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COMPANY PRESS IN PROTECTION OF JOURNALISTS IN THE PANDEMIC TIME OF COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

Journalists are the main pillars of press freedom. Therefore, in carrying out their duties, journalists are entitled to legal protection from the state, society, and press companies. The approach used in this research is a qualitative descriptive approach that intends to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects. This study used Elton Mayo's (2003) approach because of his concept of "Human Relations Theory" emphasizes the importance of the psychological and social aspects of employees as individuals or workgroups. Mayo developed the field of industrial psychology by applying the results of scientific research to work problems to improve the standard of living of workers and industrial managers and encourage collaboration between management and workers. The conclusion was that not all press companies were able to protect their journalists. However, some media companies have provided masks, particular clothes, special shoes, and more incentives should be the company's obligation to fulfill them. The workers will prefer a safe, comfortable, clean, and a minimum level of disturbance environment since there is a relationship between individual characteristics and work motivation. During the COVID 19 period, the momentum was for media companies to emphasize their attention to their journalists. Media companies should not only have protocols when assigning journalists to coverage but also have protocols for saving journalists as human beings. This momentum can also be used by media companies to reaffirm that journalists are required to have clear work safety.

KEY WORDS

Journalist protection, press company, COVID-19, human relations, work environment.

The Covid-19 pandemic has devastated all sectors around the world. It has now been exposed to Indonesian territory and forced the Indonesian government to issue a Large-Scale Social Restriction (Pembatasan Sosial Berskala Besar or PSBB) strategy that is also known as a local lockdown. In line with this policy, almost all government and private institutions implement work from home (WFH). Even schools have followed the recommendation to school from home (SFH) or study online.

Although almost all institutions have implemented WFH since March 2020, in reality, the mass media management institutions have not implemented this recommendation. Journalists and reporters still run reportage or coverage in the field in which press workers still meeting face to face with sources or the public related to the journalists' work. In this case, it means that the policies issued by the government do not affect the mass media institutions.

Observing the mass media industry cannot be separated from the role of journalists. Journalists are the main pillars of press freedom. Therefore, in carrying out their professional duties, journalists are entitled to legal protection from the state, society, and press companies. In addition to the Press Law, the Press Council has also issued a Press Council Regulation, Number: 5 / Regulation-DP / IV / 2008 concerning Professional Protection Standards for Journalists. The journalist profession is protected in legal protection standards for journalists as long as the journalists obey the journalistic code of ethics in fulfilling the public's right to obtain information. Point five of the law mentions that journalists assigned in dangerous or conflict areas have to provide an assignment letter, qualified safety equipment,



insurance, and knowledge, the skills of the press company related to the interests of the assignment.

A journalist who works for press companies is a worker. For a worker, work safety is a basic need. Work safety includes protecting workers from the risk of work accidents and improves their health status. Therefore, workers/laborers and the people around them are safely guaranteed.

The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) survey, which was attended by 1,300 journalists from 77 countries on April 26-28, 2020, explained that the protection of journalists was still not optimal. Many mass media companies do not provide insurance, complete coverage for COVID protection that is according to standards. For companies, their obligation to guarantee work safety is a fundamental need. Work safety includes protecting workers from the risk of work accidents, improving the health status of workers so that workers and those around them are safely guaranteed.

A piece of news from Tempo.co (20 May 2020) conveyed the contents of a report from the Press Emblem Campaign that in the period from March 1 to May 31, 2020, at least 127 people who worked as journalists around the world died due to being infected with Covid-19. Based on this number, two-thirds of journalists are infected while carrying out their journalistic duties.

Table 1 – Number of Journalists Who Died and Are Infected with Covid-19

No	Continent / Country	Infected	Died
1	Latin America	62	-
2	Europe	23	-
3	Asia	17	-
4	North America	13	-
5	Afrika	12	-
6	United States of America	12	-
7	Russia	8	-
8	Pakistan	8	-
9	England	-	5
10	Bolivia	-	3
11	Cameroon	--	3
12	Dominican Republic		3
13	France	-	3
14	India	-	3
15	Spain	-	3
16	Italia	-	3
17	Indonesia	2	1

Source: Tempo.co, 5 May 2020.

In Indonesia (Tempo, 5 May 2020) there were cases in which three journalists contracted the coronavirus and one of them was declared dead. However, in East Kalimantan, especially Samarinda City, there have not been any cases of journalists infected with the coronavirus.

Currently, according to data on the number of journalists in East Kalimantan who are members of the Indonesian Journalists Association (PWI) of East Kalimantan, there are 250 people and the Indonesian Journalists Alliance (AJI) Kaltim/Kaltara is around 50 people so far, they are scattered in various mass media companies in East Kalimantan (Interview with Wiwied, a member of PWI Kaltim Samarinda).

As an organization refers to Beach, 1980, and Champoux, 2003, PWI is a system, has a structure and planning that implement with full awareness, in which people work and relate to each other in a coordinated, cooperative, and encouraging to achieve the goals. Press companies in which there is an organizational structure so that when talking about the organization as a system, it means that it consists of interdependent elements with sub-sub systems. Structure implies that there is a degree of formality and a division of tasks or roles that must be played by group members and supported by a healthy work environment. The work environment in question includes communication between superiors and subordinates,



teamwork, networking, reward and punishment, organized activity time schedules, and company relationships with external stakeholders.

The company should be a comfortable home for its residents. The comfort of the work environment must be a top priority so that employees feel comfortable and at home working. This convenience will enable corporate priorities and targets to be fulfilled on time, even faster. The essential indicator of a comfortable work environment is the close relationship between superiors and subordinates. Their relationship is like a family where superiors as parents who are ready to share their knowledge and experience. Besides, employees provide creative and innovative ideas to support the progress of the company. This relationship creates positive synergies that can boost the company's achievements, both in the form of increasingly excellent products and services. Generally, the increase in productivity and services will be directly proportional to the high profitability of the company.

Elton Mayo's approach is used in this study because the concept of flow is known as "Human Relations Theory". Emphasizes the "importance of the psychological and social aspects of employees as individuals or workgroups". Experiments were carried out by Elton Mayo at the Hawthorne Factory in 1924. The company which also owns the Western Electric company in Cicero and is sponsored by the American National Research Institute has found the conclusion that the importance of paying attention to wage incentives and employee working conditions is of paramount importance. for increased productivity. Elton Mayo is very well known for his experiments on human behavior in work situations. This experiment concluded that special attention could cause a person to increase his business. "This phenomenon is called the Hawthorne effect, that is, employees will be more active if they believe that management is thinking about their health." The results of Mayo's experiment with Roethlisberger and Dickson are that stimulation of money does not lead to improved productivity. What can increase productivity is an attitude that employees have.

METHODS OF RESEARCH

The approach used in this research is a qualitative descriptive approach that intends to understand the phenomena experienced by the research subjects. For example, behavior, perception, motivation, action, etc., holistically, and by way of description in the form of words and language, in a specific natural context, and by utilizing various natural methods. Lexy J. Moleong (2005: 6),

This approach is used because researchers intend to obtain an in-depth picture of Press Companies in the Protection of Journalists during the Covid-19 Pandemic in Elton Mayo's Perspective. The informants in this study were the Kaltim Pos Press company, Disway Kaltim, the chairman of the Alliance of Independent Journalists. Data were collected using in-depth interviews and data analysis using Miles and Huberman.

RESULTS OF STUDY

In a work environment, a sense of security is essential for workers. Employees or workers will pay great attention to the work environment both on personal comfort strategies and also the ease of doing a good job. There is a relationship between individual characteristics and work motivation. Workers will prefer a safe, comfortable, and clean environment, and also has a minimum level of disturbance. Journalists as workers. Elton Mayo (1880 - 1949) believed that workers were not only motivated by money but could be more motivated by meeting their social interaction needs by meeting many people at work.

out their professional duties receive protection. If it is related to this pandemic, health protection takes precedence. According to the results of an interview with the chief editor of the Kaltim Pos Samarinda, Ade Mayasanto explained that the media where he works had started implementing the work from the home policy as recommended by the government since the end of March 2020. Only a few times, Ade and his fellow journalists had to be present in the field due to special coverage that did not provide live streaming or mandatory coverage. Ade and his fellows in Kaltim Post still paying attention to health protocol, with



initial preparation, namely regularly taking vitamin C, carrying hand sanitizers, and wearing masks. According to Ade's explanation, now that it is Work from Home, journalists do not have to come to the office. The allocation for placement is also more flexible because fellow journalists in Indonesia work together. As a result, they can share the news without credit. As a journalist, the news verification process is crucial in presenting factual information and warding off hoaxes. Indonesian people are very enthusiastic about the news spread on social media without a trusted source. The actual verification is not mandatory with physical contact. Because now the conditions do not allow for verification, even this can be done online, via the WhatsApp application, telephone, email, and others.

Since being officially recognized as entering Indonesia last March, the Covid-19 virus has had an impact on media and journalists in Indonesia. The government is trying to contain the spread of the plague by implementing several territorial restrictions, including the economy sector. For the media, this impact causes companies to terminate employment, efficiency, and other austerity measures. Indonesian Journalists Association or AJI considers this pandemic has seriously impacted on the press today and for the future. The real impact of the media industry has directly impacted the welfare of journalists and the quality of journalism due to a large number of online newsgathering processes. The General Chairperson of AJI, Abdul Manan, said that this situation is a serious concern for AJI, which is concerned about press freedom, professionalism, and the welfare of journalists. The current difficult situation in the media certainly has a direct impact on these three things. Manan said AJI had published its coverage protocol during COVID-19. AJI encourages journalists to work from home. Then, AJI asked press companies to prepare personal protective equipment for journalists such as hand sanitizers and masks. AJI also encouraged press companies not to assign journalists to risky areas and prompting the government to provide information online. AJI strongly criticized when the coverage did not apply the COVID-19 protocol. Manan called on press companies to fulfill obligations to workers during the pandemic because journalists are in the second front line after medical personnel in reporting COVID-19 and providing critical information about government policies regarding COVID-19. "We hope that media companies should fulfill their obligations to their workers and must try to avoid decreasing welfare, by reducing wages or layoffs. That should be avoided during this difficult situation," said Manan. AJI hopes that the media can face these difficult times, while maintaining the values of this profession, namely working to find the truth and prioritizing public interests. He also said that even if you have to go to the office, there are procedures that must be followed.

Meanwhile, according to Devi Alamsyah as the chief editor of Disway Kaltim, their company has protected workers by doing Work from Home since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for coverage has also changed, both in terms of news and technical composition which prioritizes the health of journalists' crew. In response to the fact that the current crisis is concerned with health issues, informants with political backgrounds need not be pursued, unless they are regulators in certain areas in handling the Covid-19 case.

Referring to the information conveyed by the Senior Journalists of Kompas in a timeline, it can be concluded that journalists must always be close to the object of the coverage to get complete and authentic news. However, it also means all risks will be open. There is a risk of being exposed to sparks by getting close to the fire. Getting close to the battlefield has potential for mortar exposure. Even so, when coverage of the outbreak, journalists must approach the source of information related to the outbreak. The potential for exposure is wide open. Due to these conditions, journalists need to have special protocols when carrying out their duties in times of crisis. Unfortunately, journalists don't always get the fulfillment of these various protocols. During the Covid-19 periods, media companies that provide self-protection tools for journalists can be counted. Masks, special clothes, special shoes, and more incentives should be the company's obligation to fulfill them. The process of obtaining news may be tricked by multiplying news content without coverage, aka simply releasing press releases and confirming sources only by telephone. This may be done for print or online media. If only the ceremonial news and the content, the issue might be done.



But if the incident only relies on information via telephone, the news presented will certainly not be complete. The choice of confirmation by telephone sources and relying on press releases certainly cannot be done for television media. Because television is a picture. It's not nice to only publish old content. If the news is hard news, of course, it requires the latest images and on-location images. The fate of journalists is increasingly unfavorable when it comes to welfare. During this pandemic, some journalists did not get a stimulus from their media companies, on the contrary (<https://kuninganmass.com/anything/netizen-mass/jurnalis-di-masa-krisis/>)

State incentives or subsidies are very urgent during this pandemic. Not only to save the media industry from bankruptcy but also to maintain the flow of information and communication that supports efforts to deal with the crisis caused by the pandemic. (Kompas: 14 May 2020).

This study confirms that following the development of Elton Mayo's theory about the opportunity to interact with one another in the press company. As in the case of democratic decision making, freedom in expressing opinions, providing guidance and direction in improving employee abilities, the existence of togetherness to achieve goals, togetherness, undifferentiated treatment, harmonious relationships with colleagues, and so on. There is a finding that the best workers are motivated by better communication between the editor in chief or media owners and subordinates. Furthermore, in this study are journalists (journalists are randomly selected to be interviewed during the pandemic period and also have the opportunity to provide feedback). However, according to interviews with several journalists who asked to remain anonymous the amount of attention from the editor-in-chief and media owners in the life of journalists shows a good working climate.

However, some of these news workers also revealed that currently, television broadcasts need to reduce regional journalist content. Almost all televisions in Indonesia treat local journalists like traders and buyers. News sent by regional journalists will only be paid if broadcast on television. This condition is not only the case for television media as there are much online and print media that apply a similar pattern.

This unfavorable condition also occurs for journalists in Jakarta. Several national and local newspapers have started to maneuver so that they can operate. There is a medium that reduces the page and paper size and reducing the spread of newspapers. Usually, the printing remains seven days a week, but the distribution to the agents is only three times a week. Not a few have also started to reduce working hours. The impact on the public was not encouraging. The audience consumes news content with confirmation from the source. Our mass media are starting to be plagued with two chronic diseases. First, the rise of the News statement. This type of news only puts forward news from sources from the authorities or those with authority.

Indeed, during this pandemic, journalists were not the only group affected. Almost all levels of society feel it. To keep the press world from collapsing, the Press Council asked the government to help with this mass media problem. In the view of the Press Council, the image of dismissal for media company employees is said to be real if there are no concrete actions.

CONCLUSION

The outbreak of the Covid-19 case is a challenge for every journalist in carrying out activities. The reason is that many unexpected things can arise in the middle of the coverage field. Not infrequently, this situation forces journalists to maneuver to meet demands for deadlines. The challenge of covering disaster news is from the logistical aspects and psychological aspects of the coverage. Journalists who have the guts to go to the field to cover the pandemic are extraordinary. A large number of victims have infected due to this coronavirus, and they must remain vigilant by applying standard health protocols, namely masks, hand sanitizers, and physical and psychological conditions that must be prime. Journalists must also be responsive in reading news angles so that the news that is present does not only capitalize on the sadness of the families of victims who have died from the



virus or coverage of other news so that the content does not continue to unravel about the corona. Persecution related to infected victims is forbidden because a journalist obliges to think about the impact on the victim's family. Of course, no coverage costs lives, because the press company is also obliged to protect its workers by preparing the equipment according to the established standard health protocol procedures. Following the key concept of Elton Mayo's theory that society is a system of cooperation, a civilized society is one sign that cooperation is based on understanding or understanding and a desire to work together. Mayo describes the workplace as the focus of individual identity and a key to social cohesion.

The pandemic and new regulations are great lessons for journalists to be able to process and produce optimal news regardless of unusual technical challenges. The press company reflects that this global epidemic is to strengthen coordination and compromise that leads to the priority of the safety of its workers. Not only medical personnel but journalists are also elements who are at the forefront of reporting actual and factual news to the public in an unusual way amid the Covid-19 pandemic. These methods have ultimately reformulated what journalism would consider the new normal in the future.

Yet in the world of journalism, media companies and their journalists are different elements. As a company, the press agency is never free from profit and loss. Meanwhile, journalists must always have idealistic values. In a pragmatic view, profit and loss and idealism seem to be two poles that are difficult to unite. The two often contradict themselves. Although ideally, press institutions and journalists are bound in journalistic codes. There are journalistic obligations on media companies and journalists personally. When in charge of coverage, journalists are representatives of the media. If all kinds of technical and non-technical difficulties occur, the media company automatically plays a role in eliminating these difficulties. Likewise, if there is a media product that is reported by journalists, it is considered problematic. The journalist is not the one who responded, but the company must install the front body. But apart from that, journalists themselves as adults who consciously choose journalists as a profession must be responsible for their actions when carrying out this profession. During the COVID 19 period, the momentum was for media companies to emphasize their attention to their journalists. Media companies should not only have protocols when assigning journalists to coverage but also have protocols for saving journalists as human beings. This momentum can also be used by media companies to reaffirm that journalists are required to have clear work safety.

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