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## REVERSE AGENDA SETTING IN THE COVERAGE OF VIRAL ISSUES IN ONLINE MEDIA

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### Abstract

This study examines the practice of reverse agenda setting and the verification process at Tribunsumsel.com in reporting viral issues. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through interviews and news content analysis. The findings indicate that news agenda formation occurs through interactions between social media, the newsroom, and the public. Viral issues on social media function as initial signals that attract media attention (agenda rippling), develop into structured news coverage (agenda diffusion), and leads to follow-up reporting as a form of verification, representing reverse agenda setting. Despite pressures related to speed and virality, fact verification remains a core principle of journalistic practice. Overall, this study highlights a shift in the initial sources of media agendas in the digital era and underscores the challenges faced by online media in balancing timeliness, accuracy, and social responsibility.

**Keywords:** Viral Issues, Online media, Reverse agenda setting, Fact verification

### Abstract

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis praktik reverse agenda setting dan proses verifikasi oleh media Tribunsumsel.com pada pemberitaan isu viral. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus yang dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dan analisis pada pemberitaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penentuan agenda pemberitaan saat ini melalui interaksi media sosial, redaksi, dan publik yang kompleks. Isu viral di media sosial menjadi pemicu awal perhatian media (agenda rippling), kemudian meluas hingga menjadi agenda liputan media (agenda diffusion), dan berita lanjutan sebagai verifikasi yang utuh dari media sebagai bagian akhir (reverse agenda setting). Verifikasi fakta tetap diposisikan sebagai prinsip dasar dalam praktik jurnalistik. Temuan ini menunjukkan adanya pergeseran sumber awal agenda media di era digital, sekaligus menegaskan tantangan media online dalam menjaga keseimbangan antara kecepatan, akurasi, dan tanggung jawab sosial.*

**Kata kunci:** Isu viral, Media online, Reverse agenda setting, Verifikasi fakta

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## INTRODUCTION

The ever-growing presence of social media has changed the patterns of consumption and distribution of information in society. Currently, viral issues on social media platforms, such as TikTok, Instagram, and X are often the main reference for people in knowing and understanding an event. This condition occurs because people actively use social media to upload content in the form of narratives, images, and videos that attract public attention and trigger broad discussions. In (Desar Deryansyah et al., 2023) it was stated that people, especially generation Z, access social media with the aim of meeting their needs for the information they need. Current field facts show that social media has transformed the public into a part that also produces, distributes, and frames information according to their respective perspectives. Even now there are TikTok influencers who make various news stories into more interesting and varied forms of storytelling content (Saadah & Permana Sidik, 2023). The public is often the trigger for viral content because of emotional involvement, controversy, and the influence of algorithms that can make issues spread quickly and shape public perception even before the news is verified to be true. This situation has an impact on journalistic practices, especially in online media which are required to move faster in responding to issues of public concern. According to Berger and Milkman in (Wold, 2023), the spread of the issue is quickly triggered by the emotions of the audience that encourage them to share the content without considering confirmation and accuracy. In this context, the media no longer fully performs its role as a determinant of the media agenda for consumption by the public, but the media is influenced by the public agenda that has been formed in the community first through social media.

Content virality is measured based on the level of interaction such as the number of likes, comments, and reshares that reflect audience engagement and social and emotional value in a content. Usually content that triggers strong emotions, such as anger, empathy, or anxiety, spreads more widely and quickly, even before there is confirmation and certainty of the accuracy of the information. Based on the analysis in the research (Azmi, 2025), the total number of interactions a content can be considered viral is to have 10,000 interactions and has been discussed by the news media. This makes online media required to move quickly to respond to viral issues which makes the speed of publication one of the important indicators in maintaining the relevance of news. The media is required to be responsive to issues that are of public concern to remain relevant to the needs of the audience. On the other hand, the media is also bound by the basic principles of journalism, especially accuracy and fact-verification. The large number of public opinions that form assumptions on social media makes the media face the risk of unconfirmed information. The media must be able to convince and maintain public trust, which is often more dominant in personal emotions and beliefs than objective facts. The existing virality flow must be responded to with an adequate verification process, so that the media functions as an institution that provides credible and trustworthy information. In addition, online media must be able to be used to shape public perception must comply with journalistic standards and ethics, and have used technology wisely (Karerek et al., 2025).

In the last decade, this condition has had a significant impact on journalistic practices, especially in news activities originating from online media which are required to respond quickly and precisely in responding to the dynamics of public information. In the era before the presence of the internet, the mainstream media had a dominant position as *the gatekeeper* of information that determined issues that were feasible and important to be published to the public. However, entering the current modern era, the position of the public is no longer the

recipient of a one-way communication pattern, but has become more participatory and interactive in triggering and expanding issues that are spread in society. The media is no longer the only determinant of the public agenda, but has also been influenced by the public agenda that has been formed first through social media. Entering the current modern era, there have been significant changes related to the direction and model of communication that tends to be one-way where the public only plays the role of the recipient of this message, this has developed after the existence of social media that shifts the one-way pattern to be more participatory and interactive. The power of social media is currently supported by algorithms that accelerate the dynamics of information dissemination.

This phenomenon is known as *reverse agenda setting*, which is a condition when the public agenda precedes the media agenda. Public perception of an event is first formed on social media before there is official verification from the authorities or sources directly involved in an event. This makes online media follow every issue that is viral with the aim of maintaining relevance, traffic, and audience trust in the media in updating the latest issues. However, there is pressure felt by the media to immediately produce news, so it has the potential to shift the basic principles of journalism. This orientation has the potential to pose an ethical dilemma for journalists, especially in maintaining a balance between speed and basic journalistic principles such as accuracy and fact-verification.

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A number of studies have shown that there is an intermediary relationship between social media and mainstream media in the formation of news agendas. (Wang et al., 2023) found that there is a reciprocal relationship between social media and professional media in shaping the agenda, while research by (Humeira & Ramadhan, 2022) explains that viral issues can encourage the media to follow the agenda that has been formed in the digital space through social media. Other research also highlights that the gap between information producers and consumers is increasingly blurred because the public not only consumes news, but also produces and frames information (Hendrickx & Vázquez-Herrero, 2024).

However, the study of *reverse agenda setting*, especially in the context of news by online media related to viral issues in Indonesia, is still relatively limited and only focuses on the dynamics between the media and the public, without looking at the in-depth processes related to the shift in information and communication flows that affect the process in journalistic practice, especially in terms of fact verification. In fact, the large amount of viral content and the increasing possibility of dependence on viral content as an initial source of information will give rise to a dilemma between accuracy and speed, as well as open up space for hoaxes to spread faster and be accepted by the public. Theoretically, this phenomenon can be understood as a development of *the classical agenda setting* theory. This concept shows the influence or reciprocal relationship between the media in determining news priorities. This process takes place in several stages starting from *the*

*rippling agenda*, *the diffusion agenda*, and *reverse agenda setting* which shows how issues on social media can affect the priorities of mainstream media reporting. In this case, the role of gatekeeping has also undergone a transformation where the public who is the initial trigger of the issue makes the media have to take the role of validator of information.

Based on this, this study aims to analyze the reverse agenda setting process in reporting viral issues in online media by examining the role of fact verification in each stage. This research fills this gap not only to understand the changing flow in the formation of media agendas, but also to examine its implications for journalistic practices and fact-checking in news production. This research focuses on Tribunsumsel.com, especially on the reporting of criminal issues originating from social media in the period from January to September 2025. The issue chosen is a criminal issue that has a significant social impact, so it requires a high level of accuracy and verification in its reporting. Through this research, it is hoped that a more comprehensive understanding of journalistic practices and authorities can be obtained in the era of digital communication which is increasingly influenced by the logic of virality and social media algorithms.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

This study uses the concept of reverse agenda setting by Kim Seong Tae and Lee Young Hwan which was first initiated in research entitled "New Functions of Internet Mediated Agenda-Setting: Agenda-Rippling and Reversed Agenda-Setting". This concept illustrates that public opinion on the internet can influence and become the main agenda of the media in producing news.

### **Reverse Agenda Setting**

Reverse agenda setting is a development of the theory of agenda setting which is based on Lippmann's (1922) idea of "the outside world and the images in our heads". The development of agenda setting theory began to change with the presence of the internet which changed the media landscape into a new media based on digital technology. New media that has free, interactive, hyperlinked, and networked characteristics make the relationship between the media and society also change. In the study (Kim & 이영환, 2006), they argued that the characteristics of the internet with greater interactivity and content capacity influence changes and agenda-setting. This concept shows that society no longer depends on the mainstream media to form an agenda for the public, on the contrary, the media has begun to shape the public agenda on social media and the internet which is then used as mainstream media as a news topic.

(Kim & 이영환, 2006) explained that when entering the internet era, there are three stages in the process of forming an agenda. The first stage is when people express their opinions through social media (*rippling agenda*) in the form of certain content. Then, the second stage is when these opinions begin to spread on social media and become public conversation. Currently, this opinion has become an issue that attracts many other opinions from various circles in society and has become an agenda for various media and online sites (*diffusion agenda*). Finally, the third stage is *reverse agenda setting* which occurs when conventional media begin to discuss and write what the public is talking about on the internet. This *reverse agenda setting* also shows that the public agenda can be more influenced by what is talked about by the public on the internet than by the media itself.

### Viral Issues

Viral issues on social media are generally characterized by a high level of audience interaction, such as the number of likes, comments, and reshares. Cohen in (Agustina, 2020) defines the term viral sharing as the spread of content from one person to another through the social networks they have which usually refers to social networks on the internet. According to Berger and Milkman (2012) in (Azmi, 2025), viral content occurs when the content has elements that attract attention and trigger emotional engagement from the audience. The 6 main principles that determine the virality of content are called STEPPS, namely *Social Currency, Triggers, Emotion, Public, Partial Value, and Stories*.

### Fact Verification

The fact verification process is a procedure that must be carried out and is an ethical responsibility for every journalist who has official written rules in the Journalistic Code of Ethics (KEJ). The KEJ is published by the Press Council as a binding and applicable rule to be obeyed by all journalists in writing any news. Not only on viral issues or news taken from social media, but all types of news are mandatory to be verified for truth. KEJ is a moral foundation that contains guidelines and directions regarding what should and should not be done in carrying out journalistic duties. A journalist is obliged to live the code of ethics and practice it because it includes human efforts to judge an act which is good and which is bad.

The obligation to carry out this fact-verification process is based on the principle of journalism that the first principle that must be done by every journalist is to ensure that the news is in accordance with the facts in the field. This is in line with the book *Nine Elements of Journalism* (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2003) which states that verification is the core of the principles of journalism which requires journalists to always test existing information before publication. In an effort to get news, journalists can focus on the concept that Kovach has formulated that: journalists should not make news based on opinions and not facts. Second, journalists must be transparent related to the source and their motives, namely journalists must be able to be open in conveying everything known by the source and also related to the rules of the journalist's approach by disguise to facilitate the process of digging for information.

In addition, this can also be understood by exchanging information between fellow journalists, but by paying attention to the next point, namely journalists are prohibited from plagiarism and are prohibited from being arrogant. The journalistic process is not only limited to ensuring truth, accuracy, and conveying factual truths, but also includes the process of seeking the truth through confirmation with relevant sources, checking certain sources and documents, and comparisons with various other sources, such as official documents. This process is emphasized by the statement (Kovach & Rosentiel, 2012) in the *BLUR* book that the public on social media often reacts and makes assumptions based on the emotional side and sentiment in commenting. Verification is the main foundation that keeps journalism dragged by the public in the midst of viral issues that have not been confirmed to be true.

Tabel 1 Finding Articles

Yes	Author and Year	Article Title	Method	Findings
1	(Yoedtadi et al., 2023)	<i>Reversed Agenda-Setting At xyz.com</i>	Qualitative (case study)	The media agenda, especially in XYZ.com

Yes	Author and Year	Article Title	Method	Findings
				is not predominantly determined by the editorial, but through the public agenda on social media and search engines.
2	(Humeira & Ramadhan, 2022)	<i>The Uses of Social Media in Journalism Practices: The Reversed-Agenda Setting on Television News Production</i>	Qualitative	Social media is the main source for journalists in determining issues that attract public attention and making the concept of reverse agenda setting more visible
3	Setiawan & Handayani, 2022)	<i>Social Media Viral Content Gatekeeping (harianjogja.com, jogja.tribunnews.com, &amp; suarajogja.id Studies)</i>	Explanatory qualitative (Case study)	Mass media plays a role in selecting viral content on social media.
4	(Santoso, 2024)	<i>The Determination of Ganjar Pranowo as a Presidential Candidate: A Study of Topic Analysis on Reverse Agenda Setting Related to the Ganjar Pranowo Case</i>	Sentiment and topic analysis using Latent Dirichlet Allocation (LDA)	Social media acts as a barometer of dynamic public sentiment, influencing political news in Indonesia.
5	(Marsela Yoginata, 2023)	<i>Changes in the Work Patterns of Journalists in the Digital Era with Access to Social Media Information in Jatimtimes.Com and Tugumalang.Id</i>	Qualitative	There is a change in the work pattern of journalists in the digital era that makes social media a source of information for journalists in Jatimtimes.com and Tugumalang.id.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a case study method. This approach is used to understand the *reverse agenda setting process* in depth through the object of research, namely the reporting of a legal and criminal issue related to the hazing case of Unsri new students in 2025 in the *Tribunsumsel.com* media. The focus of the research will lead to the process carried out by *Tribunsumsel.com* media which leads to the stages of *the ripping agenda, the diffusion agenda, and the reverse agenda setting*.

### A. Research Focus

1. Agenda Rippling: how do journalists monitor issues that arise on social media?
2. Diffusion Agenda: what are the indicators of viral issues then raised and paid attention to by the media?
3. Reverse Agenda Setting: what is the role of follow-up news in validating issues that have been circulating and viral on social media?

## **B. Research Informant**

The data in the study was collected through primary data from interviews with the Tribunsumsel.com editorial team, namely.

1. Editor in Chief
2. Editor
3. Reporter. Who are involved in the production of viral news.

This research is also equipped with secondary data from documentation studies and literature studies by utilizing news texts published by Tribunsumsel.com related to the hazing case of freshmen in the Sriwijaya University area

## **C. Unit of Analysis**

Data analysis was carried out using the data analysis technique of the Miles and Huberman (2014) model. The analysis model is carried out by selecting, focusing, and simplifying the data from the interview results in several main dimensions to facilitate the process of presenting data, namely *the rippling agenda*, *the diffusion agenda*, and *reverse agenda setting*, as well as the fact verification process that occurs in the process.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study show that the mainstream media, including Tribunsumsel.com have carried out the practice of *reverse agenda setting* in the news production process. The determination of the news agenda in Tribunsumsel.com no longer takes place one-way from the editorial to the public, but through a more complex interaction between social media, editorial, and the public. Currently, in news writing, Tribunsumsel.com apply a hybrid method by utilizing social media, especially Instagram to find information that is going viral and then carry out follow-up coverage directly to the field. In the news that is analyzed, in responding to viral issues, Tribunsumsel.com continue to include and try to continue to apply the principles of journalism, especially the process of fact-checking which is the most crucial process in reporting based on viral issues on social media. This can be seen from a number of news reports published by Tribunsumsel.com that there are still verification quotes from primary sources in a number of news reports.

### **Rippling Agenda: Social Media as a New Strategy**

This method becomes a new strategy when editors feel that social media can function as a starting point for the emergence of public issues that then enter the editorial board. Based on research (Kim & 이영환, 2006) this process occurs in three stages, namely *the rippling agenda*, *the diffusion agenda*, and *the reverse agenda setting*. In the early stages, *the rippling agenda* is a condition when issues that develop on social media receive the attention of many people and begin to be detected by editors as a signal of public interest that must be answered or explained. At the *rippling agenda* stage, social media acts as the fastest *public scanner* used to monitor issues that are developing and discussed by the public. The informant emphasized that social media monitoring has become an important strategy that is good to implement because it will make it easier for journalists to reach out to issues that are not reached by journalists or whose reporting process cannot be done through conventional reporting. Social media is seen as a space for editors to capture every complaint and experience that the community experiences directly. In this case, virality cannot be directly interpreted as the truth of an event, but as an early indicator that an issue has received wide attention and has news value. The public agenda formed on social media has unconsciously given rise to the initial wave that has become a signal for the mainstream media. This statement is in line with what was conveyed by Tribunsumsel.com's Online Manager, Eko Adia Saputro during an interview at Graha Tribun Kompas Gramedia Palembang.

*"Social media is initial information, of course, there are many points of view from the public, but the consideration of our news is usually still in accordance with the facts in the field that we find."*

However, the findings of this study also show that viral issues do not automatically become on the news agenda. The use of social media is a tool for early detection and a new strategy in detecting public issues appropriately. Viral issues still have limitations and cannot be used as a sole determinant because editors must make a selection based on considerations of news value, public relevance, and journalistic feasibility. Thus, *the rippling agenda* is the initial trigger for media attention, but it does not directly become a coverage agenda and is produced in the form of news. This stage confirms that the media still retains full editorial rights to the media.

### **Diffusion Agenda: From Media to Media**

Issues that have passed the initial monitoring stage carried out by Tribunsumsel.com then enter the *diffusion agenda phase*, which is when viral issues begin to be integrated and submitted to field journalists as a daily coverage projection to immediately start the reporting and news process. In this stage, issues that develop on social media are positioned as preliminary material or findings to be used in shaping a more systematic coverage framework. The informant explained that the viral issue that was included in the daily coverage agenda was an issue that required a more complete, fair, and balanced perspective. *The diffusion agenda* shows that editorial efforts to transform a fragmentary and assumption-filled public course into verifiable and more contextual information.

In this stage, public comments and responses on social media have a role as indicators of public perception, but do not replace the content of the news. Public comments are positioned as initial claims that can be used as a reference for further review processes. However, editorial decisions are still based on the factual findings of journalists in the field and the results of confirmation to relevant sources. This shows that *the diffusion agenda* serves as an editorial control mechanism to prevent the dominance of public opinion in the construction of news. Therefore, the initial news published is still accompanied by a basic context and an explanation of the limitations of information that has not been fully verified. Tribunsumsel.com field reporter, M. Agung Dwipayana during an interview at the Ogan Ilir Public Service Mall said that,

*"Netizens' comments can be a reference. For example, there are many comments that mention the same thing about an issue that is going viral, then it can be used as a reference if it is true. Although there are a number of comments that do not seem to be so important, if there is truth then it is the reporter's job to confirm and validate whether the information is true."*

In the end, public comments are limited only to the urgency and need for verification. The media must be able to see opportunities in seeing comments that provide information and comments that will undermine the legitimacy of the reporting. In this process, it involves negotiation between journalistic logic that emphasizes accuracy and verification and virality logic that emphasizes the speed and visibility of news. This stage makes journalists not only function as conveyors of information, but actors who must select and interpret the social realities formed in the digital space. Editors must also be able to take a fair and balanced point of view, as well as keep the news from a sensational, emotional, or judgmental angle.

Editorial decisions should be made based on verified facts, not the pressure of public emotions

### **Reverse Agenda Setting: Advanced News**

This process then enters the peak stage of reverse *agenda setting practice*, where the public agenda that has been formed on social media since the beginning influences the priorities of mainstream media coverage. *The reverse agenda setting* in this study does not mean that the mainstream media has lost its role in determining the media, but rather that there is a shift in the initial source of the issue from editorial who only uses releases, official agendas, or public information and then moves to a wider digital public space. Viral issues on social media, which are the starting point of the media agenda, must also go through a structured editorial process. Editors Tribunsumsel.com run their workflows in a hybrid manner to ensure that the news production process is still running as per journalistic standards, but they are not lagging behind the latest trends and information. This process starts from identifying issues that are included in the *ripping agenda*, assigning journalists to report and collect data (*diffusion agenda*), as well as media editing and gatekeeping stages to ensure the feasibility of news.

In this context, follow-up news has a strategic role as a means of clarification and deepening of information. Follow-up news is published when initial information is considered incomplete, a follow-up response from the public appears, or new relevant facts are found. Follow-up reporting serves to provide a broader context, corroborate or refute claims circulating on social media, and provide space for the right to reply and correction. In addition, follow-up news also acts as a form of social control by displaying responses and settlement efforts from the authorities.

This phenomenon cannot be separated from the algorithmic influence in the digital media ecosystem. Social media algorithms prioritize the involvement of social media users in shaping the priorities of issues that are considered important by the public and the media. Algorithms make news value no longer a complete consideration, but also how that content positions in the digital space. This puts pressure on online media to continue to follow the flow of virality in order to maintain the visibility and relevance of news in the midst of increasingly fierce competition between online media. The existence of competition between media strengthens the pressure on the speed of publication which is the main indicator in attracting the attention of the audience. In this case, it is possible that there will be actions that violate journalistic principles, including verification. Therefore, *reverse agenda setting* is not only a clue to a change in the direction of the agenda, but also shows that there is a considerable gap in influencing journalistic practices in the digital era.

In this condition, fact verification is a key element that determines the credibility of the media in the eyes of the public. (Kovach & Rosenstiel, 2003) has explained that verification is the core of the discipline of journalism that combines journalism with various other forms of communication. The findings of this study show that even though the media is under pressure of virality and speed, verification must remain a fundamental principle of a news. Verification not only serves as a technical procedure, but also a mandatory mechanism that ensures that the information conveyed to the public has gone through a valid and correct truth testing process without any element of manipulation

Fact verification is the connecting element in all these stages. The findings of the study show that even though the media is under pressure of speed and public expectations, fact verification remains positioned as a fundamental principle in news production. The informant emphasized that verification is part of a journalist's professional identity and a key standard in journalistic practice. The verification process should not be missed by the media under any circumstances because this process is what distinguishes mainstream media from fast social media. The main challenge faced by the media is not the lack of verification, but in the consistency of its application in the midst of virality and high public demands.

Overall, the findings of this study show that *reverse agenda setting* in Tribunsumsel.com continues through a gradual and controlled process, starting from *the rippling agenda* as the initial monitoring of viral issues on social media, followed by *the rippling agenda* in coverage planning, to the implementation of *reverse agenda setting* in the process of news production. This phenomenon reflects the changing flow of news agenda determination in the digital era, but there is also an ethical dilemma faced by online media in maintaining a balance between speed, verification, and social responsibility. *Reverse agenda setting* not only shifts the priority of issues, but also challenges the consistency of the media in maintaining journalistic principles in the midst of the virality of social media. The importance of understanding the phenomenon of *reverse agenda setting* and the verification process was reinforced by Professor of Communication Sciences at Bina Darma University, Prof. Isna Wijayani, M.Si., Ph.D in an interview on December 7, 2025.

*"It's very important. Because this research can provide new impacts or knowledge to the public and the media itself regarding the packaging of viral content in the press media. Don't let the press make a mistake in packaging issues that come from viral content and then cause violations or press disputes in the future."*

### Practice of Reverse Agenda Setting in Tribunsumsel.com News



Image 1 Video of hazing against Unsri freshmen

In the news of the alleged hazing case of new students of Sriwijaya University in Tribunsumsel shows the practice *Reverse agenda setting* where this case began to be reported by Tribunsumsel.com after a video spread on social media. Process *Rippling Agenda* occurred when a 24-second video posted by the @kementerian\_kurangajar Instagram account on September 22, 2025 went viral and became a conversation by the public This video triggered criticism of the ospek culture in the university environment. Public reaction shows that this issue touches the sensitivity of the public regarding the importance of new student protection and the ethics of campus activities. The initial news that went viral on social media then spread beyond control through screenshots or screen recordings made by the public.

The diffusion agenda stage occurs when issues that initially develop on social media begin to be processed and distributed by the mainstream media (in this case Tribunsumsel.com) through a professional journalistic process. The initial news published by Tribunsumsel.com was on Monday, September 22, 2025. In the initial news, com placed videos and narratives on social media as the starting point for information that was explicitly listed. Tribunsumsel.com included information openly by explaining that the incident in the video allegedly occurred during the introduction of the new student environment at the Unsri Indralaya campus. In the initial article, Tribunsumsel.com expanded the context and confirmed the incident to the primary source,

namely Sriwijaya University as a related institution to obtain official clarification regarding the truth of the event. In the news narrative, it was explained that they had tried to carry out a verification process, but Tribunsumsel.com efforts to confirm the incident through the Rector and Vice Chancellor 1 of Unsri had not been successful because they did not respond when contacted via phone Tribunsumsel.com. In this case, Tribunsumsel.com have not received verification, but still posted the initial news by including information that the source did not respond when contacted. This context may be done in the news with the note that the initial news made was not with the intention of providing false verification or that verification actions have actually been taken, but there is no answer.

In the case of alleged hazing of Unsri freshmen, *reverse agenda setting* presents more follow-up news in enriching and increasing public perception understanding. The issue that initially went viral on social media quickly created the assumption that there had been ethical violations in educational institutions and symbolic violence against new students. Tribunsumsel.com then published a follow-up news statement containing a statement that the campus would conduct an internal evaluation and follow up on the incident in accordance with applicable regulations. Tribunsumsel.com redirects the public agenda by leading to a more institutional discourse on more structured legal actions and processes. In addition, comments from education observers in South Sumatra are also included to provide perspectives and understandings for the public.

Practice shows how Tribunsumsel.com make social media uploads the starting point for coverage and develop the issue through confirmation with primary sources and chronological deepening.

## **CONCLUSION**

The reverse agenda setting process takes place in three main stages, namely the rippling agenda, the diffusion agenda, and reverse agenda setting as a unit of the viral issue reporting process. At the rippling agenda stage, viral issues from public uploads on social media serve as an initial trigger for editors to reflect on the public's concerns and interests in an event, so that Tribunsumsel.com use social media to monitor issues in the public space. The diffusion agenda stage occurs when viral issues that have attracted public attention spread more widely and are responded to by the mainstream media by making it a coverage agenda that is carried out but through a process of verification and confirmation of facts in the field by involving primary sources. The reverse agenda setting stage becomes intact when the entire process of reporting viral issues is also complemented by follow-up news that aims to provide more comprehensive and balanced information to the public.

This study also found challenges in the practice of reverse agenda setting, especially related to speed pressure, public demands, and competition between media that can cause misinformation. To face these challenges, Tribunsumsel.com emphasized the importance of early verification, maintaining the principle of accuracy, and a transparent correction mechanism so that the existing pressure can strengthen the fact-verification process. These findings confirm that while the media must be responsive to viral issues on social media, speed should not trump accuracy and ethical responsibility. Overall, social media influences the coverage agenda, but it does not replace the editorial role of the mainstream media. Thus, reverse agenda setting in Tribunsumsel.com is not a form of public domination over the media, but a form of media adaptation and responsiveness to the dynamics of digital communication.

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