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### THE CHALLENGE OF MEDIA BUSINESS IN INDONESIA AT THE THE ERA OF INFORMATION

#### By

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#### Abstract

Facing the era of information which is also known as the digital era, media in Indonesia is confronted a challenge which often becomes a dilemma. The decisions taken will determine whether media will still exist or not in society. The realism demand often interrupts the idealism of media. The commercial dynamism becomes a major determinant in defining the message. The competition among media seems hard. Only by maintaining the topicality, the economic gains could be obtained. Under the pressure of economic pragmatism, media are prosecuted to keep having the idealism because of the influence of media in society is enormous, to inculcate freedom and initiative in order to achieve the aim of nation and state which is to gain the prosperous, just and wealthy society order. The participation of media in public policy, its sensitivity to the ethical demands of the procedure and the choice of means, professionalism and respect to the presumption of innocence becomes the references of media to gain public trust.

Keywords: Business media, economic pragmatism, idealism

#### Introduction

In the era of information which is marked by digitizing the mass media, especially when the use of the internet is widespread, the printed media in various countries experience unfavorable situation. Circulation decreased, as the example, Newsweek which had been 80 years old, left the printed edition. There were also many printed media companies reduced the number of employees and sold their printing machines cheaply in the United States. This situation, uniquely is not very influential in Indonesia, there are many new printed media emerge, especially in regions. In Jakarta, for example, used to be known only a few newspapers such as Kompas, Pos Kota, Voice Reform, but now emerges the newspaper of Tempo, Sindo, Warta Kota, Daily Publishing and others. It also happens in Bandar Lampung, beside Lampung Post newspaper, there are also Radar Lampung, Tribun Lampung, Lampung Express and others. That development is also experienced by the broadcast media, there are

many private television stations emerged, both nationally and regionally. The tendency of the increase of internet use began to be addressed by the media owners to make online media.

The advancement of information technology which is enjoyed by modern society raises challenges for media owners to still exist in their business. Media business challenges which are related to the advancement of information technology generally can be solved. However, a problem arose is that the challenge which often becomes a dilemma. The decisions taken will determine whether media will still exist or not in society. The realism demand often interrupts the idealism of media. The commercial dynamism becomes a major determinant in defining the message. The competition among media seems hard. Only by maintaining the topicality, the economic gains could be obtained. This paper will discuss the dilemma of media between idealism and pragmatism economy.

#### Literature review

#### The Role of Media in Society

Media in this case is the mass media which gives an overview of communication means that work in different scales, ranging from the limited scale to a very wide scale.

The mass media have been able to reach the mass in large numbers and wide. The ability of the mass media has become an urgent concern of the public and decision-makers. According McQuail (2000), there are six perspectives when looking at the role of media in society.

- 1. Media are seen as a window that allows the audience to see what is happening outside. Or media are a means to learn and know the different events.
- 2. Media are the mirror of events in society and the world, which reflects in real. Therefore, media organizers often feel guilty if the media content is filled with violence, conflict, pornography and other various bad contents, because according to the facts, media are only as a reflection of the facts, regardless of likes or dislikes. In fact, angle, direction and framing of the content which are considered as a mirror of reality is determined by media professionals, and audiences are not entirely free to determine what they want.
- 3. Media are as a filter, or a gatekeeper that selects a variety of things to be given attention or not. Media always choose the issues, information or other forms of content that are based on the standard of the organizers. In this case the audiences are chosen by the media about what is deserved to know and get the attention.

- 4. The media are often seen as a guide or an interpreter, which translates and shows the direction of various uncertainties or alternatives.
- 5. Media are as a forum to present information and ideas to audiences, therefore they allow responses and feedbacks.
- 6. Media are not just a means to pass the information, but also as a communication partner which enables interactive communication.

The role of the media is very big, attracts the various interests to approach. The media are no longer a separated institution from its environment. Now media work under a variety of importance such as politics, economics, and law including the audiences themselves.

#### Strength fight on Media

Based on various researches that have been done, McQuail (2000) describes a variety of forces that influence media and will ultimately affect media content. According McQuail there are three parties which have the most influence in the media, which are:

- 1.The management
- 2. Media professionals
- 3. Technique or technology proponent

In making its decision, the three parties have fought in various obstacles, constraints and demands, also efforts to give influence and power in media.

Those various pressures are not entirely negative, it can also be positive which becomes a source of liberation instead, such as government policies that protect media freedom from pressure. Pressure received by the media is something proper, even necessary. Media which do not accept pressures, indicate that media are not deemed important by the community.

Media content is a result of the influence of a combination from internal programs, managerial and editorial decisions, and the external influences that come from non media sources such as individuals who have social effects, government officials, advertisers and others (Reese, 1991). Related to the ideas above, it can be explained about the relation between media and the seven parties that affect and how the power of each could interact with media in order to influence the content of message delivered by media.

Those seven parties are:

- 1. The ruler / government
- 2. The general public
- 3. The pressure group

- 4. Owner
- 5. Advertisers
- 6. Audience
- 7. Internal Organization

The following will be discussed in detail of the seven influential parties and how the power of each is interacting to media (Morissan, Wardhani, Hamid, 2012):

#### 1. The ruler / government

The ruler or the government gives a big influence to the content of media messages. The power of media in shaping the public agenda depends partly on relevant media relations with the central power. If media have a close relation with the elite in the government, then the group will affect what should be delivered by media. In general, proponents of critical theory believe that media can be or usually be instrument of the dominant ideology in society, and if in that case, then the dominant ideology would affect the public issue.

#### 2. Society

Society gives a great influence to the media organizations. These effects can come from anywhere, be persistent and appear in any media connections made with outsiders. In the liberal democratic society, free media work within the constraints of applicable law, but conflict still exists in relation with the government and various large and influential social institutions. Media are constantly involved, sometimes in defiance of the main sources of them and the various pressure groups organized.

How the media define and handle a wide range of pressures and these issues partly depends on the objectives that have been determined in advance by the media concerned. In this case, there is a quite big difference, as the example, the media has a goal which is oriented to public interest (public service) and therefore it has social, cultural and political characteristic, for the example, the news media or anything who only pursues the profit.

Based on the experience in newspapers, Tunstall ( in Morissan , Wardhani , Hamid , 2010), explains the purpose of the media organization from an economic standpoint by distinguishing between the objective of revenue and non- revenue purposes. The non-revenue purpose refers to the destination without looking at the financial aspect directly, such as gaining prestige, giving effect to the public, or achieving normative purpose (eg , community service). There are two types of purpose income; deriving revenue from direct sales to the public or consumers and selling media space to advertisers.

In theory, divided the division (typology) of purpose of the organization into two, which are the purpose based on benefits (utilitarian) and normative purpose. Purpose based benefits leads to efforts to produce and supply goods and services with a view to profit, while the normative purpose leads to efforts to achieve certain values (eg, education, democracy, etc.),

In Indonesia, the television station oriented in public service, such as television stations which broadcast news program, will be easier to broadcast a kind of breaking news, that is very important and immediate by stopping (interrupting) other ongoing programs. It is more difficult to do on a TV station oriented only on profit because they have an obligation to other parties (sponsors, advertisers) that must be fulfilled prior rights first.

Media which prioritize public services with priority on information programs such as television news station, basically want to have a role that can give the progress of society, but how the role is done gives a variety of different interpretations. Certain media types, especially the media that have quality and good credibility, provide influence through the quality of the information or opinions expressed through the authority of the media concerned. Credibility does not only belong to big media, small media can also give effect to the public, but with more limited area. Big media, such as newspapers with large circulation or a popular TV with broad range would give greater influence.

#### **Role of Journalists**

How is the role of journalists in relation to society? The role of neutral reporter refers to the idea that the journalists or the press as a transmitter of information, interpreters, interpretation giver, and 'instrument of government', which means lending itself as channel or mirror of society.

The role of reporter as a participant means that press who is served as the representative, has a critical attitude towards the government, policy advocates and policy makers. Various surveys of journalists in a number of countries show that in general the role of neutral and the information conveyors is better than the participants. In addition, they stated that objectivity is the most important value in their profession. The role of participant journalists marked by strong political commitment and a level of active involvement in an issue basically is not easy to be combined with the role of personal beliefs influence in the news. However, the choice to be objective also emerged from self-interest and the logic of the media business market because the attitude of participants tends to be judged impartially

and this will narrow audience interest to the media concerned. Weaver and Wilhit (in Morissan, Wardhani, Hamid, 2010), suggests the existence of three roles of journalists, as follows:

- a. Interpreter. In this case, the role of the interpreter has the same definition or the same meaning of the role of the participants, which are analyzing and interpreting the various issues which are difficult and complicated; investigating the various claims made by the government and discussing national policies being implemented.
- b. Transmitter and disseminator of information. The main role as a disseminator of information related to work is to deliver the news as quickly as possible to the community and focused attention on the highest public interest.
- c. The role of opposition. The view of the role of opposition, both to the government and business, has considerably decreased or weakened, but still recognized to some degree by most journalists.

The level and type of professionalism of those who work and sit at various positions in the media also give influences. In general, we can expect that the higher the level of professionalism of those who work in the media, then the media will produce a more autonomous media and have more advanced views related to their responsibilities to society. As an additional explanation related to the purpose of the media in relation to society, then we need to consider public access to media as a community effort to be able to express their views.

#### 3. The pressure groups

The relation between media and public are often mediated through various informal groups, but often organized, called 'pressure group', which tries to influence what the media do by limiting the content or media messages to society. Pressure groups can be either organizations or groups, such as religious group or organizations, profession/job, politics, advocacy groups and others. Various groups and organizations often show the complaint, criticism and rejection of mass media content. They also often approach or lobby, for the example to the government or other institutions of policy makers, related to a wide range of issues, especially morality, political bias, and the representation of minority groups, such as children, the poors, the disabled, the mentally infirm, the homeless, and others.

Although media are usually cautious in handling the pressures and refuse to surrender their independence and autonomy, but pressure groups often manage to carry out their agenda to influence the media content. This usually happens when the commercial important of the media are in danger or if the media worried about the emergence of negative publicity for a specific reason.

In the case of Indonesia, a pressure group that often arises is usually derived from religious groups and defenders of the rights of women and children. Not a few programs are considered inappropriate is shown in the view of these groups, forced to stop showing. One of the aspirations of pressure groups which support media is the group that rejects the passing of laws on pornography and porn action. Their action always gets coverage from media, especially television, because they are considered in line with the aspirations of media which wish to have freedom in creativity.

#### 4. Media and Owners

Important issues discussed in this section are questions about how far the media organizations can implement autonomy and remain independent in relation to the media owners and to those who provide direct influence economically to media, such as shareholders, advertisers and sponsors. According Altschull (in Morissan, Wardhani, Hamid, 2010), a statement which says that, "the content of the news media always Reflects the interest of Reviews those who finance the press" is the fairly obvious answer and also consistent with the principles of a free press in this version of the theory of understanding 'free market'. However, it is not necessarily the owner of the media communicators who is employed, loses their freedom. In this case, the independence and autonomy of mass communicators remain, especially the freedom of professionalism or the freedom for creativity.

No doubt that owners of commercial media organizations have great power against media content and may ask the media professionals to broadcast or not broadcast a media content. Various studies have shown how the owners use their power to participate in determining the content of the media. However, there is a fairly strong provision related to journalistic activities that protects the freedom of journalists in decision-making journalism. Research conducted by Meyer to the media in the United States and The Royal Commission on the Press in the United Kingdom (in Morissan, Wardhani, Hamid, 2010), shows how the editors were reluctant to acknowledge receipt of a briefing from media owners about media content, but they assess that the intervention owner toward the media content is still being reasonable.

However, there is an unavoidable tendency for the owners of the news media to participate in determining the general policy line to be followed by journalists working in the media concerned. There is also indirect pressure and often being informal on certain issues considered will affect the owner, for example, issues related to their other business interests (Turrow , in Morissan , Wardhani , Hamid , 2010) . Other various credible evidences indicated the owner pressure toward journalists and at the end the theory about economically free press (press could be free, as long as the media still gets profit), authorize these circumstances. In this case, we need to realize that the owners, if they wish, are free to use the media for propaganda purposes, as long as realized that it could pose a risk of that media for losing interest and credibility.

There is a view that is quite commonly accepted, although it is difficult to prove that the increase in the size of the media or media conglomerate makes a problem of the owners' wishes toward the media content becomes irrelevant and a decision must be made objectively on the basis of managerial and market. Beside the direct intervention of the owner at some particular problem, the pressure may also arise from the growth of the media business chain and a conglomeration which often involve in a high level of cooperation among a number of units of the editorial and implementing policy on a number of issues. There are some evidences, for example in the United States, that a certain number of newspapers have a tendency to support the presidential candidate of the Republican Party than the Democratic Party, particularly the views expressed by newspaper editorials they wrote (Wackman in Morissan, Wardhani, Hamid, 2010).

Furthermore, according to McQuail (2000), although the alleged conspiracy between the media organizers and the owner has not been proven, but it is not possible for journalists who work at the newspaper owned by certain associated industries for not supporting the interests of the association who fund it because the newspaper concerned was established with the aim to help the interests of the association.

As a result of the monopoly of media ownership on media content is essentially difficult to prove, but on the other hand there is a little doubt that the monopoly is able to threaten press freedom and choice for consumers. Shoemaker and Reese (1991) concludes that those who work in the local media which are part of a large media network are likely to have a little relevance and involvement in the communities environment where they work.

For them, a large media organization is more important than the influence of the community. Instead, local media get the strength and independence of the relation they have with communication or city where the media are concerned.

For media which produce entertainment programs, such as movies, music and other programs, there are provisions which limit the powers of the owner of the media content and entertainment media organizational decisions, largely determined by market considerations (including claims and responses from the public). In addition, the entertainment industry does not usually have close ties with the community environment in which they work.

The situations in public broadcasting stations are usually more complex in this case because of the absence of the owner, only the number of directors or managers and supervisors are appointed by the government and/or elected democratically. Their responsibility is usually judged by how big the public interest can be fulfilled from the media content being delivered. The degree of artistic liberation and professional freedom is usually relatively high, but with the control of the bureaucracy and the budget (and the organization's policies) rather than the market forces. Today, the public broadcasting media are anywhere in a competitive environment. Public broadcasting media have a small risk of the possibility of censorship of the program, except for sanctions in the form of public opinion.

### 5. Advertiser

The influence of advertising on the content of the media has long been a subject of discussion among researchers of mass communication. On one side, the structure of the majority of the mass media industry in many capitalist countries clearly reflects the interests of advertisers. It historically has grown along with the social and economic changes. In this case, it is not a coincidence if the target audience is the same as the target of consumers of advertisers. The conditions of largely free-market media today are competing to satisfy the needs and interests of the advertising determined as a normal thing.

The influence of advertisers is also seen on the media content that is designed like it has a pattern similar to the pattern of consumption of the target consumer. The design, program, plan, and schedule of media often reflect the interests of advertisers. It is still difficult to prove whether advertisers can directly intervene to influence the news content, especially the news about the advertiser itself in order to support their interests, beside of what is already set in the system.

#### 6. Audience

The audience is the most important factor for the media because audiences are consumers of media. The success of media are determined by how much the media concerned can obtain their readers, listeners and viewers. Although it was realized that the audience is the most important factor for the media, but some researches suggest that the managers of mass media or communicator mass often make the audience not as the most important factor for the media, but they still follow the ranking report events (rating), and the sales of advertising is as an indicator to determine the amount of their audiences.

#### 7. Feedback

There is a problem of uncertainty for those who want to communicate or who want to change or influence the public view by using the media to achieve the goals. Uncertain problem is also experienced by those who want to deliver a message to specific groups only. A solution to the problem is to do it with the construction of the abstract description and the people they want to reach. According Gans (1957), the audience participates in the making of a movie through the audience image held by the creator.

Shoemaker and Reese conclude that journalists write mainly for themselves, for their editors, and to the other journalists. However, communication with the audience in large numbers remains a problem for those who want to convey the message effectively. In this case, the audience is seen as the spectators who observe and give praise, but cannot interact directly with the senders of the message and the players (Elliot , in Morissan , Wardhani , Hamid , 2010).

Media organizations produce the show or spectacle served as a way to get an audience, create profits and jobs, because media need a strong foothold to estimate how much the interest and attention of audiences can be given to a show. The feedback in the form of ranking reports program, beside it is not be available immediately, it also does not provide an explanation of how to improve the quality of television programs. According Pekurny (in Morissan, Wardhani, Hamid, 2010), a feedback system actually does not originate from audiences' response at home, but from the writers, producers, performers, and television station executives. In addition, the media organizers in producing television programs have a strong tendency to repeat old recipes that never works. The most important factors that guide, for example, the selection of songs in the music industry is to refer on the good product

image. This is essentially an attempt to adjust the characteristics of the new songs with old songs that has been successfully before.

#### 8. Internal Organization

Various aspects of the structure and internal dynamics of media organization influence the media content. This is related to the degree of difference with the various divisions of functions contained within media organizations. One of the most obvious divisions is the division of the internal structure of media organizations based functions, such as engineering functions, programs, marketing, administration, and others. Each function has different interests competing to gain better financial and status for of each part of interest. Another difference lies in the background of personnel or members of organizations from different social backgrounds which are different and varying according to age, gender, ethnic, and other differences.

Most explanations of the purpose of the media organization refer to the difference in orientation and goals which can be a source of latent conflict within media organizations. Understanding the fact that mass media organizations have goals mixture (mixed goals) is important to place the media in a social context. Another thing is to understand the pressures that received media and a variety of different types of jobs available to those who work in media. Accordingly, we have addressed one of the important aspects of media, which is ambiguities related to its role in society.

Engwall (in Morissan, Ward, Hamid, 2010), suggests the examples of newspapers as mixture organization (hybrid organization) because newspapers do not have an obvious place in one and two important dimensions of organization in general: the dimensions of goods and services. Another thing is related to the diversity of products and the use of technology, newspaper organizations do two activities at once, which produce goods and provide services. In addition, the newspapers also use a wide range of production technologies, ranging from the simple to the complex. This also applies to the other mass media, although in varying degrees.

Furthermore, Engwall found that an organization has a culture of mass media work (work cultures) which is varying between parts of the organization. Each work culture has a foundation of justification based on objective or task they are working with an orientation which is also different, that consists of the orientation of news, politics, economics, and engineering. Those who are in a position oriented work culture news (news - oriented culture) emphasize more on activity for collecting the news in various kinds and as much as possible, and spread the news to the audience. Those who are in the news-oriented work culture, are usually reporters or junior journalists.

Those who are in a position or political orientation section tend to show more political view or direction of the news and the media concerned and therefore, those who are in this position is the editorial staff and senior political correspondent. The two first orientations, the orientation of news and politics, are in common because they consist of professional journalists and/or creative staffs and both are mutually supportive and work together.

Parts of media organizations that have economic and technical orientation consist of those functions of financial management and the handling of media production, and the second part of this is basically the same as those who work in business organizations in general.

#### Discussion

Has been described in literature about the occurrence of interests of media, mainly is the occurrence of interests between the interests of idealism and business. Idealism media, characterized by providing the right information, served as a means of education, audience is expected to think critically and deeply. But in reality, idealism is often defeated by economic pragmatism. These market realities show media are under economic pressure of intense competition. The slogan "slow news, no news" illustrates how hard the competition among media are, they do not want the information they have was preceded by others in the media proclaimed. Actuality is important to gain the profit. Beside that, in order not to be left by audiences, media often produces sensation. For example, in August 2015, when Maritime and Resource Coordinating Minister, Rizal Ramli, criticized the Garuda aircraft purchasing policy and construction of power plants, there were more interested media reported about the private life of Rizal Ramli who was close to a woman. In the print media, the high number of customers will determine the attractiveness of the customer, while at the television media, the rating is an indicator of success. Economic pragmatism is more highlighted remembering that there is a presumption which is the economic benefits will ensure the continuity of media.

Idealism of media is faced with economic pragmatism as a challenge that often becomes a dilemma of media. On one hand, idealism media demands a role as a conduit of information to brighten lives, help making the right decisions, and as a means to think critically and deeply. As a means to convey and obtain information, media are required to continuously provide information that can help you avoid misunderstandings and provide benefits in order to reach a peaceful and prosperous life.

On the other hand, for the sake of effectiveness, rationality and profit, media show something spectacular and sensational, looking for things that are fun. According Haryatmoko (2015), the result of fierce competition among media is weakening professional deontology. Economic pragmatism makes management over-emphasizes the principle of benefit, so that it is no longer sensitive to the ethical demands of the procedure and the choice of means. Impact reports tend to violate private life and do not respect the presumption of innocence on behalf of the public's right of information.

Media dilemma raises less cohesive views between the owner and the journalists who used to work with the truth. A common vision between the owners and journalists is needed, because ownership can threaten the products and trust. Actually the products which are produced by media are the products of trust. Since everyone knows that media and information are so abundant, people need guidance, so that media must be trustworthy. Therefore, media can put the choice in the field to observe and photograph all the symptoms. When the media is served as an instrument to obtain the maximum benefit, media business will be destroyed. It is true that the cost structure, work methods and technology must be adapted to the current era, but it does not alter the vision and mission of the media. Rhenald Kasali (2015), mentions all the alignments, except for the public interest, only make media workers are agitated and difficult to align management, looks strong outside but the management is brittle.

#### CONCLUSION

The advancement of information technology enjoyed by modern society raises challenges for media owners to still exist in business. Indonesian media business challenges related to the advancement of information technology generally can be solved. However, a problem arisen is a challenge which often becomes a dilemma. The decisions taken will determine whether media will still exist or not in society.

Realism demands often interrupt idealism of media. Commercial dynamism becomes a major determinant in defining the message. The competition among media seems hard. Only by maintaining the topicality, the economic gains could be obtained. Media dilemma raises less cohesive views between the owner and the journalists who used to work with the truth. A common vision between the owners and journalists is needed, because ownership can threaten the products and trust.

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