

## THE NATURE OF NEWS REPORTAGE ON AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT IN REPUBLIKA NEWSPAPER

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Received : 15 June 2021

Accepted : 1 August 2021

Published : 25 September 2021

### ABSTRACT

*Republika newspaper is a national daily newspaper reporting various news topics from many regions of Indonesia. Agricultural development news is a type of news which frequently reported by the Republika newspaper. This research aims to analyze agricultural development news at Republika newspaper based on some categories, including the width of column, page position, type of subsector, news topic, regional scope, and news source. The primary method of this research was a descriptive method with a content analysis technic. The research object was the Republika newspaper's news items from May 1st, 2018 to June 30th, 2018. These research results are: (1) Agricultural development news was dominated by the news with a column width between 51-100 cm. (2) Agricultural development news was dominantly located at the middle of the page, (3) The food crops subsector was the most frequently served at Republika newspaper, (4) Larger part of agricultural development news at Republika newspaper on the topic of marketing, (5) Republika newspaper mainly served national scale of agricultural development news, and (6) The majority source of agricultural development news at Republika newspaper was taken from the government.*

**Keywords:** *agricultural development, content analysis, national daily newspaper, news, Republika*

### INTRODUCTION

Amid in the mass media's digitalization in the last decade, newspapers' existence as one of the mass media is still easily found in the community. Print media publishing companies are considered successful in luring the public to continue reading newspapers. It is evidenced by the emergence of several new newspapers, even local newspapers that have readers with relatively smaller coverage areas. One of the factors that cause this condition is the ease of access by various ages and society levels. If smartphones or computers as tools for accessing news in digital form are still considered a luxury by some people, this is not the case with newspapers because newspapers can be purchased at a lower price. News in newspapers can also be accessed just by reading it, unlike using a computer which must master how to use it.

Republika Newspaper is one of the national newspapers which still plays a role in providing information to the public, including the agricultural sector, in a broad sense. By knowing the large portion of news about agriculture presented by the Republika Newspaper to its readers, it is hoped that it can be seen how much attention is paid to current issues in the agricultural sector. These issues are covered in local, national, and international scope.

According to Ngatif et al. (2005), determining information and news in a rubric, of

course, guided by a policy higher up above it, the newspaper editor was concerned. The material displayed and the composition of the content must represent the original purpose of the rubric. This rule must not conflict with the working mechanism that has been previously established.

Republika Newspaper is a national newspaper that has an Islamic background at the beginning of its appearance. It is because the Republika Newspaper was founded by an Islamic organization, namely the Indonesian Muslim Intellectuals Association (ICMI). Some of the ICMI members who took part in establishing the Republika Newspaper occupy several vital positions in the company's management. It can affect the editorial team's policy, which determines the news published either directly or indirectly. Based on this fact, it is necessary to examine whether there is still considerable attention to the Republika Newspaper on Indonesia's agricultural development issues.

Jain (1984) in Subejo (1995) shows that the press plays a role in transferring agricultural technology to farmers; the rural press also plays a crucial role. Likewise, in the growing demand for consumer goods in rural areas. With the right promotion, the rural press can persuade villagers to buy goods that supplement their living needs. Especially after there is an increase in income they get from selling agricultural products. According

to Effendy (1984), a newspaper is a printed sheet containing reports that occur in society with the characteristics of being published periodically. The content is current and actual about anything and anywhere in the world for readers to know.

Agricultural development can be defined as a process of social change. Its implementation is not only aimed at improving the status and welfare of farmers, but at the same time it is also intended to develop the potential of human resources both economically, socially, politically, culturally, environmentally, and through improvement, growth, and change (Iqbal and Sudaryanto, 2008).

Sihono (2001) in Irja'i (2004) argued that agricultural news has not become the leading choice for journalists or mass media managers (newspapers) for journalistic work presentation material, so there is no need to be surprised if agricultural information, processing education, innovation, and others do not get an adequate portion of the daily newspaper pages. Mass media managers generally prefer politics, economics, and law for their presentation materials. The material in this field is considered more marketable. The press members are still guided by information that contains conflict, sex, and criminals worth selling, apart from considering other things, namely the impact of news (consequence), fame (prominence), disasters, and human interest.

News of agricultural development in Indonesia still occupies a small place. This statement is reinforced by Sutopo's (1989) research in Widodo (2003), which states that agricultural news is only 4.7% of the entire newsroom. Harsoyo (1991) in Widodo (2003) states that the average amount of agricultural news is relatively small, short, and relatively more placed at the newspaper's back.

Content analysis on national media, a reference for the public, and the government accessing various agricultural development information is a strategic matter. It has an essential role as one of the strategic information in encouraging the role of mass media to participate in the agricultural development process in the future actively. This research aims to analyze agricultural development news at *Republika* newspaper based on some categories, including the width of column, page position, type of subsector, news topic, regional scope, and news source

## METHOD

This research used a descriptive method with content analysis techniques. The descriptive method is defined as a research method that intends to describe or describe systematically, factually, and accurately about situations,

circumstances, and events based on facts and population characteristics (Nasution, 2003).

The research technique used is content analysis techniques. According to Budd in Kritantono (2010), content analysis is a systematic technique for analyzing message content, processing or observing the message, and analyzing the content of the selected communicator's open communication behavior. The research object used in this research is the *Republika* Newspaper. This newspaper was chosen as the object of research because it is one of the national daily newspapers that presents news in the scope of local, national, and international areas and includes agriculture news. The focus of the news analyzed is news on agricultural development in a broad sense, which includes the sub-sectors of food crops, horticulture, plantations, animal husbandry, fisheries, and forestry during May to June 2018.

The May to June 2018 edition of the *Republika* Newspaper was chosen as the research object because it is a relatively new edition that presents the latest issues. The news presented can be assumed to be quite actual. Apart from these reasons, the May to June 2018 editions of the *Republika* Newspaper are still well documented. The *Republika* Newspaper, which is used as the research object, is documented by the Library of the Faculty of Agriculture, Gadjah Mada University, Yogyakarta.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

*Republika* Newspaper is Indonesia's national newspaper headquartered in Jakarta. PT *Republika* Media Mandiri publishes *Republika* Newspaper. This newspaper has been published since January 4, 1993. The company that publishes the *Republika* Newspaper is under the auspices of the Mahaka Group. In each edition, the *Republika* Newspaper presents various kinds of news covering all lines of life. News about education, social, economy, sports, and tourism did not escape the editorial staff's attention to be written and then presented to the readers.

The news column area is the printed area used to present a news item. It can be found by measuring the number of columns x the height of the space used for the news in centimeter columns (cmc). The newspaper's editorial policy determines the size of the space or the size of a newsroom. The column area distribution of agricultural development news columns *Republika* Newspaper can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. The Column Area Distribution of Agriculture Development News on Republika Newspaper

| Column Area | Area (cmc) |
|-------------|------------|
| Minimum     | 22.00      |
| Maximum     | 205.00     |
| Average     | 60.32      |

Source: Primary Data Analyzed in 2018

Based on Table 1 regarding the column area's distribution for agricultural development news, the column area is used as a newsroom for agricultural development minimum of 22 cmc. The largest column area used as an agricultural development newsroom is 205 cmc. The average area of development news columns agriculture at Republika Newspaper is 60.32 cmc. The column area of a story depends on the number of writings and supporting information used in the news. The wide range of agricultural development news columns presented by Republika Newspaper can be seen in Table 2 below.

Tabel 2. The Wide Range of Agricultural Development News Columns Presented by Republika Newspaper

| Column area (cmc) | Number of News | Percentage (%) | Rating |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------|--------|
| 0-50              | 27             | 4.55           | 2      |
| 51 - 100          | 30             | 48.39          | 1      |
| 101 - 150         | 2              | 3.23           | 3      |
| 151 - 200         | 2              | 3.23           | 3      |
| >200              | 1              | 1.61           | 4      |
| Total             | 62             | 100.00         |        |

Source: Primary Data Analyzed in 2018

Based on Table 2, most news agricultural development at the Republika Newspaper has a column area of 51-100 cmc, namely 30 news or 48.39%. The small difference is shown in Table 2 when compared to the news on agricultural development, which has a column area of 0-50 cmc. Agricultural development news with column area 0-50 cmc amounted to 27 news or 43.55%.

There is a similarity in the percentage generated by agricultural development news, which has a column area of 101-150 cmc, with agricultural development news that has an area of column 151-200, namely 3.23%. The news on agricultural development in the Republika Newspaper, which has a reasonably large column area of > 200 cmc, only has a 1.61% percentage. Republika Newspaper presents news on agricultural development with a relatively small column area. It shows the lack of attention from the Republika Newspaper to agricultural issues that often arise in society. Even though there is

agricultural development news, the material presented in an article is less attractive. Apart from the small size of the column, supporting news reports are rarely shown.

The possibility of readers' interest in a news item becomes a benchmark in determining a story's location in a newspaper. The higher the probability that a piece of news will attract readers, the more strategic it is. People tend to be more interested in reading newspapers on the first and last pages than other pages.

The results showed that most agricultural development news was located on page 13, 12 news items, or 19.35%. Smaller results are on page 5, which is as much as nine news or as much as 14.52%. The news on agricultural development in the Republika Newspaper, located on the front page, only found one news or 1.61%.

The placement of a news article is determined by the editor based on its priority level. The front page of a newspaper contains news that is considered the most important for readers to know. The results obtained from the study indicate that agricultural development news has not been rated as significant news to be presented to the public seen from the small percentage of news contained on the first page, which is 1.61%.

The news on agricultural development presented by the Republika Newspaper is quite diverse. News categorization agricultural development based on sub-sectors includes food crops, horticulture, plantations, animal husbandry, fisheries, and forestry. The following is presented in Table 3, which shows data analysis results regarding the Republika Newspaper's agricultural sub-sector news.

Table 3. The News of Agricultural Sub-sector in Republika Newspaper

| Agricultural Sub-sector | Number of the News | Percentage (%) | Rating |
|-------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------|
| Food Crop               | 35                 | 56.45          | 1      |
| Horticulture            | 12                 | 19.35          | 2      |
| Plantation              | 5                  | 8.06           | 4      |
| Animal Farming          | 7                  | 11.29          | 3      |
| Fisheries               | 1                  | 1.61           | 6      |
| Forestry                | 2                  | 3.23           | 5      |
| Total                   | 62                 | 100.00         |        |

Source: Primary Data Analyzed in 2018

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The news on agricultural development presented by the Republika Newspaper is quite diverse. News categorization agricultural development based on sub-sectors includes food crops, horticulture, plantations, animal husbandry, fisheries, and forestry. The following is presented in Table 5.4, which shows data analysis results regarding the Republika Newspaper's agricultural sub-sector news.

The topic of agricultural development news in a newspaper shows its ability and willingness to present various agricultural development topics. The readers can give great attention to sector agriculture and also dig up information. It also avoids the impression of a newspaper that presents "the same" news. The news on agricultural development in the Republika Newspaper is quite diverse when viewed from the topic (Table 4).

Table 4. The Topic of Agricultural Development News in Republika Newspaper

| Topic          | Number of the News | Percentage | Rating |
|----------------|--------------------|------------|--------|
| Production     | 15                 | 24.19      | 2      |
| Marketing      | 28                 | 45.16      | 1      |
| Infrastructure | 2                  | 3.23       | 5      |
| Policy         | 12                 | 19.35      | 3      |
| Etc            | 5                  | 8.06       | 4      |
| Total          | 62                 | 100.00     |        |

Source: Primary Data Analyzed in 2018

Based on Table 4, it can be seen that the majority of agricultural development news presented by the Republika Newspaper raises the topic of marketing, namely 28 news or 45.16%. This topic is essential because issues related to agricultural products' marketing are often a problem for some farmers as producers of agricultural commodities and the general public as consumers. The emergence of a long chain of marketing that causes high prices and import policies that can harm local farmers is an interesting topic to present.

The focus of attention on marketing news, which is quite essential by the Republika Newspaper, is in line with Asmarantaka's study (2017). In the context of agribusiness and agricultural development, marketing issues are

becoming increasingly important. The focus is on the production aspects of various agricultural products and how to market the products after producing significant economic value for agricultural product producers.

The topics of agricultural development news that were least published by the Republika Newspaper were infrastructure, namely two news stories or 3.23%. Unfortunately, infrastructure supports the production, processing, and marketing of agricultural commodities. Problems that arise in the community regarding its infrastructure inadequacy are a severe obstacle to farming's sustainability.

The infrastructure that supports farming, either directly or indirectly, plays an essential role in various production stages. Newspapers, as a tangible manifestation of press freedom, have a control function over government performance related to the provision of adequate agricultural infrastructure. If published in national newspapers, issues regarding this matter can be an impetus for the government to improve immediately or even create breakthroughs to improve infrastructure, positively affecting productivity both in quality and quantity. In the long term, it can provide welfare for farming actors because production costs can be reduced and for the community because commodity prices are not too high.

Price stability is the center of attention of the Republika Newspaper in the news on agricultural development that it presents. This discussion is considered attractive to readers because the information presented directly impacts households, one of the Republika Newspaper's readership segments. The increase in food prices is presented in detail with the source of a particular market location, and the causes are analyzed. The long distribution chain of agricultural products from farmers to the community's hands as consumers causes high food prices. It does not include the existence of illegal practices in the middle of the distribution process.

Agricultural production is a long process in farming. At each stage of production, good knowledge and skills are needed so it can run optimally. Planting media, seed or seed picker, maintenance, and subsequent processes until post-harvest management should be prepared and performed carefully. Selection of livestock breeds, feed composition, pen management, and livestock maintenance are essential parts that determine the success of farming in the livestock subsector. The Republika Newspaper also assessed that agricultural development news with the topic of production is an interesting topic when presented to readers because people, especially farmers, tend to want to know about new technologies related to

their farming production processes so that they can be considered as to whether to do it or not.

Table 5. The Scope of Agricultural Development News in Republika Newspaper

| The Scope     | Number of the News | Percentage (%) | Rating |
|---------------|--------------------|----------------|--------|
| Local         | 21                 | 33.87          | 2      |
| National      | 41                 | 66.13          | 1      |
| International | 0                  | 0.00           | 3      |
| Jumlah        | 62                 | 100.00         |        |

Source: Primary Data Analyzed in 2018

The scope of the agricultural development news area consists of local, national, and international. As a national newspaper, the Republika Newspaper still pays attention to agricultural issues in the local sphere. These are listed in Table 5.

The national newspaper Republika's attention to issues related to the agricultural sector in the local area is shown in Table 5. It is indicated by the news that was published, namely as many as 21 news or 33.87%. The Republika Newspaper's most significant concern for agricultural development news is news that covers a national scale. It is shown in Table 5 above, namely as many as 41 news or 66.13%. This data has a significant percentage difference compared with news on agricultural development in the local area of 33.87%. It cannot be denied because the Republika Newspaper is a national newspaper, so that it has a spread of readers throughout the country.

Even though agricultural development is increasingly dynamic, national issues are still considered essential and strategic. The domination of national agricultural news coverage by Republika is in line with Subejo's (1995) findings, which show that attention to various national issues is still on the journalists' agenda in the reporting process of agricultural issues.

Based on the research data analysis shown in Table 5, there is no news on agricultural development in the international area. It happens because international agricultural issues are deemed less attractive to present, and the issues do not directly impact the broader community who are readers of the Republika Newspaper. International agricultural issues deserve to be reported as additional information and insight for the domestic community. If there is a new technology in the agricultural sector discovered by researchers abroad, it will significantly benefit readers if presented in good and attractive packaging.

Most national issues in the agricultural sector are presented because they include information concerning the wider community's

life. Increases in agricultural commodity prices, government programs to increase productivity, assistance with production facilities, and other essential issues are good information if understood carefully. News related to this directly impacts the community's welfare, especially for people in the farming business.

The Republika Newspaper also contains news on agricultural development in the local area. The distribution of readers of the Republika Newspaper covering rural areas is the basis for consideration in the presentation of news on agricultural development in the local area. The local agricultural issues presented by the Republika Newspaper avoid the negative stigma that may arise among readers that national newspapers are exclusive, so they are reluctant to present agricultural development news with local coverage because they are considered unpopular. In this regard, the Republika Newspaper's move, which consistently reports on agriculture's local issues, should be appreciated.

An individual's attachment to his hometown triggers his interest in seeking information about his area. Someone tends to be more interested in reading news articles that contain phenomena occurring in their area. Republika's daily attention to agricultural issues in the local area can generate interest in the community in the regions to read it.

The sources of agricultural development news material presented by the Republika Newspaper in each edition can be categorized into agricultural development news sources from the government and agricultural development news from non-government sources. The results of the research data analysis can be seen in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Material Source of Agricultural Development News in Republika Newspaper

| Source Material               | Number of the News | Percentage (%) | Rating |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|--------|
| Government                    | 42                 | 67.74          | 1      |
| Non-government                | 14                 | 22.58          | 2      |
| Government and Non-government | 6                  | 9.68           | 3      |
| Total                         | 62                 | 100.00         |        |

Source: Primary Data Analyzed in 2018

Based on Table 6, it can be concluded that the majority of agricultural development news presented by the Republika Newspaper comes from the government, namely 42 news or 67.74%. This result is quite different from agricultural development news from non-government sources, which shows the number 14 news or 22.58%. This

fact can be caused by the *Republika Newspaper*, which is quite active in reporting about government programs, in this case, the Ministry of Agriculture, to increase production.

The government's dominance at the central and regional levels as a source of agricultural news by the *Republika Newspaper* seems to be in line with the government's still-strong role in determining agricultural development policies and directions at national and local levels. The study results by Rada et al. (2010) show that agricultural development policies and the productivity of the agricultural sector in Indonesia are still heavily influenced by the government's critical role. The government's important role in agricultural development can strengthen its credibility as a trusted news source by journalists and media.

Agricultural development news sourced from non-governmental sources was also found in the *Republika Newspaper*. Based on Table 6, it is noted that the number of news originating from non-government sources is 14 news or 22.58%. These results appear to be far below the figures that government sources have on agricultural development reports. It seems that the non-governmental parties in contact with the agricultural sector are not attractive enough for the editorial staff of the *Republika Newspaper* to be reported on in their published newspapers. The following is presented one of the agricultural development news in the *Republika Newspaper* sourced from non-governmental organizations.

Agricultural development news may come from both government and non-government at the same time. It is evident in Table 6, where there are as many as six news or 9.68%, which originate from government and non-government sources. It is because the *Republika Newspaper* as a journalistic product is required to present information in a balanced manner so that when needed, an agricultural development news item that discusses specific issues takes information from the government and non-government.

Government policies in the agricultural sector often appear in the news. In the policy, it can affect other sectors such as the economy, health, and social. The *Republika Newspaper* considers this fact to be the main reason to focus its government's attention on the agricultural sector.

As a national newspaper, *Republika Newspaper* needs to maintain its credibility as a source of accurate information. Accuracy of news can be obtained by digging news sources from parties who have good competence about the material being reported. The government, in this case, is considered to meet these requirements. Through institutions under government control and

related agencies, agricultural information can be obtained accurately.

The research results showing agricultural development news originating from two parties, namely government and non-government, are quite a relief. It makes agricultural development news with specific topics a balance because of the two sources. It also prevented the *Republika Newspaper* from being too pro-government.

A newspaper is a form of mass media in printed form. Based on the idea put forward by Effendy (1984) about the requirements for a mass media to be called a newspaper, the results of the research show that the *Republika Newspaper* has met the requirements as a newspaper. The requirements are (1) publicity, (2) periodicity, (3) universality, and (4) actuality.

*Republika Newspaper* contains news with various topics. Various lines of people's lives are reported in pretty good packages using the language commonly used. The segmentation of the readers of the *Republika Newspaper* covers all regions of Indonesia. It is because the *Republika Newspaper* is a national newspaper. Thus, the *Republika Newspaper* has met the requirements for publicity as a newspaper.

Regularity in publishing in terms of time shows the credibility of mass media in a newspaper. For more than 25 years, the *Republika Newspaper* has been published regularly every day. In its discussion of news on agricultural development, periodicity can be defined as the frequency of the emergence of agricultural development news in newspapers during a certain publication period. The most agricultural development news is in an edition of the *Republika Newspaper*, namely four news articles published in the 3rd May edition 2018 and 2 June 2018. Of the total 61 editions of publication studied, 25 editions did not contain news on agricultural development. Most editions of the *Republika Newspaper* have news on agricultural development. Thus, the *Republika Newspaper* fulfills the requirements periodically if assessed from the published news on agricultural development.

*Republika Newspaper* provides news from all regions, both domestic and international. The diversity of aspects of life is also considered in the news presented by the *Republika Newspaper*. People from various professional backgrounds can read *Republika Newspaper*. Although ICMI, an Islamic organization, founded it, the *Republika Newspaper* provides news on all aspects of community life in its development. In this case, the *Republika Newspaper* has met the universality requirements as a newspaper.

The news presented by *Republika Newspaper* is a new phenomenon that occurs in society. Important information is quite up-to-date,

so it is interesting to read because it has never been known before. Agricultural development news, which contains government policies in responding to various issues, is presented quite actual if seen from the difference between the time the policy was published and the time the news was presented, which was relatively short. Based on the description, the *Republika Newspaper* has met the actuality requirements as a newspaper.

## CONCLUSIONS

The conclusions that can be given from this research are:

1. The newsroom analysis shows that the news column's agricultural development area in the *Republika Newspaper* is still relatively small.
2. The news position shows the agricultural development news page's location in the *Republika Newspaper*, which occupies a less strategic space.
3. Based on the agricultural sub-sector coverage, news on agricultural development in the *Republika Newspaper* is dominated by food crops.
4. The topic of agricultural development news that is mostly presented by the *Republika Newspaper* is marketing.
5. The news with a national territory dominates news on agricultural development in the *Republika Newspaper*.
6. Judging from the aspect of news sources, the government is the primary source of agricultural development news material in the *Republika Newspaper*.

The suggestions that can be given from this research are:

1. The *Republika Newspaper* needs to pay more attention to agricultural development by expanding the news column and placing development news in a more strategic position.
2. Based on the sub-sectors, it is hoped that the coverage of the various sub-sectors will be more evenly distributed because agricultural business actors in Indonesia are quite diverse.
3. News topics also need to be packaged in a more varied manner, and coverage of news coverage also needs to be combined between national and local, and if considered necessary, it can make agricultural news on a global/international scale.
4. Apart from referring to the government as a news source, the *Republika Newspaper* needs to utilize non-government sources in developing news on agricultural development.

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