



## A DISCUSSION ON THE GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF THE FLOOD DISASTER IN NORTH SUMATRA ON TIKTOK

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### ABSTRACT

*The purpose of this study was to examine the discourse surrounding the government's handling of flood victims on TikTok. This research was descriptive qualitative, employing Robert N. Entman's framing analysis model. Data collection techniques included observation, documentation, and literature review. Data analysis techniques included examining the text, visuals, and narratives in TikTok content on the accounts @Kementrian Sosial RI, @Bobby Nasution, @Ferry Irwandi, and @CallMeHyung. Robert N. Entman's model analysis was used to identify how the media constructs an event through four main elements: defining problems, diagnosing causes, making moral judgments, and emphasizing solutions. The results of this study are as follows: 1) The discourse of flooding as an inevitable natural disaster. This study shows that flooding in TikTok reporting is constructed as a natural disaster caused by extreme weather factors, such as heavy rainfall and river overflows. This discourse positions flooding as a natural event beyond human control, so the focus of news coverage is directed at the impact and post-disaster management, rather than the structural causes. 2) The discourse of the government as the primary actor and helper. The dominant discourse in TikTok news coverage positions the government as the primary actor, present and acting swiftly in flood management. Video content consistently depicts the activities of government officials, officials, and volunteers involved in evacuating residents, distributing aid, and visiting affected locations. 3) The discourse of social concern and solidarity. The research also indicates the existence of a discourse of social concern and solidarity.*

**Keywords:** Discourse, Reporting, Social Media

## 1. INTRODUCTION

News reporting is the primary medium for conveying information to the public about current events based on facts. Media not only serves as a transmitter of information, but also plays a role in shaping public perspectives and opinions regarding the social realities reported. In practice, news reporting should be presented objectively, accurately, and

balanced so that the information received by the public can be trusted. However, in reality, the reporting process often faces various obstacles, such as bias, the selection of certain facts, and demands for sensationalism, which have the potential to affect the quality and integrity of news content. Verse 6 of the Qur'an, Al-Hujurat, explains that:

فَتُصَبِّحُوا بِجَهَالَةٍ ۖ قَوْمًا تَصِيبُوا ۚ أَنْ فَتَبَيَّنُوا بِنَبَأٍ فَاسِقٍ ۚ جَاءَكُمْ إِنْ أَمِنُوا الَّذِينَ آيَاهَا  
نَدِمِينَ فَعَلْتُمْ مَا عَلَى

“O you who believe, if a wicked person comes to you with important news, then ascertain its truth lest you harm a people through ignorance, and then become regretful of what you have done.”

This verse was revealed to emphasize the importance of tabayyun (verification) before believing and spreading news, especially that which could harm others. This is relevant to social situations where gossip or false information can trigger slander, hostility, or wrong judgment. The phrase "ata fatabayyanu" emphasizes that every news item must be verified for its veracity. Spreading information without fact-checking can cause harm to both individuals and groups, and can lead to regret.

Surah Al-Hujurat, verse 6, serves as a warning to Muslims to always tabayyun (verification) when dealing with information we hear. And of course, seek explanations from both parties. Failure to tabayyun is extremely dangerous, as it can lead to division and even bloodshed. As mentioned above, the principle of tabayyun, namely, being cautious, is better than double-checking the information we receive (Syamsul, 2020).

Moreover, today is a time of such openness in information. It's as if we can simply tap or click on a link on the internet and easily obtain the information we desire. This news quickly goes viral, and those who receive this information also fail to adhere to the principles of tabayyun, ultimately leading to lies and public deception. Maintaining tabayyun in all circumstances is the path that Muslims must take in this day and age. This includes implementing tabayyun within the family, community, workplace, and even on the social media we use daily.

In the context of the natural disasters of floods and landslides that struck North Sumatra, by the end of 2025, it became a major disaster with significant social and economic impacts, causing loss of life, infrastructure damage, and the displacement of thousands of residents. The central and regional governments have deployed various emergency response efforts, such as establishing command posts, mobilizing logistics, distributing aid, and deploying field posts to expedite the handling and evacuation of victims in the affected areas (Effendy, 2011). Media TikTok tidak hanya digunakan oleh media resmi dan akun pemerintah, tetapi juga digunakan oleh influencer yang memiliki jumlah followers yang besar serta kemampuan menggiring opini publik. Dalam konteks bencana banjir di Sumatra Utara, influencer menyediakan konten berupa informasi lapangan, opini pribadi, narasi emosional, hingga kritik atau dukungan terhadap penanganan pemerintah. Dalam kesempatan ini peneliti melihat pada akun tiktok penelitian ini yaitu mengkaji teks, visual, dan narasi dalam konten TikTok pada akun @Kementrian Sosial RI, @Bobby Nasution @Ferry Irwandi @Call Me Hyung.

Not only is official government media outlets like TikTok popular, but content is also widely produced by influencers and ordinary citizens. This has led to a diverse discourse, with competing ideas, perspectives, and opinions competing with each other. Therefore, flood coverage is not merely informative but also becomes an arena for constructing public opinion. In this context, the way the media frames the news becomes crucial because it influences how the public understands the causes of the disaster, those responsible, and what solutions are considered appropriate.

Framing analysis is an effective approach to examining how the media emphasizes certain aspects of an event while ignoring others. Robert N. Entman's framing model emphasizes four main elements: problem definition, cause determination, moral judgment, and recommended solutions. In the context of flood coverage in North Sumatra, this approach allows researchers to identify how the media shapes the construction of reality, from the perspective of the government, influencers, and the public. For example, the media can emphasize government unpreparedness, community solidarity, or the social and economic impacts of the flood. This research is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the media's role in shaping public perception regarding flood disaster management in North Sumatra, while also providing a foundation for improving the quality of information and reporting ethics in the digital age.

In fact, the contest of ideas, or in journalistic language known as discourse, that occurs in the reporting of government response delivered by influencers on TikTok has characteristics that differ from journalistic reporting. Influencer content tends to be personal, expressive, and easily trending, thus having a significant influence on public perception. On the one hand, such content can increase social awareness, public empathy, and community participation in assisting disaster victims. For example, Ferry Irwandi's content, which provides fundraising through online platforms like TikTok, is presented. However, on the other hand, because not all influencer content is based on the principles of objectivity and journalistic verification, such reporting has the potential to contain bias, subjectivity, and oversimplify the complexity of government disaster management (Nasrullah, 2017).

Furthermore, discourse, a difference in perspective among influencers in providing news content about natural disasters, contributes to diverse representations of government performance. Some influencers viewed the government as responsive and responsive, while others presented news reports about delays in aid, weak coordination, and perceived ineffectiveness of officials at the disaster site. This difference in representation indicates that news on TikTok conveys not only facts but also public opinion about the government's handling of the flood disaster (Eriyanto, 2011).

Public responses to news about the government's handling of the flood disaster in North Sumatra on social media, including TikTok, demonstrate a wide range of attitudes and perceptions. Sentiment analysis data indicates that TikTok users' sentiment toward disaster response coverage is positive, even higher than on other social media platforms. During a given period, approximately 46% of conversations on TikTok were positive regarding disaster coverage and the government's response, demonstrating appreciation for the government's actions and support for disaster victims. Meanwhile, the remainder displayed neutral or critical sentiments toward various aspects of disaster management (Papacharissi, 2015).

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This positive response can stem from a sense of concern and social solidarity, such as appreciation for logistical efforts, rapid response at affected locations, and public participation in assisting disaster victims through donations and community cooperation. Furthermore, appreciation for the involvement of government agencies and volunteers in disaster management efforts also influenced conversations on TikTok.

However, people also expressed criticism and concern regarding the government's handling of the crisis through TikTok posts. Some content expressed dissatisfaction with the slow pace of aid distribution to remote areas, the lack of clear information, and uncertainty about long-term government support. This criticism consistently emerged in expressive comments and videos that showed the facts on the ground during the disaster. This contrast between positive and negative responses demonstrates that social media coverage is not only a platform for information but also a platform for public discourse assessing the government's performance in crisis situations.

Based on the phenomenon of natural disasters, the research will be titled "Reporting on Government Response to Floods in North Sumatra on TikTok." This research is crucial for examining narratives, framing tendencies, and their impact on public opinion formation in the context of disaster communication in the digital era.

## 2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive approach. Framing analysis is an approach in communication studies that examines how the media packages and presents reality. The focus is not only on what is reported, but also how the news is discussed about the ideas in each news item. In this study, regarding the reporting of the flood disaster management in North Sumatra, it is used to systematically describe the characteristics of TikTok content that fills the news about flood disaster management. In this study, the news was taken from the following TikTok account:

No	Tiktok Account	Account Type	Data Type	Description / Notes
1	@KementrianSosialRI	Government	Video + Caption	Official government posts, showcasing aid distribution and disaster management coordination
2	@BobbyNasution	Medan Government / Mayor	Video + Caption	Showing direct monitoring and instructions to field officers
3	@FerryIrwandi	Influencers	Video + Caption + Cooments	Highlighting the social aspects and conditions of victims, emphasizing the urgency of aid

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	Community / Content Creators		Perspectives of flood-affected residents, showcasing personal experiences and critiques of the government's response
4	@CallMeHyung	Video + Caption	

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The media also featured solutions deemed appropriate, such as river normalization, resident relocation, social assistance, or evaluation of spatial planning policies. These recommendations indicated the direction of solutions framed as solutions to the flood problem. The analysis was conducted by examining the text, visuals, and narratives in TikTok content, then describing each framing element to determine the tendencies of the discourse being constructed. To ensure data validity, this study used source and theory triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing content from various TikTok accounts (government, media, and community). Theory triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of the framing analysis with concepts of discourse and disaster communication from scientific literature.

### 3. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

The flood disaster that occurred in North Sumatra, particularly in Medan and its surrounding areas, not only attracted mainstream media attention but was also widely discussed on social media, particularly TikTok. The TikTok platform presents a different communication pattern than conventional media, as information is packaged in short, emotional videos, often with personal opinions. TikTok influencers hold a strategic position as digital opinion leaders. They not only convey information but also frame events through specific perspectives that have the potential to shape public perceptions of the government's performance in handling the flood disaster. Unlike formal journalistic media, which adheres to the principles of verification and balance, TikTok content tends to be: Visual-based and dramatize situations on the ground, Use emotional narratives (empathy, anger, criticism), Prioritize the experiences of affected residents, and Use music, overlay text, and video clips that reinforce specific messages.

With these characteristics, the framing of the government's response is often more pointed and subjective. In much TikTok content, flooding is defined not simply as a natural disaster, but as a governance crisis and a lack of government preparedness. Visuals of submerged houses, residents crying, and refugee camps symbolize that the problem is not simply heavy rain, but rather a systemic failure. However, some influencers define the problem as an emergency caused by extreme weather, thus viewing the government's response as a response to an unexpected situation. Framing of the cause on TikTok generally falls into two categories:

1. **Critical Framing:** The causes are directed at poor drainage, the neglect of buildings on riverbanks, and the lack of disaster mitigation. This narrative implies the responsibility of the local government.
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2. Neutral/Pro-Government Framing: The causes are more focused on extreme rainfall and natural factors that cannot be fully controlled.

The choice of angle is heavily influenced by the influencer's position—whether as a social activist, citizen journalist, or entertainment creator addressing a current issue. At this stage, TikTok content often displays explicit moral judgments. In critical framing, the government is seen as less responsive or only present when it goes viral. In pro framing, the government is portrayed as responsive through video clips of aid distribution or official visits. Moral judgments on TikTok tend to be more direct and emotional than those on formal news media, conveyed through personal expression, voice intonation, and direct commentary to the audience. Influencer content typically offers solutions such as: Urging the government to improve the drainage system, Raising public donations, Encouraging the public to care more about the environment, and Demanding transparency in disaster management budgets.

Interestingly, TikTok is not only a space for criticism but also a space for social mobilization, where audiences are invited to participate directly. TikTok, as an algorithm-based social media platform, amplifies content that generates high engagement. This means that emotional and controversial content is more likely to go viral than neutral, informative content. This means that framings critical of the government often receive wider attention. Thus, public opinion can be formed not only based on objective facts, but also on the most emotionally appealing narrative. Coverage of the government's response to the floods in North Sumatra on TikTok influencers demonstrates diverse framing dynamics. Some content builds the government's legitimacy as a responsive entity, while others construct narratives critical of environmental governance and policies. Thus, TikTok serves not only as a medium for disseminating information but also as an arena for discursive battles that shape public perceptions of the government's performance in crisis situations.

Floods carrying logs exhibit a distinct character from ordinary inundation. Large logs swept away by the current cause massive damage to homes, bridges, and public facilities. In the context of crisis communication, the image of large logs crashing into residential areas becomes a powerful symbol, prompting public questions: where did the wood come from? This is where TikTok influencers' framing becomes significant—as the issue no longer stops at "heavy rainfall" but expands to include allegations of forest destruction and environmental governance.

No	Framing Elements (Entman)	Pro-Government Framing	Counter-Government Framing
1	Define Problems	Flooding is defined as a natural disaster caused by extreme rainfall and geographic conditions in areas prone to river overflows.	Flooding is defined as an environmental governance crisis and a recurring mitigation failure.

2	Diagnose Causes	The causes are attributed to external factors: high-intensity rainfall, climate change, and limited river capacity.	The causes are pointed to structural factors: weak spatial planning oversight, land conversion, forest destruction, poor drainage systems, and alleged policy omissions.
3	Make Moral Judgments	The government is considered alert and responsive, going directly to the location, quickly establishing posts, and distributing aid.	The government is seen as reactive and lacking in preventative measures, with only temporary measures, even considered mere image-building.
4	Treatment Recommendations	Technical solutions include river normalization, drainage dredging, social assistance, and cross-agency coordination.	Structural solutions include spatial planning reform, audits of company permits, regulation of riverbank buildings, reforestation, and budget transparency.
5	Implications of Framing for Public Opinion	Building legitimacy and trust in the government's performance in emergency situations.	Encourage public criticism and social pressure on the government to implement long-term policy changes.

TikTok, the social media platform, has become a crucial platform for public communication, disseminating information and shaping public opinion. Beyond its function as an entertainment medium, TikTok has also become a platform for social and political discourse, particularly on disaster issues. In the context of the flood disaster in North Sumatra, TikTok has generated various narratives regarding the causes of the flooding, its impact on the community, and the government's role and responsibility in handling it. This situation demonstrates that social media plays a role in constructing social reality and influencing public perception.

Content sourced from local government accounts or depicting the activities of government officials generally conceptualizes flooding as a natural disaster caused by severe weather factors. Heavy rainfall and rising river levels are the primary causes of flooding. In this framing, the government is positioned as a responsive and responsible entity through various activities, such as distributing logistical aid, building temporary housing, normalizing rivers, and visiting affected areas.

When analyzed using Robert N. Entman's framing model, government framing demonstrates four main elements: defining the problem and the impact of flooding on the community, diagnosing the causes as natural factors, morally assessing the government's concern and responsibility, and suggesting solutions in the form of post-disaster management and recovery measures. This framing plays a role in building a positive image of the government as a party present and working in emergency situations.

In addition to the government narrative, another discourse that is more prominent on TikTok is the humanitarian and social solidarity framing. This content is generally created by volunteers, communities, and content creators, showcasing the collection and distribution of aid to flood victims. This disaster response is seen as a manifestation of simultaneous concern and national mutual cooperation.

In this framing, aid such as rice, basic necessities, blankets, mattresses, and ready-to-eat meals are presented as the most urgent needs for disaster-affected communities. The government is always positioned as a facilitator or partner, rather than the primary actor. This discourse emphasizes that disaster management is not solely the responsibility of the state but also requires the active involvement of the community. This phenomenon aligns with the nature of social media as a platform for public involvement to play a direct role in the production of discourse.

On the other hand, TikTok has also become a platform for critical framing of the government. Critical content portrays flooding not solely as a natural disaster, but as a result of non-natural factors, such as weak security, ineffective policies, and environmental damage. Logs in rivers, as well as natural resource exploitation, are used to challenge the government's narrative.

In this framing, rain and bad weather are positioned merely as triggers, while the root of the problem lies in human actions and structural deficiencies. Entman's framing analysis suggests that critical content defines the problem as an inaccurate government narrative, diagnoses the causes of policy failures, provides moral judgments in the form of criticism of government performance, and offers solutions in the form of demands for accountability, public transparency, and law enforcement.

The language used in critical content tends to be assertive and aggressive, reflecting public disappointment with the government. This demonstrates that social media serves as a means of social control, enabling people to voice criticism of those in power. The findings of this study demonstrate a discursive battle in reporting on the flood management in North Sumatra on TikTok. The government's narrative, emphasizing the natural disaster and humanitarian response, is countered by a narrative of community solidarity and a narrative of policy criticism.

TikTok's algorithm, which prioritizes user engagement, also influences the spread of discourse, particularly emotional and critical content. This can lead to critical framing often attracting widespread attention and becoming an adjustment to the government's narrative. Overall, the discourse on flood management on TikTok demonstrates that natural disasters are not merely interpreted as natural events, but as social, political, and public policy issues. TikTok social media serves as a communication platform that provides an opportunity for the public to assess, support, or criticize the government's performance in handling the flood disaster in North Sumatra.

Table of Discourse Responses to the North Sumatra Floods

No	Actors	Pro Response	Counter-Reactions
1	Government	- Declare the flooding as a result of extreme rainfall and natural factors.	- Considered insufficient long-term mitigation.
2	Influencers (Social Media/TikTok)	- Affirm that rapid evacuation and aid distribution have been carried out.	- Spatial planning policies are considered weak.
3	Affected Communities	- Claim that river normalization and drainage repairs are underway.	- Management is considered reactive, not preventative.

No	Actors	Pro Response	Counter-Reactions
4	General Public (Netizens)	- Commend the authorities who directly assisted residents.	- Criticize alleged forest destruction and illegal logging (especially when logs are involved).

The table above shows that the government tends to construct a defensive and administrative narrative. Influencers act as alternative framing actors, either strengthening legitimacy or amplifying criticism. The affected public finds themselves in an ambivalent position: appreciative of the emergency situation, yet critical of the structural situation. General netizens reinforce the polarization of opinion through comments and the virality of content. In the context of crisis communication, these differing responses demonstrate a contest for meaning in the public sphere between policy legitimacy and demands for accountability.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion of the discourse on the government's response to the flood disaster in North Sumatra on TikTok, the following conclusions can be drawn: First, TikTok has become a significant public discourse space for disseminating information related to the flood disaster in North Sumatra. Through its short video format, TikTok functions not only as an information medium but also as a means of shaping public opinion, social criticism, and a space for expressing the emotions of disaster-affected communities. Second, news coverage of the government's response to the flood disaster on TikTok displays a variety of framings. Some content frames the government as responsive and alert through the distribution of logistical assistance, construction of temporary housing, and post-disaster recovery efforts. However, there is also content that frames the government critically, particularly regarding issues of negligence in environmental oversight, natural resource management policies, and weak law enforcement. Third, public responses to the flood disaster management content on TikTok tend to be diverse, ranging from support and appreciation for government assistance to sharp criticism tinged with disappointment and distrust. This indicates that TikTok serves as an arena for contestation between the official government narrative and the critical public narrative.

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