The Rise of a Pandemic-Related Writing Style in the News Media

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Abstract
This study examines journalistic writing styles in Covid 19 pandemic reporting on Malaysian online news portals through content analysis. The discussion is divided into research questions, such as (1) what is the pattern of the news writing style used in Covid 19 reporting on online news portals, (2) how *Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* source and frame news on pandemic Covid 19. Content analysis were used to examine trends in the use of writing patterns. The study found that the writing patterns in covid 19 news delivery were descriptive, interpretative, and data journalism.
Keywords: News Writing Style, Descriptive, Interpretive, Infographic, Covid 19, Online News Portal.

Introduction
The journalism industry's landscape has changed dramatically, and it continues to encounter new challenges and opportunities as it progresses toward technological modernity. The journalism industry is expanding in tandem with the advancement of technology. Digital news includes the approach in which news articles are written. The style of news writing is an essential component in the field of journalism. Yang et al (2019) shows that linguistic features and news writing structure (DeAngelo & Yegiyan, 2019) significantly impact news quality.
The internet and technology have changed the form of news writing in digital news portals. According to Greenberg (2016), adding specialist skills in text selection and structuring helps create consistency of voice in online news writing. Furthermore, the news writing style in online news welcomes new approaches to the journalistic narrative by employing digital resources to animate literary journalism techniques (Jacobson, Marino & Gutsche, 2016). The advent of digital journalism has impacted news writing, specifically journalists' ability to engage and communicate with the audience (Haugaard, 2018).
Soares (2020) defines news writing as raising awareness and identifying "unidentified story elements" (Willman, 2020). In addition, the news writing style in online news provides a civic role by informing and enlightening society (Hassan, 2020). Thus, understanding the news

writing style is critical because it enables new chances by leveraging the internet, its platforms, and its capacity to create different types of news writing (Maniou, Stark & Touwen, 2020).

Digital news demonstrates that digital journalism, or online information, has emerged as a significant and rising news source. The way report is created and represented has also evolved. The growth of the internet has also impacted how information and news about coronavirus disease are disseminated (Covid-19). Covid -19 has gained a great deal of attention on online news sites.

The style of news writing used in communicating Covid-19 news to the public is essential. Thus, news writing patterns have been influenced by digital communication, particularly the rising interconnection between verbal output and images (Facchinetti, 2021) and their choice of article angle, tone, and point of view (Pauly, 2014).

The pattern of reporting about the Covid-19 pandemic is significant in transmitting information or news to the audience. According to Knight (2015), the value of visual appeals, such as infographics, charts, stats maps, graphs, number pull quotes, or tables, is greater than that of any other kind of journalism. The development of news writing style because the effect of news portals is a result of information overload (Oh et al., 2021; Chen & Masullo Chen, 2020), which has resulted in increasingly urgent demands for news literacy on "fake news," misinformation, and disinformation (Johnson et al., 2021).

The researcher's goal in conducting this study was to:

(a) explore the style of news writing in Malaysia's digital news portal by identifying the patterns used by journalists when delivering Covid 19 news online.

(b) this study aims to explore how differently *Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* frame news writing on pandemic covid 19.

Background of News Writing Style in Malaysia

News writing style includes the form, organisation, and norms of journalistic writing (Johnson-Cartee, 2005). Initially published in Penang in 1805, the Prince of Wales Island Gazette was Malaya's first newspaper (as Malaysia was known before 1965). Other newspapers followed, including The Malacca Observer, The Perak Pinoor, and The Malaya Mail. Commercial news and advertisement made up a sizable portion of the newspaper content (Yusoff et al., 2006).

As a result of the rise of social media, the pattern of news writing is transforming. An analysis of data by year revealed that journalists used a descriptive writing pattern in 1987, according to Zuwairi et al. (2016). No proof exists that journalists use interpretive components while conveying specific news articles. "In 1997, *Utusan Malaysia* journalists utilised a mixed (descriptive and interpretive) writing pattern at a rate of 6.2 per cent, which grew to 8.8 per cent in 2014." In contrast to *Berita Harian*, the percentage of people who employ mixed writing styles was 3.8 per cent in 1997 and 16.2 per cent in 2014. *Berita Harian* has grown significantly." (p. 311)

The development of news writing demonstrates that journalists employed a diverse writing pattern to cover news between 1997 and 2014. Furthermore, according to Zuwairi and Normah (2017), "two (2) elements influence the changes in writing styles that occur in Malaysia as technology advances: internal factors and external factors." (p.455).

Inverted Pyramid Versus Narrative News Style of Writing in Online Journalism
The inverted pyramid news writing style is referred to as "simple uncomplicated style" (Kerrick, 1959), it is seen as an essential part of objectivity (Thomson et al., 2008) in news reporting, and it emphasises the importance of news (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016; Jorge, 2008). The inverted pyramid news writing style is intended to improve the quality of news communication (Pottker, 2003). The inverted pyramid style pattern begins with a lead sentence that includes the five Ws (who, what, when, where, and why) of the topic events as well as the H (how) (Ryan & Tankard, 1977).

Several types of research have been conducted to understand better the consumers of the inverted news writing style in news reporting. Norambuena, Horning, and Mitra (2020) investigated the structural differences between breaking and non-breaking news by evaluating how well a news article complies with the pyramid structure format. Furthermore, Rafiee et al. (2018) study if the textual organisation of news texts varies across cultural contexts. While Zuwairi et al (2016) conducted an inverted pyramid study, concentrating on the reporter writing from information delivery, specifically in election news. Previous research indicates that descriptive writing is commonly employed in political news reporting (Olsson & Nord, 2015; Zuwairi et al., 2016).

The phenomenon of evolving writing patterns began to change. Because of the advancement of digital technologies, the news writing style has transformed from being primarily descriptive (inverted pyramid) to becoming more interpretive (narrative) (Soontjens, 2019). As "objectified journalism" became the standard in the American newsroom at the beginning of the twentieth century, the narrative style was regarded as more subjective and novelistic (Hartsock, 1998). Even in the United States, research, notably on political news, has revealed that interpretive journalism (i.e., trivia, entertainment, and opinions) has served as a substitute for reporting and has shifted toward personal and literary forms (Houston, 2008). The use of interpretive journalism in today's news has gradually increased (Soontjens, 2019).

Writing news in the form of an inverted pyramid increases the communicative quality of a journalistic product by presenting the most critical information at the top and making it easy for readers to recognise what type of information reporters want to give (Po ttker, 2013). (Stuart, 2017; Zhang et al., 2014). Furthermore, by employing an inverted pyramid style, the audience spends less time reading stories while remembering them more than narrative stories (DeAngelo & Yegiyan, 2018). Social media news, in particular, is quick, simple, and viral (Farmer, 2012). However, while presenting the narrative style of online news writing as storytelling, Bird (1998) emphasised a danger of narrative writing replacing rational, analytical, and critical analysis in the news.

Reporting on the Covid-19 outbreak
Information about the Corona Covid-19 epidemic was widely covered in online media, especially news portals, from early 2020 until today. The global and extensive coverage of the Corona COVID-19 epidemic includes content, news consumer behaviour, and news production.

How drew researchers examining the Corona Virus in the news to Covid 19 reportage in online media. According to prior research, news studies on Covid 19 include a wide range of topics,

including fake news in reporting (Yang et al., 2021; ang & Tian, 2021; Shrivastava et al., 2020) and disinformation (Caldarelli et al., 2021; Shim, Lee & Ahn, 2021). Based on the current findings, the study of Covid 19 reporting on online media focuses on reporting ethics.

The covid 19 reporting study also looks at content, audiences, platforms, and production techniques (Ceide, López, & lvarez, 2020). Furthermore, recent research has found Covid 19 reporting to be highlighted in studies on the role of news impact on news consumers (Hoewe, Brownell & Wiemer, 2021). Aside from that, the COVID-19 news reporting study discusses the issue of comparative analysis of online news content objectivity (Pristianita et al., 2021).

In disseminating information and news, news writing plays a crucial role in understanding news content. Li's (2021) research focuses on the text on the web-based on the covid 19 news data. At the same time, the study focused on employing a semantic knowledge network to model, structure, and store COVID-related news stories (Al-Obeidat et al., 2021). Furthermore, Papa and Maniou (2020) examine the role of narrative news style in researching the constructed meanings associated with this issue and interpreting users' perception of news content uploaded on social networks in understanding news writing in covid-related news 19.

This study fills a journalistic gap on Covid 19 in the age of digital journalism. There is a lack of research on news writing and reporting on online news portals, notably in Malaysia.

Methodology
The researchers conducted a quantitative content analysis in which the data were descriptively presented. One hundred eighty units of analysis were subjected to content analysis, focusing on Covid 19 news in Malaysia. The study examined articles from *Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* online news portals from July 19 to July 23, 2021. The researchers chose *Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* because these two online news portals are among Malaysia's Top 30 news portals that readers prefer.

Findings
News writing style
Table 1 shows the overall frequency of news writing patterns in Covid 19 news. There were 118 descriptive news stories, 50 interpretive descriptive writing patterns, and 13 items of data journalism news style of writing

Table 1
The total frequency of overall news writing patterns

News writing style	Frequency	Percentage
Descriptive	118	65.5
Interpretive	50	27.7
Data journalism (infographic/ video)	13	7.2
Total	180	100

The study's findings reveal three types of news writing styles *Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* employed in their coverage of Covid 19 on the online news portal. The graphic method and visualisation components are used to explain the data journalism writing pattern.

The use of data journalism in reporting Covid 19 on the online news site helps readers understand how the data is acquired, why the information is relevant, and what the data signify to the individuals they represent. McBride (McBride, 2020). The data journalism writing style is likewise tied to interaction time, and visual narratives can reflect role conformity and conflict in ways that verbal narratives cannot (Thomson, 2018).

Table 2 shows the frequency values of writing pattern components found in *Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* news portals. According to the statistics, the frequency of elements in news writing style in Covid 19 reporting indicates the descriptive characteristic of news writing style with 92 *Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* 26 articles. *Malay Mail* has 24 pieces in its interpretive news writing style, whilst *Malaysia Kin*i has 36. The last news writing style selected by journalists is data journalism. *Malaysia Kini* uses five articles of news writing style data, while *Malay Mail* uses eight pieces.

Comparative of Malaysia Kini and Malay Mail

Table 2
The contrast in the writing style between the news portal news Covid -19

News writing style	Malaysia Kini	MalayMail
Descriptive	92	26
Interpretive	36	14
Data Journalism (infographic/ video)	5	8
Total	133	48

The total frequency *between Malaysia Kini* and *Malay Mail* did not differ considerably based on the descriptive findings. According to the study results, the descriptive news writing style is frequently utilised in reporting on Covid 19 on online news portals. Meanwhile, both platforms disseminate the news through journalism data writing.

Data from a content analysis study revealed improvements in writing patterns in reporting on online news portals. Journalists present information using the data writing pattern of journalism. According to content analysis quantitative, journalists are starting to choose writing patterns on whether they want to provide information in descriptive, interpretative, or data journalism form of news writing.

Discussion and Conclusion

The news writing pattern investigated is journalistic news writing in descriptive, interpretative, or data journalism writing patterns during a specific timeframe. Overall, the content analysis method discovered that the writing pattern in Covid 19 news maintained descriptive use and improved news representation by employing data journalism with video and graphical representation. Improvements in news writing style have been observed since 1997, since the emergence of technology, particularly the Internet in Malaysia (Zuwairi et al., 2016).

Journalists use descriptive news writing style to present news about the Covid Pandemic -19 because descriptive news writing style focuses on what, when, where, and who, as well as verified facts (Salgado and Strömbäck, 2012). Aside from that, Covid 19 reporting is breaking news. According to Norambuena, Horning, and Mitra (2020), breaking news reporting is more appropriate to employ descriptive or inverted pyramid news styles in reporting.

The Pandemic Covid 19 news also provided a new style to the news. Covid 19 news is presented in descriptive or interpretative news writing style and data journalism with infographics and visualisation. According to Lu. et al (2020), the news writing style's development towards data journalism offers significantly more information. Since the development of the news writing style in digital journalism promotes interaction, hypertextuality, and multimedia (Palau-Sampio and Sánchez-Garca, 2020). Finding demonstrates that data journalism of news writing style can provide the reader with a more engaging visual than just the facts.

The news writing style of Pandemic has developed. When data journalism is combined with engaging headlines, visual news, and unique graphic representation, news reporting can benefit from a massive network of traffic that can be utilised to send information to readers while also attracting clickbait in digital media. Furthermore, prior research has indicated that interactivity encourages the audience to become more engaged in their news consuming experiences (Chung & Nah, 2009). Moreover, the study's findings regarding the evolution of this writing pattern are consistent with DeAngelo and Yegiyan (2019). They demonstrated that the development of news writing in online news portals influences both reading time and memory.

As indicated by the study's findings, both news portals prefer to employ descriptive news writing style in reporting Covid 19 since it allows journalists to avoid misinformation or misinterpretation and the spread of fake news. Descriptive or inverted pyramid news writing style is known as "basic straightforward style" (Kerrick, 1959), and it is regarded as an essential element of objectivity (Thomson et al., 2008) in news reporting, emphasising the importance of the news (Harcup & O'Neill, 2016; Jorge, 2008). The inverted pyramid news writing style is used to increase the quality of news communication (Pottker, 2003).

Finally, the development of news writing style during the epidemic Covid 19 contributes to the consistency and diversity of news reporting in the digital news portal. The study's findings highlighted the necessity of media literacy among readers, particularly those who utilise digital media such as social media and news portals.

A study of the development of news writing style opens up new perspectives on journalism. If, in the past, writing centred on lengthy news writing styles, the news writing style has evolved in digital journalism. The development of the news writing style in reporting epidemic Covid-19 involves refining news stories by gathering, organising, evaluating, writing, and visualising data. Also of note, while the development of news writing style can assist journalists in providing the analysis and insight required to make sense of the key themes on Covid 19 through applying the data journalism pattern. It can give people the impression that the news media does not provide the facts on their own.

Many aspects of research on news writing style in Malaysia remain to be investigated, such as the advancement of news writing style in Malaysian media organisations and the suggestion of acceptable and practical models for incorporating news writing style into academic education.

Furthermore, more in-depth research of the ethical practice of news writing style in digital news portals is required. Readers are concerned about the credibility of their information sources as the news writing style evolves. It is crucial to investigate the audience's reaction to news writing style. As a result, the study's findings should be interpreted and generalised, considering the chosen news writing style and target audience.

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