

The Meaning of Environmental Journalism for Comic Journalists in "Stories from the Sea" on Social Media Instagram @Jurnaliskomik

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ABSTRACT: This study explores the experiences, motives, and meanings of environmental journalism for comic journalists in Stories from The Sea on the Instagram account @Jurnaliskomik. Using a qualitative method with Alfred Schutz's phenomenological approach, this research examines how comic journalists perceive and convey environmental issues through visual storytelling. The findings reveal that environmental journalism is a field that presents environmental news with a meticulous and detailed reporting style, allowing the emergence of activism in journalism. Furthermore, environmental journalism should be considered a public issue, as many aspects of environmental sustainability are closely related to society. Therefore, there is a need for exemplary environmental journalists whose work can inspire various media, communities, and institutions. Their role is crucial in raising public awareness about environmental issues and encouraging collective action for environmental preservation.

Keywords: Environmental Journalism, Comic Journalism, Phenomenology, Instagram, Public Awareness.



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INTRODUCTION

Environmental issues are a growing concern in Indonesia, especially among young people. There are many new projects, like the Pandawara Grup community, which creates new ways to manage waste. There are also social media accounts, such as @remotivi and @males.nyampah, which teach people about the environment. Several public figures, including Hamish Daud, Tasya Kamila, and Dian Sastro, have also joined the effort. They're using social media and taking direct action to help the environment (Shah & Khan, 2023).

Jurnaliskomik is one of many new media platforms that use comics to talk about environmental issues. Unlike most news sites, which use text and images, Jurnaliskomik mixes news stories with comics. This makes the information more interesting and easier for people to understand. Since 2017, they have produced various comics that highlight regional issues that are rarely covered by mainstream media. In their production process, they collaborate with local residents and government officials to ensure the accuracy of the information presented.

The growing popularity of Jurnalis Komik is evident in the increasing number of followers on Instagram, which rose from 21,600 in 2021 to 25,400 by July 2023. Each of their posts receives an average of 1,000 to 5,000 likes, with some viral content reaching up to 17,500 likes. This shows that using pictures to tell stories can make people interested and share important messages (Eskandari et al. , 2015).

Jurnalis Komik is a platform that combines illustrations with other elements, such as short videos with voice-over narration. Researchers have identified 19 environmentally themed works produced by the platform. These works cover topics such as illegal logging, disaster preparedness, and marine exploitation in Nusa Tenggara. Some of these works are presented in a human-interest feature format to create a stronger emotional impact.

One of their most notable works is the Stories from the Sea comic series, which explores the lives of coastal communities, maritime culture, and marine conservation. Each episode presents different characters and storylines while maintaining a strong ecological focus. Data from their social media posts indicate a positive response to the series, with likes ranging from 700 to 1,359, while the animated video adaptation of the first episode has been viewed 11,800 times.

The comics also feature environmental experts like Widodo Pranowo and Reza Cordova, who are shown as characters in the story. These experts talk about how plastic and medical waste from the pandemic can pollute the ocean and how we can manage waste better on land (Teymourian et al. , 2021). The comics also talk about cultural traditions, like the Ngaben cremation ceremony in Bali, and how these traditions can be changed to be better for the environment (Murniti & Purnomo, 2022).

The 2022 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report. It says that Indonesia will face severe consequences from the climate crisis. Rising global temperatures are projected to cause 99% of Southeast Asia's coral reefs to bleach by 2050 (Anshari et al. , 2023). This will affect marine ecosystems and food security. This has led many media platforms, including Jurnalis Komik, to keep sharing information about protecting the environment.

Comics are a type of visual communication, and they can share information in a fun and easy-to-understand way (Abd Aziz et al. , 2023). They mix images, text, and storytelling to get people's attention and teach them a lot about a topic (McNicol, 2017). Jurnalis Komik uses a human-interest feature idea, which makes their messages more interesting, especially since not many comic artists focus on environmental journalism.

This study looks at why Jurnalis Komik focuses on environmental issues, especially in the Stories from the Sea series. Alfred Schutz's approach looks at why people do things and what their reasons are (Rasid et al. , 2021). This study will examine the experiences and reasons behind Jurnalis Komik's environmental storytelling. It will look at the past and the future. This study will also look at how journalists understand environmental journalism through Stories from the Sea. This will give us a better understanding of how alternative media can influence people's awareness of the environment (Triyono et al. , 2024).

METHOD

The method used in this research is a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. Qualitative research explores the nature of phenomena, explaining why things happen and improving complex interventions (Busetto et al. , 2020). Phenomenology is an approach that explores lived experiences to understand their meaning (Rasid et al. , 2021). Focusing on understanding the meaning of environmental journalism for comic journalists in story work. The phenomenological approach is used as an effort to understand how the meaning of environmental journalism is based on the experience of comic journalists as an individual interpretative form, through deepening experience, and action motives. This approach aligns with the notion that reality, as perceived by individuals, is shaped by socially constructed and mutually agreed upon interpretations (Ibrahim et al. , 2023). The research methodology encompasses the use of observation and in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2016). The latter serving as the primary data collection technique, complemented and integrated with direct observation (Bungin, 2019). The present research is further bolstered by the utilization of secondary data sources, employing the documentation method as a means of acquiring data and information in the form of written text, archives, books, documents, and images (Cheong et al. , 2023).

The data analysis technique employed in this research consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Hennink et al. , 2020). The first stage, data reduction, entailed the filtration and selection of pertinent information from the music videos and literature collected. The second stage, data display, involved the structuring of the data in a more organized format, such as through the utilization of tables or diagrams, facilitating the identification of patterns and relationships between semiotic elements. The third stage, conclusion drawing, entailed the interpretation of the data presented. Through this analysis, this research aims to provide an understanding of environmental journalism for comic journalists in the work of Stories from The Sea. To check the validity of the data using source triangulation (Carter, 2014).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Experiences of Comic Journalists During the Creation of Stories from the Sea

This research reveals that creating Stories from The Sea comics presents its own challenges for its creators, especially in the process of selecting issues, collecting data, and organizing information to remain accurate and in accordance with journalistic principles. Unlike comics in general, this project relies on data sources from scientific research and interviews with environmental experts, which requires more precision in processing information before it is presented in an attractive visual form that is easily understood by the public.

The informants reported experiencing difficulties ranging from the filtration of number-based data obtained from academic research to obstacles in accessing specific information related to marine debris issues. They also reported challenges in coordinating with various parties in the field, including environmental communities and research institutions, to ensure the accuracy of the narrative built in the comic. Despite the mentioned challenges, the creators also gained valuable experience during the comic production process. During the interview and observation stages, the

creators visited various locations, which not only enriched their understanding of environmental issues but also expanded their professional network with communities that share similar concerns.

This experience also gave them insight into the scientific approach to environmental reporting that is based on data and research. As part of the creative process, involvement in environmental communities provides unique experiences for creators. Interaction with environmental activists and scientists enabled them to comprehend the dynamics of the environmental movement and the challenges faced in policy advocacy related to the sustainability of marine ecosystems (Folke et al. , 2016). This experience strengthens their commitment to deliver information through media that is more accessible to the wider community (Hajli et al. , 2017).

Public acceptance of the environmental issues raised in Stories from the Sea is a significant concern for the creators, who, based on their experience, have observed that, although the community has realized the negative impacts of marine pollution, concrete steps to address the problem are still minimal. They have noted that concern for the environment is often not directly proportional to concrete actions, suggesting a need for a more effective communication approach to build stronger collective awareness.

Furthermore, this project has provided a reflective experience for the creators in understanding the role of environmental journalism. Through a visual approach, in the form of comics, it was realized that alternative media of this sort can reach a more expansive audience, especially the younger generation, who tend to be less interested in reading conventional news (Wings et al. , 2022). This experience provided new insights into the potential of information visualization as an effective communication strategy for conveying complex issues (Heggli et al. , 2023).

In terms of production, the experience in developing this comic also illustrates the importance of solid teamwork in research-based projects. Given the large number of contributors, effective coordination emerged as a pivotal aspect necessitating meticulous management. This experience underscored the significance of synergy among team members, integrating their diverse expertise to produce high-quality journalistic content.

Furthermore, the experience in exhibitions and project launches fostered a sense of motivation among the creators, who found encouragement in the recognition and feedback they received from readers and other stakeholders. This positive reception further reinforces the creators conviction that comic-based journalism possesses considerable potential in conveying crucial information in a manner that is both engaging and easily comprehensible to various audiences (Indriyani et al. , 2024).

The Stories from the Sea project proved to be a valuable experience in understanding the intricacies of presenting research-based data in visual form. The creators of this project learned how to process quantitative and qualitative data in a manner that ensured the information retained its aesthetic value in the context of a comic. This challenge provided them with novel insights on effective methods of conveying environmental issues, ensuring that they are both educational and entertaining.

In general, the experience gained from this project demonstrates that environmental journalism in the form of a comic has significant potential in raising public awareness. Despite the challenges

encountered, the experience garnered from community interaction, the research process, and public response underscores the efficacy of a creative approach in conveying environmental issues, particularly in the context of marine pollution, as a effective means of raising global awareness.

Because of Motive Comic Journalist Members raise Environmental Issues

This study found that the decision of informants to choose environmental issues as the main theme in the Stories from the Sea comic was significantly influenced by their underlying motives. These motives were established well before the informants joined the Comic Journalist team, primarily through their academic and professional experiences during their university years. These factors contributed to their comprehension of alternative journalism and the significance of visual communication in conveying environmental news (Bake & Zöhrer, 2018).

Their interest in alternative journalism is the primary factor driving their decision to adopt the comics approach as a journalistic medium. Since their university days, they have demonstrated a preference for investigative narratives and features that can be presented in a more visually appealing format. Conventional journalism, which is typically text-based, has prompted them to explore new methods of delivering news, leading to the concept of utilizing comics as a means of making information more accessible to a broader audience (Vasileva et al. , 2021).

The concept of comics as a journalistic medium is further substantiated by the observation that, in international contexts, comic-based journalism has evolved and gained acceptance as a legitimate medium for addressing complex issues, including environmental concerns (Jamil, 2023). This notion is further reinforced through internships and interactions with journalism communities, which introduce informants to diverse forms of media innovation.

In the development of Stories from the Sea, it was recognized by informants that comics offer the advantage of simplifying complex information, making it more accessible to a broader audience. The use of visual media in news delivery facilitates a deeper comprehension for viewers, overcoming the language barriers frequently encountered in traditional journalistic texts. Consequently, the utilization of comics as a journalistic medium aims not only to capture readers interest but also to enhance their understanding of the discussed issues (Koçak, 2017).

The selection of environmental issues in Stories from the Sea is inseparable from the personal experiences of informants who have interacted with various environmental communities and organizations since their university days. These informants have realized that environmental issues, especially those related to marine debris and climate change, have a significant impact on people's lives. Their direct experience in observing environmental conditions and their involvement in academic discussions on environmental journalism further strengthened their decision to raise this theme in their work.

The journalistic approach employed in Comic Journalists aligns with the principles of Good Journalism, recognizing that the primary objective of journalism is not merely to disseminate information, but also to exert a positive influence on society. By integrating data-driven research and visually appealing graphics, comics can serve as an effective educational medium and enhance

public awareness of environmental issues that frequently receive insufficient attention in conventional media (Comet, 2018).

This study also found that the use of comics in environmental journalism contributes to increased reader engagement. Compared to news in the form of long articles that are often difficult to access by ordinary people, comics offer a more interactive and easily comprehensible way. Informants believe that by presenting an engaging visual narrative, they can reach a wider audience, including the younger generation, who are more accustomed to image- and video-based media consumption.

The decision to adopt this approach was influenced by factors such as involvement in the journalism community and the professional experience of the journalists. Interactions with journalists and environmental activists served to enhance their comprehension of the pressing nature of the issues at hand and the most effective strategies for conveying them. Consequently, the decision to utilize comics as a medium for news delivery was not solely based on personal preference but also on well-considered professional considerations.

Schutz's phenomenological theory asserts that individuals engage in actions, progressing through two stages that must be understood. The first stage involves the articulation of the "why" behind an action, orienting it towards a past experience, scientific knowledge, or the environment. The present study finds that the informants' experiences and interactions with the world of journalism and the environmental community shape their awareness of the importance of innovation in news delivery and the role of comics in raising public awareness of environmental issues.

The analysis of this research indicates that Schutz's phenomenology plays a significant role in the informants' decision to raise environmental issues through the medium of comics. Their academic and professional experiences in journalism have shaped their understanding of the importance of visualization in delivering environmental news. Since their university days, they have been exposed to various journalistic approaches, including alternative journalism that is more narrative and visual. This experience has heightened their awareness of the efficacy of comics in conveying complex information in a manner that is more readily comprehensible to the general public. Moreover, their involvement in journalistic communities and environmental organizations has further reinforced their conviction that environmental journalism must adopt innovative formats to reach a broader audience.

The decision to utilize comics as a journalistic medium was influenced by observations of international comic journalism practices. Exposure to various works of visual-based journalism strengthens the understanding that this medium can be a legitimate and impactful tool in conveying important issues, including the environment. In Schutz's perspective, these past experiences become the foundation in shaping present actions, which is why the informants chose to apply a similar approach in the *Stories from the Sea* project. Therefore, the cause-motive derived from academic, professional experiences, and interactions with journalistic and environmental communities are the main factors that encourage them to develop environmental journalism through the medium of comics.

In Order to Motive Comic Journalist Members raise Environmental Issues

The Stories from the Sea project offers a variety of experiences for individuals involved, with involvement being driven not only by external factors but also by intrinsic motivations. Some participants sought to develop their creativity in comics, while others perceived the project as a preliminary step in establishing a broader community in the domain of visual journalism.

A primary goal of the project is to transform complex data into narratives that are more readily comprehensible to the public. In this context, the individuals involved are driven to present environmental issues with a more engaging approach, while retaining the essence of the information they seek to convey. Their motivation is rooted in the belief that the use of comics can enhance the audience's understanding of oceanic conditions and environmental issues.

The project has encountered challenges in terms of its dissemination through social media, although the information it disseminates has reached a broader audience. Engagement in the form of digital interaction remains to be optimal. However, the success of the project in terms of the dissemination of comics in book format indicates that there is a degree of appreciation from the community, which serves as a motivation for the creators to continue developing this project.

The project's scope extends beyond mere information transfer; it aspires to elevate public cognizance of environmental concerns, particularly those pertaining to marine debris. The individuals engaged in this initiative anticipate that their comics will reach a diverse audience, including those who have historically demonstrated a limited engagement with environmental issues. From a phenomenological standpoint, this objective underscores the role of individual experiences in shaping the dissemination of information.

This project has been developed with the objective of demonstrating the efficacy of comics as an educational medium, challenging the conventional perception of comics as merely a form of entertainment. The creators of this project are motivated to present a narrative that is not only engaging but also possesses significant educational value, with the aim of dispelling the prevailing stigma that comics are exclusively for children and highlighting their potential as a versatile communication medium.

That's seeks to promote a shift in public mindset regarding environmental hygiene within a social context. Awareness about waste management, especially the separation of plastic and organic waste, remains a significant challenge, underscoring the need for effective educational initiatives. The individuals involved in this project aim to instill a profound understanding of the importance of environmental cleanliness through a medium that is more accessible to the public.

While the project does not directly modify people's behavior, raising awareness is regarded as a pivotal initial step. For some individuals, the success of the project was not measured by instantaneous change, but rather by the extent to which information could be disseminated and understood by the community. This approach aligns with the concept of phenomenology, which emphasizes how individuals experiences influence their actions in an effort to achieve certain goals.

Schutz's perspective suggests that the term "in order to" signifies the underlying motivation that propels an individual to act with the intention of achieving a future outcome (Sadiyyah, 2024).

Within the context of the Stories from The Sea project, the creators aspire to transform the public's comprehension of environmental concerns through a visually engaging and accessible narrative approach. They perceive comics as a medium with the capacity to not only simplify intricate information but also to enhance audience engagement, particularly among individuals who may exhibit less interest in text-based news. The creators' objective is to cultivate narratives that can enhance public awareness of environmental issues, particularly those pertaining to marine debris and climate change, with the aspiration of effecting a transformation in people's mindset and behavior concerning these issues.

Moreover, the creators professional motivations are intricately intertwined with their aspirations in the realm of visual journalism. They seek to substantiate the notion that comics have the potential to serve as a credible journalistic medium, transcending mere entertainment. Adopting the principles of environmental journalism and integrating them with visual storytelling, they aspire to offer a novel alternative in the media landscape.

This objective is consistent with Schutz's theory on human behavior, which posits that individuals act in pursuit of goals. In addition to conveying information, the creators seek to establish comics as a catalyst for innovation in journalism. Consequently, this initiative is not merely a form of creative expression it is also a strategic move to introduce visual-based journalism as an educational instrument, with the objective of enhancing public awareness regarding the issue of marine debris. The gradual rise in awareness and the adoption of concrete actions to protect the environment are anticipated to accompany this project, thereby ensuring that it functions not only as a form of creative expression but also as a catalyst for broader social change (Abdelmaksod et al. , 2024).

Meanings of Environmental Journalism for Comic Journalists in Stories from the Sea Comic Works

The Stories from the Sea comic project offers a multifaceted perspective on environmental journalism, as perceived by the individuals involved in its production. The unique roles and experiences of each contributor contribute to this diversity of viewpoint. Broadly speaking, the project aims to adapt a reporting style that prioritizes human interest alongside a more profound exploration of environmental issues. This approach demands meticulous data processing and presentation of information grounded in scientific facts.

As a form of journalism that highlights environmental issues, this project also plays a role in fostering awareness of activism among its practitioners. Activism in this context is not merely advocacy, but also reflects active involvement in building public awareness about the importance of protecting the environment. Through this project, environmental journalism is interpreted as a form of concern articulated in visual narratives and text to reach a wider audience.

The incorporation of comics as a journalistic medium in this project introduces its own set of challenges, particularly in ensuring the accuracy of data processing without compromising its narrative appeal. The implementation of environmental journalism in this project was determined to be effective in conveying messages to the public, despite the challenges encountered in enhancing digital audience engagement. However, the distribution of the comics in physical form

received a favorable response, indicating that the visual approach to journalism can be well-received by various audiences.

In understanding environmental journalism, the project actors also highlighted the importance of making environmental issues a central part of public discourse. Environmental journalism should not be considered as a separate field, but rather as equivalent to other types of journalism. As such, a more systematic and comprehensive approach is needed for environmental issues to receive greater attention in the mass media.

Moreover, the project also reflects the role of environmental journalism in shaping public opinion and encouraging changes in people's mindsets regarding environmental issues. The awareness generated from environmental reporting is not immediate; instead, it is part of a long-term process that can have a sustainable impact on people's information consumption patterns.

from a media perspective, this project demonstrates that environmental journalism is not exclusively reliant on official government reports; rather, it must diversify its information sources to include contributions from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and environmental communities. This approach fosters a more balanced and comprehensive news agenda, presenting a range of perspectives that are directly relevant to the public.

Environmental journalism is conceptualized as a tool for building awareness through more engaging and interactive communication methods (Carpenter et al. , 2016). The use of the comic medium, with its visual appeal, has been demonstrated to facilitate more effective conveyance of environmental messages, particularly among groups with limited exposure to environmental issues in conventional news formats.

Beyond its role as a conduit for disseminating information, environmental journalism is regarded as a tangible measure in sustaining environmental awareness. The presence of media outlets that consistently advocate for environmental concerns is paramount for disseminating information regarding environmental impacts in a comprehensive and profound manner (Abdujabbarovna, 2023).

In the Stories from the Sea project, the role of environmental journalism is defined by the subjective experiences of the actors who interact with social and environmental realities. According to Schutz, individuals understanding of the world is shaped by their experiences and expectations. In this context, the comic creators perceive environmental journalism not only as a means of information transmission, but also as a tool for activism and education with the potential to influence collective consciousness. The creators' interpretation of environmental journalism transcends its conventional conception as mere data transmission, emphasizing its role as a catalyst for active engagement aimed at reshaping societal perceptions and responses to environmental challenges.

According to Schutz, individuals act based on the meanings they construct through social interactions. The creators of this project understand how their audience will receive and respond to the messages delivered, and they work with scientific data in addition to their understanding of the comic medium as a form of environmental journalism. The creators choice of the comic medium reflects their awareness of the importance of reaching a wider audience in a more

interesting and understandable way. In Schutz's phenomenology, the meaning of environmental journalism in this project is not fixed; rather, it continues to evolve in tandem with the experiences of the actors involved in disseminating environmental messages and receiving feedback from the public.

CONCLUSION

In accordance with the findings of the preceding section's research and discourse, the researcher arrives at the following conclusions. The experience of comic journalists during the production of the *Cerita Dari Laut* work constitutes a primary informant and possesses a wealth of knowledge regarding the intricacies of the comic project, including the ability to visit the precise locations depicted in the coastal region, the capacity to raise environmental concerns, and the perception that the comic exerts a tangible influence. The past motives (or reasons) of comic journalists interested in environmental issues are rooted in past experiences related to the environment, interest in journalism and comics, love exploring the sea and beaches, and the implementation of good journalism. The future motives of comic journalists are identified through this work, and other media can emulate them, albeit through different mediums. The objective of this work is to be useful for people, to encourage readers to participate in disseminating information about environmental issues, and to underscore the unifying nature of the sea for Indonesia.

The significance of environmental journalism for comic journalists, who are key informants, encompasses environmental journalism that fosters activism and environmental journalism as a public interest. This assertion underscores the significance of environmental journalism as a discipline that employs meticulous and comprehensive reporting methodologies to foster environmental awareness, exemplified by the actions of environmental journalists. The necessity for emulation by diverse media entities, communities, and institutions is highlighted, with the overarching objective being to raise societal consciousness regarding environmental concerns.

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