

"Reluctant to live, unwilling to die": The Adaptation of Traditional Media to Changes in News Consumption

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital technology has changed the news consumption patterns of the Indonesian public, prompting traditional media to adapt to maintain relevance and competitiveness. This research aims to identify the adaptation strategies of traditional media in Indonesia in responding to these changes, focusing on business models, content innovation, and efforts to build public trust. This research uses a qualitative approach through case studies of 12 traditional media organizations (newspapers, radio, television). Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 key informants, document analysis, and observation. Thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns of adaptation, challenges, and their impacts. The research results show three main strategies. First, diversifying the business model through digital subscriptions and partnerships with technology platforms, although hindered by infrastructure limitations and costs. Second, content production innovation with multimedia formats (video, podcast) and distribution through social media, although it requires increased human resource capabilities. Third, efforts to increase public trust through investigative journalism, fact-checking programs, and content transparency. The main challenges include political pressure, dependence on third-party platforms, and disparities in digital literacy. These findings underscore the importance of the local context in media adaptation, where organizational resilience and continuous learning are key to success. The research recommends strengthening strategic partnerships, investing in journalist training, and utilizing technology to enhance accountability. Its theoretical implications enrich the literature on media adaptation in developing countries, highlighting the complex interactions between technical, social, and political factors.

Keywords: *Traditional media, media adaptation, media ecosystem, news consumption, Indonesia.*

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has changed the global media landscape, including in Indonesia. This transformation affects how news is produced and disseminated and changes the information consumption patterns in society. This phenomenon is highly relevant in Indonesia, considering the high internet penetration and the increasing use of mobile devices. According to data from the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association (APJII), in 2023, more than 73% of the Indonesian population was connected to the Internet, with most users accessing information through mobile devices. This condition marks a significant shift from

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traditional media consumption, such as printed newspapers and television, to digital platforms. This change in news consumption poses a significant challenge for traditional media in maintaining their relevance and competitiveness in the digital era. Traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television, which for decades have been the primary sources of information, now face significant challenges in maintaining their relevance amidst the dominance of digital platforms (Adikpo et al., 2022; Khan et al., 2024; Onyenankeya, 2022). This phenomenon is not only occurring at the global level but also has significant implications in Indonesia, where traditional media still play an important role in shaping public opinion and providing credible information (Alvin, 2025; Latif et al., 2024; Priadi & Thariq, 2023). However, with the increasing Internet penetration and social media use, news consumers in Indonesia are increasingly turning to digital platforms that offer quick access, interactivity, and content personalization (Ioscote et al., 2024; Ittefaq et al., 2025). This change raises fundamental questions about how traditional media can adapt to remain relevant in the digital era.

In Indonesia, traditional media plays a unique social, political, and cultural role. As a country with a population of over 270 million and a high level of diversity, traditional media often serves as a bridge between the government and society and a tool to promote social awareness and democratic participation (Tapsell, 2017). However, in recent years, traditional media have faced a decline in the number of readers, listeners, and viewers, impacting their advertising revenue and operational sustainability (Nugroho et al., 2013; Parahita & Pamungkas, 2023). This challenge is exacerbated by the emergence of digital platforms that offer faster, cheaper, and more accessible news alternatives. As a result, traditional media are forced to undergo strategic transformations to compete in an increasingly complex media ecosystem.

The main issue that this research aims to address is how traditional media in Indonesia adapts to changes in news consumption patterns triggered by digitalization. This adaptation not only includes changes in business models but also innovations in content production and distribution, as well as efforts to rebuild public trust amid the rampant spread of fake news (hoaxes) and misinformation (McDougall, 2019; Mihailidis & Foster, 2021; Torre et al., 2024; Vukić, 2020). This research aims to identify effective and sustainable adaptation strategies for traditional media, considering Indonesia's unique social, economic, and political context.

Several previous studies have explored the impact of digitalization on traditional media in various countries. For example, some research shows that traditional media in developed countries have adopted strategies such as digital platform integration (Krstic, 2024), revenue diversification (Masele & Joseph, 2023; Schauerte et al., 2021), and enhanced quality of investigative journalism to remain competitive (de-Lima-Santos et al., 2022; Olsen et al., 2021). However, the Indonesian context has different characteristics, such as a still-developing level of digital literacy, uneven internet infrastructure, and complex political dynamics (Alvin, 2025; Lim, 2023; Margono et al., 2024). Therefore, findings from research in other countries cannot always be directly applied in Indonesia. This research aims to fill the gap in the literature by providing an in-depth analysis of the adaptation of traditional media in Indonesia, which can serve as a reference for the development of policies and practices in the media sector.

In addition, this research also responds to the need to understand how traditional media can maintain their role as watchdogs of democracy in the digital era. In Indonesia, where social media often serves as a means of disseminating unverified information, traditional media provides accurate and trustworthy content (Baptista & Gradim, 2022;

Perreault et al., 2023). However, these efforts must be balanced with the ability to attract the interest of an increasingly fragmented audience with diverse preferences. Therefore, this research will also explore how traditional media can combine traditional journalistic values with technological innovations to meet the information needs of modern society.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Institutionalism, Media Adaptation and Innovation

The development of digital technology has transformed the global media landscape, prompting media organizations to adopt adaptation strategies to maintain relevance in the era of convergence. Media adaptation and convergence have become central to the study of communication literature, especially in the context of traditional media transformation. This literature aims to analyse the relationship between these two concepts, referring to Lowrey's (2011) media adaptation theory and recent research developments. This review also highlights the challenges and opportunities in the context of developing countries like Indonesia, which have unique infrastructure and social and political dynamics.

Media adaptation refers to the ability of media organizations to respond to external changes, such as technological developments, audience preferences, and market pressures, through strategic adjustments in business models, content production, and organizational structure (Lowrey, 2011; Russell & Vos, 2022). This process is not linear and involves complex interactions between internal factors (e.g., organizational culture, resources) and external factors (e.g., regulations, competition). Lowrey (2011) with Russel and Vos (2022) emphasize that adaptation requires resilience and organizational learning to survive in a disruptive media ecosystem.

Meanwhile, media convergence integrates traditional and digital media platforms in content production, distribution, and consumption (Cao, 2023; Fu, 2023; Rahnavard et al., 2019). Convergence encompasses using new technologies, transforming organizational culture, and interacting with an increasingly fragmented audience (Parahita & Pamungkas, 2023). In this context, convergence becomes one of the main adaptation strategies for traditional media to compete with digital platforms.

Media Convergence (Adaptation Strategy) and Dynamics of Organizational Learning (Media Convergence)

Research by Cao (2023), Jensen (2022), Mutsvairo et al. (2021), Rahnavard et al. (2019), Cools and Diakopoulos (2024) shows that traditional media in developed countries are adopting convergence in response to declining advertising revenue and the shift of audiences to digital platforms. For example, integrating websites, mobile applications, and social media channels allows print newspapers to expand their reach and create new revenue streams through digital subscriptions. This strategy aligns with Lowrey (2011), which emphasizes the importance of diversifying business models as a form of adaptation. However, Cao and the other researchers also remind us that the success of convergence depends on the organization's ability to allocate resources effectively, which often poses a challenge for media with financial constraints.

In Indonesia, a study by Hidayat et al. (2023), Mardiana et al. (2023), and Rahayu et al. (2024) revealed that traditional media such as Kompas and TVRI have adopted convergence by launching interactive digital platforms. However, this implementation faces challenges such as uneven internet infrastructure and low digital literacy in rural areas. These findings

reinforce Lowrey's (2011) argument that adaptation depends on internal decisions and is influenced by external conditions such as infrastructure availability and government policies.

The concept of organizational learning in media adaptation (Lowrey, 2011) is key to understanding how traditional media integrate convergence into their operations. Organizational learning encompasses adopting new technologies, training human resources, and developing a culture of innovation. In Eastern Europe, research by Koc-Michalska et al. (2024), Kunert et al. (2022), Sarelska and Jenkins (2023) shows that media outlets that succeed in convergence form special teams to manage digital platforms and invest in training multidisciplinary journalists.

However, resource limitations often hinder this learning process in developing countries like Indonesia. Many local media struggles to recruit competent staff in digital content production, thus relying on outsourcing or collaboration with third-party platforms. This creates a risky dependency, especially regarding profit sharing and algorithm control. This challenge underscores the importance of a holistic adaptation approach, where convergence is technical and involves strengthening internal capacities (Chalaby & Plunkett, 2021; Cruz, 2024; Nugroho et al., 2013).

Convergence and Shift in the Role of Traditional Media

Media convergence has transformed the role of traditional media from merely being information providers to content curators and community builders. According to Nelson (2021), modern audiences desire content that is personal, interactive, and easily accessible across various platforms. Traditional media respond to this by producing podcasts, short videos, and infographics distributed through social media. For example, The Jakarta Post launched a YouTube channel to reach the younger generation, while RRI developed a streaming radio application. This change aligns with media ecology theory (Widholm et al., 2019), which views convergence as a co-evolution between traditional media, digital platforms, and audiences. However, convergence also raises ethical dilemmas. Research in Southeast Asia (Iannone, 2022; Perreault et al., 2023; Wu, 2022) shows that the pressure to produce viral content often sacrifices journalistic quality, such as accuracy and depth of investigation. In Indonesia, this is exacerbated by the rampant misinformation on social media, which forces traditional media to balance speed and credibility (Monsees, 2023).

Although convergence offers opportunities, its implementation in developing countries faces unique challenges. First, the disparity in digital infrastructure becomes a significant obstacle. APJII (2023) data shows that only 73% of the Indonesian population is connected to the Internet, with a significant gap between urban and rural areas. Traditional media in remote areas often lack access to digital platforms, thus relying on conventional business models.

Second, political dynamics and regulations influence adaptation. In Indonesia, the media often faces pressure from capital owners or the government to avoid critical reporting (Firman & Rahmawati, 2023; Masduki & D'Haenens, 2022; Tapsell, 2017). The convergence to digital platforms, while increasing reach, also opens up risks of censorship and content restrictions by authorities. Tapsell's study (2017) found that some media intentionally limit political investigations on digital platforms to avoid stakeholder conflicts.

Third, the audience's low digital literacy limits the effectiveness of convergence. (Parahita & Pamungkas, 2023) Research revealed that most internet users in Indonesia are more interested in entertainment content than in in-depth news. As a result, traditional

media struggle to monetize quality content through digital subscriptions and rely more on advertisements, potentially reducing editorial independence.

Media Ecology Theory

Media Ecology Theory, popularized by McLuhan in 1964, provides a broader lens for understanding the interactions between media, technology, and society (Deshaye, 2019). This theory views the media ecosystem as a complex network of actors, including content producers, consumers, regulators, and technology platforms. Changes in one ecosystem element, such as the emergence of new digital platforms, can affect the entire system and force other actors to adapt. In Indonesia, Media Ecology Theory helps explain how traditional media interacts with digital platforms, social media, and an increasingly fragmented audience.

One of the key concepts in Media Ecology Theory is co-evolution, which refers to the process where various elements in the media ecosystem influence each other and evolve together. For example, the emergence of digital platforms like YouTube and Instagram changed how audiences consume news and forced traditional media to develop more visual and interactive content (Deshaye, 2019). This co-evolution often creates complex dynamics, where traditional media must balance maintaining traditional journalistic values and adopting new practices that align with audience preferences.

Another relevant concept is niche construction, which refers to the efforts of media organizations to create a unique space within the competitive media ecosystem. In Indonesia, traditional media can build a niche by focusing on local content, in-depth investigations, or solution journalism, which are difficult for digital platforms to replicate (Tandoc et al., 2018). However, constructing this niche often requires significant investment in human resources and technology, which poses a challenge for traditional media with financial limitations.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this literature enriches the understanding of media adaptation by emphasizing the importance of the local context. Lowrey (2011) initially developed in developed countries, needs to be modified to include variables such as infrastructure inequality, political dynamics, and unique information consumption cultures. Additionally, integrating media ecology theory (Deshaye, 2019) helps explain how convergence creates interconnected media ecosystems and makes them vulnerable to external disruptions.

Practically, the findings of this literature provide recommendations for policymakers and media practitioners. First, the government must accelerate the equitable distribution of Internet infrastructure and enhance digital literacy through educational programs. Second, traditional media must build strategic partnerships with technology platforms to reduce dependency while investing in human resource training. Media organizations must prioritize credibility by strengthening investigative journalism and fact-checking programs, even though this requires long-term financial support.

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The case study design was chosen because it allows researchers to explore phenomena in depth within the context of real life (Lim, 2024). Case studies allow researchers to collect rich and detailed data about the adaptation strategies of traditional media, including the challenges and opportunities faced.

In addition, this design allows researchers to compare the adaptation strategies employed by various types of traditional media, such as newspapers, radio, and television.

Research Subject

a. Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The subjects of this research are traditional media organizations in Indonesia that have made efforts to adapt to changes in news consumption patterns. Inclusion criteria for sample selection include: 1) Media organizations that have been operating for at least 10 years, thus having experience in facing technological changes and audience preferences; 2) Media that have adopted at least one adaptation strategy, such as digital platform integration, revenue diversification, or content innovation; 3) Media that have significant influence in the Indonesian media ecosystem, both in terms of audience reach and contribution to public discourse.

Exclusion criteria include: 1) Media that have only operated digitally from the beginning, as the focus of the research is on the adaptation of traditional media; 2) Media that do not have a clear adaptation strategy or do not respond significantly to changes.

b. Sampling Method

This research uses purposive sampling techniques to select the sample. Purposive sampling was chosen because it allows researchers to select relevant and informative cases based on predetermined criteria (Khoja et al., 2023).

Table 1: Research informants

Media Type	Position	Informant Code
Newspaper A	Editor	iN-1
Newspaper B	Editor	iN-2
Newspaper C	Editor	iN-3
Newspaper D	Senior Journalist	iN-4
Radio A	Senior Journalist	iR-1
Radio B	Senior Journalist	iR-2
Radio C	Journalist	iR-3
Radio D	Manager	iR-4
Television A	Manager	iT-1
Television B	Manager	iT-2
Television C	Manager	iT-3
Television D	Manager	iT-4

The sample comprises 12 traditional media organizations, including four newspapers, four radio stations, and four television stations. This selection ensured a balanced representation of various traditional media types.

Measured Parameters and Research Instruments

a. Measured Parameters

The parameters measured in this study include: 1) Adaptation Strategies: Changes in business models, organizational structures, and journalistic practices carried out by traditional media; 2) Supporting and Hindering Factors: Internal factors (such as resources and organizational culture) and external factors (such as regulations and competition) that influence adaptation; 3) Impact of Adaptation: The implications of adaptation strategies on the sustainability of traditional media and the media ecosystem as a whole.

b. Research Instruments

Data was collected through: 1) In-Depth Interviews: Interviews were conducted with 24 key informants, including editors-in-chief, strategy managers, and senior journalists from each media organization. The interviews were designed to explore the informants' perspectives on adaptation strategies, the challenges faced, and the impact of those adaptations. 2) Document Analysis: Internal organizational documents, such as annual reports, editorial policies, and digital strategies, are analysed to complement the data from interviews; 3) Observation: Observations were conducted on content production and distribution practices in several media organizations to understand the direct implementation of adaptation strategies.

Data Analysis Method

Data analysis was conducted thematically by following the steps proposed by Braun and Clarke in 2006 (cited in Byrne, 2022). The steps include: 1) Transcription and Familiarization: Interview data is transcribed verbatim and read repeatedly to understand emerging patterns and themes; 2) Coding: Data is coded inductively to identify concepts and themes relevant to the research question; 3) Theme Identification: Similar codes are grouped into broader themes, such as "digital integration strategies," "financial challenges," and "the role of traditional journalism"; 4) Review and Refinement of Themes: The identified themes are reviewed to ensure their consistency and relevance with the data; 5) Reporting Findings: Findings are presented in the form of a structured narrative, supplemented with direct quotes from informants to strengthen the argument.

Data analysis is supported by NVivo software to facilitate the systematic management and coding of data. Additionally, data triangulation was conducted by comparing interview results, document analysis, and observations to enhance the validity of the findings (Bingham, 2023).

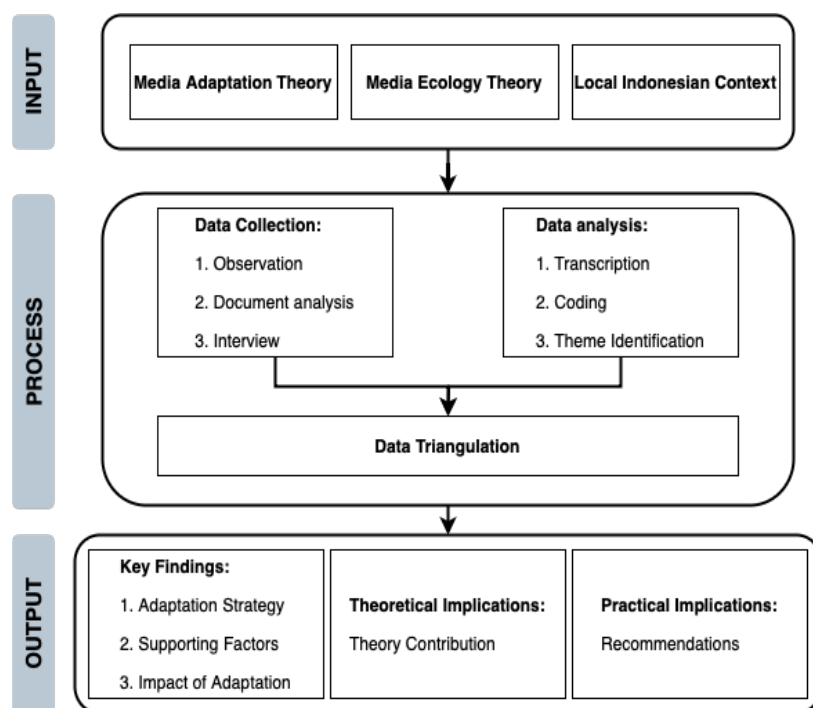


Figure 1: Conceptual framework research

The flow diagram of the conceptual framework of this research consists of three main components: Input, Process, and Output. **Input** includes Media Adaptation Theory, Media Ecology Theory, and the Local Context of Indonesia, which form the basis of the research. The **Process** includes data collection through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and observation, followed by thematic data analysis and triangulation to ensure validity. The **Output** produces key findings on strategies for adapting traditional media, theoretical implications for literature development, and practical implications in the form of recommendations for media practitioners and policymakers. This diagram illustrates the research flow systematically, from the theoretical foundation to the final results that are academically and practically relevant.

Ethics Approval Statement

This study involved human participants. Before participating, all informants were given a full explanation of the purpose of the study, the procedures to be performed, and the use of the data collected. Informed consent was obtained in writing from each informant, stating their willingness to participate in the study. Participants were also free to withdraw from the study without any consequences. The confidentiality of the identity of the participants and the media organizations involved was strictly maintained. All data collected, including interview results and internal documents, are stored securely and used only for research purposes. The participants' identities will not be disclosed in research reports or publications, per the conditions requested by all informants.

This research also adheres to non-maleficence, which ensures that participants are not harmed physically, psychologically or socially during the research process. In addition, this study has received approval from the university's research ethics committee, ensuring that all research procedures comply with applicable ethical standards.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of this study reveal various adaptation strategies employed by traditional media in Indonesia in response to changes in news consumption patterns triggered by digitalization. Data collected through in-depth interviews, document analysis, and observations show that traditional media face complex challenges but also find opportunities to remain relevant in the digital era. The main findings of this research can be grouped into three categories: (1) adaptation strategies in business models and revenue, (2) innovation in content production and distribution, and (3) efforts to rebuild public trust.

Adaptation Strategies in Business and Revenue Models

One of the main findings of this research is that traditional media in Indonesia have adopted various strategies to address the decline in revenue from conventional advertising. Most media organizations interviewed acknowledged that they have switched to a subscription-based business model and diversified their revenue streams. For example, one of the editors of a national newspaper (informant code: iN-1) stated that they have started using premium content. Informant iN-1 explained:

... We started offering premium content that paying subscribers can only access. This helps us reduce our dependence on advertisements. This company can no longer rely solely on print editions. We are striving to

develop a digital platform. With this platform, we can reach a younger and more tech-savvy audience. (Informant iN-1)

Revenue diversification has also become an important strategy for traditional media in facing the decline in print and television advertising revenue. As many as 7 out of 12 media organizations have developed new sources of income, such as digital subscription services, paid content, and partnerships with technology platforms. A senior journalist from the radio station (informant code: iR-1) stated:

... The provision of exclusive content for subscription customers has begun in an effort to reduce dependence on traditional advertising. We are taking this step to ensure media sustainability in the face of changing news consumption patterns. (Informant iR-1)

Revenue diversification is an effective strategy to enhance the sustainability of traditional media. However, this research also found that revenue diversification often requires a significant initial investment, which poses a challenge for media with financial constraints (Olsen et al., 2020). Global media increasingly rely on reader revenue in response to declining advertising income. Integrating digital platforms has become a common strategy for traditional media in various countries. However, unlike in developed countries, where digital integration is often supported by adequate infrastructure, traditional media in Indonesia face challenges such as limited internet access in remote areas and high technology development costs (Beckert, 2023; Flew & Stepnik, 2024; Ranaivoson & Domazetovikj, 2023).

In addition, some traditional media are also developing strategic partnerships with digital platforms and technology companies. A strategy manager from a television station (informant code: iT-1) explained:

... Through collaboration with streaming platforms, content can be distributed more widely, thus not only increasing audience reach but also creating opportunities for us to earn new revenue that was previously unavailable. This describes the distribution process and its outcomes in more detail. (Informant iT-1)

This approach reflects the concept of co-evolution in Media Ecology Theory, where traditional media and digital platforms influence each other and develop together (Lowrey, 2011). However, challenges remain, especially regarding profit sharing and dependence on third-party platforms.

Innovation in Content Production and Distribution

One of the key findings in this research is the innovation carried out by traditional media in Indonesia in the production and distribution of content in response to changes in news consumption patterns in the digital era. Traditional media have adopted various strategies to create more engaging, interactive content aligned with modern audiences' preferences. This innovation not only includes changes in content format but also in the way the content is distributed and accessed by the public.

First, traditional media have shifted from conventional news formats, such as text articles and live broadcasts, to more dynamic and multimedia formats. For example, some national newspapers now produce news in the form of short videos, interactive infographics, and podcasts. An editor-in-chief from one of the leading newspapers (informant code: iN-2) explained:

... The younger generation, as a major part of the audience, shows greater interest in visual and audio content. Therefore, we decided to increase the production of news videos and podcasts in response to their preferences."
(Informant iN-2)

These findings align with the research by Lowrey (2011), which shows that global audiences are increasingly consuming news through multimedia formats, especially videos and podcasts.

Secondly, traditional media also utilize digital platforms and social media to distribute their content. Most media organizations acknowledged integrating platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube into their distribution strategies. A strategy manager from a national television station (informant code: iT-2) stated:

... There is a policy in our company. In addition to relying on conventional television broadcasts, content is also uploaded to YouTube and Instagram platforms to expand audience reach, especially the younger generation who are more active on social media ... (Informant iT-2)

This approach reflects the concept of co-evolution in Media Ecology Theory, where traditional media and digital platforms influence and develop together (Deshaye, 2019). However, challenges remain, especially regarding profit sharing and dependence on third-party platform algorithms.

Third, innovation in content production also involves using advanced technologies, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), to understand audience preferences and enhance engagement. Some traditional media have started using analytical tools to track audience behaviour and adjust content according to interests and consumption habits. A senior journalist from a radio station explained that using data to understand what the audience wants helps the media produce more relevant and engaging content. These findings align with the research by Tandoc (2019), which shows that data analytics can enhance the effectiveness of media content strategies.

However, this innovation also poses challenges, especially regarding resources and capabilities. Most traditional media outlets interviewed acknowledged that they lack staff skilled in digital content production. A chief editor from a local newspaper (informant code: iN-3) revealed:

... We have difficulty finding journalists who understand and can operate digital technology. Moreover, investment in human resources requires a tremendous value because it relates to training activities and recruitment implementation. (Informant iN-3)

This challenge underscores the importance of organizational learning in Media Adaptation Theory, where media organizations must continuously learn and adapt to remain competitive (Lowrey, 2011). Innovation in content production and distribution in traditional media in Indonesia has taken significant steps to remain relevant in the digital era. However, this strategy's success heavily depends on traditional media's ability to overcome challenges such as resource limitations, reliance on third-party platforms, and economic pressures. These findings enrich the literature on media adaptation by highlighting the importance of innovation and organizational learning in facing technological changes.

Efforts to Build Public Trust

One of the biggest challenges faced by traditional media in Indonesia in the digital era is the declining public trust in mainstream media. This phenomenon is happening in Indonesia and many other countries, where traditional media often face competition from digital platforms that disseminate information quickly, although not always accurately. In this context, traditional media in Indonesia have made various efforts to rebuild public trust, especially by improving the quality of journalism, combating disinformation, and strengthening their role as watchdogs of democracy.

a. Improving the Quality of Journalism

One of the main strategies employed by traditional media is to improve the quality of journalism by focusing on investigative journalism and fact-checking. Most interviewed media organizations stated they have launched special programs for fact-checking and combating the spread of fake information (hoaxes). A chief editor from a national television station (informant code: iT3) explained that they have a special team tasked with verifying information before it is published. This helps the television station maintain its credibility in the eyes of the public, as found in the research conducted by Taibi and Na (2020), which emphasizes the importance of the role of traditional media in combating disinformation and ensuring information accuracy.

In addition, several traditional media outlets have also increased their investment in journalist training to ensure that they have the necessary skills to produce quality content. An investigative journalist from a national newspaper stated that they regularly hold training on journalistic ethics and investigative techniques. That has been very helpful for them in producing in-depth and trustworthy news. Their journalists initially had a limited understanding of investigative journalism standards and ethics. This approach reflects the concept of organizational learning in Media Adaptation Theory, where media organizations must continuously learn and adapt to remain competitive (Lowrey, 2011).

b. Fighting Disinformation and Hoaxes

Efforts to combat misinformation and hoaxes have become a primary focus for many traditional media outlets in Indonesia. Most media organizations acknowledged that they have launched special initiatives to fact-check and combat hoaxes. For example, several national newspapers have formed fact-checking teams that collaborate with independent organizations to verify information circulating on social media. An informant iN-2 and informant iR-4 explained that their media company collaborates with fact-checking organizations to ensure the information they publish is accurate and trustworthy. Tandoc

(2019) state that collaboration between traditional media and fact-checking organizations can improve information accuracy and reduce the spread of hoaxes.

In addition, several traditional media outlets have also developed unique platforms to report and verify hoaxes. For example, one of the national television stations has launched a dedicated website allowing the audience to report suspicious information. A strategy manager from the television station (informant code: iT-4) explained his desire to provide the public with tools to verify information themselves. This helps build trust and transparency. This approach reflects the concept of transparency in journalism, where traditional media strives to be more open and accountable in the news production process (Karlsson, 2010).

c. Strengthening the Role as Guardians of Democracy

Traditional media in Indonesia are also striving to strengthen their role as watchdogs of democracy by increasing their focus on investigative journalism and critical reporting. Most of the media organizations interviewed stated that they have increased their investment in investigative reporting to uncover cases of corruption, human rights violations, and other social issues. An investigative journalist from a national newspaper (informant code: iN-4) stated:

... By promoting investigative journalism, our media can maintain its role as a guardian of democracy, ensuring that power does not overstep boundaries and remains under control. and we still believe that Investigative journalism is the best way to maintain the idealism of our media ... (Informant iN-4)

Tapsell's (2017) research shows that traditional media are important in promoting social awareness and democratic participation, especially amid the rampant spread of false information. However, these efforts often face challenges such as political and economic pressure. Some traditional media outlets acknowledged that they face pressure from certain parties not to report critical news. A senior journalist from the radio station "A" (informant code: iR-2) and the manager from the radio station "B" (informant code: iR-3) stated that sometimes they must balance public interest and pressure from media owners or advertisers. This challenge underscores the complexity of the role of traditional media in the Indonesian context, where political and economic dynamics often influence media independence.

The efforts of traditional media to rebuild public trust have significant implications for the media ecosystem and democracy in Indonesia. First, these efforts can help restore public trust in mainstream media, which is crucial in a context where misinformation and hoaxes are increasingly rampant. Secondly, this effort can strengthen the role of traditional media as guardians of democracy, which is crucial to ensure that power is held accountable and public rights are protected.

However, challenges remain, especially regarding political and economic pressure and resource limitations. To address these challenges, traditional media need to continue investing in journalist training, developing strategic partnerships with fact-checking organizations, and strengthening their independence. Additionally, further research can explore how traditional media can leverage new technologies, such as blockchain, to enhance transparency and accountability in the news production process.

Implications and Limitations

The findings of this research significantly contribute to the understanding of the adaptation of traditional media in the context of developing countries. First, this research confirms that traditional media in Indonesia have adopted adaptation strategies similar to those of media in developed countries, such as digital platform integration and revenue diversification (Sehl et al., 2020). However, this research also reveals unique challenges faced by traditional media in Indonesia, such as limited digital infrastructure, varying levels of digital literacy, and complex political dynamics. These findings enrich the literature on media adaptation by highlighting the importance of local context in shaping adaptation strategies.

Second, this research provides empirical evidence about the importance of resilience and organizational learning in Media Adaptation Theory. Traditional media that successfully adapt can develop resilience to change and continuously learn from experience. These findings align with the research by Evenseth et al. (2022), which shows that resilience and organizational learning are key to the sustainability of traditional media in the digital era.

Third, this research highlights the role of traditional media as guardians of democracy in the Indonesian context. These findings reinforce Tapsell's (2017) argument that traditional media is important in promoting social awareness and democratic participation, especially amid the rampant spread of false information. However, this research also underscores the challenges faced by traditional media in maintaining their independence, which has become a critical issue in the Indonesian context.

Although this research provides valuable insights, several limitations need to be acknowledged. First, this study only involved 12 traditional media organizations, which may not represent Indonesia's entire media diversity. Second, this research is qualitative, so the findings cannot be widely generalized. Further research is recommended to explore strategies for media adaptation in rural areas with limited infrastructure, addressing this limitation.

Furthermore, this research only focuses on traditional media without considering the role of independent digital media. Further research could explore the interaction between traditional and independent digital media and their impact on the overall media ecosystem. Finally, this research only covers a specific period, so it cannot capture the dynamics of changes that occur in the long term. Longitudinal research can provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of traditional media adaptation strategies.

CONCLUSION

This research reveals that traditional media in Indonesia have implemented various adaptation strategies to respond to changes in news consumption patterns triggered by digitalization. The main findings indicate that traditional media have adopted subscription-based business models, developed multimedia content, and utilized digital platforms to enhance audience reach and engagement. Additionally, efforts to rebuild public trust through investigative journalism and fact-checking programs have become a crucial focus in the face of rampant misinformation. However, limited resources (Cao, 2023; Cools & Diakopoulos, 2024; Jensen, 2022; Margono et al., 2024; Mutsvairo et al., 2021; Rahnavard et al., 2019), political pressure, and dependence on third-party platforms remain significant obstacles. The implications of this research include theoretical and practical contributions. Theoretically, this research enriches the literature on media adaptation by highlighting the importance of the local context, such as digital infrastructure and political dynamics, in shaping adaptation strategies. These findings provide recommendations for traditional media to enhance

organizational resilience, develop strategic partnerships, and maintain journalistic independence. This research also reaffirms the role of traditional media as guardians of democracy in combating disinformation and promoting public participation. For further research, it is recommended to explore the interaction between traditional media and independent digital media and their impact on the overall media ecosystem. Furthermore, longitudinal research can provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of traditional media adaptation strategies in the long term.

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