



ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS IN MEDIA: AS SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND PRODUCTION COMMODITY

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A B S T R A C T

Previous studies have suggested that mass media plays a role in raising public awareness on environmental issues (Jurin, 2010), disseminating information to the community (Campbell, 1999) and educating the public on environmental issues. Media is also an important translator of scientific information and policy for audience (Boykoff, 2009). However, there are many barriers to the media to do those, especially in Indonesia (Mihardja, 2017). This paper describes the production process of environmental stories in Indonesia's mainstream media as well as various factors that influencing this process. The description is reviewed with a discussion of Media Theory to understand the challenges and opportunities faced by the media to carry out its role to participate in efforts to maintain the quality of the environment.

INTRODUCTION

In environmental communication, the role of the mass media is vital to linking the environmental understanding held by stakeholders with the understanding of the public (Jurin et.al., 2010). The mass media convey information on environmental issues to create public awareness. Sometimes people do not realize that mistakes have occurred in environmental management. In this situation, the mass media can play its role as a watchdog on the actions of policymakers or governments, for example in terms of the implementation of environmental conservation policies.

Related to the role of the media, can be traced in the process of producing news. Allan (2004) points out that there are two different perspectives on news production, liberalist-pluralist and Marxist perspective. Allan (2004) describes the media displaying the opinions and stance of various classes in society. The supporters of the pluralist liberal view argue that the diversity of opinions displayed on the media is secured by a conflict of interests that exists

between the owner, the chairman, the editor and the journalist. On the other hand, supporters of the Marxist ideology of the ruling class believes that the need to ensure its interests prevail in various ways, including by presenting their ideas and norms in general terms so that their ideas are considered the most correct to the community (Azman, 2000).

According to Dispensa and Brulle (2003), journalists are just one of three parties who build news coverage. The other two are advertisers and media owners. Newspapers and magazines are under pressure to increase their revenue from advertising, so they need to take specific actions to keep contact with advertisers. Press and magazine managers should show advertisers that they have high-quality audiences as their potential users. Hence, the press will produce coverage that attracts high-quality audiences and ignores those who do not fit into their marketing scheme (Bagdikian, 1997). Authors will choose news not only as readers but also affect advertisers. On the other hand, owners will determine the basis of all

operations in the process of collecting and producing this news. Ownership concentrations can provide tools to control the minds of society because of its monopoly nature. Dispensa and Brulle exemplify that global warming is a threat to society as a whole.

Therefore, it is interesting to note whether environmental news is used by the media to convey social responsibility or just as a commodity of production. This paper is part of Mihardja's (2017) dissertation at the School of Communication, Universiti Sains Malaysia. This study applies content analysis, discourse analysis of the Sociology of Knowledge Approach, interviews and participating observations. A study on the coverage of news coverage was carried out to identify whether there was any environmental news published in newspapers and how the pattern took place. While the study of discourse is important as a liaison between content analysis based on results and focuses on messages with the process of collecting and producing news which is an activity or study on communicators and providing an understanding of the ideology of the environment.

Environmental news in this research is defined as news of events, problems, and conditions related to environmental health including land, air and water (Mihardja, 2017; Hornig-Priest, 2010; Nik Norma, 2007). Environmental news published in the mass media, especially Kompas, contains news on related materials.

Meanwhile, the press is a mass media that has a huge role in disseminating information on environmental sustainability. In addition, the mass media is also an institution that has the potential and has a great role to join efforts to preserve the environment (Riffe and Reimold, 2008). So, although it has shortcomings and weaknesses in the mass media industry that is increasingly dynamic presence information based on web technology, the press still can endure to be one source of knowledge for the community. These findings are complemented by Corbett (2006) that print media, especially daily newspapers, have more opportunities to disseminate environmental reporting.

Kompas places a minimum of 2 people covering the environment and provides page 13 for an environmental section with

Environmental and Health banner. The media organization also involves journalists working in the environmental section and journalists interested in environmental issues on specific programs to generate multi-platform coverage. News organization Kompas places the section on the Environment as part of the Humanities along with the education, culture, science and technology sections. This makes the environmental discussion be addressed to humanitarian concerns; environment and its relation to humanity. The layout of the environmental section as part of the Humanities also reflects the influence of the media organization's goals in environmental reporting. Humanism is the knowledge of men. Hence, the discussion of the environment in the Kompas news is viewed from a human-based perspective. That is, the environment is preserved for the benefit of humans, in the hope that humans will not spoil the environment as it is contrary to the noble nature of man.

LITERATURE & METHODOLOGY

Media Theory of Gans (2004) discusses in depth the process of news selection and the opposite factor in journalist-centered, event-centered, media organization and external factors as media-forming factors. The journalist-centered theory emphasized that news was formed through the results of journalist professionalism assessments so journalistic practices were influenced by the attitudes and processes of journalists' socialization. Preston (2009) discusses it as the values and norms of journalists who are facilitators in the process of producing this news. The journalist-centered theory argues that journalists are a profession that is free of any political and social interest pressures. Journalists are free to make their professional power-based news as long as the goal of fulfilling the reader's sense is achieved (Azman, 2000: 84). Journalists hold firmly on the principle of objectivity in the process of producing news. According to this theory, the power of selecting and producing news is on news-generating practitioners (journalists) and not on external parties.

Journalists acquire the values and norms of their profession through education and training. Gitlin (1980) argues that journalists have been trained to identify the importance of

news. In line with Gitlin's arguments, Shoemaker and Reese (2006) also argue that journalist's education and training influence the news that they publish in the media.

Event-centered theory is known as a mirror theory emphasizing that the news produced reflects the real situation in the world. However, the theory goes down and is less noticeable when media critics can prove that the news is not a report on actual events (Azman, 2000: 94). This theory then no longer got the spotlight. In addition to journalist-centered and event-centered theory, Gans (2004) presents the theory of newspaper organization and external factors. According to Gans, the process of earning news is determined by media routines. Examples of routine media are deadlines, news quota, news sources and news writing patterns. Each press organization has its own objectives to achieve and has its own operational procedures. Accordingly, practitioners in the news-production process will work according to the stated goals. Ericson, Baranek and Chan (1987) reveal that journalists are under pressure to fulfill their social responsibility and also fulfill the interests of the organization. Journalists emphasize their autonomy by rejecting assignments, changing the story angle, adding resources, storing information, producing stories according to their own needs and the like (Azman, 2000: 89). However, according to Reese (1990), when a journalist became a member of the media organization, it meant that it authorized the organization to officially exercise its full force. External factors consist of advertisers, sources, governments, ruling groups in society, technology development, national economy and current political ideology

While according to Shoemaker and Reese (1996), the process of collecting and producing news is influenced by various factors at various levels. At the individual level, the factors that influence include the attitude, training and background of journalists (or media workers) in general. However, the individual does not work or use their own rules (Azman, 2000). They are faced with routine or practice work that have become a pattern in the execution of their tasks. Furthermore, the routine is determined by the organization. Control at the organizational level is a routine and individual way of carrying out

responsibilities and dealing with others in a larger formal structure. In fact, according to Shoemaker, Eichholz, Kim, and Wigley (2001), in the process of applying, routine factors are more influential than individual factors.

RESULTS & ANALYSIS

Environmental News as Social Responsibility

Professional journalists' professionalism in Kompas is created to best play a role in disseminating and interpreting information about the environment. This professionalism arose because journalists should always ensure the accuracy and clarity of published information. Scientific technical terms should be facilitated so that the public can understand those terms. Environmental journalists should also have an interest in and love the field as well as receive them as their profession. Every journalist gets his turn to rotate into another reporting field. However, if the journalist has a strong interest, he will be loyal to the discussion on the environment of environmental reporting no matter where he is placed. More than that, a journalist needs to have an insight, knowledge, skill, and great ability in the environment. However, he must keep his role as a journalist, because he is not an expert in the field of the environment.

Discourse analysis results show that discourse production refers to the formation of discussions in news coverage so as to become a discourse. This is an issue of development strategy chosen because it is considered important to the public and to the media. Development as a network of national-level coverage and related to the political culture of the community because of significant significance and impact to society and the nation. As an example, the uncontrolled mining industry tends to hurt the current and future of the country and society. The effect of power indicated by the position of the media and its position as the presenter of a particular message. Kompas takes its place as a defender of the local community around the mining industry and the general interests of the country. It is also a criticism to the implementation of the regional autonomy system is out of control that led the 'little napoleon' in the area.

According to the sources, Kompas expressed concern for environmental issues by

displaying the environmental beat in its news. This reflects the role of social responsibility undertaken by Kompas in order to assist in disseminating knowledge and awareness about the importance of protecting the environment.

Environmental News as Production Commodity

Practically, Kompas utilizes environmental news for the following purposes: (1) Enrich the "content" of Kompas newsletters with multimedia, enhancing the Kompas-Gramedia Group's business into the areas of book publishing, television, radio, and hotel networks. With environmental reporting Kompas can fill the contents of other media into the KKG while supporting the KKG business outside the mass media; (2) Distribute the hobby or favorite of journalists or media workers, with the establishment of a cycling club and nature expedition. Thus, special reporting programs such as this can be a challenge and an opportunity for the media to try reporting adventures, favorite channel and strengthen cooperation among media personnel.

Influence of media outcome that appear on Kompas is from business interest of collection of corporate. Kompas may perpetuate the existence of the page and the field of environmental coverage because there are concerns than newspaper owners and supported by an established business term. All areas of coverage in the Kompas Gramedia Group, including the environment, a portion rather than a system of integrated multi-platform (integrated) so it can be run within idealistic and also commercialization function. So, Kompas makes environmental news as well as a commodity. News of the environment is filler for various media platforms in the Kompas-Gramedia group.

CONCLUSION

Environmental news in media in Kompas operates as the embodiment of social responsibility and also as a production commodity. In media management, it brings material and immaterial benefits, directly and indirectly.

In regard to media ethics, for me, resource allocation and space in Kompas reflects the role of the media in the participation in maintaining

the quality of the environment by creating knowledge and foster public awareness of the importance of preserving the environment. However, as a business entity, Kompas must survive by processing materials (information) into products (news published). In this case, Kompas performs two roles at once in a favorable way.

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