

Framing Analysis Of The Kim Soo-Hyun And Kim Sae-Ron Case Reporting In Tempo.Co Media

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to analyze Tempo.co's news framing of the case involving Kim Sae-ron and Kim Soo-hyun, specifically regarding the celebrity scandal and alleged child grooming. This research is motivated by the significant public attention to the case and the role of online media in shaping public perception through news construction. The focus of this study is to examine how Tempo.co frames reality through issue selection, language use, and emphasis on certain aspects in its reporting. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach using the framing analysis method of William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. The research subjects were 10 Tempo.co news articles published between March and April 2025 that discussed the Kim Sae-ron and Kim Soo-hyun cases. Data were collected through literature and documentation studies, then analyzed using framing devices and reasoning devices to identify core ideas, symbols, narratives, and reasoning patterns constructed by the media. The results of this study indicate that Tempo.co frames the Kim Sae-ron and Kim Soo-hyun cases not only as celebrity scandals but also as social issues related to power relations, exploitation, and child protection. In terms of framing devices, Tempo.co emphasizes the use of dramatic diction, the selection of specific facts, and an emphasis on the controversy developing in the public sphere. Meanwhile, in terms of reasoning devices, Tempo.co constructs a narrative that leads readers to understand the case as a broader issue than mere entertainment gossip, namely as a social issue concerning morality, law, and public awareness. This study demonstrates that Tempo.co's framing demonstrates the media's role not only as a conveyor of information but also as an actor constructing social reality through a particular perspective. The coverage of this case demonstrates the link between journalistic practices, the formation of public opinion, and the economic logic of media within the digital news industry.

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital media has transformed the way information is produced, distributed, and consumed by society. Online media platforms no longer merely serve as channels for information dissemination, but also play an active role in constructing social realities through news framing and narrative selection. In the digital era, news

organizations compete to capture audience attention by presenting issues with high news value, emotional appeal, and viral potential. As a result, media coverage of public figures and celebrity scandals has become one of the most consumed categories of online news content (Ramadhina et al., 2025). The South Korean entertainment industry has gained global popularity over the past two decades through the international

success of K-pop music, films, and television dramas. However, behind its global achievements, the industry has also faced various controversies involving celebrities, including scandals, mental health issues, and public scrutiny. These controversies often receive extensive media attention because celebrities occupy a symbolic position in popular culture and public discourse. Media representations of such cases significantly influence how audiences perceive the individuals involved and interpret the broader social issues associated with the events (Nurhablisyah, 2022).

One of the most discussed controversies of 2025 involved South Korean actor Kim Soo-hyun and actress Kim Sae-ron. The case attracted significant public attention in various countries, including Indonesia, and generated widespread discussion on social media and online news platforms. The controversy was particularly significant because it involved allegations of power relations, celebrity reputations, and public concerns about child abuse. As public interest grew, media organizations continued to report on developments surrounding the case, contributing to the formation of public perceptions and interpretations.

Among Indonesian online media outlets, Tempo.co emerged as one of the most active platforms covering the case. Known for its journalistic credibility and analytical reporting style, Tempo.co published numerous articles addressing various aspects of the controversy. Rather than simply presenting factual information, the outlet chose a particular perspective, emphasized specific facts, and constructed a narrative that shaped readers' understanding of the issue. This process demonstrates the importance of framing in news production, as media organizations inevitably select certain aspects of reality while excluding others.

Framing theory provides a useful framework for understanding how media construct meanings around social events. According to Gamson and Modigliani, media framing involves the organization of information into interpretive packages that guide audience understanding of an issue (Firman, 2022).

Through framing devices and reasoning devices, journalists highlight particular themes, symbols, and explanations that influence public interpretation. Consequently, news reporting cannot be viewed as a neutral reflection of reality but rather as a socially constructed representation shaped by journalistic choices and institutional considerations.

Previous studies have examined media framing in political, social, and criminal issues. Indainanto et al. (2022) investigated the framing of sexual violence cases in Indonesian online media using the Gamson and Modigliani model. Other studies have analyzed framing practices in political reporting, corruption cases, and public controversies. While these studies contribute significantly to framing scholarship, limited research has focused on how Indonesian online media frame international celebrity controversies, particularly cases involving allegations of child grooming and power imbalances within the entertainment industry.

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This gap is important because celebrity scandals have increasingly become a central component of digital media content. Such cases not only attract public attention but also reveal how media organizations balance journalistic values, audience interests, and commercial pressures. Within the context of media economics, celebrity-related controversies often function as highly profitable content due to their ability to attract readership, increase engagement, and generate digital traffic. Therefore, examining media framing of celebrity scandals provides insights into the relationship between journalistic practices and economic considerations in contemporary online media.

This study contributes to the existing literature by analyzing how Tempo.co framed the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron case using the framing model developed by William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on political or criminal issues, this research

investigates the framing of an international celebrity controversy within the Indonesian media context. Furthermore, the study integrates perspectives from media economics and social construction theory to provide a broader understanding of how online media construct meanings around globally significant entertainment issues. Therefore, this study aims to answer the following research question: *How does Tempo.co frame the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron case based on the framing model of William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani?*

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This study contributes to the existing literature by analyzing how Tempo.co framed the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron cases using a framing model developed by William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. Unlike previous studies that primarily focused on political or criminal issues, this study investigates the framing of international celebrity controversies in the Indonesian media context. Furthermore, this study integrates perspectives from media economics and social construction theory to provide a broader understanding of how online media construct meaning around globally significant entertainment issues. Therefore, this study aims to answer the question of How does Tempo.co frame the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron cases based on the framing model of William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Framing Theory

Framing theory explains how media organizations select, organize, and emphasize certain aspects of reality while excluding others when presenting information to the public (Fatra et al., 2024). Rather than functioning as neutral channels of

communication, media institutions actively construct meanings through decisions regarding issue selection, source usage, language choice, and narrative structure. As a result, audiences do not receive reality in its entirety but rather a mediated version shaped by journalistic and institutional considerations.

The concept of framing was initially introduced by Erving Goffman (Indainanto & Nasution, 2020), who described frames as interpretive structures that help individuals understand and organize social experiences. In media studies, framing refers to the process through which journalists define problems, identify causes, make moral judgments, and suggest possible solutions regarding particular issues. Through this process, media organizations influence how audiences perceive events, individuals, and social phenomena.

Framing has become one of the most widely used approaches in communication studies because it enables researchers to examine the relationship between media representation and public understanding. The theory assumes that the presentation of information is never entirely objective, as every news story inevitably reflects specific perspectives and values. Consequently, framing analysis allows scholars to investigate how meanings are constructed and communicated within media texts.

William A. Gamson dan Andre Modigliani

William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani developed a framing model that views media discourse as a collection of interpretive packages used to organize and present social issues. According to this perspective, news reports contain central organizing ideas that provide meaning to events and guide audience interpretations. These interpretive packages function as frameworks through which media institutions define and explain social reality.

Gamson and Modigliani identify two major analytical components: framing devices and reasoning devices. Framing devices refer to symbolic tools used by media organizations to highlight particular meanings within news coverage. These devices include metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions, and visual images that help audiences understand issues from a specific perspective. Through framing devices,

media organizations emphasize selected aspects of reality while minimizing others (Dr. Mulyana, 2002).

Reasoning devices, on the other hand, focus on the logical explanations embedded within media narratives. These devices consist of roots, which identify the causes of a problem, and appeals to principle, which provide moral or ethical justifications for particular interpretations. Through reasoning devices, media organizations construct causal relationships and value judgments that influence audience perceptions of events (Muji Rahayu et al., 2018).

The Gamson and Modigliani model is particularly relevant for analyzing controversial issues because it reveals how media organizations construct narratives that shape public understanding. By examining both framing devices and reasoning devices, researchers can identify dominant frames and uncover the ideological assumptions underlying media representations.

Social Construction of Reality

The social construction of reality perspective, developed by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, argues that reality is not simply discovered but continuously created through social interaction and communication processes (Ramadhani et al., 2025). Knowledge, meanings, and interpretations emerge through collective experiences and become institutionalized within society. Media institutions play a significant role in this process because they function as major sources of information and symbolic representations.

Within contemporary society, news media contribute to the construction of social reality by determining which events deserve attention and how those events should be interpreted. Through repetitive coverage and narrative consistency, media organizations influence public perceptions regarding social issues, public figures, and cultural values. Consequently, media representations often become dominant frameworks through which audiences understand complex events.

In case involving Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron illustrates how celebrity controversies can become important media commodities. Extensive news coverage not only informs audiences about developments surrounding the case but also contributes to broader processes of meaning construction, public opinion formation, and audience engagement. In this study, Framing Theory is used to identify how

Tempo.com constructs and emphasizes particular interpretation of the case through its news coverage. The Social Construction of Reality perspective explains how these framed narratives contribute to shaping public understanding of the controversy, while Media Economics provides insight into the commercial motivations that encourage extensive coverage of celebrity-related issues. Together, these three theoretical perspectives complement one another in explaining how media construct, disseminate, and economically sustain representations of controversial events in contemporary digital media. Consequently, analyzing media framing of celebrity scandals provides valuable insights into the interaction between journalistic practices, social reality construction, and economic motivations within contemporary digital media.

Media Economics

Media economics examines the relationship between media production and economic interests within communication industries. In digital media environments, audience attention has become a valuable economic resource. Online news organizations increasingly depend on website traffic, advertising revenue, audience engagement, and algorithmic visibility to sustain their operations. Consequently, news production is influenced not only by journalistic considerations but also by market demands (Nurwulan & Nurul, 2020).

Celebrity-related news represents one of the most profitable categories within digital journalism because it attracts substantial public attention and generates high levels of audience engagement. Controversies involving public figures often produce significant numbers of clicks, comments, and social media interactions, making such content commercially attractive for online media organizations (Prastya & Yusuf, 2024).

The concept of the attention economy suggests that media institutions compete for audience attention in increasingly crowded information environments. Within this context, celebrity scandals become strategic content capable of maintaining readership and maximizing digital visibility. The economic value of celebrity news is therefore closely linked to its capacity to attract public curiosity and sustain audience interest over extended periods.

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METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze how Tempo.co framed the news coverage of the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron case. A qualitative approach was selected because the research focused on understanding meanings, interpretations, and media constructions embedded within news texts rather than measuring variables quantitatively. The study aimed to explore how Tempo.co constructed social reality through specific framing strategies in its reporting of the controversy. The research object consisted of news articles published by Tempo.co concerning the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron case. The unit of analysis was the textual content of online news articles that discussed allegations, public responses, and developments related to the controversy. A purposive sampling technique was used to select news articles that were directly relevant to the research objectives. Based on these criteria, ten news articles published between March and April 2025 were chosen as the primary data source.

Data collection was conducted through documentation and literature study. Documentation involved collecting, reading, and categorizing news articles published on the Tempo.co website. Meanwhile, the literature study was carried out by reviewing books, scientific journal articles, and previous studies related to framing theory, media economics, social construction of reality, celebrity scandals, and child grooming. These sources were used to strengthen the theoretical framework and support the interpretation of findings.

The analytical framework employed in this study was the framing model developed by William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. According to this model, media framing can be identified through two major analytical components: framing devices and

reasoning devices. Framing devices include symbolic elements such as metaphors, exemplars, catchphrases, depictions, and visual images that are used to emphasize particular meanings within media texts. Reasoning devices consist of roots and appeals to principle, which explain causal relationships and moral justifications embedded in news narratives.

The analysis process was conducted in several stages. First, the selected news articles were collected and organized according to publication date and relevance to the research topic. Second, each article was carefully examined to identify dominant themes, issue emphasis, and narrative patterns. Third, the analysis began by identifying the framing devices, including metaphors, catchphrases, exemplars, depictions, and visual images used in each news article. Fourth, the reasoning devices, consisting of roots and appeals to principle, were identified to examine the causal explanations and moral justifications presented in the news narratives. Fifth, the identified framing and reasoning devices were interpreted based on the Gamson and Modigliani framework to determine the dominant frame constructed by Tempo.co. Finally, conclusions were drawn by relating the identified frames to the broader perspectives of framing theory, social construction of reality, and media economics in explaining the media representation of the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron controversy.

To ensure the credibility of the findings, data interpretation was supported by theoretical triangulation through the use of framing theory, social construction of reality, and media economics perspectives. This approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of how media narratives were

constructed and how they contributed to the formation of public perceptions regarding the case.

RESULT

Frame 1: The Case as a Child Grooming and Power Relations Issue

The analysis revealed that Tempo.co predominantly framed the controversy involving Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ron as an issue related to alleged child grooming and unequal power relations. The news articles consistently emphasized the age difference between the two

individuals and highlighted public concerns regarding the possibility of an inappropriate relationship when Kim Sae-on was still underage.

Through framing devices, Tempo.co frequently used depictions and exemplars that focused on allegations, public reactions, and statements from various parties discussing the issue. The selected facts were organized in a way that directed audience attention toward the broader social implications of the controversy rather than merely presenting it as a celebrity-related issue.

The reasoning devices identified in the articles demonstrated how Tempo.co constructed causal explanations regarding the emergence of public criticism. The media connected the controversy with broader concerns about child protection, exploitation, and ethical responsibility, encouraging readers to interpret the issue within a social and moral framework.

Frame 2: The Case as a Celebrity Reputation Crisis

The second dominant frame portrayed the controversy as a crisis affecting Kim Soo-hyun's public image and professional reputation. Tempo.co highlighted the potential consequences of the allegations on the actor's career, public perception, endorsement contracts, and relationship with fans.

The framing devices were evident in the selection of facts concerning public criticism, online discussions, declining public trust, and responses from agencies or related parties. These elements constructed a narrative emphasizing the vulnerability of celebrity reputation within the digital media environment.

Reasoning devices reinforced the idea that public figures are expected to maintain moral credibility and social responsibility. The coverage suggested that controversies involving celebrities extend beyond personal matters and can significantly influence professional careers and public legitimacy.

Frame 3: The Case as a Public and Media Controversy

The third frame identified in the analysis presented the case as a highly debated public controversy that generated widespread discussion across digital platforms. Tempo.co emphasized the reactions of social media users, fans, online communities, and entertainment observers. Through framing devices, the media highlighted public debates, trending discussions, and continuous developments

surrounding the case. This approach positioned the controversy as a topic of collective public interest rather than a private issue involving two individuals.

The reasoning devices linked the extensive public attention to the social significance of celebrity culture in contemporary society. The news articles suggested that public engagement with celebrity controversies reflects broader concerns regarding morality, accountability, and social norms.

DISCUSSION

Framing and the Construction of Social Reality

The findings demonstrate that Tempo.co actively participated in constructing social reality through its framing of the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-on case. Consistent with the perspective of Berger and Luckmann, reality presented by the media is not a direct reflection of events but rather a social construction shaped through selection, interpretation, and representation.

Tempo.co emphasized aspects related to child grooming allegations, power imbalances, and moral responsibility while minimizing alternative interpretations that framed the controversy solely as entertainment news. Through this process, the media encouraged audiences to understand the issue as a social problem requiring public attention. The repetition of particular narratives and issue emphasis contributed to the formation of a dominant interpretation among readers.

The findings support previous framing studies demonstrating that media organizations actively shape public understanding through narrative construction. Rather than functioning as neutral transmitters of information, media institutions play an influential role in determining how audiences perceive social issues and public figures.

Media Economics and Celebrity News Commodification

The findings also reveal the relevance of media economics in understanding Tempo.co's coverage of the controversy. Celebrity-related scandals possess significant commercial value because they attract audience attention, stimulate public discussion, and generate digital engagement. Within the contemporary attention economy, audience attention functions as a valuable

economic resource.

The extensive coverage of the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ran case illustrates how celebrity controversies become media commodities capable of increasing website traffic and audience interaction. Continuous reporting on new developments, public reactions, and emerging allegations demonstrates how media organizations maintain audience interest through ongoing narrative production.

This finding is consistent with media economics perspectives suggesting that digital news organizations operate within market-driven environments where audience engagement influences content production decisions. While Tempo.co maintains its journalistic identity as a credible news organization, the intensity of coverage indicates that celebrity controversies remain strategically important within the competitive digital media landscape.

Application of the Gamson and Modigliani Framing Model

The Gamson and Modigliani framing model effectively explains how Tempo.co constructed meaning around the controversy. Framing devices such as depictions, exemplars, and selected narratives were used to emphasize particular aspects of the case, while reasoning devices provided moral and causal explanations that guided audience interpretation.

The dominant package identified in the analysis positioned the controversy as a social issue involving morality, child protection, and power relations rather than merely a celebrity scandal. This package served as the central organizing idea that structured the news narratives and shaped audience understanding.

The findings confirm the relevance of Gamson and Modigliani's framework for examining media representations of contemporary controversies. Through framing devices and reasoning devices, media organizations construct interpretive packages that influence how social reality is understood and discussed within the public sphere.

CONCLUSION

This study examined how Tempo.co framed the Kim Soo-hyun and Kim Sae-ran case using the framing analysis model developed by William A. Gamson and Andre Modigliani. The findings indicate that Tempo.co did not frame the controversy solely as a celebrity scandal. Instead, the media constructed the issue as a broader social problem involving allegations

of child grooming, unequal power relations, moral responsibility, and public accountability.

Three dominant frames were identified in the coverage: the case as an issue of child grooming and power relations, the case as a celebrity reputation crisis, and the case as a public controversy attracting widespread social attention. Through framing devices and reasoning devices, Tempo.co emphasized specific aspects of the controversy while providing moral and causal explanations that shaped audience interpretation.

From the perspective of social construction theory, the findings demonstrate that media organizations actively participate in creating social reality through selective representation and narrative construction. Furthermore, from a media economics perspective, the study highlights how celebrity controversies function as valuable media commodities capable of generating audience engagement and digital traffic.

This research is limited to the analysis of ten news articles published by Tempo.co during a specific period. Future studies may compare framing patterns across different media organizations or examine audience reception of celebrity-related controversies to provide a more comprehensive understanding of media influence in the digital era.

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