

## Tyranny of Balance in News Increases Climate Change Denialism in Indonesian Society

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### ABSTRACT

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Climate change denialism, the rejection of overwhelming scientific evidence about the negative impacts of human activities on the environment, is a significant hurdle in mitigating climate change. This study investigates the influence of communication factors on climate change denialism among 124 students in Cilegon, Banten. Factors examined include news immediacy, scientific communication competence, message tone, tyranny of balance, and message narrative. Multiple regression analysis revealed only the tyranny of balance in news reporting significantly impacted climate change denialism ( $p < 0.001$ ). Other variables, including belief in conspiracy theory, news immediacy, science communication competence, message tone, and message narrative, had no significant effect. These findings underscore the crucial role of media bias in climate change denialism, particularly in the context of emerging, tropical, and island nations. Future research should scrutinize journalistic principles and mass communication about climate change denialism. However, the methodology has limitations, including a homogeneous student sample and potential recall bias, necessitating more diverse sampling and experimental methods in future studies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the scientific consensus that climate change has occurred globally and the earth has entered a new period of mass extinction, public opinion on climate change is still mixed and the Indonesian and Malaysian public are among the most resistant to climate change [1]. Climate change denial can adversely affect government efforts to mitigate climate change and protect people's lives in the future [2].

Previous research so far has focused on ideological [3] and political factors [4]. This research is directed at communication factors. Identification of communication factors is vital as it would help to resolve other factors. With proper communication, ideological and political factors can be mitigated and climate change denial can be reduced [5].

From the literature review, five main communication factors are considered to have the most influence on climate change denialism: message immediacy, communicator competence, message tone, the tyranny of balance, and narrative [6-10].

So far, no research has examined these factors simultaneously in the Indonesian context. The research shows that the drivers for each country may vary [3]. Many studies in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore on climate denialism in the context of oil palm plantations found that the tyranny of the balance factor loomed large [11, 12]. It found that news media in Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore mostly built a climate change denial narrative by saying that palm oil development does not affect climate change. This ignores the scientific consensus that oil palm plantations on peatlands are a contributor to greenhouse gases and increase the risk of

forest fires [12]. The source of this rejectionist discourse is that the media uses a divergent approach where several stakeholders, not just scientists, are interviewed and asked for their opinions, even if they have no competence on the issue.

There is a possibility that climate change denialism in Indonesia is strongly influenced by communication factors, rather than ideological and political factors. If this is the case, appropriate and strategic communication by scientists and the media can be developed and implemented to reduce climate change denial.

In line with these thoughts, this research aims to answer the following two questions. First, what communication factors structure community resistance to climate change in Indonesia? Second, what communication strategies are appropriate to reduce climate change denial in Indonesia?

Tropical countries are the most vulnerable to climate change, with the threat of temperatures rising so high that these regions will become uninhabitable. Island nations are also severely affected by rising sea levels due to melting ice. In addition, developing countries face the challenge of lacking the health and technological resources to deal with the challenges posed by climate change. Indonesia has the triple disadvantage of being a tropical country, an archipelago, as well as a developing country. Therefore, research conducted in Indonesia is of great importance not only for raising climate awareness in tropical countries but also in island nations around the world.

In alignment with the above significance, this research contributes to the enrichment of the climate change denialism literature. It suggests the critical role of several determinants that enable denialism to increase, which is detrimental to

efforts to prevent and mitigate climate change, particularly in the context of tropical and island countries.

This paper is organized as follows. After this section, a literature review is presented that includes an explanation of the concept of climate change denialism and hypotheses related to the relationship between belief in conspiracy theories and the five communication factors (message immediacy, communicator competence, message tone, tyranny of balance, and narrative) on climate change denialism. This is followed by a description of the research methodology, the results of the data collection and analysis, and the discussion. The paper concludes with conclusions, implications, and limitations.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Climate change denialism

There are several ways in the literature to define denialism. In the most general context, denialism can be viewed as a larger, orchestrated pattern of ideological, political, or cultural denialism, which tends to involve an agenda that does not necessarily have to be expressed, a view of the world, argumentative traditions and structures, and common motives and motivations [13]. In the context of science, denialism is the use of rhetorically loaded arguments that convey a sense of legitimacy but merely aim to deny scientific consensus [14]. Denialism is ignoring or denying scientific facts and making claims that have been refuted in the peer-reviewed literature [15]. The definitions above suggested that while there is no consensus on what denialism is, they all describe the phenomenon through its characteristics. Therefore, denialism is characterized by: (1) having an ideological, political, or cultural background, (2) being larger and more structured than ordinary denialism, (3) tending to involve an agenda that does not necessarily have to be expressed, a view of the world, argumentative traditions and structures, and shared motives and motivations, (4) it relies on rhetorical arguments that give the appearance of legitimacy but only intend to deny scientific consensus, (5) it ignores or rejects scientific facts that do not align with its arguments, and (6) it makes claims that have long been refuted in the scientific literature. These characteristics are relatively broader than the characteristics of denialism, which include: (1) identification of conspiracies, (2) use of fake experts, (3) selectivity of sources, (4) creating impossible expectations of research and evidence, and (5) using misrepresentations and logical fallacies [16].

Denialism in science takes many forms. The literature identifies vaccine denialism [14], HIV denialism [17], invasive species denialism [15], COVID-19 denialism [18], and certainly climate change denialism [19]. The focus of this research is climate change denialism or what calls climate science denialism. Climate science denialism is the denial of the overwhelming scientific evidence for the existence of a significant ongoing anthropogenic greenhouse gas effect that will have serious negative impacts on the climate in the future. This definition aligns with the concept of climate change so that climate change denialism and climate science denialism can be treated as synonyms [19].

There are 3 types of denialism: literal, interpretive, and implication denialism [20]. Furthermore, there is specifically a classification of climate change denialism which could divide into six forms: literal denial, neo-skepticism, techno-

optimism, individualism, market fundamentalism, and green growthism [2]. Literal denialism is relatively similar to literal denialism in that it directly denies the existence of climate change. Neo-skepticism is a healthy critique of climate change, but has ulterior motives and interests [21].

Techno-optimism or Promethean is the belief that the problem of climate change will be solved by technological development. Techno-optimism is considered denialism because it ignores the fact that climate change has a social component that cannot be addressed solely by technology [2]. There are three types of techno-optimism: geoengineering, energy efficiency, and renewable energy. Individualism is taking the extreme pole of the social component, the individual component [2]. Individualism focuses climate campaigns on individual efforts, rather than social or collective efforts. Much like techno-optimism, individualism diverts attention from the more fundamental root cause of climate change, which is collective human behavior that requires socio-structural change.

Based on observations of the six types of climate change denialism, formulated the concept of climate change ideological denialism. Climate change ideological denialism is the ideas and practices underlying responses to climate change that: (1) recognize that climate change is real and caused by human activities and that we must take immediate action to mitigate its negative impacts now and in the future, (2) implicitly or explicitly misdiagnose the social factors of climate change, (3) limit the effective action options that can be taken to promote social change by assuming that the social factors of climate change are implicit and explicit, (3) limiting the options of effective actions that can be taken to promote social change by assuming that ineffective strategies are effective and realistic or applying ineffective strategies to suppress strategies that oppose the social factors of climate change, and (4) maintaining the current social order that has been proven to be a contributing factor to climate change [2].

The study is comprehensive enough to emphasize what is healthy criticism in the climate change discourse and what is denialism. The study asserts that climate change is not only real but has social roots that must be addressed. Denialism seeks to deny the reality of climate change as a whole (literal denialism) or partially (neo-skepticism), and even if they do not, they deny the existence of social roots by highlighting economic aspects (market fundamentalism, green growthism), technological (techno-optimism), and individual actions (individualism) [2].

### 2.2 Conspiracy theory and denialism

A conspiracy theory is an allegation of conspiracy that can be true or false [11]. However, this concept in its application has a pejorative value as a theory that is not supported by proper epistemic authorities such as mainstream media, government authorities, investigative journalists, scientific societies, and professional historians [22]. Conspiracy theories as one of the rhetorical weapons used to discredit experts in their fields [23]. Meanwhile, it stated that conspiracy theories are a subset of false beliefs in society [24, 25].

Classified conspiracy theories are classified into two types: degenerative-destructive conspiracy theories and progressive-destructive conspiracy theories. Degenerative-destructive theories propose the existence of a conspiracy using circumstantial evidence. Progressive-destructive theories propose a conspiracy by building directly from a false premise.

This theory is not an explanation of a particular scientific problem but a separate theory developed on a particular topic [26].

Studies on the impact of conspiracy theories on various public attitudes and behaviors have been widely researched. Studies have found that belief in conspiracy theories can lead to the stigmatization of certain groups of people and support for xenophobic policies [27-29]. In the political context, belief in conspiracy theories makes it easier for people to be controlled by certain authorities to the point where people are directed to commit acts of violence and undermine democratic institutions [30]. Another study confirmed that at the interpersonal level, belief in conspiracies leads to the justification of violent and radical behavior [31]. Effective refutation of conspiracy theories can have deradicalization effects and reduce prejudice in society [32].

At the individual level, belief in conspiracy theories leads to reduced mental health and morale [23, 33]. At the societal level, belief in conspiracy theories prevents the effectiveness of infectious disease prevention and treatment programs [34].

In general, belief in conspiracy theories has a negative and undesirable effect. However, belief in conspiracy theories had a positive effect on preventive action and COVID-19 vaccination intentions [35]. It explained that this paradox is due to cultural factors. Their study was conducted in South Korea and the country's society tends to be collective, in contrast to Western countries that tend to be individualistic. They refer to Leiser and Wagner-Egger [36] who criticize that conspiracy theory studies tend to suffer from value bias because they are conducted in Western countries. Similarly, the study shows that while some people who share conspiracy theories are negatively stigmatized, others can be seen as critical and wanting change [37].

Meanwhile, studies in the context of climate change show that conspiracy theories have a positive effect on climate denialism [38]. Studies show that belief in conspiracy theories related to climate change negatively affects public support for mitigation efforts [39] and encourages people's attitudes that do not care about the environment [40]. Studies in the United States reveal that people who believe in climate change conspiracy theories are generally male, more conservative, more religious, older, more educated, and more affluent than people who do not believe in conspiracy theories [41]. Based on the review, it is hypothesized that belief in conspiracy theories has a positive influence on climate denialism. Hypothesis 1: belief in conspiracy theories has a positive effect on climate denialism.

### **2.3 Climate immediacy and denialism**

The immediacy of addressing climate issues is desirable because it moves the frame of climate change from the future to the present. It emphasizes the urgency and seriousness of the problem and should encourage positive attitudes [42]. However, this immediacy effect does not appear to be linear. When the concept of "climate emergency" is used in news stories, people tend to perceive them as less credible and worthy than stories that use the concept of "climate change" [43].

So, immediacy has two meanings: presenting climate change as something that is in the present and happening now rather than in the future and presenting climate change as a local rather than global phenomenon. There is disagreement in

the literature about whether this immediacy has a positive or negative impact on climate attitudes, such as denialism. We expect immediacy to have a positive effect on denialism because immediacy decreases credibility and newsworthiness [44]. Hypothesis 2: news immediacy has a positive effect on climate denialism.

### **2.4 Communicator competence and climate denialism**

Science communication skills are not the core of the problem [45]. It is essential to improve the effectiveness of communicating climate change scientific evidence [46]. The task of science communicators is to translate academic knowledge into practical action-ready knowledge to promote climate change mitigation and adaptation [47]. In line with the general opinion, the researchers developed hypothesis 3: science communication competence negatively affects climate denialism.

### **2.5 Message tones and climate denialism**

Some studies have found that the effect of a positive message tone is limited. News delivered in a positive tone encourages sociographic and prospective evaluations while egocentric and retrospective evaluations are not affected [48]. That is, evaluations are only given to the social context and the future, not to the self and the past. Individuals may not be motivated to change if the change is not observed at the societal level, for example, by the presence of street activities [49]. Solution journalism only increases positive attitudes but does not encourage behavior [50, 51].

There is an unresolved conflict in the literature regarding the impact of a positive news tone. There is controversy over whether a positive news tone encourages positive attitudes or denialism or whether positive news encourages trust or distrust in the news content. According to the researcher, considering these studies, a moderate situation is the most likely situation. A moderate situation means that a positive tone has an impact, but this impact is not radical. It only changes attitudes, not behavior. However, since this study is focused on climate denialism, which is a form of attitude, it is hypothesized that a positive news tone will harm climate denialism. Hypothesis 4: positive message tone harms climate denialism.

### **2.6 The tyranny of balance and climate denialism**

The tyranny of balance is the tendency of news to present a balanced side for the sake of fairness even if it is irrelevant (e.g., expert versus non-expert opinion). The tyranny of balance allows "fake" experts or even people who are blatantly non-experts to give opinions on climate change [9]. These opinions, if negative in tone, will skew public perception because they are easier to digest than expert opinions which are sometimes not exactly definitive due to a kind of scientific modesty. Of course, if, on the other hand, the non-experts support the scientists, then a positive effect can be realized. Studies show that climate change narratives can be particularly effective for communities if they are delivered by members of civil society themselves. This effectiveness arises because people feel that the news is authentic and so close to them that it demands immediate change [52]. Hypothesis 5: The tyranny of balance has a positive effect on climate denialism.

## 2.7 Narratives and climate denialism

Narrative is a natural factor in human persuasion [53]. Narrative paradigm theory argues that humans are storytellers and that all forms of human communication are best viewed as stories [54]. A study measuring the narrativity of climate change news in five countries showed a maximum score of 1.72 on a scale of 0 - 4, 0 - no narrative, and 4 - strong narrative [55]. In line with the importance of narrative, this study proposes hypothesis 6: message narrativity negatively affects climate denialism.

The hypotheses reveal that several variables influence climate denialism in Indonesian society. Figure 1 indicates the hypotheses based on the literature analysis.

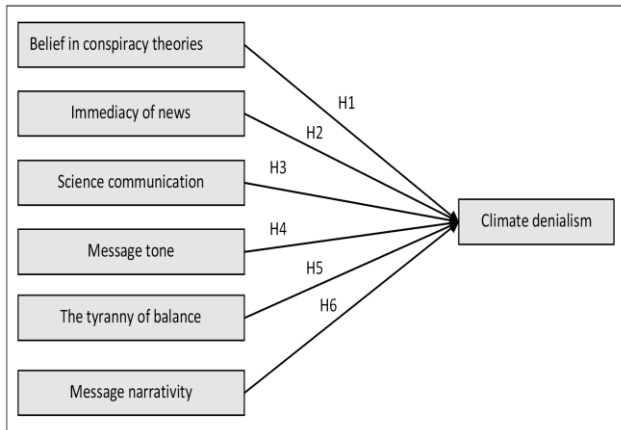


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

## 3. METHODS

### 3.1 Participants and procedures

The sample for the linear regression method uses four inputs: anticipated effect size ( $f^2$ ), desired statistical power level, number of predictors, and probability level [56]. We used the default values for effect size (0.15), statistical power level (0.8), and probability level (0.05). As for the number of predictors, there were six predictors in this study (belief in conspiracy theories, immediacy of news, science communication competence, message tone, tyranny of balance, and message narrativity). The sample size was 124 people out of 180 people in the study population obtained from the calculation of the Slovin sample formula with an error tolerance of 0.05. The survey was conducted face-to-face. The researcher surveyed students in Cilegon City, Banten, using a simple random sampling approach. Students were selected as respondents because climate change denialism is sensitive to education level, social status, income, and age [38, 57, 58].

### 3.2 Measurement

#### 3.2.1 Belief in conspiracy theories

Respondents reported their belief in conspiracy theories according to an instrument that has been developed [59]. Responses to these statements were measured on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questions were modified from the original scale which mentioned the government as an actor who has secret plans to be a particular group. The reliability test yielded a value of

0.945 which is greater than the threshold of 0.700 and indicates that this variable is reliable and can be aggregated into one measurement value on average.

#### 3.2.2 News immediacy

Ten statements measured on a 5-item scale were used to measure immediacy in this study [60]. This variable originally contained four dimensions, but the last two dimensions (vividness and timeliness) apply to the context of the news source, not to individual news stories, so they were not included in this study. The reliability test yielded a value of 0.847, which is greater than the threshold of 0.700 and can therefore be aggregated into one average measurement score.

#### 3.2.3 Science communication competency

To measure science communication competence, respondents responded to eight items built from the roles of science communicators [47]. The reliability test resulted in a value of 0.859 and can be unified into one measurement value on average.

#### 3.2.4 Message tone

The message tone scale was adopted from the public optimism development measurement [61]. This scale describes how the relevance of the message to the recipient of the message to encourage the audience to take action. The reliability test resulted in a value of 0.769.

#### 3.2.5 The tyranny of balance

The tyranny of balance was measured through three items that highlighted the presence of climate change deniers. Participants indicated on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability value of these three items was 0.708.

#### 3.2.6 Message narrativity

The measurement of message narrativity used a four-item scale [62]. Participants answered each item on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability value of these four items was 0.812.

#### 3.2.7 Climate change denialism

To measure denialism, we asked respondents to give their opinion on ten statements about climate denialism [63]. These ten items were measured on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability test results yielded a score of 0.875.

#### 3.2.8 Data analysis

To analyze climate change denialism among university students, the conceptual framework was tested using multiple regression analysis. The regression equation used is expressed as follows:

$$DPI = \beta_0 + \beta_1 KPTK + \beta_2 KB + \beta_3 KKS + \beta_4 NDP + \beta_5 TK + \beta_6 NRP + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

where DPI is climate change denialism, KPTK is belief in conspiracy theories, KB is news immediacy, KKS is science communication competence, NP is message tone, TK is the tyranny of balance, and NP is message narrativity. To analyze this equation, a linear regression assumption test was also conducted, which included a normality test, heteroscedasticity test, and multicollinearity test.

#### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Demographic data collected showed that of the 124 respondents, 64.5% were female and 35.5% were male. As the respondents were university students, the age distribution of the respondents was very narrow with the lowest age being 18 years and the oldest being 24 years with a mean value of 20 years and a standard deviation of 1.26 years.

**Table 1.** The mean and standard deviation for model variables

Variables	Mean	Std Deviation
Belief in conspiracy theories	3.07	1.17
Immediacy of news	3.42	0.49
Science communication competency	3.89	0.47
Message tone	3.67	0.49
The tyranny of balance	3.14	0.66
Message narrativity	3.47	0.59
Climate change denialism	2.80	0.63

As shown in Table 1, students' level of climate change denialism is classified as the lowest-scoring variable with a mean value of only 2.80. On the other hand, the variable with the highest score is science communication competence with a mean of 3.89. When looking at the distribution of answers, the variable of belief in conspiracy theories is the variable with the most varied data, characterized by a standard deviation that reaches 1.17. Meanwhile, the variable with the most uniform answers is science communication competence with a deviation of 0.47.

**Table 2.** Collinearity diagnostics

Variables	VIF
Belief in conspiracy theories	1.11
Immediacy of news	1.37
Science communication competency	1.41
Message tone	1.90
The tyranny of balance	1.69
Message narrativity	1.76

**Table 3.** Summary of multiple regression analysis for variables predicting climate change denialism

Variables	B	SE B	$\beta$
Belief in conspiracy theories	-0.03	0.05	-0.06
Immediacy of news	-0.06	0.12	-0.04
Science communication competency	-0.09	0.12	-0.07
Message tone	-0.12	0.14	-0.09
The tyranny of balance	0.49	0.10	0.52***
Message narrativity	0.08	0.11	0.08
R	0.52		
R <sup>2</sup>	0.27		
R <sup>2</sup> Adjusted	0.24		
F (6,123)	7.36		
p	<0.001		

Note \*\*\*p <0.001

According to the scatterplots, the data shows homoscedasticity. Meanwhile, the normal probability of residuals indicates that the data meets the assumption of normality. Furthermore, the collinearity statistics (VIF) were checked and there were no multicollinearity issues, as the VIF

values were all below 2.0 (See Table 2). Therefore, the analysis continued by examining the results of the regression analysis (Table 3).

Table 3 shows that only the tyranny of balance significantly predicts climate change denialism. The other variables do not significantly predict climate change denialism, as none of the *p* values are at the maximum level of 0.05. Meanwhile, the tyranny of balance has a highly significant value with a maximum significance level of 0.001 with a positive influence, indicating that only the fifth hypothesis is accepted in this study.

There is only one variable that has a significant effect on Indonesian students' climate denialism, the tyranny of balance. The tyranny of balance creates the impression that the issue of climate change, whether in favor or against, is an extreme position and should not be pursued. A neutral, middle-of-the-road position is encouraged by the tyranny of balance. This position creates the impression that climate change is not something serious and eventually gives rise to a tendency toward denialism.

Other factors are less significant for climate change denialism in Indonesia. Belief in conspiracy theories does not affect climate change denialism. A possible explanation for this finding is that climate change is something based on objective natural science, so it is very difficult to refute. On the other hand, belief in conspiracy theories is subjective and based on suspicion or faulty epistemic authority. Climate change is a phenomenon that has very broad scientific support so that denialism based on conspiracy cannot arise, especially in students who strongly believe in the epistemic authority of universities.

Message immediacy does not affect climate change denialism. Immediacy in the context of climate change has two meanings. First, is immediacy in providing reporting, such as what is prioritized by online news. Second, immediacy in the sense of updating climate change issues. Rapidly disseminated news about scientific findings can be delayed by the media because the media still have to digest the news value of the findings. If the media pursue immediacy, then only basic information can be conveyed and this leads to misperceptions [6]. This type of immediacy will prioritize global issues that seem far away and omit local issues that are more real and relevant in the context of climate change, a phenomenon termed as slow violence [64] or the tyranny of the news peg [65]. However, this study found that immediacy has no relevance to climate change denialism. This result means that the transportation of one's entry into the news and engagement with the news does not affect whether one denies or accepts climate change. Climate change can be felt at a distance (in time and space) and close range. Its global nature, happening all around us and far away in other regions of the planet, makes the influence of message immediacy insignificant to denialism.

Science communication competence/skill is the communicator's understanding of what they are communicating, namely climate change issues, as well as the communicator's ability to communicate effectively. The point is that a writer or journalist must have skills in science communication. Communication skills are hypothesized to play a role in denialism because of the important role communication skills play in explaining a topic as challenging as climate change. There is an entire field dedicated to educating the public about climate change [66]. However, the results of this study are in line with the assertion that science communication skills are not a source of problems in science

denialism [67].

Regarding the insignificant effect of message tone on denialism, literature in the field of constructive journalism suggests that news that is constructively framed with a solution orientation encourages perceptions of possible solutions and that audiences can do something to engage in problem-solving efforts [68]. This effect is explained by positive psychology theory, which posits that people are more likely to change if they are positively, rather than negatively, reinforced [50]. Studies show that optimistic people deal more easily with stressful situations, experience less depression, are more prosperous, have less anxiety, and have an internal locus of control [69]. Constructive journalism is a new direction of future change for journalism to encourage collective action in society [70, 71]. However, several other studies have also shown that a positive or negative tone has little effect on audience views [48, 49, 51]. The current research is in line with these studies, in that the tone does not have to be strictly positive or negative but must be optimal in conveying information to the public to have an impact on denialism.

News narrativity also has no significant effect on denialism. The narrative paradigm states that humans use "*good reasons*" or *value-laden warrants* to believe or act in certain ways, rather than *logical reasons*. All humans naturally have a narrative logic that they use to assess human communication. Furthermore, humans create reality through a set of stories (consider and ignore) that must be chosen to live in a continuous process of re-creation. However, the narrative paradigm is not significant for natural science problems which tend to be factual, rather than narrative.

The finding that only the tyranny of balance plays a role in shaping climate denialism in Indonesia forces us to look at how the tyranny of balance is practiced in Indonesia today. Although not explicitly mentioned, the tyranny of balance is demonstrated by giving voice to sources that violate climate change commitments such as palm oil, agriculture, and mining companies. Rather than acknowledging their role in climate change as has been proven repeatedly scientifically [72, 73], these interviewees assert that they are not the cause of climate change. Palm oil companies insist they are not the cause of climate change, government food estate projects deny being the cause of climate change, and the government paradoxically boasts about its abundant coal reserves for the future needs of society, while on the other hand, committing to address climate change. These stakeholders could honestly admit that they contribute to climate change and commit to being better at mitigating climate change. It is these kinds of denials that create doubt in the public that climate change is real, and hence, the tyranny of the balance has a significant effect on climate change denialism.

To summarize, according to the findings presented above, only one out of six proposed hypotheses showed significant results. Belief in conspiracy theories, news immediacy, science communication competence, message tone, and message narratives had no significant effect on climate change denialism, while the tyranny of balance had a positive significant effect on denialism.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This study concludes that climate change denialism in Indonesia is fully influenced by the tyranny of balance in the media. Analysis of this study shows that factors initially

thought to play a role in supporting climate change denialism such as belief in conspiracy theories, the immediacy of news, science communication competence, message tone, and message tone, are found to have no significant effect on climate change denialism. The variable with the closest degree of significance is science communication competence. This finding highlights the important role of the media in treating climate change as a news story that is excluded from other news stories that are delivered with the principle of balance. On the topic of climate change, the media should take a position as a support group campaigning for climate change. The campaign can be done in various forms, including campaigning quickly or slowly, being reported by people who are competent in science or not, having a positive or negative tone, and being narrative or factual, as long as the news is delivered in an unbalanced manner by framing it entirely in favor of climate change and muting the voices against climate change.

In terms of policy implications, this study reveals the importance of efforts to encourage journalism cooperation in providing news that supports climate change mitigation efforts. This initiative can be carried out through national and regional climate change mitigation policies that involve mass media, print, and cyber media as stakeholders who play a significant role in socializing government policies on climate change.

The contributions of this study to empirical research on climate change denialism are many. First, the tyranny of equilibrium is a new idea that has not been studied much before. There is no research on climate change denialism that empirically links it to the tyranny of equilibrium. Yet, on the other hand, the tyranny of equilibrium has an impact on climate change denialism in two ways: it creates a perception of a lack of consensus and it brings the scale of thinking down to the micro-level of the everyday as directed by "fake" experts. Second, this study supports the idea that university students can still be framed by news that obfuscates objectivity through the tyranny of balance. They are, intellectually, relatively immune to conspiracy theories, news immersiveness, communicator competence, messaging language, and message storytelling style, but they are not immune to the skepticism brought by alternative non-expert sources that the media brings to the fore when talking about climate change. Finally, there is almost no research on climate change denialism among university students in developing countries, especially Indonesia. Therefore, this study extends the climate change denialism literature, in the context of a tropical, archipelagic, and developing country, by analyzing denialism factors in a sample of university students from Indonesia.

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