

# Optimizing the Role of Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in the Context of Disseminating Health Information during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Information technology is developing very rapidly along with the emergence of the Covid-19 Pandemic. Various information related to Covid-19 delivered by broadcasters is required to be strictly monitored to ensure that the information received by the public is correct and valid. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission has the authority to monitor the broadcasting.

**Objectives:** This paper aimed to analyze the optimization of the role of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission to monitor the spread of health information during the Covid-19 pandemic.

**Research Methodology:** This study combined doctrinal law research and non-doctrinal legal research. The research specification was descriptive-analytical and the analysis was carried out qualitatively.

**Conclusion:** The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission has not optimally carried out its duties and roles in monitoring the dissemination of information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Institutional strengthening, institutional synchronization at the central and regional levels, and increasing the capacity of Commissioners are some efforts to optimize the roles and tasks of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in the future.

**Keywords:** Indonesian Broadcasting Commission; Health Information; Covid-19 Pandemic.

## INTRODUCTION

The determination of the Covid-19 pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) has had a massive impact on human life throughout the world, including in Indonesia.<sup>1</sup> The Covid-19 pandemic that has affected all countries in the world has changed the way people live. People are forced to adapt to new habits.<sup>2</sup> The Covid-19 virus has disease characteristics that are different from other types of disease outbreaks, and this virus affects people of any age, gender, or certain race or ethnicity because this outbreak can easily transmit the virus to anyone who is negligent with the health protocols.<sup>3</sup>

The increasing number of Covid-19 cases has led the Indonesian government to implement various efforts to reduce the number of positive Covid-19 cases in Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> Government intervention is absolutely necessary to address and prevent the increasingly extensive and tremendous spread of the virus. The Indonesian government responded to the health emergency by issuing various policy combinations to prevent and control the spread of Covid-19, both medical and non-medical policies.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding these policies and various important information about the Covid-19 pandemic, the public must receive correct and appropriate information to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 Virus. The government is obliged to be more open and transparent in delivering information about the Covid-19 pandemic. Yosanna H. Laoly stated that: "Good governance must create mutual trust between the government and the community through the provision of information and ensuring the ease of receiving accurate and adequate information".<sup>5</sup>

Kadek Wibawa said that: "Disclosure of public information is a means in optimizing public monitoring of state administration and other public institutions and everything that affects the public interest, for example, during the Covid-19 pandemic".<sup>1</sup> Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Disclosure of Public Information and Law Number 32 of 2002 concerning Broadcasting ensure that the society obtains public information, especially regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic correctly and through correct and appropriate broadcast media.

Broadcast media has a considerably significant role in disseminating various information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The development of information technology, communication, and the internet has brought changes in television broadcasting throughout the world. One of the significant changes is the shift from analogue transmission broadcast to digital

transmission broadcast technology.<sup>6</sup> In line with Abdullah, broadcasting digitization is a necessity that cannot be avoided.<sup>7</sup>

Diverse information related to the Covid-19 pandemic is increasingly accessible digitally, including: statistical data on patients confirmed positive for Covid-19, data on the number of victims who died due to Covid-19, information on vaccination policies, and other information. Various broadcast media can disseminate the information, such as: digital television media, digital radio, YouTube media platform, online newspapers, websites, Line and WhatsApp applications, etc.

The flow of information that is spread is not entirely true and valid. There is a lot of incorrect and invalid information related to Covid-19 that is spread by unauthorized parties with specific purposes, for example: the desire to spread excessive fear, the aim to gain economic benefits, some aim to increase viewers on YouTube, the others aim to increase the number of followers on Instagram. This condition will obviously unsettle society.

The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as an independent institution formed on the basis of Law Number 32 of 2002 concerning Broadcasting (Broadcasting Law); has the duty and authority to monitor the implementation of regulations and guidelines for broadcasting activities as well as broadcast program standards; provides sanctions for violations of regulations and guidelines for broadcasting activities as well as broadcast program standards (see Article 8 of the Broadcasting Law). The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission is the representative of the Government in charge of monitoring distinguished information broadcasts, especially those related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission has a crucial role in supervising broadcast media that spread false news or information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The commission is also a law enforcement institution in the field of broadcasting, meaning that it is an institution that has the duty and authority to impose sanctions on broadcast media that violate the laws and regulations in the broadcasting sector.

Based on this explanation above, the authors are interested in writing a study entitled "Optimizing the Role of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in the Context of Disseminating Health Information during the Covid-19 Pandemic". Several articles related to the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission have been published, including: Dwi Eki Liansyah and Maesaroh (2018) who discussed a study entitled "Analysis of the Organizational Performance of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in Central Java Province"<sup>8</sup>; Afra Afifah and Mirra Noor Milla (2018) who discussed a study entitled "Strengthening the Authority of the

Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as an Effort to Decrease Behavior of Violating Television Broadcasting Standards<sup>9</sup>; Dian Sukmawati and Ade Armando (2019) who wrote about "The Authority of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in Regulating Broadcast Content"<sup>10</sup>; Asip Suyadi (2019) who wrote about "The Position and Authority of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission with the Film Censorship Institute regarding Legal Certainty in the Film Sector"<sup>11</sup>.

Different to previous articles, this paper focused on optimizing the role of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in monitoring the dissemination of information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. The focus of this study is what distinguishes this paper from those of other studies on similar writings that have been published.

## METHODS

This study is a combination of juridical law research (doctrinal legal research) and empirical legal research (non-doctrinal legal research), with a statutory and qualitative approach. Doctrinal law research is carried out by searching and analyzing legal materials, both primary legal materials, and secondary legal materials.<sup>12</sup> Empirical legal research places more emphasis on the effectiveness of the work of law in society, in this case, the role of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in monitoring the dissemination of information related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The research specifications are descriptive-analytical, meaning that it describes the applicable laws and regulations related to legal theories and positive law implementation practices concerning the problems in the research.<sup>13</sup> The normative method in this study is used to analyze Law Number 32 of 2002 concerning Broadcasting and Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Public Information Disclosure. Qualitative research is research that is used to investigate, describe, explain, discover the quality or features of social influence that cannot be explained, measured, or illustrated through a quantitative approach.<sup>14,15</sup>

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

**The Existing Condition of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in the Indonesian Broadcasting Law:** The Indonesian Broadcasting Law states that the authority in making policies related to broadcasting is under the control of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as an independent institution, not intervened by any party, both from the government and investors. In carrying out these functions, duties, and authorities, the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission cannot be fully accommodated with the Broadcasting Law currently in effect. This is because the Broadcasting Law has not provided any regulations related to broadcasting developments carried out via digital devices or the internet.

The existence of broadcasting with digital equipment has not yet been regulated by a comprehensible law. This has implications for the inability of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission to take action against the perpetrators of violations carried out and distributed through the internet or digital platforms. The current Broadcasting Code of Conduct and Broadcast Program Standards, as a reference for giving sanctions based on the findings of the supervision, have not been able to anticipate broadcasting digitization.<sup>16</sup>

The position of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as a state institution is also unclear. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission is currently only referred to as a state auxiliary institution, which is a term for the position of the institution which cannot be determined with certainty whether it is included in the executive, legislative or judicial institutions. The unclear position of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as a state institution has also led to some implications. These implications, among other things, affect the authority of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, whether then its authority only covers the preparation

of broadcast regulatory substances or it also has the authority to issue permits for broadcasting.

Other problems also arise regarding the capabilities and competencies of members or commissioners of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission. The commissioners are regarded to lack mastery of the development of technology and information, so they are considered less able to keep up with the rapid development of digital-based broadcasting. The rapid development of information technology during the Covid-19 pandemic has provided an extremely broad source of information and communication from what society already has.<sup>17,18</sup>

These various existing conditions resulted in the ineffective implementation of the functions and duties of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in monitoring the dissemination of public information related to health during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission has not been able to act decisively against parties who have spread hoax news or information related to Covid-19. Within 2 years of the determination of the Covid-19 Pandemic (December 2019-March 2022), there is no data regarding law enforcement (giving sanctions) by the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission for broadcast media, including television, radio, newspapers, magazines, Whatsapp, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram accounts, and other platforms that have clearly spread hoax or invalid information related to Covid-19.

The Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission is considered not to take advantage of good coordination with the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in each province. The Regional Indonesian Broadcasting Commission should be an extension of the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in carrying monitoring related to broadcasting, especially related to Covid-19. This needs to be carried out, considering the spread of information is very quick and digital-based. It is necessary to expand the parties that carry out monitoring, so that it can run optimally, effectively, and efficiently.

**Optimizing the Role of the Commissioner of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as a Public Information Broadcasting Supervisory Institution regarding the Covid-19 Pandemic:** The development of digitizing information cannot be separated from the development of information technology.<sup>19</sup> The development of information technology is growing swiftly during the Covid-19 pandemic. Various information related to Covid-19 spread speedily and widely. The Indonesian Broadcasting Commission is required to take several strategic steps to optimize its roles and tasks regarding the supervision of health information, especially related to Covid-19.

First, strengthening the position of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission as a state institution which is not only a state auxiliary institution, but also an institution that is given the power and authority to take action regarding violations of unacceptable broadcasting activities. Denico Doly stated: "Efforts to strengthen the institutional organization of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission need to be carried out by making improvements within the body of the institution. This improvement is carried out by strengthening the institutional organization of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, changing the institutional structure, and providing legal instruments that support the performance of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission".<sup>16</sup>

Second, improving coordination and expanding the network of work areas to the regional level. The Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission is obliged to make the Regional Indonesian Broadcasting Commission an extension of its power in monitoring various broadcast media, especially information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. This is required to be carried out, considering that the geographical area of Indonesia is remarkably wide, with unequal regional conditions, so that broadcasting supervision will be sub-optimal, ineffective, and inefficient. The involvement of the Regional Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in the implementation of supervision will realize good governance in the field of broadcasting supervision.

Third, seeing the challenges in the development of digitalization of information, in addition to institutional strengthening, there should also be efforts to increase the capability of the Indonesia Broadcasting Commission to respond to these challenges. Capability is the ability to carry out tasks and functions, consisting of three interrelated elements: the capacity, authority, and competence of Human Resources (HR) that the apparatus must have to carry out its role effectively.<sup>20</sup> Furthermore, Eldyani & Wardoyo stated that: "the success of an institution or organization in achieving its objectives, one of which is influenced by the human resources possessed by the institution or organization. Therefore, these institutions or organizations need talented human resources."<sup>19,21</sup>

Based on this, the Commissioner of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, both at the central and regional levels, is obliged to improve their capabilities and competencies through various short training, attending seminars, webinars, focus group discussions, and education. The ability of the Commissioner of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission must continually be updated and upgraded to follow the development of information in the digital era.<sup>19</sup>

## CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation, it can be concluded that the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission has not been optimal in conducting supervision and law enforcement (giving sanctions) related to violations in the dissemination of hoax news or information related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Systematic and strategic efforts are required in optimizing the role of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission in monitoring broadcasting institutions, such as: strengthening the institutional organization of the Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, restructuring the relationship between the Central Indonesian Broadcasting Commission and the Regional Indonesian Broadcasting Commission, and increasing the competence and capability of the Commissioners, both at the national and regional levels.

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