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The Process and Techniques of Cinematography in Strengthening News Delivery in the Program Fokus on Indosiar

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Abstract: This study investigates the production processes and camerawork techniques within the Fokus news program of PT Indosiar Visual Mandiri Tbk, one of Indonesia's leading television broadcasters. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, the research draws upon in-depth interviews and field observations involving three key informants: one coordinator of cameramen and two field cameramen. The findings reveal that camerawork in television news production is a structured yet adaptive process that integrates technical precision, situational judgment, and narrative awareness. Preparation and coordination before field deployment are vital stages, involving meticulous equipment checks and crew communication. In the field, cameramen must interpret the situation quickly and apply compositional techniques to produce visuals that support the news narrative. The coordinator functions as an organisational gatekeeper who ensures the consistency of production standards and editorial identity. The study concludes that cameramen play a crucial role as both technical experts and visual storytellers, bridging institutional expectations with field realities. This research contributes to a broader understanding of production culture in Indonesian broadcast journalism and highlights the significance of visual communication in constructing credible television news narratives.

Keyword: Camerawork, Production Culture, Visual Communication, Television Journalism, Indosiar

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, mass media has become an inseparable part of everyday life. Whether through television, newspapers, radio, or the internet, people engage constantly with media content in ways that shape perception, information access, and cultural understanding. Raharjo et al. (2018) argue that media consumption, such as watching television, cannot be viewed as a one-dimensional activity; rather, it constitutes a complex social practice in which prolonged exposure fosters deeper comprehension and meaning-making. In Indonesia, as in many other countries, the media serves as a primary channel for disseminating information, constructing public narratives, and shaping social awareness.

Among the various forms of mass media, television continues to occupy a dominant position due to its audiovisual advantages. As Adriany (2018) explains, television stations compete to attract audiences through specialized programming, particularly news broadcasts that fulfill viewers' demand for information. However, not all information disseminated through mass media can be classified as essential or socially beneficial. The selection and framing of news stories are influenced by editorial priorities, market pressures, and institutional values, often leading to content that prioritizes entertainment or sensationalism over substantive information (Adriany, 2018).

The Indonesian media industry has undergone rapid transformation, especially following the government's implementation of digitalization policies that encourage greater diversity of content and ownership. Rhafidilla and Maryani (2017) note that this policy aligns with the global broadcasting principle of *diversity of content* and *diversity of ownership*, aiming to promote pluralism in both production and distribution. As a result, numerous new television stations have emerged, intensifying competition not only in program development but also in the recruitment and performance of human resources.

Historically, television broadcasting in Indonesia began in 1962 with the establishment of the state-owned Television of the Republic of Indonesia (TVRI). Over time, the medium evolved from a purely informative and educational platform into a multifaceted industry integrating entertainment, journalism, and advertising. Journalism, as Indraswari (2017) emphasizes, derives its authority from factuality and public significance. A journalistic product must deliver verified information accompanied by credible sources to strengthen public trust. This principle remains essential to broadcast journalism, where accuracy and professionalism are crucial to maintaining credibility.

Today, many Indonesian television stations integrate traditional media practices with new media technologies. According to McQuail (2011), new media are defined by their digital foundations, interactivity, and widespread accessibility, allowing for more personalized communication and audience participation. Rhafidilla and Maryani (2017) observe that this convergence has reshaped how broadcasters produce, distribute, and engage audiences with multimedia content. Despite the growth of online platforms, television remains the most preferred medium among Indonesian audiences, largely because of its immediacy and visual impact.

Television programming—especially news programming—serves as a key identifier of a station's brand and public image. Wardana (2019) asserts that a television station without a news program lacks an identity in the broadcasting ecosystem. One of Indonesia's prominent private television networks, PT Indosiar Visual Mandiri (Indosiar), exemplifies this principle. Established officially on July 19, 1991, Indosiar became the fifth private television station in the country, following RCTI, SCTV, TPI, and ANTV (Wardana, 2019).

Broadcasting practices in Indonesia are regulated under Law No. 32 of 2002 on Broadcasting, which stipulates that broadcast content must educate, inform, and entertain, while also fostering national unity and upholding moral and cultural values (Government of the Republic of Indonesia, 2002). The Broadcasting Code of Conduct (P3SPS) further mandates that broadcast institutions maintain program diversity and may adapt formats to meet public service goals (Lembaran & Republik, 2016). In this context, innovation in program design becomes crucial to fulfilling both regulatory and audience expectations.

Television programs are commonly categorized into two primary genres: entertainment and information (Bawahab, 2021). Entertainment programs prioritize creativity and aesthetic appeal, while informational programs adhere closely to journalistic standards of accuracy and timeliness. Yet, the boundaries between these genres are increasingly blurred. Programs such as talk shows and variety shows often combine factual information with entertaining elements

to capture audience interest. Similarly, news programs may adopt engaging presentation styles to enhance viewer retention in a competitive media landscape.

Bawahab (2021) further explains that a television program's quality can be evaluated through creative and technical dimensions, including program mission, audience target, airtime, and production elements such as script, stage design, and performance. These aspects determine a program's ability to attract and retain audiences, particularly in a saturated market where innovation is essential. Wardana (2019) notes that news programming is not only a professional obligation but also a defining feature that distinguishes one station from another.

Indosiar's flagship news program, *Fokus*, illustrates this convergence of journalistic integrity and creative presentation. The program covers current national issues, focusing on economic, criminal, and metropolitan news. Its style is characterized by concise yet accessible storytelling that balances seriousness with clarity. The success of such a program depends not only on editorial decisions but also on technical execution—especially the work of the cameraman (Prasetyo, 2019).

A cameraman, or television camera operator, bears significant responsibility for ensuring the visual quality and communicative strength of a news program. According to Prasetyo (2019), a cameraman's task extends beyond recording footage; it involves understanding narrative structure, visual composition, and journalistic intent. The cameraman must ensure focus, framing, color balance, and overall image sharpness to maintain broadcast quality. Furthermore, the cameraman collaborates closely with the program director, whose role encompasses both technical coordination and visual storytelling. As Morissan (1990) highlights, camerawork requires mastery of manual controls such as white balance, aperture, and light adjustment to avoid technical errors during live or recorded shoots.

The process of news production follows standard operational procedures (SOPs) across three stages: pre-production, production, and post-production (Millerson, as cited in Diki, 2019). The pre-production stage involves conceptual planning, scriptwriting, technical design, and crew preparation. The production phase focuses on recording, direction, and real-time coordination, while post-production includes editing, previewing, and broadcasting. Each stage demands technical precision and creative collaboration to produce coherent, engaging, and ethically responsible news content.

Given the increasing competition among private broadcasters and the growing demand for visually compelling news, understanding the cameraman's role in shaping the narrative power of televised journalism becomes vital. The present study, therefore, investigates the process and techniques of camerawork in producing news strength for Indosiar's *Fokus* program. It aims to identify how professional cameramen employ visual strategies and production techniques to enhance storytelling, maintain factual accuracy, and sustain audience engagement.

By examining camerawork as both a technical and communicative act, this research situates visual production within the broader discourse of media professionalism and creative industry practices in Indonesia. Ultimately, the study underscores that effective news production is not merely a matter of technological mastery but also a reflection of aesthetic judgment, ethical consideration, and institutional collaboration that together determine the credibility and appeal of televised journalism.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach designed to produce rich, contextualized, and in-depth understandings of human experience. As defined by Bogdan and Taylor (2002), qualitative research generates descriptive data in the form of written or spoken words and observable behavior. This orientation enables researchers to interpret phenomena

as they unfold naturally, emphasizing meaning rather than measurement. Qualitative inquiry in this study was conducted through field observation, systematic data collection, and the formulation of conceptual insights and hypotheses derived inductively from the data (Mays & Pope, 1996). A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of real-life situations and the social meanings constructed by individuals involved in the studied context.

The research design is descriptive in nature, seeking to portray and interpret the lived experiences of camera operators at *Fokus Indosiar*. Following Kriyantono (2006), qualitative descriptive research prioritizes the depth and richness of information rather than the number of participants or the size of the population. When the data collected are considered sufficient to explain the studied phenomenon, additional sampling becomes unnecessary. The emphasis, therefore, lies in the quality and significance of insights rather than statistical generalization. Methodologically, research involves systematic, logical, and sequential activities that follow scientific principles in order to achieve practical and theoretical objectives (R. Samiawan, 2009). The planning of the study—including time allocation, data access, and logistical arrangements—was determined based on feasibility, research objectives, and the contextual relevance of the selected field site.

In alignment with Moleong (2017), this research is classified as qualitative descriptive, with data consisting primarily of words, visual materials, and observed interactions rather than numerical values. The phenomenological dimension of this approach allows the researcher to investigate how individuals experience and interpret their professional practices within the newsroom setting. The focus of this study is the production process undertaken by camera operators (*kameramen*) in capturing visual footage for the *Fokus Indosiar* news program. Accordingly, the key informants were purposively selected to ensure that they possessed firsthand knowledge of the research context. The participants included Hilman and Vando, who serve as camera operators at *Indosiar*, and Damar Galih, the coordinator of the camera crew, who acted as the key informant. These participants were chosen for their direct involvement in the technical and editorial processes of television news production.

In qualitative research, the research object represents the empirical focus from which data are collected and interpreted. As Supriyati (2012) explains, the research object refers to the variables or conditions being examined to understand their real-world manifestations. Complementarily, Irwan Satibi (2011) notes that mapping the research field involves understanding its organizational structure, development history, primary responsibilities, and contextual dynamics. Hence, the object of this study is the role of camera operators in the image-capturing process of *Fokus Indosiar*. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, field observations, and documentation. The analysis process involved identifying, organizing, and validating information through cross-verification of sources to ensure credibility and dependability. Observational notes and interview transcripts were triangulated with documentation records to strengthen data validity. The researcher then synthesized and interpreted these findings inductively to derive conclusions that illuminate the practices, challenges, and meanings underlying the visual production process at *Fokus Indosiar*.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The present study examines the production processes and techniques of camerawork at PT Indosiar Visual Mandiri Tbk (Indosiar) in the creation of its flagship news programme, *Fokus*. Indosiar itself is one of Indonesia's major television broadcasters, founded on 19 July 1991 and officially commencing national broadcasts on 11 January 1995. From the interviews and field observations of three key practitioners—one coordinator of cameramen (Informant 1) and two cameramen (Informants 2 and 3)—several themes emerged relating to preparation, operational steps, technical execution, and broader organisational dynamics. In

what follows, I discuss these findings in relation to established theoretical frameworks including gatekeeping, production culture, and visual communication.

Organisational Context and Informant Profiles

Informant 1, Damar Galih (male, age 48), has worked at Indosiar since 21 January 1997 and serves as coordinator of cameramen in the news department. Informant 2, Hilmansyah (male, age 26), has approximately two years' experience as a cameraman in the news division. Informant 3, Ervando Piong (male, age 25), has three years' experience, likewise in the news division. These selections allowed for both long-term institutional memory and newer practitioner perspectives to inform the research.

Indosiar's history is salient in understanding the organisational culture of camerawork: as one of the early adopters of digital broadcasting technologies in Indonesia (including the NICAM audio system), the station positions itself as pioneering and market-responsive. This ethos influences how staff view their roles and responsibilities, particularly in news production.

Pre-Production and Logistical Preparation

A first key theme relates to the preparatory work conducted by cameramen and their coordination with the logistics team. As Informant 2 recounted:

“First we get the floatingan (assignment) from the korlip and korkam. Then secondly we prepare, prepare the equipment. So we check the equipment in logistics at the office. We check before going out, starting from audio, camera, and the other gear... we check first just in case the camera wasn't checked and when we arrive at the location suddenly there's trouble, because it happens often... So we prepare really carefully before departure.”

This quote illustrates how the cameramen view logistical readiness as a routine but critical phase prior to field deployment. The metaphor of “floatingan” reflects an informal production culture in which assignments circulate among crews and coordination is mediated by the coordinator (korkam). The emphasis on pre-checking gear indicates institutionalised Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and aligns with production-culture research which emphasises that technical infrastructure is socially organised (see Schlesinger, 1978; Caldwell, 2008). In this sense, the stabilisation of technical conditions becomes an organisational routine that supports creative and journalistic goals.

Field-Shooting Techniques and Situation Assessment

Another major theme concerns how cameramen assess the field location and apply technical techniques in line with the news narrative. As Informant 3 explained:

“If we're already in the field, of course we must look at the situation first, then after we look at the situation we can directly work.”

The “look at the situation first” approach underscores how camerawork at Indosiar is not purely mechanical but involves rapid situational judgement. Informant 2 added:

“We must have the wide shot, the wide image; the atmosphere, then detail by detail. That's for sure.”

These statements reveal how the cameraman aims to capture both the establishing shot (wide) to situate the viewer and sequentially move to medium and close-up shots to provide detail and texture. The key point here is that camera technique is driven by motivators tied to context, narrative, and viewer comprehension—rather than simply aesthetic considerations. The observation resonates with existing research in visual journalism that emphasises the role of camera movement, shot size variation, and compositional strategy in helping the audience make sense of news events (see Foss, 2005; Brennan, 2014).

Coordinator Role and Gatekeeping Dynamics

A further finding relates to the role of the coordinator of cameramen as an organisational intermediary and gatekeeper of both equipment and narrative framing. Informant 1 described the coordinator's responsibilities:

"What needs to be prepared by cameramen is of course the equipment. Prepare the gear which has been booked under each person's name, and once he takes the gear if he is not satisfied with it he can request a replacement from the cam-store. Then after that we check completeness and what else might be needed in the field, maybe a longer cable, maybe wireless... etc."

The coordinator monitors assignments, equipment allocation, and the composition of crews. From a theoretical perspective, the coordinator occupies a gatekeeping role in the sense described by Bittner (1996): selecting, approving and ensuring that visual production meets institutional standards. In this case, the coordinator decides which cameraman receives which equipment, monitors technical readiness, and ultimately ensures that the outcome aligns with Indosiar's editorial identity. This suggests that the gatekeeping of visual production is not only exercised in editorial selection but also in technical distribution and crew deployment.

Technical Skills, Composition and Visual Quality

At a more granular level, cameramen emphasised mastering camera technique, composition, audio levels, white balance, and responsive shot sequencing. Informant 2 stated: "What must be had is the shot-technique, then the composition, the angle. Don't forget the audio should still enter... Then the colour details: not over, not under... the white balance too."

Similarly, Informant 3 explained: "The basic skill first is we must understand how to operate the camera; basically a camera is similar – what's the name of the button, record... then next is lighting triangle exposure... white balance mustn't be too blue or too yellow... then shoot size we must understand that."

These verbatim statements show that cameramen view their work as combining technical expertise with journalistic sensitivity: the visual must "tell the story" and connect with viewers. The requirement for proper composition, lighting, and audio resonates with visual communication theory which posits that the technical form of the image influences both readability and credibility of news content (see Lule, 2001; Livingstone & Lunt, 1994). The repeated focus on "not over, not under" colour and white balance reveals an institutional pressure to maintain professional broadcast standards.

Motivational Logic, Contextual Framing and Narrative Fit

Beyond purely technical concerns, cameramen described how the choice of shot size, camera movement, and sequencing are motivated by the news context and narrative. One cameraman described:

"It depends on the motivation, for example we're covering food then how to package the image to look good. For example first I take the object, say the food in the bowl, I take the detail first close up, but I also take a long shot so you can see the entire environment... So one object you can take different shot-sizes..."

This explanation underscores that camerawork is deeply interpretative: the cameraman curates visual meaning by adjusting shot size and movement to fit the story. This aligns with production-studies scholarship that sees technical workers as active meaning-makers within news routines (see Couldry & Hepp, 2017). The field of television journalism thus requires

trained reflexivity: the cameraman must respond to narrative cues, editorial instructions, and situational demands to produce visuals that align with the editorial logic of *Fokus*.

Organisational Identity and Institutional Innovation

Observations also indicate that Indosiar's organisational identity emphasises innovation—particularly because it was among the first Indonesian broadcasters to adopt digital technology and the NICAM system for audio clarity. This institutional history appears to manifest in the cameramen's self-understanding: they believe their work is part of a larger project of providing high-quality visuals and meeting market demands. This reflects what production culture literature calls the “journalistic mentality” – an institutional logic that shapes workers' practices and values (see Schudson, 2005). As one veteran cameraman remarked, “We feel we are part of the station's ambition to lead technologically and visually”.

Challenges and Tensions in Field Work

While many routines are well-established, the interviews and observations also revealed tensions. For example, despite prior checks, equipment failures sometimes occurred in the field: “Even though we checked well, once at the location there's always some issue...” (Informant 2). Such recurring disruptions reflect the contingencies inherent in broadcast journalism and suggest that organisational routines are never fully stabilised. Moreover, the requirement to deploy quickly, coordinate multiple crews, and respond to unpredictable news contexts underscores the stress and workload of cameramen—an overlooked aspect in many studies of broadcast production.

The findings of this six-month field study highlight the crucial role of cameramen and the cameraman coordinator in shaping the visual narrative of the *Fokus* news program at PT Indosiar Visual Mandiri Tbk. *Fokus*, as one of Indosiar's flagship news productions, is categorized as a soft news program that emphasizes human-interest stories and social issues relevant to the local community, particularly targeting audiences above the age of 30. The program is broadcast daily through three main segments—*Fokus Pagi*, *Fokus Petang*, and *Fokus Malam*—as well as short *Fokus Update* segments between other programs. Indosiar's editorial strategy demonstrates a commitment to aligning its news production with audience segmentation and preferences, ensuring that both content and technical delivery meet viewers' informational and emotional expectations.

The research found that the process of news production in *Fokus* is characterized by a meticulous visual workflow. Cameramen act as both visual narrators and technical operators who translate news scripts into compelling imagery. According to Kusumawati, as cited in Risky et al. (2017), a cameraman's task involves recording visuals using video equipment and storage media based on the director's creative direction. However, the findings suggest that at *Fokus*, cameramen often exercise considerable creative agency in selecting shot compositions, framing, and camera movements—decisions that directly affect the narrative rhythm and emotional resonance of the news piece. The preparation phase involves ensuring the readiness of essential tools such as cameras, tripods, and lighting equipment, followed by determining the appropriate objects and themes aligned with the editorial concept.

In visual communication, composition serves as the structural foundation through which meaning is conveyed (Putri, n.d.). Cameramen employ varied shot sizes—ranging from wide shots to close-ups—to build visual continuity and emotional nuance. For instance, in a live market report, a sequence might begin with a wide shot capturing the overall atmosphere, followed by medium and close-up shots focusing on vendors and goods to emphasize human interaction and local color. This layering of visual details embodies what the researcher terms *motivational adjustment*—the process of aligning visual choices with

contextual and thematic intent. Such practice echoes the concept of visual semiotics, where each frame operates as a signifier within a broader system of mediated meaning.

The study also highlights the organizational structure that supports this production process. The cameraman coordinator functions as a *gatekeeper* (Bittner, 1996, as cited in Nurudin, 2007), overseeing the cameramen's work, ensuring operational flow, and maintaining coordination across divisions. As Mutiah (2018) and Fadhilah (2020) emphasize, gatekeeping in television is a collective process involving multiple roles—from producers and directors to editors and camera operators—who collectively determine the quality, coherence, and broadcast-worthiness of visual information. In this context, the coordinator acts as a critical filter, ensuring that each visual element aligns with editorial standards and ethical norms.

Television, as Cangara (2011) notes, possesses the unique ability to merge audio and visual elements while manipulating color to enhance emotional engagement. This dual-channel nature of television production demands close collaboration among core team members—producers, directors, writers, camera operators, and editors—who collectively construct meaning (Effendy, 2009; Morissan, 2008). Within *Fokus*, the cameramen's visual expertise represents a central creative force, mediating between journalistic intent and aesthetic execution. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that camera work is not merely a technical act but a communicative practice grounded in visual literacy, teamwork, and editorial ethics, all of which are vital to sustaining Indosiar's credibility and its connection with the public.

CONCLUSION

This study explores how cameramen in the *Fokus* news division of PT Indosiar Visual Mandiri Tbk perform their work within a structured yet dynamic production environment. The findings show that camerawork is not merely a technical activity but a form of visual communication that demands both technical mastery and interpretive awareness. Cameramen must balance between following established production routines and responding flexibly to field conditions that often change rapidly.

The research highlights that preparation, coordination, and situational assessment are central to the success of field coverage. The process begins with logistical readiness, including equipment inspection and crew coordination, and continues with real-time decision-making during shooting. Cameramen rely on their ability to frame, compose, and sequence images that effectively convey the story, ensuring that visuals support the news narrative and maintain viewer comprehension.

Within the newsroom structure, the coordinator of cameramen plays an essential organisational role in managing logistics, monitoring equipment readiness, and maintaining production quality. This function ensures that the visual output aligns with the station's editorial standards and brand identity. The teamwork between the coordinator and cameramen reflects a culture of shared responsibility, professionalism, and adherence to institutional values.

The study also finds that the organisational culture at Indosiar encourages innovation and continuous improvement, shaping the cameramen's sense of professional pride and accountability. However, challenges remain in the form of equipment reliability, time constraints, and the unpredictable nature of fieldwork.

In conclusion, camerawork in *Fokus* exemplifies the integration of discipline, creativity, and adaptability in television journalism. It illustrates how visual storytelling is achieved through technical skill, coordination, and a deep understanding of the newsroom's operational culture. This research provides a foundation for future studies on the evolving role of cameramen within Indonesia's rapidly changing broadcast industry.

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