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COVID-19 Pandemic: To Be in the Focus of Media

A Critical Discourse Analysis of Denmark and Sweden's News Media's Reporting on the Coronavirus Pandemic in 2020

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Reporting on the Coronavirus Pandemic in 2020

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Abstract

Title: COVID-19 Pandemic: To be in the focus of media - A critical discourse analysis of Denmark and Sweden's news media's reporting on the coronavirus pandemic in 2020

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Aim and research questions: This study investigates how the corona pandemic COVID-19 has been noticed and presented in the news reporting of a Danish newspaper and a Swedish newspaper in their digital news feed. The study is based on the following questions:

- What discursive themes can be identified in Danish and Swedish news reporting on COVID-19 in 2020?
- What are linguistic features used in the headline of the articles in Danish and Swedish news media?
- How can the Danish and Swedish media reports on COVID-19 be explained by discourse analysis and theoretical framework?

Method and material: The study has used a qualitative method with a critical discourse analysis that uses Norman Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis model to analyze a total of 48 articles from Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad.

Main result: The study results show an overview of how news media reporting from Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad shapes the COVID-19 pandemic with four discursive themes: infection, information, restriction, and immunity. They shaped the discourses on COVID-19 through a critical perspective in relation to the actions of politicians and authorities and their handling. Linguistic features are used to construct our society during the pandemic to capture readers' attention through the headlines. These have been in the form of metaphorical and charged words that reflect either negative or positive emotional reactions. It also highlights that the media has an influence on how things look; they can consciously or unconsciously make us feel a certain way. As a result, people perceive things differently and can sometimes misunderstand information.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Critical discourse analysis, Health communication, News media*

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1. Introduction

Coronavirus COVID-19 is a contagious disease that emerged in Wuhan, China, in late 2019. Its global outbreak in March 2020 has been marked as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO). This pandemic has led to changes in health and lifestyle in the Nordic countries' society to approach recommendations and regulations. The population must adapt from physical communication to digital communication to stay up to date within the country and the outside world. Denmark and Sweden are only a few miles away, with the Öresund Bridge connecting them. However, these two countries have handled the COVID-19 pandemic differently. Denmark was among the first European countries to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and took firm actions, announcing a national lockdown and border closure. In contrast, Sweden did not go on lockdown but had few restrictions, mainly limited to public recommendations (Olagnier & Mogensen, 2020; Zhang, Brikell, Dalsgaard & Chang, 2021).

Since the virus outbreak, the news media have given much room for this pandemic—real-time news reports and press conferences raise public awareness and reduce anxiety. Health officials and many others published and explained health directives on social platforms (Mheidly & Fares, 2020). Media are the tools, channels, platforms, and strategies that we can use to acquire, generate and share knowledge about the world around us through communication and interaction (Lindgren, 2017). They have become a window for the public to search for accurate information, scientific facts, and government decisions (Mheidly & Fares, 2020). However, there is also the risk of misinformation or rather infodemics in scary propaganda (WHO, 2021) spreading faster than the disease itself, leading to unnecessary panic. Communication is crucial to all crises, including a public health crisis, and plays a vital role in the political debate on how a society handles them (Nielsen, Fletcher, Kalogeropoulos & Simon, 2020). Nielsen et al. (2020) claim that the crisis is characterized by the fact that the public is most informed, cautious, and willing to take further preventive measures. However, it also includes growing information inequality, the erosion of trust, and an increasing number of "infodemically vulnerable" using little or no pandemic news and not trusting the news media. Information from news organizations is sometimes provided by misinformation and disinformation, and many other sources that go far beyond official communication from governments and public health authorities (Nielsen et al., 2020). The Nordic media welfare state has a social responsibility where people in the Nordic countries must have extensive access to digital media. For the Nordic welfare states, a public with equal access to information has always been the central idea. People in the Nordic countries are avid consumers of digital news media to obtain information about what is happening in society and the outside world. The media are cultural institutions that are important for the well-being of citizens and their democratic participation, which is characterized by social cohesion (Syvertsen, Enli, Mjøs, & Moe, 2014).

Thus, the thesis takes a closer look at how Danish and Swedish news media differ in how they have influenced themselves through their headlines and content in what can be described as a very pressured and critical situation.

2. Background

2.1 The origin of COVID-19

The current infectious disease COVID-19 pandemic is caused by coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, an abbreviation for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2. Coronavirus (CoVs) is a large class of viruses that can cause various respiratory diseases in humans. From colds to rare and more severe diseases, such as SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) and MERS (Middle East Respiratory Syndrome). Both have a high incidence of mortality and were first detected in 2003 and 2012 (WHO, 2020). Bats are well-established hosts for a wide range of viruses known to cause serious illness in humans. SARS-CoV-2 considering to be genetically related to coronavirus derived from the bat population. After the first coronavirus case was reported in late December 2019 in China, an investigation was immediately conducted to understand the epidemiology and the outbreak's source. It was quickly discovered that the outbreak's source was directly related to the Huanan Wholesale Seafood Market in Wuhan City. The market sells seafood, wild and farmed animals (WHO, 2020).

2.2 Danish and Swedish societal context during COVID-19

The Nordic region is in the northernmost part of Europe and consists of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. These Nordic countries are world-famous for their peculiar way of organizing society. The social welfare and economic systems have been called the Nordic model. This welfare model aims to universal rights in societies with a relatively small class, income, and gender differences. The Nordic countries constitute a distinct cultural and geographical unit among the nations of the world. However, these countries also have common historical roots, political, social, and economic systems embodied in the Nordic model concept (Syvertsen et al., 2014). Nordic welfare has been affected by COVID-19, where people's living conditions have changed in the capacity of the economy, health and education. Since Denmark and Sweden share many similarities but have different approaches for dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, this makes them ideal subjects for this study.

Both the researchers Olganier and Mogensen (2020) and Zhang et al. (2021) wrote that the Danish government was one of the first countries in Europe to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic and took firm actions by declaring a national lockdown and closing borders. Denmark's response to the COVID-19 pandemic can be summarized as: "act quickly, act forcefully" (Olganier & Mogensen, 2020). The country's strategy is stricter and very different from neighboring Sweden, where relatively few measures apart from "social distance" were introduced into public life (Olganier & Mogensen, 2020). Denmark bans large gatherings, closes all unnecessary places in its cities, and seriously discourages the use of public transport and all types of travel unless necessary. Preschools, schools, and universities were closed quickly, and air travel was severely restricted (Olganier & Mogensen, 2020). During the spring in Sweden's grocery stores, the shelves are empty for various goods. The inhabitants stock all kinds of goods for households. This event has been featured in many news and articles, which results in how

severe and frightening the pandemic is in Sweden. Sweden, however, did not go on lockdown; instead, the country had few restrictions, mainly limited to general recommendations, such as prohibited public gatherings or more than 500 people, and recommended distance work and education (Zhang et al., 2021). Irwin (2020) explained that Swedish citizens trust public institutions and the government; the government relies on the people to do the right thing.

2.3 The role of the media in health communication

Media are tools, channels, platforms, and strategies that we can use to acquire, generate and share knowledge about the world through communication and interaction. The media is at the center of how humans as groups and individuals connect to society and the many social activities (Lindgren, 2017). In times of crisis, the media can play an important role. Individuals rely on the media, and the media satisfy the needs of information during the COVID-19 pandemic. Media channels have become a window for the public to search for accurate information, scientific facts, government decisions, and general answers (Mheidly & Fares, 2020). The inputs that people collect as "recipients" shape their actions and responses to the pandemic. The media has also made significant contributions to health awareness and marketing, making it an essential mediator for health communication. It plays an indispensable role in changing attitudes and intentions and influencing healthy behavior (Mheidly & Fares, 2020). Health communication includes research and communication strategies to inform and influence personal and social knowledge, attitudes, and methods related to health and health care (Thomas, 2006). Health communication may seek to: Increase the audience's knowledge and awareness of health issues or solutions. Influence behaviors and attitudes to health issues. Refute misunderstandings and myths about health (Thomas, 2006). A large amount of information about COVID-19 has been widely distributed in the news media. Although some information is correct, some information is also incorrect, which has led to infodemics with waves of false information, rumors, political propaganda, or other forms of unreliable material (WHO, 2021). The information disseminated during an epidemic (or, in this case, a pandemic) must be both sensible and straightforward to keep the population as calm as possible (Loveday, 2020). That is why, as WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said in February 2020, with the emergence and spread of COVID-19, "we are fighting not only epidemics but also infodemics" (WHO, 2020).

According to the latest media development report from DR (2020), Dane's consumption of TV news and news sites increased during the lockdown due to greater interest in following the latest developments and statistics on COVID-19 in Denmark and the world. The Swedish non-profit organization Vetenskap & Allmänhet (VA) studied COVID-19 in Swedish media. In March 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, the traditional news media were the essential information source for the Swedish public about COVID-19. Swedes have tremendous confidence in Swedish Television (SVT) and Swedish radio. Next are TV4, Dagens Nyheter, local morning newspaper and Svenska Dagbladet. The minor proportion has high confidence in Aftonbladet, international media, and Expressen (VA, 2020).

3. Problem definition and Aim

3.1 Problem definition

In times of crisis, the media plays an essential role. It can be used as a source of information and an interpreter for what is happening in society; it reflects how our society is structured during the corona pandemic—fast, accurate, and reliable news reports. It should also be conveyed in a sensible tone with comprehensive information as the articles promote health communication to not cause anxiety among the recipients. People in the Nordic countries are eager consumers of digital news media to get information about what is happening in society and the world around them (Syvertsen et al., 2014), which has increased during the corona pandemic in Denmark and Sweden. Crisis communication is fundamental in the coronavirus pandemic to promote health communication and increase public awareness of the virus and the state of society during the pandemic and its development. When the media choose to present news, they also choose how to shape and frame reality. This framing of news affects people's own perceptions of the world through the media's function of organizing reality for us. Through this, the media can exercise a kind of power over thought (Strömbäck, 2014). However, in the media, broad questions are asked that the recipients do not reflect on in connection with being influenced and rely on what is written in the news media. This is about whether reliable and factual information is provided by news media depicting the COVID-19 pandemic in society. Do the news articles give a fairer picture, or do they magnify things and make people even more scared? The problem on which the thesis is based is that there is no knowledge of whether the Nordic news media of Danish and Swedish news reporting on the COVID-19 pandemic reflects society throughout the year 2020 and how COVID-19 is framed. Yet, also how the news media from Denmark and Sweden difference between the reports promotes health crisis communication during the pandemic.

3.2 Aim

This study aims to investigate how the corona pandemic COVID-19 has been noticed and presented in the news reporting of a Danish newspaper and a Swedish newspaper in their digital news feed, in how they have influenced themselves through their headlines and content in what can be described as a very pressured and critical situation. Studying two countries' news media can be a clue to understanding their different approaches to the pandemic and how it reflects reality during 2020. The study also aims to introduce a historical perspective to future research, hoping that it will generate new knowledge about media reporting in a crisis situation, emphasizing the basic need for reliable and credible information. In this context, the role of journalism is more important than ever. They allow many people to receive reliable, credible, fair, and comprehensible information on all aspects of such crises.

The main research questions are the following:

- What discursive themes can be identified in Danish and Swedish news reporting on COVID-19 in 2020?

- What are linguistic features used in the headline of the articles in Danish and Swedish news media?
- How can the Danish and Swedish media reports on COVID-19 be explained by discourse analysis and theoretical framework?

4. Previous research

How epidemics and pandemics are portrayed in the media and how the media reports and communicates during global crises is a well-studied area. The following sections present previous research on this field, emphasizing the previous epidemic of SARS and the pandemic H1N1, also known as swine flu.

4.1 The news media's communication in a crisis

Mairal (2011) wrote an article about how the media used different narratives to control how news about disasters and influenza is presented. This is done by using people's previous knowledge and awareness of similar events and using comparisons and reminders of how this can happen again, leading to extrapolation among readers, which is a grossly incorrect assumption. The article refers to a commentary published in the newspaper to critique it for using sensational headlines. The commentator criticizes that the headline in the newspaper usually does not reflect the body text and that headlines should accurately reflect the information content of the news.

Many studies claim that the media feeds our fears through linguistics in headlines that address "invisible threat", "super spreaders", and other things that cause anxiety and stigmatized groups and people (Loveday, 2020).

In the book, *The Rhetoric of the Global Epidemic of Transcultural Communication on SARS*, Ding (2014) explores how different cultures and societies communicated about the SARS epidemic by comparing how different organizations and cultures communicated about four various outbreaks. There are many similarities between the book and Mairal's articles, including the fact that the media and authorities often compare the 2009 H1N1 influenza pandemic with SARS to learn from previous epidemiology to address the risks of other diseases. Words referring to various emotions, such as "panic" and "deadly killer", were also used. Military terms such as "battle" and "quarantine" emphasize the severity of the disease. Not only did the media pay attention to the spread of the virus, Ding (2014) also mentioned that the media paid attention to what she called "social side effects", which refers to mass panic and bunkering of food and other goods. Media reports are more viral than the flu itself. In the early stages of a new epidemic, the government and the media often use language and images that indicate fear, leading to an almost inevitable overreaction of the population, which is especially true of the outbreak of COVID-19. This is a balancing act. Humans need to take the virus seriously and take action to prevent the spread of infection. However, the onset of panic disorder and hysteria should be limited as much as possible (Loveday, 2020).

In previous studies, attention has been focused on the relationship between the media, agenda-setting, and people's concerns about the spread of influenza. Regardless of which country has been studied, studies from different parts of the world have shown similar results. There is a link between media reports and conversations during the ongoing epidemic and the public's perception of risk and subsequent behavior (Sandell, Hebar & Harris, 2013). When comparing

Australian and Swedish media reports on the H1N1 epidemic and whether people in each country are affected by newspaper reports, it turns out that the government must actively include the media in its communication plan during the pandemic to prevent unrest in the population. Despite this, the Swedish news media are generally more cautious than the Australian media when reporting on the pandemic and its uncertainty.

In contrast, the Australian media blame the lack of information from organizations such as the WHO. The study also emphasized sensational titles and the use of emotional words. This study highlights the importance of the media as an essential source of public health information in society. The article points to the importance of the media in formulating everyday risk awareness during influenza pandemics (Sandell et al., 2013). Vraga, Bode, Davies, and Hara (2017) claim that fake news and misinformation abound to a greater extent on social media. However, a professional presence in industry experts in the field reduces the amount of misinformation spread.

Summary

Previous research on news media communication in a crisis shows a clear link between the media's choice of words and headlines during a severe influenza outbreak and people's behavior towards it. The media is involved in influencing the population's reaction and subsequent behaviors in a societal crisis. It depends on the space and possibilities for the spread of anxiety and panic. There is a basic knowledge of the role of the media in how anxiety is spread during times of crisis in society and how it can affect various factors. In connection with previous studies, this study can look at the linguistic, sensational, and emotional words that occur and are used in the headlines of the articles and the text content. The previous research with Sandell et al. can be seen in this study how news media formulate everyday risk awareness during the COVID-19 pandemic and how much trust there is in the articles. Is there a speech from the government and other important authorities?

5. Theoretical framework

In this part, the study's theoretical framework is presented, which consists of the theory of social constructivism, which emphasizes the language of the text in the structure of the social world. The word "discourse" is intimately associated with social constructivism because events or actions only make sense in a specific historical, cultural, or social context, i.e., within one or more discourses. Furthermore, agenda-setting theory is presented, how people's reality is constructed with the media's help. Then the framing theory, how the media frame various situations and events, put these in a real context with the recipients, and how the author chooses to make certain parts of the text more distinct. Finally, health communication, how the media promotes health information.

5.1 Social constructivism

Since the study aims to conduct critical discourse analysis, the social constructivist interpretive framework comes in handy, as discourse analysis as a method requires questioning the language used. According to Fairclough (2003) social constructivism advocates that the social world is socially constructed (ideal) rather than realistic. Social constructivism emphasizes the text (language, discourse) in the structure of the social world. It means that we humans construct our reality, and the way we construct and convey this perception between us is language. We can interpret the social world in text in a specific way, but whether our representation or interpretation affects its structure depends on various contextual factors - including how social reality already is, who interprets it, and so on (Fairclough, 2003). This description of social constructivism clearly shows how this theory is appropriate in this study, as this is precisely what happens when reading an article. Everything within the framework of COVID-19 can not be written in the same article. On the contrary, the article is limited to specific topics or concepts that are interpreted as the most important, and the reader can interpret the text further. When these texts are then delimited, something else is automatically excluded, which can be at least as important. These delimitations create a picture of reality, which may not be entirely correct, as not all factors participate. Social construction as a concept was introduced in one of Berger and Luckman's works (1967) *The social construction of reality*. Constructivism was proposed as a social theory, and its purpose is to explain people's social reality - how people shape and perceive it.

5.1.2 Discourse

The term discourse has different definitions. According to Fairclough (1995), the discourse can be described in two different ways, but only one is presented in this theory chapter. The first that is relevant to this study is how the language and the way we talk about things are shaped through social interactions in society. It is important to study the texts in the media by understanding their representation, relationships, and identities. These interact with each other in media that generate a representation of our reality, as language reflects our society (Fairclough, 1995).

5.3 Agenda-setting

The theory of agenda-setting goes far back in time. As early as the 1970s, McCombs and Shaw (1972) researched how news media affect political movements through their reports and how this affects people's perceptions of the campaigns. In the agenda-setting theory, it is up to the media to decide the recipient, the audience, or the agenda related to the reader. The media can choose what to focus on and pay attention to and what events and issues to cover. The media selects the content of interest to highlight and draw attention to which events and issues will be reported. The producers behind the text are the ones who shape the reality that the recipient must relate to (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). They neglect their possible influence on what people think concerning *who* is important, *where* important things happen, and *why* things are important (McQuail, 2010). Media credibility varies; personal experiences and media images may be different. They may not influence the recipient's view of the text and its content. However, they will affect the recipient's thoughts and opinions (McCombs & Shaw, 1972; McQuail, 2010).

5.4 Framing

In 1993, the Journal of Communication published the article *Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm* written by Robert M. Entman. In the article, Entman explains the concept of framing theory and defines framing as follows:

To frame is to select some aspects of a perceived reality and make them more salient in a communicating text, such a way as to promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation for the item described. (Entman, 1993, p.52)

The framework is about selecting particular parts of a perceived reality and then making these more prominent in a communicating text to promote a special problem definition, causal interpretation, moral assessment, or proposed solution to the problem. Entman emphasizes that framing theory is mainly about two concepts: selection and salience (Entman, 1993). According to McQuail (2010), framing has two meanings. The first means that news content is usually within a well-known frame of reference and is shaped and contextualized by journalists based on some underlying sentence structure. The second related implication concerns the impact of the framework on the public. The audience accepts the reporters' frame of reference and sees the world in the same way.

5.4.1 Metaphor

Metaphors can be defined as tools we use to try to understand our world. They take meaning from one area and move it to another - in this way, metaphors can give events or things attributes that they do not necessarily have. Metaphor is not only linguistic beautifications that have no other meaning but can also say a lot about how we in a specific linguistic community perceive

our world around us. The transfer usually occurs from the concrete and familiar to the not-so-experience-based and more abstract (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). When certain language uses such as metaphors are used in the media, there is a lasting connection between people's perception of the world and the ideas of influence and influenced by language (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). The writer uses different metaphors to explain how the writer experiences the situation, event, or thing being described. An example in the context of the pandemic is that it is a roller coaster, that is, that the infection increases and decreases, so it goes on for a while.

5.4.2 Word choice in media

In the late 1980s, Roger Fowler investigated media reports of Salmonella outbreaks. The study is about how the British media created panic through reports of food poisoning and bacterial outbreaks (Fowler, 1991). In this way, the media uses a particular language that involves danger and crisis and words with medical connections so that readers gain authority and legitimacy in the presented text (Fowler, 1991). In his research, Fowler believes that news content can shock the recipient depending on which word the producer chooses (Fowler, 1991). Depending on its significance, the choice of words in the media will impact readers. This study has chosen to place Fowler's study within theoretical frameworks and not the previous research. It relates to agenda-setting and the framing theory in how the media helps construct reality for the reader.

5.5 Health communication

Health communication is about communicating issues to the public, which promotes the management of public health issues. Health communication tries to increase the audience's knowledge and awareness of health issues or solutions. Influence behaviors and attitudes to health issues, and disprove misunderstandings and myths about health (Thomas, 2006). The anthology *Health Risk Communication* by Lemal and Merrick (2013) discusses different conditions for risk communication about health. Lemal and Merrick (2013) stated that public health communication used to be one-way for health representatives to transmit messages to the audience. Over time, this has changed to a two-way interaction to provide space for information to be discussed further by both the senders (health representatives) and the recipient (caregiver). According to Lemal and Merrick (2013), the mass media play a crucial role in shaping social perceptions. Traditional and new media can help deliver customized messages to a broad and diverse audience.

Risk communication requires new ways of communicating with the public based on personal, social, and cultural differences (Das, 2013). According to Das (2013), effective risk communication can be achieved via two paths: affective and cognitive pathways. Messages that use the affective path can target heuristics and emotions unconsciously, circumvent rational thought processes, and increase persuasion by processing experience. One such strategy is to use stories. On the other hand, health information using cognitive approaches can use strategies that promote rational thinking to reduce the defensive response to health information and increase

persuasiveness. Two such strategies are self-affirmation and positive induction of emotions (Das, 2013).

In the affective pathway, the health communication reports form evidence to convince a target audience to adopt healthy lifestyles. Such evidence can be divided into two general types: objective statistical evidence versus anecdotal, narrative evidence (Das, 2013). Statistical evidence refers to using factual statements and abstract data, such as relevant prevalence calculations, to convince recipients that they are likely to be affected by health problems. On the other hand, narrative evidence uses concrete, emotionally interesting information, such as a first-person narrative about someone who came to experience a certain condition (Das, 2013). Although the application of the statistics may increase persuasion in certain circumstances, the statistics will not be practical or even repulsive when a message is a preference inconsistent, as is usually the case with threatening health information. Threatening health news generally meets with much resistance; statistical evidence alone cannot mitigate the defensive tendency. Narrative evidence is more likely to trigger affective reactions, directly affecting risk perceptions and health behavior and circumventing defensive cognitive skills (Das, 2013). There is a perception that women prefer stories, while men prefer to read the number.

The cognitive path focuses on strategies that reduce defensive responses and make individuals more rational recipients of the content of a health message. Self-related threatening health information can threaten self-integrity, which can be seen as a fundamental need of the human self-regulatory system (Das, 2013). Das (2013) claims that many health education campaigns contain threatening health information. They will generally motivate an individual to restore global self-integrity somehow. Reading about the health consequences of smoking can, for example, pose a threat to the global self-concept of smokers, who will feel the need to do something to restore the imbalance caused by the health message. Smokers can restore this imbalance directly by defensively treating threatening information and claiming that "my grandfather has smoked all his life and he has never been ill" (Das, 2013).

Summary

Here, different theoretical perspectives that are applied in the study have been presented. First, with social constructivism and discourse, the text on the news media looks at how the Danish and Swedish social society was constructed during the corona pandemic. Second, with agenda-setting, the selected news articles will see the coronavirus reporting that influences what people think about who is important, where important things happen, and why things are important. Third, with framing and metaphor, and word choice, it will be possible to see how COVID-19 has framed the news media. Finally, with health communication, be able to see how the news media and its reporting have promoted health communication to the recipients.

6. Methods

In the following sections, research methodological approaches are presented with a qualitative approach based on critical discourse analysis. Furthermore, the research's selected material and its process follow. It also highlights how the text in the study's selected articles has been analyzed and is presented through Fairclough's three-dimensional model. Furthermore, reflections regarding the study's methodology.

6.1 Design

For the groundwork of this thesis, the study has carried out a content analysis on Swedish (Aftonbladet) and Danish (Kristeligt Dagblad) news media from a critical discourse analysis with a qualitative research method. A qualitative research method is a type of social science research that collects and works with non-numerical data and that tries to interpret meaning from these data that helps to an in-depth understanding of a specific context studying targeted populations or places (Bryman, 2015). The study has chosen this research design to understand how the Danish and Swedish news media report on COVID-19 has been presented in the headlines and content. The application of critical discourse analysis of reporting on COVID-19 in Danish and Swedish media is to see if there is any possible pattern or difference in how they have chosen to express themselves through their headlines, text content, and language use during different phases during the same period.

6.1.1 Critical discourse analysis

The research is based on a critical discourse analysis method that focuses more broadly on society and criticism of power in the language. Critical discourse analysis involves examining why particular meanings are privileged or taken for granted while others are marginalized (Bryman, 2015). Critical discourse analysis originates from Norman Fairclough. It has a broader meaning of discourse, including language analysis, focuses on constructing social identity, and emphasizes the constitutive parts of the discourse (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). Language (including all texts) is a parallel construction of social identity, social relations, and knowledge. It means that every little word plays a role in shaping these aspects of the society we live in (Fairclough, 1995). Critical discourse analysis is a form of critical social science. It is considered a social science whose focus is to highlight the problems that people face in a certain form of social life and provide resources that people can use to solve and overcome these problems. Critical discourse analysis chooses to focus on certain parts of social life because the "problem" in this case is the coronavirus and its pandemic (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). According to Fairclough (1995), critical discourse analysis includes various methods of analysis, including a three-dimensional framework: language text (spoken or written), discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution, and consumption), and sociocultural practice.

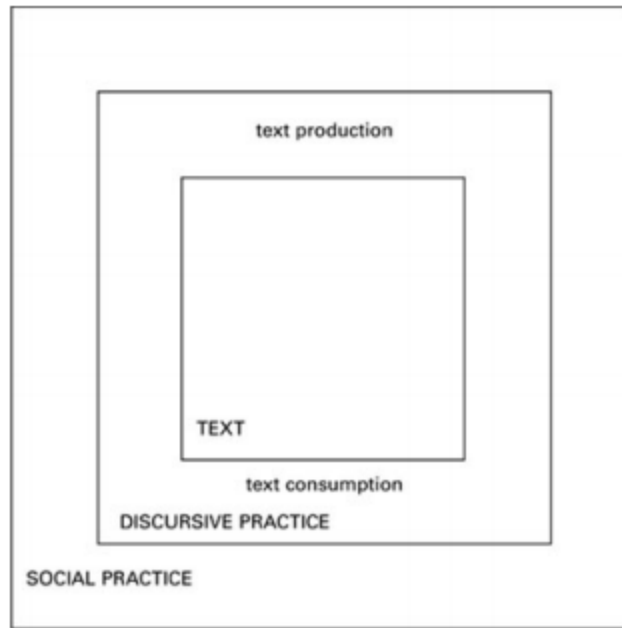


Figure 1: Fairclough's three-dimensional model (Fairclough, 1995, p.59).

Bergström and Boréus (2012) explained that the text focuses on, among other things, grammar and other linguistic ways of looking at a text. The discursive practice looks at how the text is produced and consumed, and social practice puts the text in a larger context. Fairclough (1995) believes that the media is essential to society. The media have a significant impact on how the boundaries between the public and private sectors are reduced. He discussed how different media communicate differently and emphasized that the newspapers' communication reaches the recipient through visual channels, which further becomes language, text, photo, and graphic design. In this study, which is based on the articles in the news media, the study objects have consisted of written text. The study will in the text look for metaphors and other loaded words, on the discursive practice look at the sender or producer of the text, and finally on the social practice "tie the sack" in the larger social context with the help of the selected theoretical framework, framing and health communication that syncs with critical discourse analysis in such a way that they assume that news media influence text recipients through their news descriptions. Since discourse analysis, as well as framing theory, has a focus on studying how language creates a framework (discourse), therefore in this study, discourse analysis is linked to framing theory.

6.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling was used to collect all samples for the research. A sampling based on the research questions in the search for relevant material is called purposive sampling. The selection is made based on the aim of the research and research questions (Bryman, 2015). With this in mind, web-based news was first chosen instead of printed newspapers. This is because there is a

link between the increase in the Internet's progress and a decrease in the consumption of physical newspapers during the pandemic. The country's most prominent newspapers were determined to be used for analysis: Aftonbladet for Sweden and Kristeligt Dagblad for Denmark. Aftonbladet is a social-democratic Swedish evening and online newspaper, with the vision to be: "Sweden's most engaging news source that defends the truth, examines power and gives you influence through journalism" (Aftonbladet, n.d.). According to a survey conducted by the Internetstiftelsen in 2017, a majority stated that they had the evening newspaper Aftonbladet as the primary news source on the Internet. Aftonbladet was in 2017, as mentioned above, the news source that most people turned to online (Davidsson & Thoresson, 2017). Kristeligt Dagblad is a Danish daily newspaper concerning three important focus areas for the magazine: "Faith, ethics and existence" (Kristeligt Dagblad, n.d.).

The search was limited to articles published between January 1st, 2020 to December 31st, 2020 with the term "pandemi," "corona," "covid". The rapid spread and large-scale spread of COVID-19 outbreaks worldwide, the rapidly increasing number of infections, and the rising mortality rate were widely reported in various media. Still, they were widely covered in the news media in particular. Therefore, a quantity of articles is generated with those three terms, 9528 in Aftonbladet and 4061 in Kristeligt Dagblad, and to limit the number of articles for the research, a sample was made based on the research questions. Leaders, debate articles, and other opinion pieces were screened out, including articles from sports pages, finance pages, and similar that were not considered relevant to the survey, to get as homogeneous as possible. The criterion for the articles was that they would affect COVID-19 in some way, the spread of the virus, socially important information, and reporting on the pandemic. As a result, several articles were selected, but there were still too many articles. After that, there was a further delimitation for the articles with the same criteria and looking at the headlines. Since the research was conducted with purposive sampling, there was the research question of whether the linguistic features in the headline have been used in the articles. Finally, two articles were selected each month, with 24 articles in each from Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad, with a total of 48 articles.

6.3 Data gathering

The research objects consisted of written texts where the research material was limited to one of the country's largest newspapers, i.e., Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad. The material has been based on articles published on the newspapers' web versions, not physical printed newspapers. The research collected data through an online search in a national digital archive of the news media, Mediearkivet (Retriever). Mediearkivet is Nordic's largest digital archive of media sources in print and online. Using the keywords "pandemi" or "corona" or "covid" for the period from January to December 2020, 4061 hits appeared in web-based Danish news media Kristeligt Dagblad and 9528 hits in web-based Swedish news media Aftonbladet. To limit the number of articles for research, it has been written above in sampling. In short, the selection for the articles is based on criteria where COVID-19 is affected in some way, the spread of the virus, other

socially important information, and reporting on the pandemic. Finally, two articles were selected each month from Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagbladet. Thus, a total of 48 articles were analyzed.

6.4 Data processing and analysis

Before the analysis was carried out, all articles were read thoroughly to create a good acquaintance with the material. The method of analysis in this study is critical discourse analysis using Fairclough's three-dimensional framework: language text (spoken or written), discourse practice (processes of text production, distribution, and consumption), and sociocultural practice. The textual dimension has searched for metaphors, linguistic features, and other loaded words in this study to be able to answer the second research question. Here, the headings and preambles were also analyzed to see whether metaphors or other language or design became apparent. The discursive practice has searched for the sender or producer of the text. Finally, at the social practice, "tie the sack" in the larger social context of the chosen theories that are synchronized with critical discourse analysis so that they assume that news media influence the text recipients through their news descriptions. Through the discursive and the social practice, the first and the last research question could be answered, which can then be applied with the help of the theoretical framework. In the body text, modalities were marked in the form of quotations or appearances from authorities, experts and from which the text's content was based.

All selected articles were sorted broadly into categories/themes, which appeared naturally during the reading and analysis. This is also called coding, which is to read and reread the articles to identify themes, which is where text fragments are placed in categories (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). As a researcher of this study, it has read articles in the original language, i.e., in Danish and Swedish, which have then been translated into English so that other international people can take part in the study.

6.5 Method discussion

Reliability and validity are paramount in quantitative research, but many qualitative researchers have discussed how relevant the concepts are for qualitative research (Bryman, 2015). The application of critical discourse analysis, like all methods, entails certain limitations. Specific to all text analyses is whether the researcher impartially processing the material (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). Therefore, it is central that a researcher who applies the critical discourse analysis strives to interpret the text according to the study's interpretive strategies to avoid that the interpretation affects the study's intersubjectivity and reliability negatively. For this study to have good reliability, the three-dimensional model from Fairclough is applied, which is a guide to the study's interpretive strategy, which is clarified under the headline data processing and analysis. It can also be complex to achieve good validity in relation to the study's choice of method. Validity means that what has been investigated actually corresponds to what the study intends to investigate (Bryman, 2015). In order to achieve high validity, this study has, among other things,

used a purposive selection when selecting data material to find articles that correspond to the research area and the theme that was intended to investigate with the study. This by reporting for the analysis, explaining carefully how the result has been achieved. Critical discourse analysis is nevertheless a well-adapted method for the selected study. This is because by using Fairclough's three-dimensional analysis model, the study can see and study relationships and connections between language and text production.

7. Result and analysis

This section presents the analysis carried out on the material, i.e., the 48 articles selected from Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad. The section is divided into two separate parts. Initially, the articles depicting pandemics, corona, and covid-19 are introduced by the study separating the distinctive themes of the discourse through a certain structure. Here, the analysis of discursive and social practice is presented, in order to be able to see the social context in society how COVID-19 has been represented in the news media. Then the section will present the second part with linguistic features, metaphors, and other charged words that have appeared in the headlines. Here, the analysis is presented based on the textual dimension based on the three-dimensional model.

7.1 Discursive themes in Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad news reports on COVID-19

In Aftonbladets and Kristeligt Dagblad's news articles in relation to the discourse on COVID-19, there are three recurring discursive themes throughout the year 2020; infection, information, and restrictions. With the three discursive themes, there are also sub-themes that have an impact on the discourses. In addition, Aftonbladet had an additional discursive theme, which is immunity that Kristeligt Dagblad did not have. Therefore, the analysis will begin by examining the four main discursive themes of reporting separately with discursive and social practices.

7.1.1 Infection

In the articles categorized under "infection," there are sub-themes about the spread of infection, illness, and death due to COVID-19. In Aftonbladet, eight articles fall into themes, and in Kristeligt Dagblad, 12 articles fall into themes. Both news media publish an article about the establishment of a virus in China, where several people have suffered from pneumonia due to the virus, and two have died, but also where the infection in Asia has spread. In Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad, the headlines read: *"Two killed in SARS-like virus - Has spread to The Swedish Paradise Thailand"* (AB1) and *"Mysterious virus in China demands another death toll"* (KB1). In Aftonbladet's body text, there is a statement from Hong Kong's infection disease physician Leo Poon, who excludes that the woman in Thailand has been infected by a person who visited the food market in Wuhan and instead became infected by an animal in another market in China (AB1). In Kristeligt Dagblad's body text, the writer has mentioned: "cost him his life" due to the virus, which he later became seriously ill with tuberculosis. The metaphor can be assumed; being infected with the virus causes suffering that later causes death (KB1). Kristeligt Dagblad's article *"The first three cases of Chinese virus have been spotted in Europe"* (KB2) emphasizes the Minister of Health Agnes Buzyn, who mentions the three cases that have been discovered outside China. A statement from Dr. Julie Gerberding, CEO of Merck and Co's pharmaceutical company that the epidemic is still developing. In the body text, the metaphorical expression appears as more cases "will come to light" it is meant that several cases will be discovered, revealed, or exposed soon. Another is that the virus has caused "alarm bells to ring"

in many countries. It is meant to describe an occasion when one realizes that something is wrong, indicating danger, risk, or accident (KB2). Throughout these three articles published at the beginning of the year, the coronavirus has represented something sinister to convey to recipients who should reflect fear, leading to an almost inevitable overreaction of the population.

Both Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad published an article about Sweden's deaths. The headline read as follows: *"First Swedish death in the new coronavirus"* (AB5) and *"117 have died with corona in Sweden: Neighboring countries are completely free"* (KB9). Aftonbladet's article is based on a press release from the Stockholm region, which reported on Sweden's death in COVID-19 with a statement from the infection control doctor Per Follin. The preamble mentions that the deceased person is in his or her upper 70s. Here, the person has not been abroad, met someone with coronavirus, or taken the subway or something similar (AB5). Kristeligt Dagblad's article features a statement from the Swedish National Board of Health and State epidemiologist Anders Tegnell about the number of deaths registered in Sweden. In addition, the Statens Serum Institut in Denmark and Norway is mentioned as having a day without deaths from coronavirus (KB9). The coronavirus in Aftonbladet is represented as a perpetrator who has taken someone's life, meanwhile, in Kristeligt Dagblad, it is represented as negative in Sweden and positive for the neighboring countries.

In Aftonbladet, three articles deal with Sweden's mortality and under-mortality and, to a lesser extent, the spread of infection. The article *"Sweden now has the highest mortality in the world in covid-19"* (AB10) was reported on statistics on how the death rate has risen in May, which has resulted in Sweden being at the top of the world with mortality due to COVID-19. As a reader, it is perceived how severe and dangerous the virus is and what the situation looks like in Sweden. In the preamble, a statement from the former state epidemiologist Johan Giesecke and the political scientist Bo Rothstein about each other's disagreements about the statistics. *"Disaster" says Rothstein, while Giesecke believes that Sweden has done everything right*" (AB10). In the second article, *"Under-mortality rates are increasing in Sweden"* (AB17), a statement from Linus Garp from Statistics Sweden (SCB) on death statistics shows that Sweden has gone from an increase in mortality to an increase in under-mortality. The preamble mentions, *"as a result of the pandemic that is still reaping lives, fewer people are dying now than usual"* (AB17). "Reaping life" is a metaphor for the dead, and as a reader, the saying goes, "as you sow, so shall you reap." Whatever decision you will make, be ready to suffer from the result. The body text describes how sharp excess mortality turns into an increasing under-mortality in population statistics as a "roller coaster." It is a metaphor for a period characterized by many sudden or extreme changes in a short time (AB17). The third article *"Infection is increasing in Europe again - but Sweden is going against the trend"* (AB16) contains the statement from Johan Carlson, Director General of the Swedish Public Health Agency, and WHO's European head, Dr. Hans Kluge. The statement is about Sweden having a low spread of infection compared to other countries, which shows that the spread of infection has increased (AB16). The first of these three

articles described the COVID-19 virus as negative, while the remaining two describe a more positive outlook on the situation.

Both Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad published articles about the new swine flu discovered in China among pigs at slaughterhouses. The headlines read as follows: *"New virus with pandemic potential found in China"* (AB12) and *"Researchers find new virus with potential to become a pandemic"* (KB12). Both news media mentioned "swine flu" a common metaphor for the endemic virus in pig animals and is medically called H1N1. Moreover, both contain expert voices (AB12:KB12).

In Aftonbladet, two articles deal with young people's behavior towards restrictions and their increase in the spread of infection *"Covid-19 is increasing among risk-taking young people"* (AB13). It figures statements in quotes from an interview with Margareta Bohlin, associate professor of psychology. The quotes selected for the article are aimed at young people's risk behavior towards the COVID-19 pandemic. *"Young people as a group are less likely to become seriously ill with covid-19, and that many young people feel that by refraining from seeing their father - and grandparents protect the elderly from infection"* (AB13). In the second article, *"Minister to the students: Get your act together!"* Subheading *"The number of corona infections is increasing again - mostly among young people"* (AB19). It features a statement from the Minister of Higher Education and Research and the Swedish Public Health Agency in a press conference with messages to the students. In the preamble, we find a statement from Matilda Ernkrans, Minister of Higher Education and Research, stating, *"We can not have colleges and university campuses become corona center clusters"* (AB19). Here, the reader understands that the article is aimed at students studying at the university. In both articles, the COVID-19 pandemic has described how serious it is among young people with an increased spread of infection.

Kristeligt Dagblad deals with four articles about the increased spread of infection. The article *"A record number of coronate tests have been registered in 24 hours in Denmark"* (KB8) was reported from the Statens Serum Institut on the number of confirmed coronary infections in one day. It states, *"This is the first time Denmark registers more than 11,000 tests for coronavirus in one day. The previous record was 10,621 tests in one day. It was set last week"* (KB8). The writer has chosen to write *"large dark numbers are still expected"* in the body text. Using the term "dark" as a metaphor for bad things or something negative indicates that many infections are expected to come; that is just the beginning (KB8). The second article, *"Denmark is experiencing the largest number of corona infections since April"* (KB17), figures the statement from Allan Randrup Thomsen, professor of experimental virology at the University of Copenhagen, on the increasing spread of infection. The preamble mentions the number of people infected with coronavirus and a statement from the professor that *"one should consider shutting down the nightlife"* (KB17). This may indicate that the cause of more infection is more lively and

socializing at night than during the day. The third article, *"Coronavirus has spread to the whole country faster than expected"* (KB18), features statements from important actors about the spread of infection throughout Denmark. The actors are Søren Brostrøm from the director of the National Board of Health, director Kåre Mølbak from the Statens Serum Institut, and Minister of Health Magnus Heunicke (KB18). The fourth article, *"Virologist: Nothing suggests super-spread with corona at demo"* (KB11), features an expert opinion in the form of quotes from an interview with Søren Riis Paludan, professor of virology at Aarhus University. About 15,000 people related to the Black Lives Matter demonstration in Copenhagen, only four people have been confirmed to be infected with coronavirus (KB11). It is mentioned as "super-spread" by Paludan; it indicates a risk that it may cause an increased number of infection cases after super-spreading events. All articles describe how severe the COVID-19 pandemic is in Denmark.

Kristeligt Dagblad deals with two articles about the coronavirus mutation that has been discovered in Great Britain. First, the article *"Nine Danes are infected with British corona variant"* (KB23) is that nine Danes have been infected by the coronavirus mutation discovered in Great Britain. The body text also describes what the new variant is called N501Y (KB23). In the preamble, we find a statement from the Statens Serum Institut that *"there is no indication that the British corona variant is more serious than other variants"* (KB23). In the preamble, the reader understands that the information comes from a socially important institute where the article's subject concerns covid-19 and infection, which agrees with the sender of the information. The second article, *"WHO: New corona variant is not out of control"* (KB24), is a statement from WHO corona researcher Maria Van Kerkhov about the new corona variant discovered. In the quotations selected in the article, the mortality of the new variant is *"there is currently no evidence that the new variant causes higher mortality or more serious illness"* (KB24). Therefore, both articles describe that the new variant is not dangerous or deadly.

Under the themes of infection, Kristeligt Dagblad was also reported to Denmark's most vulnerable individuals having a lower spread of infection with the headline: *"Denmark's most vulnerable citizens have escaped corona infection"* (KB13). It includes statements from significant characters in quotes from an interview with Professor Søren Riis Paludan in virology and immunology at Aarhus University. Kim Allan Jensen, the local chairman in Copenhagen for the homeless national organization Sand, etc. (KB13). The preamble finds out who the vulnerable people are: *"organizations feared that the virus would particularly affect homeless people. But that has far from been the case"* (KB13). It also published an article from a press conference where Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen commented on the mutation from minks, saying that they pose a threat to the development of vaccines for coronavirus. The headline reads: *"Mette Frederiksen: Mutated virus from mink can threaten COVID-19 vaccine. All mink must be killed"* (KB21). The first article with application with COVID-19 is described as a positive outlook. While in the second, it is described more as a negative view.

7.1.2 Information

The news articles that deal with "information" cover nine articles for Aftonbladet, which were mainly informed about the spread of risk in Sweden and mortality, socially important information about the virus, and the WHO about coronavirus. While in Kristeligt Dagblad, eight articles fall into themes that are partly about coronavirus, its global risk of spreading, and the measures.

An article in Aftonbladet, *"Increased risk that the coronavirus will spread in Sweden"* (AB3), is based on a press release from Public Health Agency and state epidemiologist Anders Tegnell statement that there is an increasing risk that the coronavirus can spread in Sweden but a low risk of a general spread of infection in the population. In the body text, the statement from Tegnell appears, *"we will get further stray cases"* (AB3). "Stray cases" can be explained in the context of the virus that it is not an actual outbreak but individual cases, i.e., single cases/clusters.

Four articles from Aftonbladet and one from Kristeligt Dagblad deal with socially important and world-important information about COVID-19 and pandemic. The article *"Wanted: Small virus with deadly potential"* (AB4) consists of general facts about the coronavirus with five subheadings. It does not appear in the article who informs the facts; they are determined in the headline and again in the preamble by the writer to be necessary information that the reader needs to get *"we know this so far, but above all: you do it to protect yourself and others"* (AB4). The article describes the coronavirus in a neutral tone with informative text. However, the headline is used more for the negative outlook. The second article, *"Think of everyone else, think of healthcare and think" every other water"* (AB8) is about Valborg's celebration where jointly from Uppsala municipality, university, and county administrative board informs the Uppsala population and the entire Swedish population what to think about when celebrating Valborg. The preamble reads: *"Council an ordinary Valborg in Uppsala:" Every other water." Valborg 2020: "Every other space"* (AB8). This means that the annual Valborg is always filled with people next to each other with alcohol, and there you should drink every other water not to get drunk. Valborg 2020, on the other hand, has instead changed from drinking every other water to keeping its distance. Articles consist of a neutral tone. The third article, *"WHO warns: Covid may be here for good"* (AB9), is based on a press conference where the WHO informs and warns about COVID. The preamble reads as follows: *"The new corona virus may never disappear - and it may be that humanity must learn to live with it, warns the World Health Organization WHO"* (AB9). In the fourth *"WHO alarm: The rise of infected an alarm clock"* (AB18), it is once again the WHO that informs and warns COVID about the increased spread of infection. It features a statement from Hans Kluge, European head of the WHO, which informs the increased spread of coronary infection in Europe, where France is most affected. In the preamble: *"The spread of the coronavirus in Europe is serious and alarming"* (AB18). By alarming, it means that something is frightening because of an awareness of danger. The military term "quarantine" is also used in the

body text. Thus, both articles, which consist of WHO as the main transmitter, have a more alarming tone about the COVID-19 virus.

Kristeligt Dagblad's article *"WHO: The risk of global virus spread is now very high"* (KB4) is based on a press conference conducted by WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, and WHO Spokesman Christian Lindmeier on the rapid spread of the new coronavirus has increased fears that the crisis will develop into a pandemic. It addresses the number of infections and deaths due to the virus. At the same time, it addresses the countries that have registered the case of coronavirus infection. The preamble mentions: *"There are no longer realistic hopes that the epidemic can be over in a few months"* (KB4). Here, readers must indicate how severe the virus is and that there are no measures for the virus at that time, which means that it will stay for a while longer. The reader must move down in body text to find out who the quote is from; WHO's Chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Two articles from Aftonbladet deal with information about deaths in Sweden. First, the article *"Löfven: 'Thousands will die in the corona'"* (AB7) the statement figures from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven where he informs how many will die as a result of COVID-19. The preamble mentions *"the corona crisis will continue for months to come and will reap thousands of deaths"* (AB7). Reaping in this context is a metaphor for the deceased, and as a reader, the saying goes "as you sow, so shall you reap." Whatever decision you will make, be ready to suffer from the result. This interpretation of some bitterness is confirmed at the end of the body text where Löfven emphasizes *"now it is important to have discipline - with your own hand hygiene, not to meet older relatives and so on"* (AB7). This means that if you do not have the discipline and do not follow the advice, you will be infected; that is, you get what you deserve. The second article, *"The Public Health Agency's number breakdown: Wrong death forecast"* (AB14), was informed that the public health authorities had informed the wrong number of deaths that are estimated to be in the future as a result of COVID-19. It had calculated and rounded off incorrectly, which resulted in a reasonably high figure, which would be reasonably low in mortality in Sweden. In the preamble, it is mentioned that the public health authority has presented a new report that would predict the future of coronavirus in Sweden. *"In the worst case scenario, just over 7,000 Swedes would die in the coming year"* (AB14). Here we find the meaning of fright and panic for the Swedish population. No one knows which of these individuals will fall for COVID-19. Here, COVID-19 is described as the villain who will take many lives.

Under theme information, Aftonbladet also published *"The government wants to introduce pandemic law -" Will limit crowds in shops and public transport"* (AB20), featuring a statement from Minister of Social Affairs Lena Hallengren informing that the government is introducing pandemic laws that society must follow. In the preamble, we find the statement from Hallengren, *"this pandemic has only just begun"* (AB20). It means that after several measures for the spread of infection, restrictions, and legislation, there are still many cases of infection. It also published

the article *"The new corona variant is spreading around the world"* (AB24), which informs which countries the new corona variant has spread to and how the individual originally got the virus and infected others. There is also a fact box in the text about what is unique about the new corona variant. In the preamble, we find which country the new corona variant has spread to. The new variant is described as *"more contagious"* in the body text, reflecting on intimidation (AB24).

Kristeligt Dagblad deals with three articles about the information to society regarding corona, measures, and what happens after lockdown. The article *"Corona posters are hung up in Danish airports"* (KB3) is based on a press release issued by the Danish Health and Medicines Authority. It is informed to travelers that information material about the new coronavirus will be hung at airports. Furthermore, it informs about symptoms of infection with the new and potentially deadly coronavirus and how to behave like a traveler if you get symptoms of infection. The preamble mentions, *"The Danish Health and Medicines Authority cooperates with Danish airports to inform travelers about the new coronavirus."* Here we find important information for travelers at Danish airports about the coronavirus from the Danish Health and Medicines Authority (KB3). The second article, *"Strategy soon shifts from containment to limitation of corona"* (KB5), is based on a press conference where the authorities convey that they should not try to prevent infection within Denmark but rather try to limit the spread and prioritize treatment to those who need it most. The body text mentions, *"There is probably a larger dark figure hiding on more infected"* (KB5), which means that there are more confirmed numbers of infected than has been reported. The military term "quarantine" is also used. In the third article, *"Professor: Corona may flourish during government experiment"* (KB7), the statement from Professor Allan Randrup Thomsen figures that there is a risk that the spread of infection among children increases when they return to preschools and schools, there was another statement from the Statens Serum Institut's academic director, Kåre Mølbak that the coronavirus does not spread among children.

Two articles in Kristeligt Dagblad are informed about the vaccination that has been developed for COVID-19. In the article *"Chief virologist on vaccines: Looks promising - but a long way yet"* (KB14), the statement figures from Anders Fomsgaard, chief virologist and professor at the Statens Serum Institut on vaccinations have been developed. Readers get the hope that the vaccination is here soon. The preamble mentions that *"The first tests of corona vaccines on human work, but several side effects are seen"* (KB14), which indicates there is still much work left to be able to test on several people. In the second article, *"The debate in Denmark is underway: Who should be vaccinated against corona first?"* (KB16) was informed that the debate with the vaccination is underway, where the Danish health authorities and other professors who disagree with each other about who should vaccinate first (KB16). In the preamble, we find that they disagree *"should the elderly be vaccinated before hospital staff?"* (KB16).

Under thematic information, Kristeligt Dagblad also published *"30 percent of infected people in Denmark work in the health sector"* (KB10). It figures statements in the form of quotes from an interview with significant characters in Denmark. The statement is about those who work in the health care sector also becoming infected with corona. The preambles show that various healthcare professions are among the infected, which are doctors, nurses and social and health assistants (KB10)." Another article, *"Criticism hails down on Trump statements on covid-19"* (KB19), where it is informed that US President Donald Trump was providing misinformation on COVID-19 to the public. It also figures a statement from Joe Biden, who has with Trump's misinformation; *"there is really a lot to be worried about. 210,000 people have died in our country"* (KB19). In the body text, Trump wrote a post on Facebook, which later were removed from Facebook, that ordinary seasonal flu is more deadly than Covid-19. Here indicated misinformation about coronavirus. *"The flu season is starting now. Many people die from the flu every year - sometimes over 100,000 - despite having a vaccine"* (KB19).

7.1.3 Restriction

The news articles under the theme "restriction" have impacted some ways on restrictions for people concerning COVID-19. For example, in Aftonbladet, six articles and four articles for Kristeligt Dagblad fall into themes.

Both Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad published an article based on a press conference with Prime Minister Stefan Löfven and Minister of Social Affairs Lena Hallengren. They have taken measures that prohibit nightlife in Swedish society, which has resulted in an alcohol ban on the restaurants and tavern after 22.00 and close at 22.30. The headlines of the articles read as follows: *"Corona stops alcohol at the tavern after 22"* (AB21) and *"Sweden bans late sale of alcohol to curb corona"* (KB22). In the preamble, we find a warning statement from Prime Minister Stefan Löfven that *"too many Swedes have begun to relax"* (AB21). Hence, the government has recommended banning alcoholic beverages in bars after 22.00. After that, bars and pubs must be closed after half an hour (AB21). The preamble in Kristeligt Dagblad also reads the same as Aftonbladet with a statement from Prime Minister Löfven *"too many Swedes have started to take too casually on corona considerations"* (KB22), which has resulted in a ban on serving alcohol until 22.00 (KB22).

Aftonbladet deals with four articles on restraining orders, restrictions, and laws and regulations. The article *"Care giants ahead of a ban on visiting country's various region nursing homes"* (AB6) is about how two of Sweden's most prominent companies in elderly care decided to introduce stop visits in their homes. In the body text, it appears that the "care giants" are Attendo and Vardaga, two of the largest companies in elderly care in Sweden (AB6). The introduction introduces readers to Carina Andersson, who is responsible for the crisis organization at Attendo. Furthermore, it is mentioned that they are now introducing a stop to visiting nursing homes and

the number of care units in question. Consequently, the Swedish Public Health Agency and its recommendations are mentioned and how decisions for stopping visits occur at the local level in the country's various regions. TT appears as the sender of interview questions transparent in the body text and asked by Carina Andersson at Attendo. Furthermore, there is also a statement from the unit manager at the municipality (AB6). The second article, *"Infection control doctor: Young people do not follow the advice"* (AB15), contains a statement from two infectious disease doctors about young people's behavior towards the restrictions. In the body text, we find a statement from Mats Erntell, acting infection control doctor in Region Halland about how young and adult handle recommendations on the beaches, *"adults were anxious to keep their distance, but among young people, it was very crowded, and they hung in clusters"* (AB15). Further, in the preambles and body text, we have a statement from the infection control doctor Thomas Wahlberg about the kids' behavior *"got a little tired of a pandemic going on"* (AB15). In the text, the metaphor *"Toothless with more restrictions"* appears; it is said that it does not matter if there are strict recommendations. Recommendations are lacking in enforcement, ineffectual for the young because they will still meet in other places. The third article, *"The government is tightening the rules to stop corona infection - Do not go to the gym, do not organize parties or dinners"* (AB22), is about how the government has taken action with further strict restrictions where the limit for public gatherings from 50 has been reduced to eight people. The preamble mentions, *"The government is roaring - and tightening the restrictions to stop the spread of infection"* (AB22). "Roaring" means that the government addresses the outraged and with a loud voice. The preamble also emphasizes that general meetings are reduced to eight people, indicating how serious the situation is in society after reaching the limit for public gatherings from 50 to eight people (AB22). The fourth article, *"New pandemic law makes Sweden like others"* (AB23), features the statement of Titti Mattsson, professor of public law at Lund University on pandemic law. The preamble is written: *"with the proposals in the new pandemic law, the government gets lockdown-like tools that make Sweden more like other countries. But still not"* (AB23). This suggests that Sweden will continue to handle pandemics differently, despite the pandemic law.

In an article from Aftonbladet, *"Millions travel - despite fearing the virus"* (AB2), TT appears as the sender of interview questions that are transparent in the body text and which are asked to Hanna Sahlberg, former foreign correspondent in China for Swedish Radio. The preamble mentions, *"Isolated cities, travel restrictions and fear of the new coronavirus"* (AB2). The term fear gives a strong feeling that creates complete panic for the new coronavirus where the affected cities have been isolated, and millions of people are affected by travel restrictions. Isolation can be described as having minimal contact and not staying near other places (AB2).

In Kristeligt Dagblad, two articles are about restrictions and regulations. The article *"The closure of Denmark is extended until after Easter"* (KB6) is based on a press conference with a statement from Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on extended lockdown and restrictions as well as the

temporary closure of schools, restaurants, and parts of the public sector until April. Furthermore, it is mentioned in the preamble, *"Even during the holiday season, people must keep their distance, [...] grabbing the phone or sending a letter of intent instead"* (KB6). "Grabbing the phone or sending a letter" means that one should change the physical contact to digital contact during the corona pandemic. The second article, *"Mette Frederiksen states: There will be new corona restrictions"* (KB20) it is again a statement from Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen about the Christmas celebration, new restrictions on the assembly ban, and increased use of sanitary napkins, as well as further restrictions in the nightlife. The reader understands that the information comes from a socially important Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen. The subject matter of the article, covid-19, and restrictions, agrees with the sender of the information. In the preamble, we find a statement from Frederiksen *"the Danes must accept that there will be no traditional Christmas lunches this year"* (KB20). This suggests that strict restrictions may be added as the spread of infection continues to increase.

In another article, *"Study: The Danes drink less and meet more"* (KB15), is based on a study with once again a statement from Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen but also a statement from Michael Bang Petersen, professor of political science at Aarhus University. The statement is partly about the Danes' behavior towards the pandemic and the restrictions. The preamble mentions that *"people are still aware of the advice to avoid infection, but we interpret advice differently"* (KB20). It is believed that each individual takes the restrictions too lightly or too harshly.

7.1.4 Immunity

Under this category, with immunity as a theme, only one article was found. *"Those with antibodies can meet their seniors"* (AB11) deals with information from the Swedish Public Health Agency at a press conference that the elderly and people in risk groups can receive visits again if the visitors show antibodies to COVID-19. The article continues with an account of the Swedish Public Health Agency's decision on people with antibodies via statements and answers to interview questions from the Swedish Public Health Agency's department head, and an update of, among other things, Sweden's COVID-19 statistics (AB11). The article emphasizes that people should continue to be careful about older people and those at risk. Although the headline gives hope and an opportunity, it appears from quotes from Karin Tegmark Wisell, head of department at the Public Health Agency, that it is not as simple as the title makes it sound: *"We do not fully know how protective the antibody response is, but there is enough evidence that it would protect against severe disease"* (AB11).

7.2 Linguistic features in the headlines of the articles in Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad

7.2.1 The use of charged words

To make headlines attract the reader's attention, the writer can use charged proverbs to influence readers using words and phrases with strong connotations associated with them to invoke an emotional response. Charged words and phrases can have significant emotional consequences beyond their literal meaning and give positive or negative reactions. In the examples below, the analysis can see that the charged words are incorporated into the headings that describe the virus somehow. Some of the headlines in Aftonbladet's and Kristeligt Dagblad's articles used the term "death" as charged words associated with the coronavirus. In the terms death, "killed," "deadly," "death," "die," and "died" were used, which were applied as a negative emotional reaction. In an example from both news media below, it can be seen how the term has been incorporated into the headlines: *"Two killed in SARS-like virus"- "Has spread to the Swedish paradise Thailand"* (AB1). The headline can be interpreted as a dramatic linguistic formation with "killed" as a negative charge word. It defines that two have died where a new virus in the form of SARS-like viruses has killed them. In the subheading, "Swedish Paradise Thailand" is used as a term to define the country where the infection has spread, which Swedes tend to travel and vacation in the tropical country of Thailand. *"Mette Frederiksen: Mutated virus from mink can threaten COVID-19 vaccine. All mink must be killed"* (KB21). The headline has a negative linguistic expression where the main character appears and expresses "threaten" and "killed" as charged words. It emphasizes that the mutated virus from the minks can be a warning of possible consequences, i.e., that the vaccine does not have a full function and effect, hence is measures to kill all minks.

Other charged words found on other headlines that reflect on fear and danger are "fearing" and "super-spreader." In the example above, we see the context of this: *"Millions travel - despite fearing the virus"* (AB2). The term "fearing" alludes to experiencing a concern for the virus, that is, an unpleasant feeling caused by imminent danger concerning the fact that millions travel regardless. *"Virologist: Nothing suggests super-spread with corona at demo"* (KB11). The headline uses a subject of knowledge within a professional language, "virologist," the doctrine of viral agents, their ability to act as small selfish genes, and cause disease. The term "super-spread" is also used, usually identified in retrospect, as tending to infect more people than the average from a common source. The headline makes readers learn about the virus that there is no indication that a super spreader can happen at a demonstration. The headline does not write the full words for the demonstration but the abbreviation for "demo".

Another loaded word that was found as an idiomatic expression is "get your act together," which means that someone needs to improve lousy behavior by changing bad habits, especially because they are ineffective or disorganized. In the example above, we can see the context in the

headline: *"Minister to the students: Get your act together!" - "The number of corona infections is increasing again - mostly among young people"* (AB19). It can be interpreted as a dramatic expression with a moral sense from an important minister to exhort all students, where an exclamation mark is applied in the headline. This means that young people are once again causing an increased spread of the infection in society, which their behavior should change.

Most charged words that have been raised have been in negative emotional reactions, but there was one charged word that has a negative term but a positive expression in the context of the headline. *"Denmark's most vulnerable citizens have escaped corona infection"* (KB13).

Here, "vulnerable" is used as a positive term even though it is a negative term. It is meant that of all Denmark's population, the most vulnerable citizens have a low coronavirus infection.

7.2.2 The use of metaphors and other rhetorical style figures

Metaphors can be defined as tools we use to try to understand our world. They take meaning from one area and move it to another - in this way, metaphors can give events or things attributes that they do not necessarily have. Metaphor is not only linguistic beautifications that have no other meaning but can also say a lot about how we in a specific linguistic community perceive our world around us (Bergström & Boréus, 2012). In the examples below, the analysis can see that the metaphorical words are incorporated into the headlines that in some way describe the virus. Of the metaphorical words that have appeared on the headlines of Aftonbladet's articles, it has been in some way to alert about the coronavirus and its increased spread of infection. The metaphorical word used within it is "warns," "alarm" and "alarm clock". An example below can be seen from the context of the headline. *"WHO alarm: The rise of infected an alarm clock"* (AB18). A world-important organization appears that issues "alarm," which is meant to give warning signals where the term "alarm clock" is used which is a figurative meaning of someone or something that makes the outside world aware of the danger, in this case the increase of infection.

Another rhetorical style figure found on the headline of Aftonbladet's article is antithesis, characterized by sentences that consist of opposites, as the sentence reads "every other water". The headline reads as follows: *"Think of everyone else, think of healthcare and think "every other water"* (AB8). Thus, the headline connects COVID-19 and the pandemic where the individual should think of others and not burden healthcare. Then a quoted excerpt with the opposite sentence deals with the Valborg celebration that applies in the ongoing pandemic. This means that the opposite of "every other water" should be 1-2 meters apart. Another metaphorical word found on Aftonbladet's article headline deals with young people's behavior towards the corona pandemic and its high spread of infection is the word "risk-taking." The term risk-taking is for risks, threats, and dangers, reflecting that young people pose a danger to society.

In Kristeligt Dagblad, metaphorical words were found that described the origin of the virus and the mutated virus to indicate that the responsibility and blame lie on the Chinese population and

the British population. The metaphorical words are "Chinese virus" and "British corona variant". Other metaphorical words found on Kristeligt Dagblad were "flourish" and "hails down." In the example below, we can see the context of the headlines. *"Professor: Corona may flourish during government experiment"* (KB7). In the headline, the professor appears as the main character in the article, which addresses the metaphor in the form of "flourish," which means that the spread of infection can develop and increase again during government experiments. It does not appear what kind of experiment, but it may have enough to do with restrictions and lockdown. *"Criticism hails down on Trump statements on covid-19"* (KB19). The headline uses "hails down" as an idiomatic expression to fall or be thrown or ejected. Here we do not find what statement Trump has made that has led critics to be thrown at him, only that it affected covid-19 in any way.

7.3 Summary

In summary, critical discourse analysis was conducted on 48 news articles from two news media, Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad, using Fairclough's three-dimensional model. As the articles were divided into their themes and deeper reading and breakdown of the texts, patterns and other answers to the research questions began to be discovered. Throughout the analysis, three common discursive themes emerged; infection, information, and restriction. With the three discursive themes, there are also sub-themes that have an impact on the discourses. Aftonbladet had an additional discursive theme, immunity, which Kristeligt Dagblad did not have. In the textual dimensions, linguistic features were found in the headlines of the articles in the form of loaded words and metaphors. But even in the preamble and body texts, the metaphorical word magnified the very problem in the text that has to do with COVID-19. One could see a certain difference in how the writers between Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad use proverbs to appeal to readers if negative, neutral or positive expressions are used. Various important senders were found in the discursive practice, such as authorities, actors, and expert opinions. In social practice, it could see how society's pandemics represented in the articles. The majority of both news media's reports represented COVID-19 in a negative outlook, where COVID-19 is the villain and dangerous. At the same time, people can be said to be innocent but also complicit in the infection.

8. Discussion and conclusion

In this last section, results and analysis will be discussed in relation to the research questions and aim, connected to previous research and theories. Furthermore, a suggestion for further research.

8.1 What discursive themes can be identified in Danish and Swedish news reporting on COVID-19 in 2020?

Throughout Aftonbladet's and Kristeligt Dagblad's reporting on COVID-19 through the year 2020, three common discursive themes have recurred: infection, information, and restriction. Aftonbladet had an additional discursive theme, which is immunity that Kristeligt Dagblad did not have. The three common recurring themes occur with different sub-themes that were related to the main themes. During the year, the two news media have primarily focused on the COVID-19 pandemic. As the situation in society changed and developed, so did the content of the articles. The fact that the reporting throughout the year has been broad and relatively evenly distributed over the articles of the selected news media may be considered a good agenda-setting. The majority of news media's reports were represented COVID-19 in a negative outlook, where COVID-19 is the villain and dangerous. At the same time, people can be said to be innocent but also complicit in the infection. In the discourse of infection, the majority in Kristeligt Dagblad's portrayal of the COVID-19 virus and pandemic was in a negative outlook. At the same time, Aftonbladet had somewhat less were both news media mediate deaths and infections, except where a few articles had a positive attitude towards the virus. In the discourse information, COVID-19 was represented in Aftonbladet by the majority in a negative view, with some exceptions where some neutral articles appeared. In Kristeligt Dagblad, it had a little more neutral text content. In the discourse restrictions, both news media had represented COVID-19 in a negative view of society. In the discourse immunity found in an article by Aftonbladet, the coronavirus is portrayed positively. As Sandell et al. (2013) show, the importance of news media of its content is in line with common perceptions to avoid panic or lack of reliability. The content of both news media has been socially informative throughout the year. With agenda-setting, it can be perceived what the writers have chosen to produce the information for the readers, with *who* is important, *where* important things happen, and *why* things are important (McQuail, 2010). In the articles produced concerning COVID-19, it could be discerned that the writers often applied dominant frames that problematized a given problem (Entman, 1993). Many time frames were also applied to maintain the coherence between the headline and the text, which could be distinguished by the fact that the actor's dominant statement was leading the discourse of the article.

Many of the articles in both news media contained information directly from authorities or other actors, such as the Public Health Agency and the World Health Organization, or the Prime Minister, or views in the form of expert opinions or quotes from people directly related to the discourse covered. These various indirect senders and statements contribute to health

communication where they communicate to the public, which promotes public health issues, increasing the audience's knowledge and awareness of health issues and solutions (Thomas, 2006). Vraga et al. (2017) demonstrate how this gives the information conveyed legitimacy and reduces misinformation disseminated. As several articles analyzed were based on the same content in the form of press conferences and official press releases, the content of those articles is considered to have high legitimacy and therefore contributes to the correct dissemination of information about COVID-19. However, an article from *Kristeligt Dagblad* with discourse "information," has been based on President Trump's statement regarding the virus, which admits misinformation about it (KB19). This contradicts Vraga et al. (2017) studies to have a professional presence in industry experts to reduce the dissemination of misinformation. Trump is not an expert in the field but only to be a president. All discourses were designed in an informative and factual way. The discourse was often shaped by the agency's actors, which constituted an informative tone, and at the same time, experts' opinions were reflected in relation to the discourse. This discursive strategy meant that the articles reflected general information to the public. Another distinctive framing in reporting on COVID-19 was the reflection of the collective dimension, which could be discerned by the state presenting society's common strategy. This was clarified by the discourse reproducing information on how one could act together to reduce the spread of infection in society. In connection with Sandell et al. (2013) study, the *Aftonbladet* and *Kristeligt Dagblad* authorities and other actors have included the media in their communication, contributing reliable facts and completeness of the information. Unlike Sandell et al. (2013) studies about Australia lack information, and Sweden does not, which in this study, both news media had completeness with information. Many of the articles in connection with Marial's study (2011) that the content of the articles should be reflected in its headlines, something that most corresponded with a few exceptions where the reader had to search in the preamble or further down in the text to find a context or coherence. In both news media, the content and linguistics of the body text have created and constructed for readers what the perception of what society and the world looks like during the corona pandemic (Fairclough, 2003; Berger & Luckman, 1967).

8.2 What are linguistic features used in the headline of the articles in *Aftonbladet* and *Kristeligt Dagblad*

Throughout, both news media have the majority of negative linguistic expressions on the headlines that contribute with either charged words or metaphorical used by the writer to capture the reader's attention. In charged words, *Aftonbladet* and *Kristeligt Dagblad* use, among other things, negatively charged words within the term death as "killed," "deadly," "die," and "died". In *Aftonbladet*, metaphorical words in the form of a disturbing tone are used to give warning singles such as "warns," "alarm," and "alarm clock". *Kristeligt Dagblad*'s metaphorical words are used to describe the origin of the virus as "Chinese virus" and "British corona variant". Other metaphorical words found were "super-spreader," "flourish," and "hails down." In addition to negative linguistic features that appeared in most of the headings, there was also a term with

negatively charged words but had a positive context in the headline, which was "vulnerable". In addition to the negative and positive emotional reactions from the charged words and metaphorical words found on the headlines, another linguistic feature was used in the headline. There was an antithesis characterized by sentences consisting of opposites in which the word was "every other water".

8.3 How can the Danish and Swedish media reports on COVID-19 be explained by discourse analysis and theoretical framework?

Together with the discourse analysis to understand society and its relationship to humans and understand language itself, the language of the article reveals the reality and human views. Every little word plays a role in shaping these aspects of the society we live in (Fairclough, 1995). Critical discourse analysis has focused on certain aspects of social life, as the "problem" in this case is the coronavirus and its pandemic (Wodak & Meyer, 2001). Through its reporting on the coronavirus, the news media showed society's crisis situation/problems with increased deaths, the spread of infection, etc. The articles also showed measures from the authorities to solve the problem. News media headlines are the first lines that text readers scan through before they dive into the article. Several of the headlines of the analyzed articles contained language choices and words in the form of metaphors, charged words that can be interpreted as alarming and negative. According to Fowler (1991), there is a risk that news media use words with negative connotations or threatening tactics, which Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad have the majority have done on the headlines. Metaphorical and charged words used in the headings have been magnified by framing to promote a particular problem definition that the headline and the text seek to convey (Entman, 1993). In addition to metaphorical and loaded words that appeared on the headlines, they also appeared in the body text and the preamble. What was used in the text content also magnified its framing, which also promoted the special problem definition or solution to the problem (Entman, 1993), which then as a reader can construct and perceive how the text has constructed our society (Fairclough, 2003). Metaphor is not only linguistic beautifications that have no other meaning but can also say a lot about how we in a specific linguistic community perceive our world around us (Bergström & Boréus, 2012), which these metaphorical words have appeared in the headings.

Throughout, all the headlines and the text content in the news media have contributed to health communication by increasing the audience's knowledge and awareness of COVID-19 and capturing its attention through the headlines (Thomas, 2006). The text contains important authorities, actors, and other expert opinions that promoted health communication to the public. Some of the headlines use health communication through an affective path. This is the health communication report's evidence to convince a target audience by applying statistical evidence to use factual statements to convince recipients that they are likely to be affected by health problems (Das, 2013). An example is an article where Löfven claims that thousands will die in COVID-19 (AB7). Both news media use metaphors in, above all, their headline and a more

figurative language in relation to COVID-19. This can be applied with several previous studies where the media feeds our fear through their linguistics features in headlines, using sensational headlines, emotionally charged words, or other things that cause anxiety and stigmatized groups and people (Mairal, 2011: Loveday, 2020: Ding 2014: Sandell et a., 2013). Health information using cognitive approaches can use strategies that promote rational thinking to reduce the defensive response to health information and increase persuasiveness (Das, 2013) such had been in the article's headline against young people and students' behavior towards the COVID-19 virus and the pandemic. Few of the articles' headlines used figures or statistics that show how many have been infected or died. This is indicated in the health communication where it promotes statistical evidence that refers to using actual statements to convince the recipients that they are likely to be affected by the health problem or how the situation looks (Das, 2013). In Dings's study (2014) it is written that in the early stages of a new epidemic, the government and the media often use language and images that indicate fear, leading to an almost inevitable overreaction of the population. Which this has been seen during the beginning of the year in the headlines of both news media articles.

8.4 Conclusion

Since the outbreak in December 2019, COVID-19 has taken a prominent place in news media worldwide. Therefore, the handling and analysis of articles on pandemics required a strict delimitation and a narrower selection for implementation. By conducting this study with the support of the study's theoretical framework, the study has made visible and led to an understanding of how news media reporting from Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad shapes the COVID-19 pandemic with four discursive themes: infection, information, restriction, and immunity. The majority of news media's reports represented COVID-19 in a negative outlook, where COVID-19 is the villain and dangerous. At the same time, people can be said to be innocent and complicit in the infection depending on whether the people follow those restrictions and regulations. Moreover, the writers use linguistic features to construct our society to capture readers' attention through the headlines. These have been in the form of metaphorical and charged words that reflect either negative or positive emotional reactions. However, it cannot be ruled out that other possible discursive themes or linguistic features are not visible through the study due to its limitations. Based on that aspect, it is central to point out that the study conclusion is only based on the material collected. The study shows that Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad shaped the discourses about COVID-19 through a critical perspective in relation to politicians and authorities' measures and their handling, promoting health communication. These authorities, actors, and other expert opinions promote and describe what the corona situation in society looks like. The study's conclusion also highlights that the media has an influence on how things look; they can consciously or unconsciously make us feel in a certain way. People perceive things differently and can sometimes misunderstand information. Therefore, they have a societal responsibility to distribute to the entire population with correct and reliable completeness of information when it comes to crisis reporting in society.

Throughout, both Aftonbladet and Kristeligt Dagblad have promoted health communication to Swedish and Danish recipients of the article by having statements from the authorities, other actors, and expert opinions. But also informative facts about the coronavirus.

8.5 Proposals for further research

As a researcher, it is hoped that the above conclusion will inspire future research to delve deeper into the subject. This is suggested by conducting a quantitative study that examines how individuals from different social groups in the Nordic countries perceived crisis reporting. In order to make visible who takes part in the media content and how the recipient actually perceived the media's crisis reporting. As the Nordic media welfare has a great significance in Nordic society. How news media report on events and situations in crisis is an extensive area of research. Several studies have been carried out in the field, but just as many can undoubtedly be carried out in the future, especially given the constant technical development and how society and different discourses develop. Thus, there is an infinite amount and angles of approach for further future research on this subject. However, perhaps most interesting will be to look back at the news reporting only after the pandemic is over and ask the questions raised then, with the new knowledge and experience that comes by having experienced this event.

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Appendices

Articles from Aftonbladet

- AB1:** Two killed in SARS-like virus" - "Has spread to The Swedish Paradise Thailand
- AB2:** Millions travel - despite fearing the virus
- AB3:** Increased risk that the coronavirus will spread in Sweden
- AB4:** Wanted: Small virus with deadly potential
- AB5:** First Swedish death in the new coronavirus
- AB6:** Care giants ahead of a ban on visiting nursing homes
- AB7:** Löfven: "Thousands will die in the corona
- AB8:** Think of everyone else, think of healthcare and think "every other water
- AB9:** WHO warns: Covid may be here for good
- AB10:** Sweden now has the highest mortality in the world in covid-19
- AB11:** Those with antibodies can meet their seniors
- AB12:** New virus with pandemic potential found in China
- AB13:** Covid-19 is increasing among risk-taking young people
- AB14:** The Public Health Agency's number breakdown: Wrong death forecast
- AB15:** Infection control doctor: Young people do not follow the advice
- AB16:** Infection is increasing in Europe again - but Sweden is going against the trend
- AB17:** Under-mortality rates are increasing in Sweden
- AB18:** WHO alarm: The rise of infected an alarm clock
- AB19:** Minister to the students: Get your act together! - The number of corona infections is increasing again - mostly among young people
- AB20:** The government wants to introduce pandemic law - Will limit crowds in shops and public transport
- AB21:** Corona stops alcohol at the tavern after 22
- AB22:** The government is tightening the rules to stop corona infection - Do not go to the gym, do not organize parties or dinners
- AB23:** New pandemic law makes Sweden like others
- AB24:** The new corona variant is spreading around the world

Articles from Kristeligt Dagblad

- KB1:** Mysterious virus in China demands another death toll'
- KB2:** The first three cases of Chinese virus have been spotted in Europe
- KB3:** Corona posters are hung up in Danish airports
- KB4:** WHO: The risk of global virus spread is now very high'
- KB5:** Strategy soon shifts from containment to limitation of corona
- KB6:** The closure of Denmark is extended until after Easter
- KB7:** Professor: Corona may flourish during government experiment
- KB8:** A record number of coronate tests have been registered in 24 hours in Denmark
- KB9:** 117 have died with corona in Sweden: Neighboring countries are completely free
- KB10:** 30 percent of infected people in Denmark work in the health sector
- KB11:** Virologist: Nothing suggests super-spread with corona at demo
- KB12:** Researchers find new virus with potential to become a pandemic
- KB13:** Denmark's most vulnerable citizens have escaped corona infection
- KB14:** Chief virologist on vaccines: Looks promising - but a long way yet
- KB15:** Study: The Danes drink less and meet more
- KB16:** The debate in Denmark is underway: Who should be vaccinated against corona first?
- KB17:** Denmark is experiencing the largest number of corona infections since April
- KB18:** Coronavirus has spread to the whole country faster than expected
- KB19:** 'Criticism hails down on Trump statements on covid-19'
- KB20:** Mette Frederiksen states: There will be new corona restrictions
- KB21:** Mette Frederiksen: Mutated virus from mink can threaten COVID-19 vaccine. All mink must be killed
- KB22:** Sweden bans late sale of alcohol to curb corona
- KB23:** Nine Danes are infected with British corona variant
- KB24:** WHO: New corona variant is not out of control

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