

Revisiting the Inverted Pyramid in Online News: kompas.com and theborneopost.com

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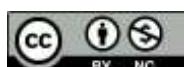
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A B S T R A C T

The rapid growth of online media has significantly transformed news production and dissemination practices. In the digital era, news is no longer produced exclusively by professional journalists, resulting in increasing variation in newswriting styles and structures. Consequently, many online news articles no longer strictly adhere to the traditional inverted pyramid structure. This study examines the application of the inverted pyramid structure in online news articles published by *Kompas.com* (Indonesia) and *The Borneo Post* (Malaysia). Using a quantitative content analysis approach, this research analyzes the structural patterns of hard news and soft news across both media outlets. The findings reveal notable variations in the composition of news structures. While the inverted pyramid model remains generally observable, hard news articles in both media do not fully conform to its classical form. The lead section contains the most essential information in considerable detail, the middle section tends to be relatively brief, and the concluding section still presents substantively relevant content. Similarly, soft news articles demonstrate a more flexible structure, characterized by attention-grabbing leads, less elaborated middle sections, and broader conclusions intended to generate emotional resonance or deeper reflection. These results indicate a shift from a rigid inverted pyramid model toward a more adaptive and reader-oriented structure in contemporary digital journalism.

Keywords:

Hard news; Inverted pyramid structure; Journalism; News structure; Soft news



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INTRODUCTION

The advancement of information and communication technology has profoundly influenced various aspects of human life, including patterns of social interaction and information exchange. Spatial and temporal constraints have become increasingly irrelevant, enabling information to circulate rapidly through digital media platforms. This transformation has significantly affected the journalism industry, where online media have emerged as dominant channels for news dissemination. As a result, news can now reach broad audiences almost instantaneously (Rosadi et al., 2022). In Indonesia, nearly all media organizations have adopted digital platforms to maintain their relevance in an increasingly competitive media environment. However, the rapid pace of technological change has not always been accompanied by adequate institutional readiness. Many journalists come from non-journalistic educational backgrounds and require additional training to meet professional standards of online newswriting. Consequently, weaknesses in linguistic precision, structural coherence, and journalistic rigor are often evident in online news content. Writing for online platforms differs fundamentally from writing for print, television, or radio,

particularly in terms of brevity, clarity, and audience engagement (Harahap, 2019).

Previous studies have extensively discussed news structures in mass media. Norambuena et al. (2020), found that breaking news stories tend to adhere more closely to the inverted pyramid structure than non-breaking news. Meanwhile, Canavilhas (2006), critically examined the relevance of the inverted pyramid in web journalism, arguing that the model was originally designed for print media with strict space limitations. In digital environments, readers navigate news content non-linearly, often through hyperlinks, prompting the emergence of alternative structural models such as the “tumbled pyramid,” which emphasizes flexibility and interactivity.

This study offers a comparative analysis of online journalism practices in two Southeast Asian countries Indonesia and Malaysia by examining how the inverted pyramid structure is applied in digital news production. Unlike prior research that primarily focuses on Western or English-language media contexts, this study highlights structural variations shaped by distinct media systems and journalistic cultures. Furthermore, it differentiates between hard news and



soft news, providing a more nuanced understanding of how news structures function across content types.

By employing quantitative content analysis, this research evaluates the distribution of 5W+1H elements across hundreds of news articles published by *Kompas.com* and *The Borneo Post*. Through this approach, the study seeks to assess whether the inverted pyramid remains a dominant structural model in online journalism or has evolved into a more adaptive form aligned with contemporary digital reading behaviors.

In Australian journalism literature, the inverted pyramid has been the dominant paradigm in teaching news writing techniques. Although the model remains widely used, recent editions of journalism textbooks have begun to offer alternative narrative-based approaches (Bungin, 2002). This shift suggests that, while effective in delivering news quickly and concisely, the inverted pyramid is sometimes viewed as limiting journalists' creativity. The model demands that information be arranged by importance rather than chronology, allowing news stories to present the main points right at the beginning. This ensures that newspapers or online media deliver the most relevant information to their audience. However, despite its efficiency, this technique may also lead to news articles that are monotonous and less engaging for readers.

Journalism in the digital era exhibits different patterns of news presentation compared to print media. Online news does not necessarily

follow the repetitive cycle seen in print publications or television broadcasts. The focus of this study is to analyze how news writing structures are applied in online media in Indonesia and Malaysia. This study focuses on online media in Indonesia and Malaysia because both countries share common historical, cultural, and linguistic roots, which also influence their journalistic styles and values. Both nations adopted press systems that originated from colonial traditions (Dutch and British, respectively) (Samsudin & Ibrahim, 2021)

Indonesia applies a liberal-participatory model, where digital media are relatively free and pluralistic, with many new news portals emerging after the reform era (Nugroho et al., 2012). According to the Indonesian Press Council, there are approximately 43,000 online media outlets in Indonesia, but only 168 are classified as professional media. This figure far surpasses the number of print, television, or radio outlets. Meanwhile, Malaysia follows a regulated-controlled model, in which online media have flourished precisely because mainstream media remain under state control (Abbott, 2011).

The selection of Indonesia and Malaysia as research objects is based on their contrasting yet interconnected characteristics: Indonesia represents a media model moving toward freedom and public participation, whereas Malaysia illustrates how state control persists despite advancements in communication technology. This study aims to evaluate the use of the inverted pyramid structure in two



news categories—hard news and soft news—across verified online media in Indonesia and Malaysia. The media selected for this study are kompas.com from Indonesia and theborneopost.com from Malaysia, with news samples collected from editions published between October 2021 and January 2022.

The main objective of this research is not only to analyze whether journalism still employs the inverted pyramid structure, but also to compare its application in online media in Indonesia and Malaysia. The research questions proposed in this study are:

1. How is the inverted pyramid structure applied in news articles?
2. What are the characteristics of hard news structures in Indonesian and Malaysian online media?
3. What are the characteristics of soft news structures in Indonesian and Malaysian online media?

By examining the structure of online news in both countries, this study seeks to understand how digital media developments influence the composition and structure of news in contemporary journalism.

News Classification

In journalism, news can generally be classified into two main types: hard news and soft news. Additionally, news can also be categorized based on its nature, the location of the event, and the content of the material. Hard news refers to information with high significance that attracts broad public attention,

such as fires, earthquakes, or riots. In contrast, soft news tends to focus on human interest aspects, such as celebrity weddings or seminars discussing social issues (Suherdiana, 2020).

Hard news is also known as straight news, which is an objective report on a current event containing important and interesting elements, without any subjective opinion from the journalist. In straight news, the element of actuality is crucial—not only in terms of the timing of the event but also regarding the novelty of the information, such as innovations, discoveries, or new ideas. The hallmark of straight news lies in its concise, direct, and straightforward delivery, while still adhering to the 5W+1H journalistic principles: who, what, when, where, why, and how. Moreover, hard news generally follows the inverted pyramid structure, where the most important information is presented at the beginning, followed by progressively less significant details. Another key feature of straight news is the inclusion of a dateline, which indicates the location of the event and the media source publishing the report—for example: “Jakarta, Kompas” (Al-Fandi, 2021).

On the other hand, soft news is considered a follow-up to hard news and aims to explore the underlying aspects that answer the questions of why and how. Therefore, soft news cannot stand alone without the initial context provided by hard news. The structure of soft news writing is more flexible than that of hard news, as it emphasizes not only the news value but also the appeal to the audience. In general, soft news



has a less formal structure and allows more flexibility in terms of timing and writing style. Based on its form, soft news can be divided into two categories: the news feature and the feature. A news feature incorporates journalistic elements with a more narrative approach, while a feature is typically more timeless and focuses on human interest stories, such as inspirational accounts, humorous tales, or emotionally driven reports that evoke empathy or outrage (Al-Fandi, 2021).

Inverted Pyramid News Structure

The inverted pyramid technique is a news writing method that places the most relevant information at the beginning of the text. This structure prioritizes answers to the fundamental journalistic questions—what, who, where, how, when, and why—followed by additional information arranged in decreasing order of importance. This model allows readers to grasp the core of the news within the first few paragraphs, with clear attribution and a formal yet straightforward writing style. Wahyudi (2020), emphasizes that this technique is primarily used for writing news with high informational value, such as hard news, soft news, straight news, and human interest stories.

Zaenuddin (2011), asserts that the inverted pyramid is the basic structure commonly applied in journalism, especially in writing straight news and features. Romli (2012), adds that this format prioritizes the delivery of the main information first, followed by increasingly less important details. In

general, news structure consists of several key elements: the headline, dateline, lead, body, and closing. This structure forms a cohesive anatomy of news, commonly referred to as the inverted pyramid style due to its presentation pattern that moves from general to specific or from climax to anticlimax (Al-Fandi, 2021).

Elements of News Structure :

1. Headline – The news title, often accompanied by a subheading, aims to provide a brief overview of the story and attract the reader's attention.
2. Timeline/Dateline – This section includes the name of the media outlet, the location, and the date of the event. It serves as a source identifier.
3. Lead – Also known as the news lead or intro, this is the opening paragraph that contains the core information. It is the most critical element, determining whether the news will capture the reader's interest.
4. Body – The main body of the news that elaborates on the lead, often explaining the "why" and "how" in greater detail. This section may also contain elements not covered in the lead.
5. Closing – The conclusion of the news piece, though not necessarily a summary. In the inverted pyramid structure, this part holds the least important information and can be omitted if space is limited. Thus, a straight news article must include at least the four primary elements: headline, lead, body, and closing.

The inverted pyramid structure has been a standard in



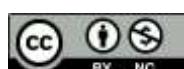
journalism since the late 19th century and remains a core technique in news production across various media platforms (J. B. Wahyudi, 1991). This model ensures that the most crucial information is conveyed first, allowing readers to quickly understand the essence of the story before delving into further details.

The Development and Composition of Online Media in Indonesia and Malaysia

Advancements in communication and information technology have significantly transformed the mass media industry. Initially, the internet was developed by the Pentagon in the 1960s as a long-distance communication system connecting various computer networks through modems and telephone lines. The development of online media began in Western countries, especially when The Wall Street Journal started offering services via Compuserve and provided financial information accessible online. In the 1990s, several newspapers in North America began utilizing the internet as part of web-based journalism. In Indonesia, the growth of online media was closely tied to the country's political dynamics. Initially, the internet was used as a communication tool by university students, which later evolved into a platform for disseminating information through various online portals. Social media, as part of the digital ecosystem, emerged through expressions and social projections produced by media professionals in the form of broadcasts, shows, and writings.

In Indonesia, the first internet connection was developed by Joseph Lukuhay within the academic sphere, with the University of Indonesia being one of the pioneers through the UINet initiative. The first online news outlet was Republika Online (www.republika.co.id) in August 1994, followed by Tempo.co and other digital media platforms. The main objective of online media was to accelerate the distribution of news to readers without relying on the traditional print process. Ongoing technological advancements have not only changed the methods of news delivery but have also given rise to new media that use the internet as their primary platform (Bungin, 2002).

The development of online journalism in Indonesia can be divided into several phases. The first phase (1995–1997) was marked by the arrival of the internet in Indonesia and its use in journalism through IPTEKNET, as well as the emergence of Internet Service Providers (ISPs), web services, and mailing lists such as Apakabar, Tempo Interaktif, and Kompas Cyber Media. The second phase (1998–2001) saw the dotcom boom and bust, and the revocation of the Press Publishing License (SIUPP) by Information Minister Yunus Yosfiah under President Habibie's administration, ushering in a new era of press freedom. The third phase (2002–present) marks the evolution of online journalism into multimedia or webcasting, incorporating features such as news feeds, podcasts, desktop alerts, and the distribution of news through smartphones and other mobile devices (Hadi, 2010).



Modern newspapers must now compete not only with television in delivering the fastest news but also with digital technology that integrates multimedia. With the internet, audiences can now access information in various formats—text, audio, and video—anytime and anywhere. Hence, multimedia is often referred to as mixed media. Meijer (2012), found that the emergence of new media has created an environment where virtual communication enhances social interaction and broadens public participation in the production and consumption of news.

In Malaysia, the development of new media has also been rapid. Former Home Minister Tan Sri Hamid Albar stated that internet-based news media can no longer be considered alternative media, as their popularity has surpassed that of traditional media. Conventional media have been forced to adapt to this trend by becoming more critical in their reporting to maintain their market share (Hayes, 2008). Riza (2012), noted that internet users in Indonesia grew dramatically over the past twelve years, from only two million in 2002 to about 63 million by the end of 2012, accounting for approximately 24.23% of the country's population. Most users are concentrated on the island of Java, followed by Sumatra, Sulawesi, Bali, and Kalimantan. The Internet Industry Outlook 2013 by the Indonesian Internet Service Providers Association showed relatively even user distribution, with internet penetration rates between 20–30% per region. It was estimated that by 2015, half of Indonesia's population

would be connected to the internet (Pangerapan, 2012).

Trends in internet usage also point to a shift in news consumption patterns. According to Nurhasim in an article on Tempo.co, Indonesian internet users spend an average of 35 hours per week, or about five hours per day, accessing various online platforms, including news websites, social media, blogs, and online videos. The Internet Industry Outlook 2013 survey found that the majority of internet users belong to the 12–34 age group, with 64% of users falling within this demographic. This age group is dominated by individuals who are just entering the workforce. Additionally, around 65% of internet users access it via smartphones, which are increasingly affordable and popular in the market (Pangerapan, 2012).

The popularity of digital media has fundamentally changed journalistic practices. The concept of "tomorrow" in news reporting has shifted to "now" or real-time, demanding that journalists deliver news as quickly as possible. Previously, news that happened today would only be available in print the next day, but now, news can be broadcast live as events unfold. Therefore, journalists in the digital age must be multi-skilled, capable of writing, live reporting, and using smartphones with front and rear cameras for recording. Nevertheless, this condition has led to a decline in the number of professionals trained in digital verification and data literacy, thereby creating ethical challenges, as speed is often prioritized over truth (Ramdani, 2014).



The internet has become an essential aspect of various sectors, including the media industry. Digital technology allows faster and more efficient access to information sources, significantly reducing the time needed for news production. New media possess distinct characteristics from traditional media, such as greater independence, decentralized information flow, and lower investment and operational costs. Banerjee (2008), stated that new media can support both one-way and multi-directional communication, offering greater opportunities for public interaction and participation. Given these features, it is unsurprising that internet-based media have gained popularity and are highly favored by civil society. According to Rosenstiel (2005), new media enable individuals to produce news independently, free from the constraints of government or corporate perspectives.

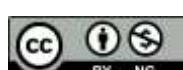
In Malaysia, new media developed rapidly in response to government control over mainstream media. As a result, the public turned to digital platforms perceived as more independent. The era of political reform in Malaysia demonstrated the critical role of digital media in disseminating information and shaping public opinion. A significant example is the emergence of the People's Justice Party (Parti Keadilan Rakyat), driven by political dynamics and information flow via the internet. With its low investment cost, the internet has become the primary platform for Malaysians seeking freedom of information and more transparent news access. Abbott (2011), asserts that the internet in

Malaysia has evolved into an arena of contestation—a political battleground that expands citizen participation and narrows the government's control over the flow of information.

Kompas.com and The Borneo Post

This study focuses on two online media outlets from Indonesia and Malaysia, namely *Kompas.com* and *The Borneo Post*. Both countries have long-established mass media institutions that have played significant roles in the development of national journalism. In Indonesia, *Kompas* is one of the largest media organizations, founded by Peter Kansius Ojong and Jakob Oetama in 1964. Initially, *Kompas* only published a daily newspaper, but with the advancement of technology and increasing information needs, the organization expanded by launching a television station, *Kompas TV*, on September 9, 2011. *Kompas TV* broadcasts not only news but also a variety of entertainment programs. Moreover, the presence of its online platform, *kompas.com*, has made *Kompas* a pioneer of digital journalism in Indonesia. This news portal was first launched on the internet on September 14, 1995, under the name *Kompas Online* (KOL), initially serving as a digital replica of the daily print edition.

The primary goal of establishing *Kompas Online* was to provide news access to readers in areas that were difficult to reach by the newspaper's physical distribution network. Through this digital platform, readers from eastern Indonesia and overseas could access *Kompas* news in real-time without having to wait several days for the



printed edition to arrive. In early 1996, Kompas Online changed its domain name to www.kompas.com to increase its digital visibility. Recognizing the growing potential of the digital space, on August 6, 1998, Kompas Online was developed into a separate business unit under PT Kompas Cyber Media (KCM). Since then, Kompas Online became widely known as KCM and began offering continuously updated news content throughout the day, moving beyond mere replication of the print edition. As internet usage in Indonesia increased, KCM grew rapidly, and on May 29, 2008, the news portal rebranded itself as kompas.com, reaffirming its commitment to delivering high-quality journalism amid the fast-paced digital information age (Kompas.com, 2023).

Meanwhile, in Malaysia, *The Borneo Post* is one of the largest English-language daily newspapers with wide distribution across East Malaysia and Brunei Darussalam. Established in 1978, it became a major competitor to other print media in Brunei, such as Pelita Brunei, Borneo Bulletin, Media Permata, and Brunei Times (before the latter ceased publication). *The Borneo Post* is recognized as the first English-language newspaper in East Malaysia to incorporate photo composition in its layout system and adopt offset printing technology, replacing conventional printing methods. The first edition was published on April 24, 1978, following the vision of the late Datuk Lau Hui Siong, with its name proposed by the late Datuk Robert Lau Hoi Chew, a former

Member of Parliament for Sibu and Deputy Minister of Federal Transport and Housing.

Today, the headquarters of The Borneo Post is located at Crown Towers, Kuching, although it originally started in the timber-industry town of Sibu. Its expansion began on October 29, 1979, with the opening of a branch in Kuching, followed by Miri in 1986, and then to various regions in Sabah, the Federal Territory of Labuan, and Brunei Darussalam. This expansion made *The Borneo Post* the English-language newspaper with the largest distribution in Malaysian Borneo and Brunei. In 2007, the newspaper expanded its reach further by launching a digital news portal aimed at engaging younger readers who are more active in the digital world. *Borneo Post Online* www.theborneopost.com is the online news portal of *The Borneo Post* – the largest English daily in Borneo. Currently, *The Borneo Post* operates five to seven printing facilities across Sarawak, Labuan, and Sabah. As of April 2023, the newspaper is printed daily in major cities such as Kuching, Sibu, and Miri in Sarawak, as well as Kota Kinabalu, Sandakan, Tawau, Labuan, and Lahad Datu in Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan. It is also widely distributed throughout Brunei Darussalam.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach using content analysis to examine the structural patterns of news articles in online media from Indonesia and Malaysia. The primary objective is to evaluate



the application of the inverted pyramid structure in hard news and soft news published by *Kompas.com* (Indonesia) and *The Borneo Post* (Malaysia). This methodological approach aligns with that employed by Cui & Liu (2016), who applied quantitative content analysis to investigate presentation patterns in digital news. However, this study differs in focus: whereas Cui and Liu examined how online news curates linked sources, the present research emphasizes the structural organization of information within news texts.

The unit of analysis in this study is online news articles from *kompas.com* and *theborneopost.com* that are categorized as hard news or soft news, published during the period from October 2021 to January 2022. The hard news examined in this study includes the national and global sections, while the soft news covers the sports and lifestyle sections. Samples were selected using purposive sampling based on several criteria: the article must clearly fall into the hard news or soft news category, be published within the specified timeframe, demonstrate high audience engagement, and originate from highly credible media outlets. A total of 400 news articles were analyzed, 200 news articles were collected from *kompas.com* and another 200 from *theborneopost.com*. For each media outlet, the sample consisted of 50 articles from the national section, 50 from the global section, 50 from the sports section, and 50 from the lifestyle section.

To analyze the structural patterns of the news articles, the study employed a coding sheet designed to

identify the distribution of information within the text. The coding categories include:

- Lead : the opening paragraph containing essential information (5W+1H),
- Bridge : a transitional section that connects the lead to the body, providing additional context,
- Body : the main content of the article, elaborating on the news with quotes from sources and supporting data,
- Conclusion (Ending/Leg) : a summarizing or interpretative section that reinforces or reflects on the key information.

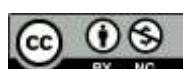
These categories were adapted from the framework developed by Cui & Liu (2016), who designed a coding sheet to identify structural patterns in online news.

The collected data were analyzed quantitatively using percentage and frequency distribution to identify dominant structural patterns. To ensure the reliability of the analysis, an intercoder reliability test was conducted using Cohen's Kappa, which measures the level of agreement between two coders. Through this approach, the study aims to identify distinctive patterns in digital news presentation and determine whether the structure of online news still adheres to the inverted pyramid model or has undergone significant variation

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Result Coding

The coding results indicate that the application of the 5W+1H elements in hard news and soft news



published on *Kompas.com* and *The Borneo Post* differs significantly. Based on the evaluation of the analyzed articles, hard news was found to be more consistent in fulfilling the 5W+1H elements than soft news.

In hard news published by *Kompas.com*, the accuracy of the four W elements (who, what, when, and where) reached 86%, which is higher

than the 69% observed in soft news. Meanwhile, *The Borneo Post* demonstrates a 4W accuracy of 89% in both hard news and soft news categories. However, when considering the overall accuracy of the 5W+1H elements, *Kompas.com* achieves only 71%, while *The Borneo Post* records a higher accuracy of 81%.

Table 1. Evaluation Results of 5W+1H Elements in *Kompas.com* and *The Borneo Post*

| | Indonesia (<i>Kompas.com</i>) | | Malaysia (<i>The Borneo Post</i>) | |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| | Hard News | Soft News | Hard News | Soft News |
| What | 100% | 100% | 100% | 100% |
| Who | 96% | 85% | 98% | 98% |
| When | 93% | 58% | 93% | 79% |
| Where | 58% | 36% | 65% | 79% |
| Why | 58% | 40% | 57% | 56% |
| How | 73% | 60% | 79% | 69% |
| Avg (Total) | 79% | 63% | 82% | 80% |
| Avg (4W) | 86% | 69% | 89% | 89% |
| Avg (hard news+soft news) | 71% | | 81% | |

Source: Calculated by the Author (2022)

This difference indicates that Malaysian online journalism continues to preserve a tradition of formal and informational news structures. This tendency is largely influenced by strict media regulations, which have cultivated a strong culture of self-censorship among Malaysian media practitioners (Ismail, 2021). In contrast, Indonesian journalism tends to be more flexible, narrative-driven, and adaptive to the preferences of digital readers. Major media organizations such as kompas.com have begun

developing convergent newsroom models that integrate cross-platform workflows and reinforce data-based verification practices (Lestari & Fitri, 2021). The success of newsroom convergence requires strengthening journalists' competencies, improving time management, and investing in newsroom technology, so that the quality of news can be maintained even as production becomes faster and more extensive (Iskandar et al., 2024)

Furthermore, the elements of "Why" and "How" appear least



frequently in both media, suggesting that online news prioritizes the rapid delivery of facts over in-depth analysis. Lestari & Fitri (2021), also note that editorial practices in the digital era have increasingly shifted from a quality-oriented to a speed- and quantity-oriented approach. Journalists are expected to produce stories at an accelerated pace, often without thorough verification. In many newsrooms, editors set daily targets of hundreds of news items to ensure higher visibility in search engines and increased website traffic.

In the context of soft news, the structure of information delivery is more flexible and does not always follow a rigid pattern like hard news. This affects the lower 5W+1H accuracy in soft news, as soft news often employs a more open-ended narrative approach. Overall, the coding results show that the structure of news presentation in online media does not fully adhere to the classic inverted pyramid model, particularly since the final sections of articles still contain important information that cannot be regarded as "less relevant." These findings will be further discussed in the analysis of news structures identified in this study.

b. Hard News Structure

The coding results of hard news from kompas.com and *The Borneo Post* indicate that the pattern of information delivery in online news still retains the basic characteristics of the inverted pyramid structure, albeit in a more flexible form.

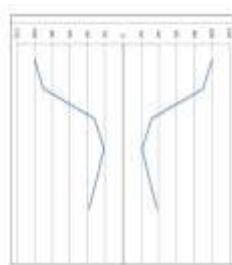


Figure 1.
kompas.com Hard
News Structure

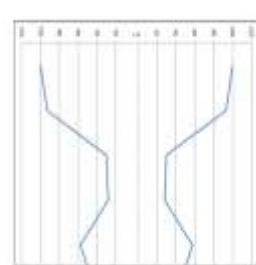


Figure 2. *The Borneo
Post* Hard News
Structure

From the 5W+1H evaluation, it was found that the lead in hard news remains the most dominant part, with an average of 50–60% of the total content containing the main information. This confirms that hard news continues to prioritize clarity and quick summarization at the beginning of the article.

However, another finding shows that the middle section of the article lacks extensive elaboration, comprising only around 20–30% of the total content. This indicates that although the main information is presented upfront, the elaboration in hard news is shorter compared to the classical inverted pyramid model. Interestingly, the conclusion still holds significant informational weight, rather than merely repeating previous points or adding minor details, as often assumed in the traditional inverted pyramid model.

Since the lead remains dominant, the structure of hard news can be divided into three main parts. The wide top reflects the dominance of the lead, where the core information (5W+1H) is comprehensively delivered at the beginning. The narrowing middle section illustrates the brief elaboration typical of digital hard news, as readers tend to seek quick



access to information without needing to read lengthy explanations. Meanwhile, the widening bottom section indicates that the conclusion still provides substantial information, contrasting the assumption that the end section only contains less relevant details.

The inverted pyramid structure in hard news during the digital era has undergone modifications. In digital journalism, readers seek fast news but still expect additional analysis or insight into the implications of the story. This explains why online hard news still includes significant supplementary information at the end, making the structure no longer strictly follow the traditional inverted pyramid, where the end is assumed to be the least important.

This phenomenon illustrates the emergence of a new paradigm in digital newswriting, commonly referred to as the “modified inverted pyramid” (Norambuena et al., 2020). Within this structure, the essential information is positioned at the outset; however, the concluding section no longer presents secondary facts but rather offers contextual elaboration or light analytical commentary aimed at sustaining reader engagement.

A comparative observation reveals that *The Borneo Post* maintains a more linear and informational format, while kompas.com demonstrates a greater degree of adaptability, incorporating narrative elements in the closing section. This divergence reflects distinct media cultural characteristics: Malaysian journalism remains hierarchical and governed by rigid

editorial systems, whereas Indonesian journalism tends to be more dynamic and publicly oriented (Hidayat et al., 2023).

These findings correspond with the conclusions of Hase et al., (2023), who assert that the platformization of online news necessitates more efficient yet engaging textual structures. Accordingly, the traditional inverted pyramid has evolved into a more functional, reader-centered model tailored for digital audiences. In harmony with this evolution, Kulkarni et al. (2023) contend that contemporary online journalism should embrace the principles of “slow journalism”—a narrative, contextual, and empathetic approach that ensures news remains both immediately accessible and socially meaningful.

c. Soft News Structure



Figure 4.
Kompas.com Soft
News Structure

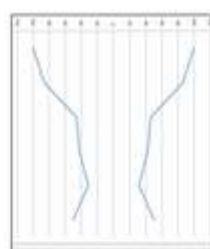


Figure 5. The Borneo
Post Soft News
Structure

The coding results of soft news from *Kompas.com* and *The Borneo Post* indicate that its presentation pattern differs from that of hard news.

If in hard news the lead is highly dominant and contains almost all the main information, in soft news the opening remains important but is not as dominant. The analysis results



show that the introduction in soft news covers around 30–40% of the total content, which is still more than the traditional inverted pyramid model, yet more concise than in hard news.

Interestingly, the middle section of soft news tends to narrow, contrasting with the classical pyramid model which usually features a stable progression of the story. This narrowing indicates that the information in soft news does not always build toward a climax in the middle, but instead flows directly to a broader ending. The final section, which accounts for about 20–30% of the total content, often includes reflections, engaging quotes, or summaries that reinforce the emotional impact of the story.

Information in soft news is presented more variably compared to hard news. The wider top section reflects an engaging introduction that captures readers' attention, often through narrative or emotionally appealing openings. The narrowing middle shows that the elaboration is not always lengthy, as in traditional feature stories, but more concise and directed toward the conclusion. The broader bottom section suggests that the conclusion in soft news still carries substantial weight, often in the form of reflections or emotionally resonant endings.

In the digital era, soft news presentation tends to involve a higher level of emotional engagement compared to hard news. Therefore, the structure of soft news does not always follow the inverted pyramid or classical feature story models, but is more dynamic and aligned with the

preferences of online news consumption.

When compared to the study by Norambuena et al. (2020), the soft news model identified in this study differs from the classical inverted pyramid structure. Norambuena et al. found that non-breaking news exhibits greater structural variation but typically maintains a longer middle section for elaboration. However, this study finds that the middle section of soft news actually narrows, indicating that the narrative does not always develop in the center, but places greater emphasis on the beginning and end of the article.

Additionally, the study by Canavilhas (2006), in "*Web Journalism: From the Inverted Pyramid to the Tumbled Pyramid*" also emphasizes that digital journalism is increasingly moving away from the inverted pyramid structure toward more adaptive models. This further supports the findings of this study, which reveal that soft news in online media no longer follows traditional structures but adopts more flexible patterns, in line with the dynamic nature of online news consumption. These findings also align with previous research asserting that digital news structures are continuously evolving, moving beyond rigid classical models toward formats that better suit audience engagement patterns in the digital age.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the inverted pyramid structure remains present in online news production on *Kompas.com* and *The Borneo Post*, albeit in a more flexible



and adaptive form. In hard news articles, essential information continues to be concentrated in the lead section; however, the middle sections are relatively concise, while the concluding sections still convey substantively relevant information. This pattern reflects a modified inverted pyramid rather than the classical model in which the final section contains only marginal details. In contrast, soft news articles exhibit a more fluid structure, with attention-oriented introductions, compressed middle sections, and expanded endings designed to create narrative depth or emotional engagement.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to digital journalism scholarship by illustrating that the inverted pyramid is no longer a rigid structural convention in online media. Instead, news structures have evolved into adaptive formats that accommodate digital audiences' reading behaviors prioritizing immediacy while maintaining contextual or emotional significance in concluding sections. These findings underscore that digital journalism has reshaped not only the speed and distribution of news but also its internal textual composition.

Practically, the results highlight the need for journalists and editors to balance production speed with informational depth, particularly by preserving the "why" and "how" elements that tend to be underrepresented in online news. Future research may expand the scope of media outlets examined, incorporate audience reception analysis, or explore the influence of algorithm-driven newsroom practices

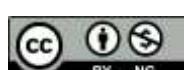
on news structure. Such inquiries are essential for advancing understanding of how journalistic conventions continue to evolve within the digital media ecosystem.

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