It does not only focus on discussing regional restriction policies and accelerating vaccines. The author makes the category "handling COVID-19" because it classifies news from *The Australian* "covid myth gives Indonesia a sense of invincibility" and "spiritual guidance still the answer for many." Although traditional medicine in Indonesia is not something new, this relatively new virus leaves a question mark for some people, so it is not surprising that the Indonesian people also consider this a conspiracy. The Australian media, primarily *The Australian*, can present this news.

In 2020, when the word lockdown became the first choice for handling COVID-19, not for Indonesia, the economy is expected to continue to spin. The topic of "trade" with 18 news articles represents various reports regarding the condition of Indonesia in formulating trading strategies during the pandemic. For example, the *Financial Review* reported on the relationship between Indonesia and Australia in ratifying the meat importer trade agreement. The *Financial Review* also covered the merger of two major e-commerce sites in Indonesia, namely Gojek and Tokopedia. Regional restrictions made both e-commerce companies see opportunities, and fast delivery answered the community's needs amid the imposed regional restrictions.

With the various efforts the government has put in place, it seems that they have not reduced the number of COVID-19 transmissions in the country. COVID-19 infection became the next highest topic with 13 news articles. *The Australian* with the news title "Jakarta running short of grave" reported that cases were increasing until Jakarta ran out of land for burial. *The Australian* also reported the deaths of Australians in Indonesia. This topic focuses on embracing the news of the increasing number of COVID-19 infections.

The role of the media can be referred to as non-government or informal diplomacy. For example, the close relationship between Indonesia and Australia has made the Australian media contribute a lot in reporting on COVID-19 in Indonesia, a series of events that occurred in early 2021, such as the Sriwijaya plane crash, the release of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir, two Indonesian ministers who were involved in corruption cases in the midst of a pandemic, natural disasters in several Indonesian provinces and the entry of refugees into Indonesia.

4.3 Themes and Keywords

Themes and keywords were analyzed, considering that the choice of words in the media is crucial to represent the published news. The framing carried out by the Australian media generally reports on cases in Indonesia from the side of health experts and examines the bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Australia. To analyze whether there is a relationship between the themes written by the Australian media and the content of the news, the authors examine more deeply explore the words published by each Australian media by taking the top 10 of the terms that often appear in the report of the seven Australian media using the TagCrowd website to visualize the frequency of words (see Table 1).

Table 1. Frequency of Words in News Title

Media	Number of articles	Frequent Words in News Title
The Australian	76	Jakarta; Indonesia; Jokowi; Bali; Covid; Health
Daily Telegraph	6	Bali; Terror
Herald Sun	3	Virus; Stress
Sydney Morning Herald	10	Bali; Indonesia
Financial Review	56	Indonesia; Jakarta; Virus; Vaccine; Bali
The Age	17	Indonesia; Vaccine; Covid; Jakarta; Pompeo
West Australian	9	Bali; Indonesia; Cattle; Export; Trade

Words that often appear in the headlines of Australian media coverage of COVID-19 in Indonesia generally do not contain negative terminology. From the results of the Tagcrowd above, "Indonesia" and "virus" are the two words that are mostly used in the title. The author visualizes the media with the most articles, namely *The Australian* and *Financial Review*.

4.3.1 The Australian

The Australian has published 76 articles since the beginning of the pandemic in Indonesia. The most frequent words used are "Jakarta"; "Indonesia"; "Jokowi"; "Bali"; "Covid"; "Health" (see Figure 4). In March 2020, *The Australian* released news articles discussing medics paying the ultimate price as researchers said half a nation could be infected. These news articles show that a high ratio of doctor deaths amid warnings the country's health system may not be able to cope with an "Italy-level outbreak." At least seven Indonesian doctors and one nurse have died of COVID-19 out of a total of 55 deaths, more than one in seven across the archipelago, with the national doctors' association blaming overwork and a lack of protective equipment. In Italy, where 5476 people have died of the coronavirus, 23 of them were doctors. Quoted from Indonesian Doctors Association spokesman Halik Malik, he said in Italy, 4,800 health workers were infected by the virus, but Indonesia cannot afford that situation. He adds that the medic will not be able to handle an explosion of cases.

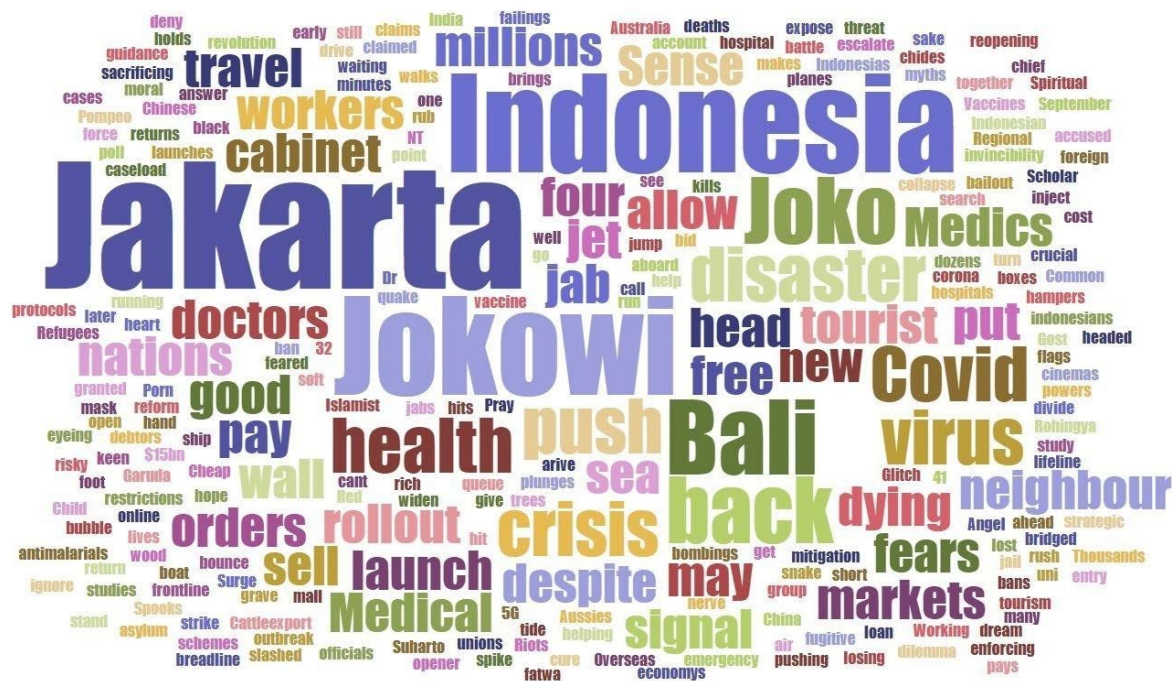


Figure 4. Most Frequently Used Words in *The Australian* Articles

In April 2021, President Joko Widodo conceded Indonesia had not been "effective" enough in fighting COVID-19. Jakarta is at risk of running out of graves as suspected and confirmed COVID-19 deaths overwhelm the capital's cemeteries. Jakarta Deputy Governor Ahmad Riza Patria said, "we have prepared around 17,900 new graves that will be available in phases". Quoting the Jakarta Forestry Agency spokesperson, Ivan Murcahyo, three public cemeteries had been fully occupied and the government is starting to prepare alternative cemetery sites as health officials recorded more than 100 deaths daily despite a fresh set of coronavirus restrictions on movement. The number of COVID-19 infections kept growing, so Ivan Murcahyo had to resort to cutting down the size of graves. One year surviving in this pandemic, through a sentence in this news article, Jokowi criticized the restrictions implemented on January 11 for failing to control the pandemic. He said, "We must say it as it is. It is not effective".

4.3.2 Daily Telegraph

Six selected news articles from *Daily Telegraph* are focused on Bali's condition, and the terrorist arrest that happened in the middle of COVID-19 in Indonesia, according to the results of Tagcrowd, namely the word "Bali" and "terror". In July 2020, the news highlighted quotes from the Government's Smart Traveller site that said that Australians have to leave Indonesia, "do not travel to Indonesia, including Bali," and "if you're an Australian visitor in Indonesia, leave now, don't delay." This warning came because Indonesian restrictions affect the flights, with Qantas, Virgin, and Jetstar suspending travel and Garuda offering a fixed limited schedule. Furthermore, the article mentioned that the Indonesian government cannot guarantee healthcare for Australians, and those infected will not be able to leave Indonesia and return to Australia. COVID-19 has spread widely across Indonesia and is in all of its 34 provinces, including Bali. So, the risk of community transmission increases every day.

The following month, in August 2020, a news highlight from Indonesia authorities have arrested 72 people on suspicion of terrorism in a significant counter-terrorism strike. National Police spokesman Awi Setiyono said Indonesia's strike force Densus 88 Anti-Terror squad netted 72 suspects between June 1 and August 12. On August 12, 15 suspected terrorists were arrested in Jakarta and West Java and identified as being part of Indonesia's homegrown Jamaah Ansharut Daulah (JAD), which is linked to ISIS.

National Police spokesman Awi Setiyono said, "They (the 15 suspects) sent logistics and funding for the Mujahidin Indonesia Timur terrorist group and became facilitators for the departure (of fighters) to Syria". Among those arrested

is Koswara, AKA Abu Hanifah, 33, who is believed to be among the leadership of JAD. Police collected evidence that he funded and facilitated both JAD and Mujahidin Indonesia Timur.

4.3.3 Herald Sun

The *Herald Sun* only published three news articles that were relevant to this study. These three articles reported the release of Abu Bakar Ba'asyir with bombastic titles such as "red carpet for the devil in white." In January 2021, this news broadcast that the Islamic terrorist Abu Bakar Bashir posed for "hero" shots before being given special treatment and being spirited out of prison-like some sort of evil celebrity. He was released on Friday, having served ten years for his part in training militant fighters. Ba'asyir was the mastermind behind the deadly 2002 Bali bombings that claimed 202 lives, including 88 Australians and injured hundreds more.

This news quoted his first public diatribe as a free man "my message is that this life is for the worship of Allah. Worship is not just prayer. Worship runs through all the laws of Allah. So, this life is only meant to carry out Allah's law. If you want to survive, that's all. There is no other way," Bashir said. The Bali bombings will not be forgotten in Indonesian history. Two explosions were detonated and quickly took hundreds of lives from Indonesian citizens and foreigners. In the last paragraph, this news emphasizes the agitating for an Islamic state and the founding of the Al-Mukmin Islamic School in Central Java. He was believed to have plans to return to the Al-Mukmin School to resume preaching.

The report on Ba'asyir's release resonates with Mahony's (2010) assertion as Australian media tend to portray terrorism using an Orientalist background with strong racism entrenched in its narratives. Hence it is expected that the article is more interested in capitalising on fear and recalling the trauma experienced by victims. Another article also extended the exaggeration of how Ba'asyir and his family may pose security threats to Indonesia and to Australia, using a title that reads "Sins of their father".

4.3.4 Sydney Morning Herald

The *Sydney Morning Herald* reports on COVID-19 in Indonesia is dominated by Bali as the most used word. Two out of ten articles focusing on the situation in Bali; published in April and July 2020. The first article elaborates on Australians who decided to stay in Bali during the restriction and lockdown. While the other article talks about an estimated 3,000 Australian tourists and 7,000 Australian permanent residents who are still living in Indonesia. The newspaper reports how the pandemic hit Bali hard as the travel ban is severely affecting hotel occupancy rates, which have fallen to single figures, the economy is struggling, and businesses are shuttering under the weight.

Second, in January 2021, *Sydney Morning Herald* also covered the release of Ba'asyir. The news highlights the contrasting perceptions between Australian victims who managed to survive terrorist attacks and the Indonesian government's decision to release Ba'asyir. A survivor was quoted saying that he is in continuous concern as "(Ba'asyir will be) doing what he's always done" and he will recruit more people to be radicalized. Again, these narratives are very commonly published in Australian media in framing Indonesia as the hotspot for terrorism and radicalized minds.

Another unique title is "virus can't shake Joko's popularity". This article highlights Jokowi desperately saying his country has been hit harder by COVID-19 than any other countries in Southeast Asia. While relying on a national vaccination program to curb the pandemic, Jokowi's administration was afflicted with corruption scandals which involved two of his ministers: the Social Affairs Minister, Juliari Batubara, and the Fisheries and Maritime Affairs Minister, Edy Prabowo.

The newspaper also reports the rise of dynastic politics as Jokowi's eldest son, Gibran Rakabuming Raka, and his son-in-law, Bobby Nasution, are eyeing the local elections. The two got elected as mayors in Solo and Medan, respectively. The trend is troubling as both have no experience in politics and tend to merely capitalize on Jokowi's popularity.

4.3.4 Financial Review

Financial Review contributes the second most news reports about COVID-19 in Indonesia with 58 articles. The most frequent words are "Indonesia" and "vaccine". In January 2021, a report titled "doubt as Indonesia rolls out China's CoronaVac" elaborates that Indonesia received a dose of vaccine from China right after India launched the vaccine rollout. Quoted in the articles from Jokowi, "vaccination is important to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission

and give protection to us and safety to every Indonesian and help accelerate economic recovery". Jokowi became the first person to get the Sinovac injection in Indonesia.

As the efficacy rate of Sinovac is only 50 percent, this strategy relying on vaccine rollout raises doubt. An Indonesian epidemiologist, Dr. Pandu Riono said "if the efficacy rate is just 50 percent. To achieve herd immunity, 100 percent of the population would have to be vaccinated. That's not possible" (14 January 2021). He also said that vaccines will reduce the risk of infections leading to severe complications, however, it will not stop the pandemic. He urged the Indonesian government to concentrate on strengthening the nation's "very weak" testing and contact tracing and to continue to reinforce the need for social distancing, mask-wearing, and handwashing. Indonesia plans its vaccination for the adult population of 181.5 million of the 188.7 million aged over 18.

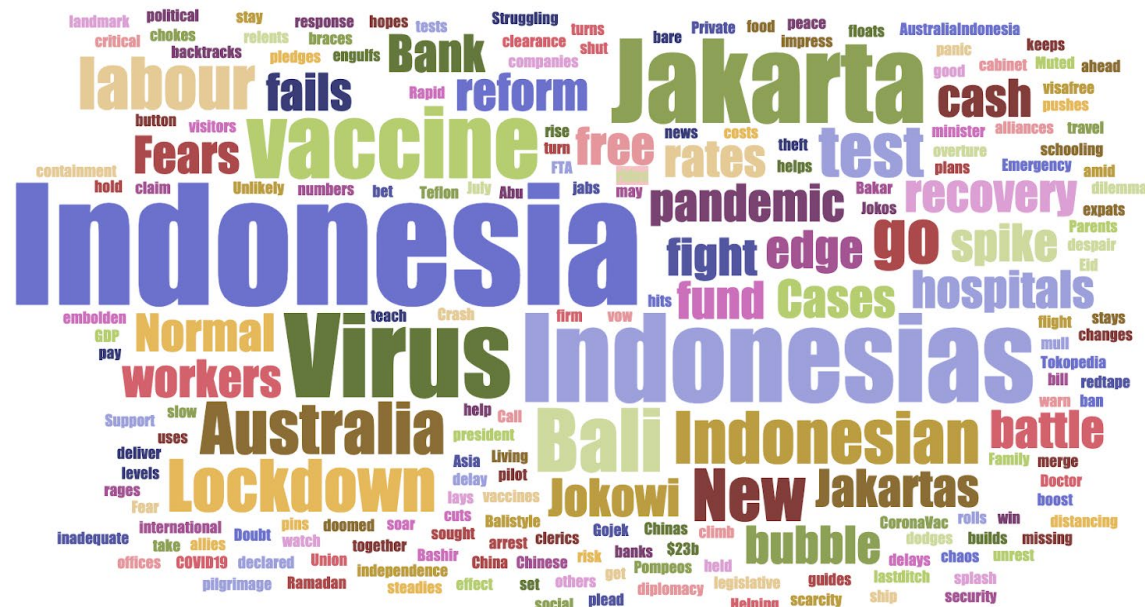


Figure 5. Most Frequently Used Words in *Financial Review* Articles

In August 2020, the news title "virus chokes Indonesian GDP". Flash on Indonesia's economic challenge since the COVID-19 wave (Figure 5). In the paragraph, Indonesian President Joko Widodo's planned meeting with key ministers yesterday took on new urgency after the data release that showed the country's economy contracted 5.32 percent in the second quarter. The sharp year-on-year fall in GDP marks a dramatic turnaround for south-east Asia's largest economy. In recent years, Indonesians have become used to increasing prosperity, with an average annual 5 percent rise in GDP lifting millions out of poverty.

Indonesia's GDP is falling because of the limitation of human activities in the capital city and almost all provinces. As a result, the central government has announced stimulus spending, including welfare payments, tax incentives, and support for small and micro-businesses. However, the World Bank also warned, noting the "twin public health and economic crises have confronted the government with new challenges while exacerbating older ones."

4.3.5 The Age

The Age, based in Melbourne, has been reporting on COVID-19 in Indonesia in 17 articles, with the two most frequent words being "Jakarta" and "vaccine". On January 12, 2021, the newspaper released an opinion article by Ben Bland (the Lowy Institute) titled "Dark days still ahead for Widodo", predicting that a vaccination program for the 180 million Indonesian population in 15 months will require "detailed planning and meticulous execution". The article suggests that the President and the more expansive bureaucracy often lack these two qualities. It further argues

President Joko Widodo has rejected pressure from scientists to use lockdowns, as he prioritizes more on the economic sector.

In a paragraph, Bland touches upon the recent local elections where the President's son and son-in-law got elected despite a limited track record in public policy and politics. His piece poses doubt in Indonesia's hope to mitigate the calamity by a national vaccination program whilst comparing the country with Britain who is already struggling to meet its targets for vaccination. Factors like "bad infrastructure, ineffective bureaucracy and endemic corruption, as well as widespread skepticism about vaccinations" were listed as possible predictors of how Indonesia will not fulfill its vaccination ambition.

Earlier in April 2020, *The Age* highlighted the growing tensions between President Joko Widodo and Jakarta Governor Anies Baswedan. While the central government has stated the country-wide death toll is 136, Governor Anies' comments suggest the number of dead and infections could be much higher than official figures. The article reads, "rather than implement a lockdown, Joko has announced large-scale social restrictions - details of which remain unclear - and insisted that only he has the power to implement a formal lockdown."

Dewi Fortuna Anwar, a female politics professor, was quoted in this article saying that "the government was struggling to find the right balance between protecting people's health and protecting the economy" as she was reflecting on the debate surrounding the need to pose travel restrictions and banning the mudik. Monash University Indonesia professor Ariel Heryanto said the President's "announcement (on large-scale social restrictions) is another example of poor public communication practice". Similarly, Australian National University Indonesia professor Marcus Mietzner was quoted saying, "It is hard to find any leader in the democratic world who has been worse at communicating the government's approach to the people".

4.3.6 West Australian

The *West Australian*, a newspaper based in Perth, has reported on COVID-19 in Indonesia in nine articles with the most frequent topic being trade. The keywords that appear frequently are "cattle" and "trade". In April 2020, a news business article titled "export cattle have to stay at home too" discussed the impact of Indonesian restrictions on cattle pastoralists' production. It cites a report by Meat and Livestock Australia (MLA) that said a shutdown of foodservice outlets, reduced consumer spending, and nationwide restrictive measures had caused a demand shock that could not have been foreseen two months ago. MLA also said that in March 2020 live cattle exports to Indonesia, Australia's most important market, were down by 41 percent compared to the previous year. A weak Indonesian rupiah also contributed to the decline.

Quoting Rob Clayton, managing director of Frontier International's parent company Nutrien Ag Solutions, cancellation needed to be kept in perspective, given Frontier alone shipped 160,000 cattle from northern Australia each year, including about 90,000 to Indonesia. He also emphasized Indonesia is WA's most important market, buying 500,000 cattle a year. In addition, the steeply depreciating Indonesian rupiah during the pandemic is creating nervousness among cattle producers.

Another business article, published in June 2020, elaborated on the Indonesia-Australia trade agreement. Citing a senior researcher, the piece suggests that Australian exporters must look beyond Indonesia, which could only absorb about 10 percent of the loss from trade with China following an intense relationship between China and Australia.

4.4. Sources Cited

This section explains who the most cited source in articles about COVID-19 in Indonesia published by the Australian press was. The author coded all the affiliation of the cited sources into eighteen categories. The frequency of sources quoted was counted as it appears in the article. For example, if an article quoted the Chinese minister of foreign affairs and the Indonesian counterpart, thus the article is coded with two ministers serving the same portfolio. For instance, in a piece titled "China to help Jakarta with 5G rollout", the Chinese Foreign Minister and the Indonesian Foreign Minister were quoted. Hence, this article was coded as having two ministers. This approach is taken as it will enable us to count the frequency of each type of affiliation.

The results of affiliation most cited are ministers (47 quotes), followed by company executives (37); public health experts (36) and academics (34). Governors and presidents/prime ministers accounted for 34 quotes each, while the

least quoted are ambassadors and commoners--with less than 5 citations. As many as 23 articles have no quotes from any individual, meaning the stories were not referring to a specific position at all.

From the framing analysis, travel restriction is dominating the news coverage of COVID-19 in Indonesia with most quoted sources being ministers explaining policies on border control. Another prominent topic is vaccines as the Indonesian government is prioritising the national vaccination program as the solution to curb the pandemic. Epidemiologists and public health experts were heavily cited in articles on vaccines as the government is planning to roll out as early as 13 January of 2021.

5. Conclusion

There is no doubt that Indonesia is one of the most important neighbours for Australia, both in the security and economic aspects. However, the interest to report how Indonesia is dealing with the current pandemic is far from adequate. This study has demonstrated that in the last 12 months, articles on COVID-19 in Indonesia comprise only 177 collected from seven Australian newspapers. Echoing Tapsell's (2021) assertion, the Australian press is far more inclined to report what is happening in the US or the UK, rather than its neighbouring countries.

This study argues that the way the Australian press is framing COVID-19 in Indonesia is determined by its readers. For example, the *West Australian* newspaper tends to report on trade relations since their readers are dominated by farmers and those working in the agricultural sector. Hence, it is expected that the news coverage will be dominated by how the current pandemic and travel restriction will be resulting in significantly lower cattle exports. Meanwhile, other dailies tend to exaggerate terrorism and the potential security threats following the release of an Islamic cleric. Again, news coverage in Indonesia is associated with terrorism using harmful stereotypes. The framing of issues related to the Bali bombing continue to utilise an Orientalist approach (Mahony, 2010), reflecting Australia's racist past and its fear of terrorism.

Some caveats of this study include the type of media observed that only focus on printed newspapers. In a digital era, this might probably exclude a vast population who are now more relying on social media or other digital platforms for news feeds. However, the current paper remains important as it provides the first examination on how the Australian press are reporting Indonesia's struggle in tackling the spread of COVID-19. Future research could expand this analysis by looking at different media platforms or to compare Indonesia with other Southeast Asian countries with similar levels of importance to Australia.

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