The Role of Digital Media in Social Transformation of Transitional Society in Pangandaran, West Java, Indonesia

Eni Maryani[1], Ilham Gemiharto[2], S Kunto Adi Wibowo[3], and Reksa Anggia Ratmita[4]

[1,2,3]Universitas Padjadjaran -- [4]University of Kent, Paris School of Arts and Culture, United Kingdom

Correspondence Author: eni.maryani@unpad.ac,id

Abstract

Pangandaran is a tourist area and a new district that is experiencing rapid development in West Java, Indonesia. This study aims to reveal the existence of digital media in Pangandaran and its implications in the process of social transformation. Studying social transformation means examining the various ways in which the forces of globalization affect local communities and national societies with very diverse historical experiences, economic and social patterns, political institutions, and cultures. The research was conducted on three local online media that reach the people of Pangandaran and its surroundings, namely radartasik.com, HarapanRakyat.com and SEPUTARPANGANDARAN.COM. The method used is a case study with data collection techniques in the form of content analysis, observation and in-depth interviews. Content analysis is carried out in a narrative manner on the websites of the three media and the various social media used. The results of the study show that social media has the potential to develop the media in Pangandaran, as evidenced by the high engagement of audiences with their social media. Local media content is still considered by the community to be very limited in meeting their information needs. However, there is a significant impact related to the presence and access of digital media, especially social media, on local communities in carrying out global interactions. Digital media has also proven to be a source of information for teenagers to compare various aspects of life in their environment and in other environments. To increase the positive implications of the existence of digital media, digital literacy is needed in the community, especially regarding digital safety among teenagers in the use of digital media.

Keywords: digital media, social transformation, transitional society

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Introduction

The development of the use of the internet or digital media and social media in Indonesia has increased quite rapidly every year. Based on 2021 data, internet users in Indonesia are recorded at 202.6 million (73.75% of the population). Among internet users, active users of social media reached 170 million (61.8%) and cellular connections to the internet reached 345.3 million, far exceeding the total population of 274.9 million (125.6%). The data shows an increase (We Are Social, 2021). In other words, the presence of digital media in people's lives in Indonesia is an important phenomenon to observe. Indonesia, which covers a very wide area, also has a variety of diverse social, economic, political and cultural situations. It is also important to understand it contextually, especially in areas that are undergoing social, economic and political change. Pangandaran is one of the local tourist areas being developed into an international tourist destination. This is in line with the making of Pangandaran as a new district in West Java Province. Pangandaran underwent significant changes in terms of politics, economy and social, including the field of Education with the establishment of the Study Program Outside the Main Campus (PSDKU, *Program Studi Di Luar Kampus Utama*) by Padjadjaran University in Pangandaran. Based on the situation faced by Panfgandaran, in general Pangandaran can be said to be an area undergoing a transitional period driven by changes, especially in the political field, which also has an impact on the economic, social and cultural fields.

There are many theories and studies that link the media with the dynamics of social changes, both in the process of modernization, globalization, and the socio-cultural transformation of society. This study aims to focus on social transformation issue that occurs in relation to the use and presence of digital media in society. Media dependence theory explains the relationship between social situations including access to technology or media and a person's dependence on media (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1990; Jackob, 2010; Jung, 2017). In addition, the media can also be one of the agents of change that drives various changes at the individual, group, or social level (Maryani, E., Rosfiantika, E., Rahmawan, 2018; Ocktilia, Ismudiyati, & Rusyidi, 2020; Oswald, 1999; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999).

Media system dependency theory (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1990), assumed that people depend on media to understand their own world around them. Ball-Rokeach proposed a theory of media dependence, which considers the effects of media on the relationships between individuals, the media, and society as compared to the relationships between each other (Jung, 2017). This theory is a systematic approach to study the effects of media on society and the interaction of media audiences and social systems. According to media dependency theory, mass media become more powerful when mainstream media system controls sources of information that are not publicly available or when alternative media are lost. When people do not have access to other mass media, this media dependency becomes

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very important because people have to trust the mass media as the only information provider (Jackob, 2010). Identifying the position and characterization of media systems as a knowledge system is the first important suggestion that forms the basis of media dependency theory (Nawi, Alsagoff, Osman, & Abdullah, 2020). Media dependency theory explains the important relationship between audiences, the media and the wider social structure. This theory has a prediction that in order to meet certain needs and achieve certain goals, someone will rely on media content (Nawi et al., 2020). An important factor in the theory of the relationship between the media and the individual is the advances in social science research in the mid-20th century (Jung, 2017). The concept of systems in media dependency theory is based on an ecological approach that focuses on "the relationship between small, medium, and large systems and their components" (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1990).

The main proposition of media dependence theory is that the power of media acts as a unification of interdependence between individuals, media, and social systems for goals and resources. (Ball-Rokeach, 1998). Another proposition of this theory is the significance of the media system in society which increases as ambiguity or uncertainty in the development of society (Hirschburg, Dillman, & Ball-Rokeach, 1986).

Changes caused by the media are related to an individual's dependency on the media itself. The dependency itself is created from how much the individual's needs are met by the media. The more needs that are met by the media, the more dependent a person is on it. An individual becomes more dependent on the media because the mainstream media system can provide essential and exclusive information that allows the public to evaluate what is happening in their community (Nawi et al., 2020). This is in line with the uses and gratification theory which assumes that an individual's continuous use of media is related to the satisfaction felt by that individual towards the media. De Fleur, in his explanation of the dependency of audiences on the media, revealed that we need to consider all social systems prevailing in society to understand the influence of media on the society itself.

Social transformation is associated with positive social changes that occur in society, which are called changes from one form to another because of the process that produces new products using science and technology (Ocktilia et al., 2020). The process of social transformation includes at least three important aspects of society, which are culture, economy, and politics. Social transformation implies the idea of the way society and culture change in response to many factors as economic, war, and politic (Castles, 2001). Currently, these three aspects are interrelated in a process that is triggered by digital technology which not only resulted in a globalization process but also a modernization process that undergoes a fundamental change called goals. Modernization, which was initially pushed by the government in order to achieve general indicators of human civilization, is shifted into a very strong pressure in economic interests regarding development of capitalism. Social transformation can also be seen as a contradiction towards

globalization in a sense that is also an integral part of globalization and a process undermines its central ideologies (Castles, 2001).

Culture is resulted from the creation of taste, initiative and human work which is also an expression of human culture that contains values highly upheld by the cultural community. These cultural values, both in the form of thought or perspective and behaviour, are then instilled from time to time by various socialization agents (Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999). Cultural socialization refers to the process by which adolescents learn about a culture and develop their sense of belonging into a cultural group (Umaña-Taylor & Fine, 2004). An important and interesting issue right now is the change of socialization agents itself. Socialization, initially relied on individuals as agents of change in the interactions between generations, is now shifted to the media whose presence is getting stronger day by day.

The existence of the media as an agent of socialization has experienced rapid development as an industry with a movement that now refers to economic interests rather than social and political ones. Media, which at the beginning of its existence was a technology aimed to overcome human limitations in communicating, has now become even stronger than the humans themselves. Additionally, the power of media at this moment is no longer driven by social or political interests which originally referred to the public interest, or human interests as citizens.

The media as agents of socialization have differences both in the short and in the long term. In the short term, media use affects behaviour through priming cognition and eliciting affection, increasing arousal and eliciting imitation (Prot et al., 2015). In the long run, media use influences beliefs, perceptions, behaviours and affective traits, bringing about changes in a person's nature (Prot et al., 2015).

Moreover, the media, especially the digital media, have not only changed the indicators and actors of modernization but also have encouraged widespread and unlimited human interactions into a process that has been widely discussed as a form of globalization. For example, globalization that blurs human boundaries based on their culture becomes a global reality that encourages various interactions between cultures. The differences between cultures in different societies are initially largely irrelevant, but now it changes as cultures begin to interact with each other (Oswald, 1999)

Referring to this growing phenomenon, this research focuses on the study of the role of digital media in the social transformation process that occurs in Pangandaran. Pangandaran is located in southern part of West Java and is famous for its beautiful beach. This coastal area was slowly undergoing a development process and in 2015 became a new regency in West Java, Indonesia. The role of media in the development process has become an important area of discourse. McQuail (1994) revealed the dilemma related to the existence of the media, because the mass media can function to oppress as well as to liberate, to unite and to divide society, both to promote and resist change (Johnson, 2001). In regards to this idea, a critical attitude is needed in understanding social roles in Pangandaran.

Methods

This study analyses the role of digital media in Pangandaran which is undergoing many changes, especially in the government sector which has an impact on social changes around it. After Pangandaran became a regency, significant changes occurred, including in the aspects of development, especially tourism and education, which were carried out by the district government.

To obtain data related to the changes that have occurred and the role of the media in the development of this research, this research uses a qualitative approach with several data collection techniques. Techniques used in the data collection were in-depth interviews, media content analysis, and observation. Media content analysis was carried out on three online media developed by local journalists to see their coverage of Pangandaran regional content until July 20221.

Media Digital chosen are HarapanRakyat.com, SEPUTARPANGANDARAN.COM, and radartasik.com. Meanwhile, interviews were conducted with the audience to capture the audience's attitude towards various media content that hit them and their use of media and the changes they experienced. Observations were made to see the physical development of Pangandaran as well as various attitudes and behaviors of the people there, including the informants during the interview.

Result

The results of the research detail the content analysis carried out on online media that makes the Pangandaran community its main target or one of the targets of the media. Furthermore, some descriptions of the audience's views on their access to digital media and the need for information and the information they get are presented.

An Overview of Online Media that Reaches the Pangandaran Audience

In this section there is an overview of the three local media, namely HarapanRakyat.com, radartasik.com, and SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM.

a) HarapanRakyat.com.

HarapanRakyat newspaper was established as a local print media in 2003 for the Ciamis Regency, Banjar City and Pangandaran Regency, then in 2010 Harapan Rakyat launched an editorial website with the HarapanRakyat.com website. This website was published in 2010 and continues to upload news until the day this research is written (Juli 2021). On the first page of HarapanRakyat.com there are contact information, editors, page guidelines, disclaimer, and page explanations.

In the home page of the HarapanRakyat.com website there is the latest news. Overall, the uploaded news has a variety of themes and types. There is news in the categories of technology, lifestyle, science, automotive, property, business, entertainment and video. Information on news categories uploaded or submitted is listed on the website. Separation of dates is also available if HarapanRakyat readers need news on certain dates only, or special news with certain titles/categories, in which both can be searched in the search column. The latest news is also displayed in text form at the top of the page.

In addition to having the main media in the form of the HarapanRakyat.com website, they also have social media such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and You Tube. Their Twitter account is @harapanrakyat_ which was first published in 2011, and is still actively uploading news at the time when the research is conducted. (Juli 2021). In the Instagram application, the @harapanrakyat.com account often uploads news in the form of videos and the uploaded news contains information that is already on their website. The same news is also uploaded on Facebook with the Harapan Rakyat Online account as well as on Twitter and YouTube accounts. The Harapanrakyat.com YouTube account most often uploads news in the form of videos. The videos are also uploaded on the HarapanRakyat.com website, but the delivery is more focused on the visual aspect.

b) radartasik.com

The online media radartasik.com is a media that has a very active website. The radartasik.com website uploads about 10-20 articles every day. Although the account is called radartasik.com, this media disseminates local information covering the areas of Tasikmalaya, Ciamis, Garut, Banjar, and Pangandaran. They also cover national news which has its own category. News categories based on coverage area are located at the top of the main page so it would be easily known by visitors who want to browse the news in each area.

In general, the coverage of each targeted area has a relatively balanced intensity or frequency of reporting, but radartasik.com presents a special category for the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and the Tasikmalaya Regency Communication and Information Office (Diskominfo). This makes it easier for Tasikmalaya residents to find out the latest news from the legislative and executive parties in their area. Radartasik.com is also one of the few media whose website is not full of ads. In addition, news on the radartasik.com site is only displayed on one page of the site so that readers can access information without the need to reload the website again and again.

In addition to having the main digital media in the form of the website radartasik.com, they are also present on four popular social media in Indonesia, namely Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube.

c. SEPUTARPANGANDARAN.COM

In this section there is an overview of existing digital media, or having news coverage, or being a local target audience for the community around Pangandaran regency. This research focuses on the online media SEPUTARPANGANDARAN.COM which is the media that has the largest digital engagement and its content includes local, national, and international content.

Digital media with the name SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM is one of the online media that presents news related to local content, especially around Pangandaran, national, and international. When a visitor opens the site seputarpangandaran.com, the first thing that can be seen is one of the news that happened on that same day or the previous day. Visitors can see the various categories of content they provide, making it easier for visitors to find out what kind of information they need. Moreover, SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM also provides special news categories in Pangandaran to make it easier for site visitors without having to type or search for keywords related to the news they want to know.

The front page of SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM website presents the category of child-friendly reporting guidelines that contain information about the code of ethics or guidelines in raising an issue or news related to children. Local online media SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM also provides information about definitions and matters relating to cyber (digital) media that we can choose from among other news categories. During the COVID-19 pandemic, SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM also presented information on positive patients, patients being treated, recovered patients, and patients who died both nationally and in the Pangandaran area itself.

Online media SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM always accepts public writings about even releases, features, news, essays, opinions, and news videos that can be sent via email. This allows for a more interactive communication between SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM and its audience. However, as an online media there are too many ads that appear when visitors open this site that appear from the top, bottom, right, and left sides on the main screen of the site SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM. Besides, there is also content about "advertising prices" which is placed between the news categories presented seputarpangandaran.com. Besides the main SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM website, this online media also has several social media networks to support the development of SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM online media, namely Facebook, You Tube, and Instagram.

Based on an analysis of audience engagement on various social media used by radartasikmalaya.com, Harapanrakyat.com and SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.com, the description in the table below is obtained.

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Table: Audience Response
On the Use of Social Media by Online Local Media

Media Social	Radartasik.com	HarapanRakyat.com	SEPUTARANPANGANDARAN.COM
Facebook	20,368 followers 19,297 Likers	32.986 Followers 25.281 Likers	7146 Followers 5.905 Likers
Instagram	4.597 Followers	1.002 posts 8.561 followers 191 Following	118 posts 1.042 followers 53 Following
Twitter	10.100 Followers	2.194 Followers 1.392 following	Inactive
YouTube	357 videos 792 Subscribers	587.042 viewers 94 Subscribers	28 videos 94 subscribers 31.530Viewers

Sources: research result accessed on July 25, 2021

Based on the description above, it can be seen that public access in Pangandaran to digital media, especially social media, is quite high. This potential is utilized by online media managers to reach a larger audience through social media. Through their social media, they get thousands of people who access the contents they produce on their website. One local journalist in Pangandaran stated that the use of social media by online media in Pangandaran can reach people who are not used to accessing online media. Therefore, they feel they do not need to create new content but simply repost the contents that have been created for the website to the various social media platforms they have.

Digital Media in Pangandaran: Their Audience and Implications

This study elaborates the experience of using digital media which has a relatively high intensity every day. An informant stated that every day, they hold their mobile phone from the time they wake up until they fall asleep. There are three uses of digital media that are interesting to discuss, namely the use of digital media to play games, the use of social media to build broad interactions, and the use of digital media to obtain information including local content information related to information in the environment around where they live, namely Pangandaran.

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One of the informants said that currently in Pangandaran the children have left the traditional games they used to play as a child, such as playing marbles or playing hide-and-seek. The informant also notices that in his village many parents give cell-phones to their children who are still in elementary school. Therefore, nowadays many children in the village are now switching from traditional games to being active in playing online games. As a result of playing online games, their parents have to spend more money so that their children can play online games. The development of groups of game players is also growing rapidly in Pangandaran. An informant stated that currently in Pangandaran the online game players already have a manager. There are also online games that are sports-themed or called e-sports. This means that children do not move much because to play football they now can do it simply through games.

In addition to using mobile phones to play games, some children, especially teenagers, are already actively using social media. One of the informants, a 2nd grade high school student, stated that the phone they had was given to them by their parents when they were still in elementary school, although they never asked for the phone. After having a phone, they use the phone a lot other for looking up information for school assignments. They also use it to find information about their karate hobby and to watch Western and Korean films.

Due to their parents' job as tour guides, this informant has good English skills. They use their English skills to make friends from Egypt, Germany and Spain. In addition, their enjoyment of K-Pop also allows them to speak little Korean and use it when meeting or hanging out with his virtual friends from various countries who also interested in K-Pop. However, in general they use English in their interactions with friends from various countries. One of the bad experiences of using digital media is when someone they do not know contacts them and act as if that person knows about their activities. The informant became afraid as stated by the informant as follows

> "Of course I'm afraid, I start to get worry when I go out all by myself because I always feel like someone is watching me. I feel so self-aware. I used to feel fine when I have to go alone, but now I have to make sure (of my surroundings). Because it feels like he stalks me and always knows what I am up to."

According to the informant, the person is an adult male judging from his voice, although had admitted that he was a senior at his school. The informant once checked the name mentioned to his senior but no one knew him. The informant once asked him to meet but he did not come. The experience made the informant traumatized and scared, but before they did not dare to talk about the experience to anyone and 'just keep it to themselves'. Currently they are becoming more careful in giving out their phone number to other people.

The presence of local online media was recognized by other informants as a source of information. According to one informant, they accessed local online media to get information about various events or information around Pangandaran.

One of the informants said that he got information about natural disasters and various government activities from seputaranpangandaran.com. However, the informant said that the information obtained was generally only in outline and lacked detail and depth. In addition, other informants stated that information about education in online media is still very limited. There is some information that is difficult to find in local online media including information about scholarships for education, especially higher education and how to tackle existing competition.

Although it is considered small, the existence of educational information contained in digital media and online local media is recognized as a source of information as revealed by the following informants;

> "At first, I get information from the Counselling Teachers, we know who gets to apply to SNMPTN based on our rankings. After I applied (those who gets to apply), I look up information by myself from YouTube and websites about best future opportunities. I saw that Information Engineering would be good because in the future technology would always be developing, and I chose to apply in ITB. But I didn't get in through SNMPTN. And through local online media I read that Universitas Padjadjaran was opening PSDKU in Pangandaran. I immediately applied to join the selection process in Communications and Thank God I got in."

After graduating at the bachelor's level in communication science, the informant continued to the master's program in communication science at Padjadjaran University. He revealed that through local online media he received initial information about the opening of the PSDKU which was not published by digital media that were national or global in nature. The informant revealed that the existence of local online media was very useful to get important information in the area, including the opening of PSDKU. After completing his studies at PSDKU Pangandaran he then continued his studies to a master's program in communication science and after graduating hoped to become a teacher at PSDKU Pangandaran and be able to contribute to his region.

Discussion

The three local online media that were observed by HarapanRakyat.com, radartasik.com and seputaranpangandaran.com are three online media that cover the Pangandaran area and its surroundings. Regarding content, radartasik.com has a better positioning as a local media compared to two other media. On the first page there are words that serve as a guide for the audience to find out various information in the media more deeply. As local media, radartasik.com is directly available on the front, slightly to the left, there are several keywords that can be clicked on to find out more about the contents. Radartasik.com explicitly contains words which are the names of the areas it covers. Meanwhile, in the other two online media, on the first page there are several words related to the issues offered, such as in HarapanRakyat.com there are words that contain issue categories, namely news,

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technology, lifestyle, science, automotive, property, business, entertainment and video. While at Seputarpangandaran.com at the top it provides the Home menu, news, my opinion, techno, automotive, sports and entertainment. The radartasik.com reflects more of its media as a local media than other online media that wants to raise a variety of local information in Pangandaran and its surroundings.

The presence of the three online media is in line with the high use of digital media in society. The use of mobile phones as a digital media device has been widely used by children since elementary school. There are parents who think that mobile phones are technology that their children need to have. Referring to the technology adoption process that occurs, it seems that parents are innovative (Rogers, Singhal, & Quinlan, 2005), however, when the reasons for acceptance of technology are further elaborated, it is found that technology adoption is not because of its function, but rather cultural values that make ownership of technology a symbol of progress or social status. Theoretically, the social situation in Pangandaran has create an increase to public dependency on the media, especially mobile phones, related to its existence and public access to the media. Referring to the Media system dependency theory and research conducted related to media (DeFleur & Ball-Rokeach, 1990; Jackob, 2010; Jung, 2017) then the phenomenon that occurred in Pangandaran illustrates the relationship between social situations including access to digital media which is relatively high. In addition, there are public attitudes, especially parents and their values, which consider the use of digital media by their children since elementary school is a must or something natural to fulfil even when their children do not ask for it. This is one of the dilemmas in the process of social transformation which emphasizes more on the material aspect and ignores the human aspect. This is what is feared to happen in Pangandaran; A high technology adoption is happened, but it instead tends to encourage consumptive, asocial and class competition based on technology ownership.

Although technology adoption does not always produce positive results for the audience, it is undeniable that the presence of digital media produces both positive and negative changes. One thing that cannot be denied is that there is a change in knowledge or the development of insight, which is recognized by web site users or social media users. However, the need for information related to local needs for the community such as education is still very limited. Within its limitations, digital media, both online and social media, can be a source of information, a source of inspiration, and a source to get to know each other or share experiences. In other words, digital media can be one of the agents of change that drives various changes at the individual, group or social level (Jung, 2017; Peñaloza & Gilly, 1999). This is what happened in Pangandaran with the existence of digital media, both online media with websites and social media as well as various applications available on digital media or internet network-based media. At the individual level, many changes occur related to the motivation and insight of digital media users as well as communication and media behavior patterns. At the group

level, virtual communities emerge and groups that appear related to media content, such as groups of online game players or K-Pop lovers. At the social level, the development of Pangandaran as a new district and a tourist area that continues to develop has resulted in social dynamics from the political, economic, social and cultural aspects. Education is an important aspect in responding to changes and the opportunities and constraints that develop in Pangandaran. In addition, the availability of access and use of digital media also requires digital literacy for the Pangandaran community, especially active users of digital media and local online media managers.

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and discussion process in this research the following conclusions can be drawn;

1. Social Media has the potential to reach audiences online media based on their engagement. All online media in this research have thousands of followers and some even reaching tens of thousands of followers. HarapanRakyat.com, SEPUTARPANGANDARAN.COM, and radartasik.com are media online that have used social media to reach and build relationships with their audiences in Pangandaran. The use of social media by online media namely Instagram, Facebook, and You Tube prove to possess great opportunities for local online media to reach their audiences more than Twitter.

2. One of dilemma in the process of social transformation is there is more emphasizes more on the material aspect and ignores the human aspect. This is what is feared to happen in Pangandaran; A high technology adoption is happened, but it instead tends to encourage consumptive, asocial and class competition based on technology ownership.

3. Local media content regarding the information people need is still considered very limited especially regarding the higher education information so there is need local content develop in online media are in line with the public needs of local communities.

4. Although digital media adoption does not always produce positive results for the audience, it is undeniable that there is a change in knowledge or the development of insight and opportunity for global interaction in many interests or objective which is recognized by digital media users in Pangandaran.

5. There is a significant impact related to the existence and access of digital media, especially social media on local communities related to global interactions experienced by local communities in terms of culture, region. In addition, it is also necessary to increase the knowledge and awareness of social media users related to digital literacy (digital skill, digital safety, digital ethic, and digital culture). ***

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