

# Implementation of Development Journalism in the Reformation Era (The Case Study of Behavioral Change Journalism Fellowship Program from the Press Council during the Covid-19 Pandemic)

*by* Susilastuti Susilastuti

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**Submission date:** 20-Jun-2023 02:16PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 2119563748

**File name:** p\_Program\_from\_the\_Press\_Council\_during\_the\_Covid-19\_Pandemi.pdf (202.9K)

**Word count:** 6503

**Character count:** 36187

## Implementation of Development Journalism in the Reformation Era (The Case Study of Behavioral Change Journalism Fellowship Program from the Press Council during the Covid-19 Pandemic)

Susilastuti Dwi Nugraha Jati

UPN "Veteran" Yogyakarta

Jl. SWK Jl. Ring Road Utara No.104, Ngropoh, Condongcatur, Kec. Depok, Kabupaten

Sleman, Daerah Istimewa Yogyakarta 55283

Correspondence Email: [susilastuti@gmail.com](mailto:susilastuti@gmail.com)

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7276-2328>

### ARTICLE INFORMATION

#### Publication Information

#### Research Article

#### HOW TO CITE

Jati, S.D.N. (2021). Implementation of Development Journalism in the Reformation Era (The Case Study of Behavioral Change Journalism Fellowship Program from the Press Council during the Covid-19 Pandemic). *Journal of International Conference Proceedings*, 4(3), 494-505.

#### DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32535/jicp.v4i3.1353>

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Received: 11 November 2021

Accepted: 11 December

Published: 27 December 2021

### ABSTRACT

The reform era marked by the fall of the New Order government bring changes in all aspects, including the development journalism in Indonesia. The development journalism has ever become a prima donna and it has submerged along with the emergence of journalism that positions journalists as the guardians of the public interest, such as anticorruption journalism, pro-gender journalism, *budgeting*, election journalism, children's journalism and data journalism. On the other hand, the development journalism has begun to be rarely discussed. One of the reasons for this journalism seems to place journalists as pawns for the interests of the government. In the middle of Covid-19 pandemic era, however, the development journalism in a different version from the New Order era is used again. The government through the behavioral change journalism fellowship program places journalists as an agency to encourage people's behavior change when encountering the Covid-19 pandemic. The program is carried out by the Indonesian Press Council in collaboration with the Covid-19 Task Force and it involves 3030 journalists who have received recommendations from the constituent members of the Indonesian Press Council from various media platforms that have been carried out since 2020. The involvement of the journalists in this behavioral change program is the implementation of the development journalism that positions journalists as an agency. This study shows that the liveliness of journalists as an agency in

responding to the structures is carried out to find the momentum of change to various issues in the society. This liveliness is intended that there is no monopoly of information from the power structure and it provides various opportunities for the public to obtain favourable information and avoid monopoly of information from the structure. The activities of this agency can no longer place the journalists with their activities into resonance, an irritation for the government in carrying out its programs. People's behavioral change is required in the middle of Covid-19 pandemic era. Efforts to encourage behavioral change cannot be merely conducted by the government. Journalists

are one of the agents of change and they are cooperating with the government. This is in line with the implementation of the development journalism which places journalists as the government partners to encourage the government programs. The agency's involvement in its relationship with the power structure related to the COVID-19 pandemic does not bring down the ruling government but they will help explain to the public the problems the government is facing regarding the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Agency, Behavioral Change, Development Journalism, Journalists

**JEL Classification:** M00, M10, M19

## INTRODUCTION

The Covid-19 pandemic has shaken the world and it has affected Indonesia as well. It forces people to adapt in their behavior so as to survive from the pandemic. There are no theoretical or practical signals regarding the Covid-19 pandemic until right now and so the government must change one policy to another from time to time. However, the implementation of the government's policies remains unsatisfactory. For one of the reasons, the socialization of the policies is frequently incomplete. The government needs partners to disseminate its policies related to the Covid-19. Besides the health professions and other groups, journalists are a professional group involved by the government.

The Indonesian Press Council (*Dewan Press*) and the Covid-19 Task Force hold the Behavioral Change Journalism Fellowship program. A goal of holding this fellowship program is that journalists is expected to help the government campaigns, watch the implementation in the field, show the examples of success, evaluate weaknesses, publish pioneering/exemplary stories and present success stories in relation to the Covid-19 policies. For the end of this change, people can adapt to new habits (new normal).

In the constellation of relations with the government related to this behavior change program, journalists take position as challengers regarding the Covid-19 pandemic policy issues and their implementation. As taking the position as a challenger, journalists cultivate facts and events related to the behavioral change program. In the context of the development journalism, the position of challenger does not mean a negative connotation because journalists will exercise control over the government particularly when policies it takes them. Furthermore, the journalists will exercise control over the social environment where the policy is implemented. They will also inform what the public wants regarding the pandemic. Finally, there is an exit mechanism or a way out related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

In carrying out his journalistic duties nine elements of journalism conveyed by Bill Kovach and Tom Rossentiels (2001) are the principles of a journalism. These nine elements include (1) the core obligation of journalism is the pursuit of truth, (2) the core

loyalty of journalism is to citizens, (3) the essence of journalism is the discipline of verification, (4) journalists must guard their independence against the object of news reports themselves, (5) journalists must make themselves as the independent monitor of power, (6) journalists must provide a forum for public to criticize each other and find compromises, (7) journalists must make the important things more interesting and relevant, (8) journalists must create comprehensive and proportional news stories, (9) journalists must be allowed to listen to their personal conscience

This study will discuss the position of journalists as the agency that actively seek information related to the COVID-19 pandemic. In this case, they become the agency that encourages behavioral change and so, people can adapt to new habits (New Normal). The liveliness of these journalists relates to the implementation of new journalism after the fall of the New Order government. However, the government's repression against journalists and the media institutions where they make news and reporting occurs if they are not in line with the interests of the government. They are accused as the irresponsible press. Therefore, it is considered that the instrument of power in the hands of the government allows the suppression of the press.

In terms of the development journalism concept, it is not a journalism that only follows the orders and interests of the government. However, it is a partner of the government to support and oversee the development process. The implementation of the development journalism applied during the New Order era but contradicting with the concept is a developing journalism, i.e., reporting the results of the national development and not talking about the development process.

When the New Order fell in 1998, as a tool of the government power to carry out the press repression, the press regulations were changed. The climax was the passing of Law Number 40 of 1999 concerning press. There is no derivative regulation under this press regulation. With this regulation, the government provides journalists protection to carry out their roles and functions. There are no more bans and so, journalists carry out their roles and functions freely. Moreover, the reform era has developed new journalism such as anti-corruption journalism, pro-women journalism, and disaster journalism. Journalists seem to have abandoned development journalism. They position themselves as vis a vis the government in power, and so this gives rise to the term of the journalism that goes too far and excessive. As Indonesia cannot avoid the Covid-19 pandemic and this pandemic affects all sectors of people's lives. Misinformation on social media spreads. It also spreads hoaxes. Finally, inviting people to adapt to a new life (new normal) is definitely difficult. At this time journalists become a profession that is expected to be an agent of encouraging the behavioral change.

Based on the above-mentioned background, this study presents how the implementation of development journalism in the reform era (The Case Study of Behavioral Change Journalism Fellowship Program by the Press Council and the Covid-19 Task Force). This study contributes to the concept of the development journalism in the reform era.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Journalists are basically a profession that carries out the duties of journalism from seeking and processing information that occurs in society to providing it in the media where they work. Their profession demands that the journalists always actively deal with the ruling government particularly the policies it has taken. This activity refers to the opinion of Antony Giddens that journalists can be called an agency. The agency does not refer to the intent that people have when doing something (because the

agency contains power). The agency is concerned with events involving the individuals as a perpetrator. It means that individuals can act differently in any phase. The agency has the ability to influence a series of events or circumstances around them (Anthony Gidens, 2010).

The involvement of journalists in responding to facts and events in society that involve power structures is not always in a linear phase. There are times when they actually contradict each other, and it causes tension between the agency and the power structure. This tug-of-war is actually not within the framework of the agency wanting to fight or overthrow the power structure, but within the framework of finding the momentum for change. On the other hand, the agency's activities also aim to exercise the public's rights to obtain information. The public does not only get single information, i.e., from the power structure, but also it obtains multi-track information. So far, researches on journalists have always been included as part of the press as an institution, and it does not place journalists as an agency. Moreover, if there is research on journalists it always associates with the institutions where they work.

There have not been many studies on journalists, particularly Indonesian journalists as an agency that actively responds to the power structure. The journalists are always seen as part of the institution and so, many studies are found on the press and its interaction with the authorities (regime) and the impact on these interactions. There are not many studies that learn about how the journalists go through their journalistic work. However, there are more studies on the institutions where journalists work. They cannot escape from the institution where they work. However, journalists are the spearhead in a media institution and they are always dealing with the institution where they work.

If you look at the history of the journey of Indonesian journalists, since before Indonesia's independence, it has become an agency that actively encourage people to continue fighting for independence until now. They always become challengers when they see injustice that harms society. The journalistic works seriously criticize the authorities who make the abuse of power and these frequently make journalists repressed and imprisoned by the authorities and the media where they work are revoked as well.

The journalist was detained or exiled by the ruling government, such as Tirtohadiseoerjo (1880-1918) through Medan Priyayi against the Dutch government regarding the compensation for economic exploitation of the Dutch colonial government to native people since the Culturstelsel era. As a result of this writing, he was exiled and exiled in Tidore, Maluku (Anwar Arifin 2015). The writings that the press published encouraged the government to repress the existence of the press.

A case study related to the banning of Indonesia Raya *Newspaper* was conducted by Abdurrahman Surjohamihardjo (editor) (2002). However, the writing did not discuss specifically on how the journalists carried out their jobs in the era of New Order Government. The same things were also conducted by Edward C. Smith (1983) when he studied the pressures faced by the Indonesian press in the period of 1945-1965. He showed how the pressure faced by the press after Indonesian's independence. Edward C. Smith indicated that the press responded to events that occurred in the early days of the Independence and criticized the policies made by the government at that time. The writings that the press published encouraged the government to repress the existence of the press. Edward C. Smith made the study of the Indonesian press in the four different periods, i.e. the colonial period (1615-1942), the Japanese occupation

period during the Second World War (1942-1945), the revolution era against the Netherlands (1945-1949), and the Soekarno government era (1949-1966).

Mochtar Loebis, the leader of *Harian Indonesia Raya*, and Rosihan Anwar, a journalist for the *Pedoman* newspaper are two examples of journalists due to their criticality against the government after Indonesia's independence. They were repressed and detained, and the media where they worked was banned by the government. (David T Hill, 2010). The repressive action were frequently carried out under the New Order Government. The actions, in his opinion, carried out by the New Order Government was due to what the news report stories of the Indonesia press was against the government's will. The government's policies were followed with a series of the warning letters to several media considered too harsh in the content of their news report stories. He cited some examples of some press bans conducted by the government such as *Jurnal Ekuin* banned to publish in 1983, the SIUP license of *Expo Magazine Topik*, and *Fokus* revoked in 1984 and *Sinar Harapan* Newspaper banned in 1986 and finally *Prioritas* Daily Newspaper banned in June 1987 (Yasou, Hanzaki, 1998)

Rizal Malaranggeng (2010) examined the structure of the press existence in the Indonesian political structure. Here he described the orientation of the news coverage published in *Kompas* and *Suara Karya* Daily Newspaper. He mentioned it as a "rubber bracelet" strategy. As the government pressure strengthens, the press will settle down. As the government pressure settles down the press will be critical. Here he described the orientation of the news stories published in *Kompas* and *Suara Karya* Daily Newspaper. Hanif Suranto (1999) Hanif Suranto et al (1999) wrote about the post-New Order Indonesian press. In this era, the press experiences euphoria and dares to criticize the government. However, the press also encounters pressure, it is no longer from the government but from public who feel aggrieved by the press' news reports. Atmakusumah (1999) Mochtar Lubis to be placed house arrest or being imprisoned for the sake of his press principles has made the next generation of journalists below him the incarnation of jihad for press freedom (Atmakusumah, 1992). He mentioned Mochtar Lubis made a meaningful contribution to the civilized development and the formation of political system in Indonesia.

The studies about the press during the New Order government definitely examined press institutions that faced its repression carried out through laws and regulations on the press. These always made the press under pressure. The single organization of journalists is also the reason why the journalists must be able to dodge when dealing with the ruling government.

After the New Order or it is better known as the reformation period, studies about the press focus on how the press understands the freedom. In addition, there are also many studies regarding the violence experienced by the press in carrying out the journalistic duties. The position of the author in this study will be to see how the position of journalists in implementing the development journalism, particularly as the agent of behavioral change and so, people adapt more quickly to a new life (new normal).

#### **Development Journalism**

Journalism is defined as an activity to process information obtained by journalists into news to be conveyed to the public through the media institutions where they work. The understanding of the development journalism is the activity of processing information into news by journalists based on the aim of supporting the development carried out by the ruling government. Conceptually, the development journalism does not place the journalists in conveying information about the development process carried out by the ruling government. The Development Journalism is the journalistic style of developing

countries or the third world that prioritizes the role of the press in the context of the national development. ((Sumaina Duku, 2014) (Pandan Yudhapramesti, 2015)).

In Indonesia, the understanding of the development journalism has association as a manifestation of implementing the Pancasila press. The Pancasila press provides the freedom but it remains accompanied with the responsibility. As carrying out their journalism activities the journalists support government programs. This implementation causes the responsible press freedom practices to have many weaknesses. Particularly it relates to the benchmark on how to practice as a responsible press.

Tribuana Said (1988) stated that the development journalism in practice during the New Order caused the press carefully positioned its relations with the ruling government. Despite the government really expected that the journalists also critically reported the development programs carried out by the government, in reality the New Order government through its power tools, i.e., the regulations governing the press, the journalists chose the safe path. They reported the development results if compared to the development process itself.

This method was chosen because it could not be separated from the 1974 Malari case. In this case, the journalists criticized the government's foreign policy, particularly with Japan and social movements against the visit of the Prime Minister of Japan which had an impact on the media institutions where they worked, i.e., the banning. At this point it could be said that the Indonesian press was on its feet. The development journalism initially supported the development programs from the process to the evaluation of the national development and finally it only focused on the development results.

The development journalism is conceptually understood as the journalism practices to report critically and deeply about the development process through in-depth writing (Hikmat and Purnama, 2005) and it has shifted to the journalism practices that only convey the viewpoint of the government. The fear of banning by the ruling government through the instruments of power has caused the development journalism to become the developing journalism.

The practice of the development journalism in Indonesia places the journalists as an extension of the ruling government. Jacob Oetama (2001) frequently mentions the press work as an insincere work. In fact, conceptually, the development journalism definitely asks what role the journalists can play to participate in dynamizing life in society. Here it actually wants to put the position of journalists in the dynamics of development.

The practice of the development journalism is basically in line with the viewpoints of Thomas Hanitzsch and Thomas Vos (2008). In this matter, the viewpoint states that it is one of the functions carried out by journalists as a collaborative-facilitative dimension where they act as the government partners and support the government efforts in realizing the development and social welfare.

In this dimension, the journalists carry out their roles as facilitators. In this matter, the journalists carry out the journalism activities as part of their social responsibility to assist the government efforts to advance the country's social and economic development. As collaborator the journalists places themselves as a public communicator. In this matter, they play a role in helping the government to disseminate its policies. In this dimension, the journalists also play a role as a mouthpiece to provide official information to the public. They strengthen the government's legitimacy in making political decisions to the public and guide public opinion.

The studies of the development journalism have been carried out so far and these have highlighted the positions taken by journalists and the media institutions where they work in supporting the development programs carried out by the ruling government. Support in this context relates to the results of development and it is not about the development as a process. These practices are reinforced in a kind of the government intervention to make the laws and regulations related to the press, such as a single organization of journalists, a single forum for press companies. Moreover, the Indonesia Press Council that should be able to protect the interests of the press, has become a tool for the authorities to place journalists and media institutions in the position of undermining their roles and functions.

The development journalism in the course of the nation particularly during the New Order government, can be frequently interpreted in a negative perspective, particularly related to the implementation of the responsible press freedom. The interpretation of the responsible press freedom is under the monopolization of the government. It means that if there are journalists' writings that are not in line with the government, they are considered irresponsible. Therefore, the government has the authority to carry out bans.

The New Order government through the laws and regulations regarding the press at that time such as Law Number 21 of 1982 concerning the Press, as well as the laws and regulations under it such as the Government Regulation Number 1 of 1984 concerning SIUUP became the government's weapon to shut down the press. It is not a strange thing. In the New Order era, bans became a frightening specter. If the journalists are not in line with the government's orders and interests, they are threatened and the media where they work will be banned. The bans have hit several major media outlets such as Harian Indonesia Raya Daily Newspaper, Harian Pedoman Daily Newspaper, SKH Kompas Daily Newspaper, Sinar Harapan Daily Newspaper and others. The bans carried out by the government towards the end of his reign were the banning of DeTik, Editor and Tempo.

In the reform era the development journalism is not frequently implemented. In this reform era, many journalists criticize the government policies but they ignore solutions or they criticize things that are developing in society from different sides. As a result, it appears the term of press that goes too far and finally it ends with dispute cases, complaints against the press due to the journalists' writings, the doxing cases against journalists, violence against journalists by the institutions outside the country is increasing. Data on complaints from the public, the government and private institutions to the Indonesian Press Council in the period of 2016-2019 amounted to 998 complaints (Dewan Pers, 2018)

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced political policies to have an impact on people's behavioral change, and it is definitely different from before the pandemic. This is where the journalists play their role again. They become the government partners to encouraging the behavioral change.

#### **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study describes the implementation of the behavioral change program as the program of the Press Council in collaboration with the Covid-19 Task Force. The data was obtained by reviewing the background of the behavioral change program, the implementation of the program and how the journalists' involvement through their journalistic work was able to become a reference for the community regarding the Covid-19 disease.



The data was obtained by looking at the journalistic work of the journalists who passed the selection of this program contained on [www.ubahlaku.id](http://www.ubahlaku.id). This website contains links to the journalists' works that have been uploaded to the media where they work. Based on the data reviewed through the web page, validation was carried out by conducting interviews with the journalists who were participants in the behavioral change program. The interview was to analyze the background that drives them to be involved in the program. It will also analyze the impact of this program on the community by looking at the studies conducted by the Indonesian Press Council. These findings are implemented to analyze the development journalism in the reform era, as well as to conduct a critical study of the behavior change program that place journalists as one of the agents of change.

## **RESULTS**

Journalists are an agency that carries out the duties of journalism from searching for and processing information from facts or events that occur in society to publishing it in the mass media where they work. As carrying out their journalistic duties, they will establish relationships with power structures, particularly those related to facts and events which become the public interest. The relationships that they build sometimes do not work harmoniously and sometimes create contentious tensions between the agency and power structures.

In establishing a relationship with the power structures and how the relationship is built to find momentum towards change, the duration is quite long. However, in this long process, the agency and the power structures will be frequently involved in complex relationships because they involve many different interests and orientations in responding to the existing changes.

The agency's active involvement does not necessarily come to conflict with the power structure. However, there are times when the agency will establish a linear relationship such as (Tarman Azzam et al, 2013) telling the experiences of Palace reporters when they covered President Suharto's activities. The journalists tried to reveal the other side of Suharto's struggle when he led the Indonesian nation. Mahpudi, et al, (2011) wrote the book with the title of *Pak Harto Untold Stories*, Gramedia Pustaka Utama, Jakarta. They wrote many things about Suharto based on the interviews with those who were the closest people to President Soeharto. Usmar Yatim (2016) wrote about President Jokowi's actions during his leadership. In fact, the ruling government does not respond to all writing of the agency. Otherwise, the agency does not respond to all government behavior. In essence, the agency's writing can move the masses (social movement). This social movement cannot always be made in a negative frame but it can also have a positive frame, particularly if this brings changes in life.

The behavioral change journalism program itself is a fellowship initiated by the Covid-19 Task Force in collaboration with the Indonesian Press Council through a special coverage. This program has three objectives (1) to make journalists at the forefront of people's behavioral change to prevent the Covid-19 transmission (2) to create news coverage that adheres to the journalistic code of ethics regarding the pandemic development. (3) to provide short-term solutions for the national press that have directly affect to the welfare of journalists ([www.ubahlaku.id](http://www.ubahlaku.id)).

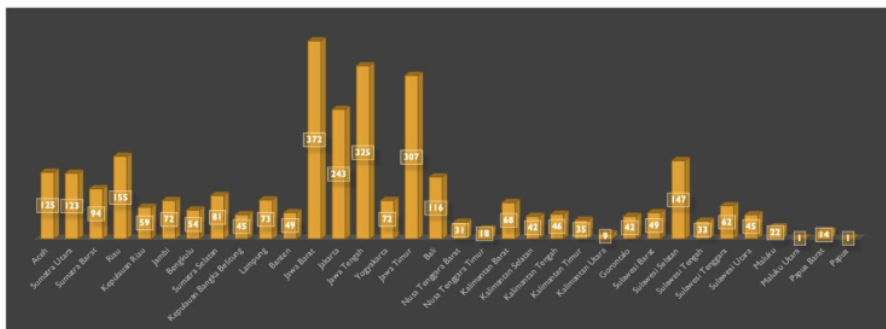
This Behavioral Change Journalism Fellowship program invites journalists to promote press news coverage with a behavioral change perspective and this can prevent the Covid-19 transmission. The trick is to enrich news content that emphasizes the importance of community discipline when implementing health protocols. The

journalists in this program are placed as the agents of behavioral change by increasing the role of the press as an institution with an educational function to deal with the pandemic disaster (buku panduan jurnalisme perubahan perilaku,2020)

In this behavioral change program, the Indonesian Press Council and the Covid-19 Task Force make a guideline as a reference for the journalists as the agents of people's behavior change. The guideline covers the locus of journalists' news coverage particularly supervising the implementation of health protocols in (1) public spaces (roads, city parks, terminals, stations, the places of worship and others). (2) public facilities (markets, street vendor centers, public transportation, hospitals, police department). (3) the government and private institutions (local government offices, police departments, hospitals, tax offices and others), (4) official public events (ceremonies, inauguration, seminars, discussions, religious events and others). This program also encourages the development of news stories. These do not only relate on the spot news but also the kind of in-depth news such as features and in-depth reporting. The development of the feature and in-depth news provides space for journalists to carry out news coverage more holistically and empathically.

The journalists are also given space to develop other issues related to (1) stigmatization/discrimination against the Covid-19 sufferers, medical personnel. (2) the burden of women and housewives during the pandemic. (3) volunteer movements to help the Covid-19 sufferers, (4) the economic impact of the pandemic on the society. The journalists in this program are also the agents of Hoax Fact Checker. This role is taken to eliminate information related to Covid-19 on social media. The research results conducted by Multimedia Nusantara University in collaboration with the Indonesian Press Council (2021) show that social media becomes the public's first reference regarding the Covid-19 disease. However, the public trusts the information of the Covid-19 pandemic more reported through mass media whether it is on cyber, print and electronic media platforms. In this context, the journalists as the agent of behavioral change can position themselves as the agent who will clear up the misleading information circulating on social media.

Total journalists who are participating in the behavioral change program in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic amount to 3030 journalists from various media platforms published in 34 provinces throughout Indonesia. If the journalists want to register in the program they must obtain recommendations from the organizations as the constituents of the Indonesian Press Council, such as PWI, AJI, IJTSI, Photo Pewarta Forum and others.



The distribution of the journalists involved in the behavioral change in 2021 (ww.ubahlaku.id, 2021)

Based on a study at [www.ubahlaku.id](http://www.ubahlaku.id), all news coverages of the journalists have been published in the media where they work. Moreover, the published news is linked to the behavioral change website ([www.ubahlaku.id](http://www.ubahlaku.id)). News written by the participants of the behavioral change journalism fellowship program is published in the channels of [www.ubahlaku.id](http://www.ubahlaku.id). These include (1) Java news (2) Sumatran news (3) Kalimantan news, (4) Nusa voice, (6) Sulawesi voice (7) various news, (8) videos, (9) photos.

In the behavioral change journalism fellowship program, the government invites the journalists to make participation. This program shows that the government has realized the importance of this profession. Journalists are not only in the position of a profession that frequently creates resonance and irritation but also the writings of criticizing the government policies on the Covid-19 as the input for the government on how to implement them in the field related to the government policies.

Based on a study from [www.ubahlaku.id](http://www.ubahlaku.id), when the journalists will oversee the government policies on the Covid-19 issues it can be observed from several phases, and each phase will describe the position of the journalists as the agency. In the first phase, news coverage points out information that Indonesia cannot avoid the COVID-19 spread which originated from the Wuhan Province in China. Many journalists have highlighted the need for the government to take steps of dealing with the pandemic, criticizing the lack of transparency in the policies taken by the government when responding this pandemic. It has led to social movement, disobedience, and negative prejudice related to restrictions in public places such as the places of worship. They also criticized the high costs of masks, hand sanitizers and others. One of them was from the Natuna social movement related to the evacuation of Indonesian citizens from Wuhan China to Natuna Island. Lack of information from the government led to the resistance from the society.

In this phase, the journalists also frequently reported social movements as a response to the scarcity of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for health workers. The government's sluggishness in preparing the supporting facilities and infrastructure to anticipate the surge in the Covid-19 patients was also reported.

In the second phase, the journalists began to encourage the public to maintain health protocols and the term of herd immunity was introduced, i.e., the adaptation of new habits. News about the socialization of maintaining the health protocol is increasingly being carried out. It compensates the increasing number of victims who are exposed, dying and recovered. In this phase the journalists published information on the policies taken by the government to reduce the death rate as well as the Covid-19 spread such as the implementation of the Large-Scale Social Restrictions (PSBB), the prohibition of going home during Eid. In this second phase, the journalists informed the government policies related to the Covid-19 pandemic and the problems that arise in the community.

In the third phase, the journalists informed about the surge of people exposed to the Covid-19 disease. They also published information about the symptoms of being exposed to the Covid-19 virus, encouraging people not to marginalize the Covid-19 sufferers. As presenting this information, they explained the causes of the surge, such as lack of implementing the health protocols in society, the frequent congregation of people and the mutation of the Covid-19 virus.

In the fourth phase, the information about the increasing number of patients exposed, recovered and died is consistently reported. However, the information about the discovery of a vaccine and the government's policy to import Sinovac vaccine from

China raised pros and cons. The journalists had been reporting the pros and cons related to the Sinovac vaccine, AstraZeneca continuously. They reported the vaccine program having been promoted as well.

The four phases found in the journalists' writings in this behavioral change bring back the concept of the development journalism in the right direction. The development journalism does not only report the results of a government policy but also the process of a policy being taken and how it is implemented which in turn becomes input for the government to improve or review its policies.

The position of the journalists in reporting the information related to the Covid-19 disease against and supporting the government programs, is definitely an exit mechanism for solving the Covid-19 pandemic which has mutated into various forms. Their position in the news coverage encourages behavioral change and also restores the role of the media as a reference for information, as the finding made by the Indonesian Press Council in collaboration with Media Nusantara University (2021) that the public gave a positive evaluation of the quality of the news coverage on the Covid-19 disease in the mass media.

This research shows that in general news coverage on the Covid-19 has impact to public behavioral change positively, such as adopting digital technology to prevent direct contact with other people and adopting a healthy lifestyle. The people who were the respondents of the UMN research have carried out the functions of public health communication and public education during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### **CONCLUSION**

As the agency that is always actively engaged in responding to the ruling government, journalists have to implement the development journalism, particularly when the government makes a policy for a better people's life. The implementation of the development journalism during the Covid-19 pandemic places journalists as the agency that oversees the process of the Covid-19 pandemic problem as well as the exit mechanism taken by the government.

The journalists who participate in the behavioral change journalism fellowship program basically adopt the concept of the development journalism. As adopting the development journalism, the journalists do not only report on the government programs related to the Covid-19 but also the problems and impacts of the policies taken by the government. Therefore, this encourages the government to make new policies that can accelerate the behavioral change in the society.

When applying the concept of development journalism, journalists build relationships with the ruling government and they are given space to criticize government policies as well. Therefore, the concept of development journalism is still required for the society in transition in supporting the government policies in the development programs. Despite there is flexibility for journalists to develop their locus of coverage, it remains within the corridor of professionalism standards and professional ethics guidelines. This reference will restore public trust for the information written by journalists to be reported through the media where they work.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

I would like to express my gratitude to: Press Council. The Covid-19 Task Force which has helped provide research data.

**DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.

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