Media Literacy and Critical Ability of Students College at Manggarai Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to describe the ability of college students in using, accessing, analyzing, and evaluating the content contained in the internet media. The type of research used is descriptive cross sectional study. The subjects of the study are 353 students. They were determined using proportional stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and observations. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis.

The results showed that 83% of students access the internet every day. Some students access actual news (41.7%) and scientific nuanced information (36.1%). However, this high accessibility is not matched by the students' critical ability. As many as 58.3% of students tend to seek information only from an anonymous source whose credibility is in doubt. This fact shows that the ability of student-based in Manggarai district is in the basic capability category in media. This condition needs to get the attention of educational stakeholders in Manggarai regency so that the young generation of special students is not stuck on false issues and pseudo-knowledge.

Keywords: media literacy, internet, critical ability

INTRODUCTION

Predictions about the world order after technological advances have long been studied academically. Karl Marx, for example, expressed his views very simply: "*we must understand history to make history*". With the development of science and technology, continued Marx, the world will become more stable and orderly. Many thinkers opposed Marx, then accepted the assumption. George Orwell, for example, imagined a society that is so stable and predictable, that we all become small wheels in large social and economic machines (Giddens, 2003: xiv).

In fact, the world we live in today is not exactly like what they thought or felt. Instead of getting more predictable and controlled, the world is out of control, a runaway world. Globalization of technology leads the world into a very complex process so that everything can not be analyzed from a single and linear perspective. Everything takes place in a contradictory form to each other (Giddens, 2003: xiv).

We are in a new era far different from the situation a few decades ago. Digital era, era of generation Y and Z. A very dynamic era simultaneously leads us into the increasingly complex socio-cultural problem. The all-digital mechanism in social interaction rather than promising a closer interpersonal bond, on the contrary, social estrangement is created when every individual is solely preoccupied with his own world, the digital world, the virtual world, the world of nowhere. Undoubtedly, there is a very embarrassing paradox in today's social life reality, when one feels very lonely in the middle of human solid. Thus digital modernization as a product of the information technology industry revolution presents itself as a double-edged sword and at the same time breeds a dualism of understanding of worth or inappropriate, good or bad, and right or wrong. The media have been made a stepping stone to violence against vulnerable groups such as women and children. The emergence of new, more complex crimes through social media communication engineering, such as pedophiles that at any time can threaten the future of children; the illegal buying and selling of organs from children for the lure of hundreds of millions to billions. It is almost certain that with the proliferation of online social media, every individual can invariably record, imitate or distort whatever information appears every second. That is why even hoax news can trigger social divisions and spur more sophisticated crime actions because it is difficult to control in the millions of information that appear almost every second from all over the world (Nelwan, 2017: 5).

Many people are increasingly pessimistic about technological advances because they are immune to ethical demands. New findings increasingly put aside concern for humanity, instead of being backed by profit-seeking and self-recall. And it is true, to pay attention to ethical aspects not to be the task of science and technology itself, but the duty of man or the perpetrator behind it. To that end, humans and especially scientists or technicians must "limit themselves" not to plunge too far into the preoccupation of interacting with the media. Heidegger was right when he said that the technology that man created to dominate nature and the world, even began to dominate men, his own creator (Bertens, 1993: 287). Hans Jonas described the destructive dimension of science and technology with the phenomenon of "fear". Humans experience tremendous fear of science and technology of his own creation. Even in the culmination of science and technology can human genetic engineering as seen in the field of biotechnology that shakes the traditional concept of what it means to be human (Two, 2009: 165). His early presence was greeted with joy, gradually worried and preying on his own creator.

New generation children, including students, are entering a new stage in life, a digital situation. Maryani, quoting Pendit, reveals the latest side of the latest generation with what is called "digital native", a term first disclosed by Marc Prensky, to refer to a different generation of what he calls digital immigrants). The substance of the difference is more to the way of thinking and how to use the mind to process the information that has been accessed. Children who are born digital from computer technology from an early age so that Prensky even believes that their brains are more skilled in operating computers and media than previous generations (Maryani, 2016: 214).

The various positive and negative implications of the presence of technology (media) give rise to a variety of responses and attitudes, and "media literacy" can be called a "wisdom" for "self-limiting" to criticize the distance between "human" and humanity as the ultimate goal of life and "Media" as a means of radiating life only. Thus, media literacy can not be done through educational approaches in formal institutions such as schools alone, but rather it must be holistic and now media literacy leads to a public policy approach. That is, media awareness must be built through structural-instructive mechanisms.

The policy approach to controlling media usage has not really been the concern of the stakeholders against the massive use of the media. In schools, the presence of media (print, electronic, cyber) lure new generations ranging from elementary school children, high school, to college students. In addition to television, the most active and desirable mass media is (cyber) internet. In 2018, the research of British media agency We Are Social, in collaboration with Hootsuite, produced a startling conclusion that active users of Indonesian social media account for 49% of the total population; they spent 3 hours 23 minutes in front of social media (WA, Facebook, Instagram, Line) (Kompas.com, 1/3/2018). The Association of Internet Service Providers in Indonesia (APJII) reports that the majority of internet users in Indonesia (49.52% are young people aged 19-34 years, followed by groups aged 35-54 years (29.55%), and youth aged 13-18 years old (16.68%) .The unique thing is the role of schools in penetrating and forming the media culture through the provision of internet and online-based learning (Kompas.com, 22/2/2018).

It is needed to understand that media literacy is not about "protecting" kids and students from unwanted messages. We now face a digital reality and this is *our culture*. Although some groups urge families to just turn the TV off, or forbid the kids to keep away from android, the fact is, media are so ingrained in our cultural milieu that even if you turn off the set, you still cannot escape today's media culture (Center for Media Literacy, 2005: 21). Perhaps this is the same as forbidding children not to talk about sexuality, when in fact

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sexuality is a modern pop culture that always stalks children in every corner of life. Therefore, it takes a way for children to understand the positive and negative aspects of media usage. At this point, we come to talk about media literacy. The question is: what is media literacy?

The concept of media literacy has disturbed public's attention, and this can be seen from the various interpretations of the term. Some prefer to use the term "information competence". Here we choose "media literacy" and follow Sonia Livingstone's thought that media literacy is "the ability to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages across a variety of contexts."

Students in Ruteng, Manggarai, are active Internet users who are adaptable to social changes as they interact with gadgets every day. The penetration of the media behind a technically oriented hidden curriculum, and the permissive and tolerant attitude of campuses and the surrounding community against the use of android, is evidenced by the low literacy of the media, like a double-edged sword, both helpful and destructive. As a newly growing city, Ruteng brings fascinating charms that attract students to always access the media.

In the future, governments and stakeholders should pay attention to the (social) media as part of the four pillars of democracy. Because if children are too engrossed in cyberspace and it is time to mature, understand that media has become your identity and your charm in social media, and self-control is the most effective means of literacy (Hisham & Pamungkas, 2016).

We conducted research on the students in Ruteng, the Capital District of Manggarai, Flores, to explore the critical attitude of media usage. The four campuses in Ruteng are STKIP Santu Paulus Ruteng, STIKES Santu Paulus Ruteng, STIPAS Santu Sirilus Ruteng, and STIE Karya Ruteng, the research area, and hopefully this research can help the institution and society to get the information about the development of the students in interaction with the media. Media is not a tool but is considered as "playmate". The type of research used is descriptive cross sectional study. Research respondents amounted to 353 students determined using proportional stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and observations. Then, data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative analysis.

DISCUSSION

Media that became the focus of attention in this research is digital media Internet. Therefore, media literacy is defined as the ability to use, access, and criticize the content contained in the internet. In this study, the literacy indicator is viewed from the aspect of the

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intensity of use, the content being accessed, and the critical power in response to the content presented by the media. The subjects of the study were students in Manggarai district.

As an early illustration, in Kabupaten Manggarai there are several High Schools, namely STKIP Santu Paulus, STIKES Santu Paulus, STIPAS Santu Sirilus, and STIE Karya Ruteng. The campus which is the research locus is STKIP Santu Paulus, STIKES Santu Paulus, and STIPAS Santu Sirilus. These three colleges are the largest campus in Manggarai district. Students who became the subject of the study amounted to 353 people. Students studied are students of semester 2 - 8 with percentage details as follows.
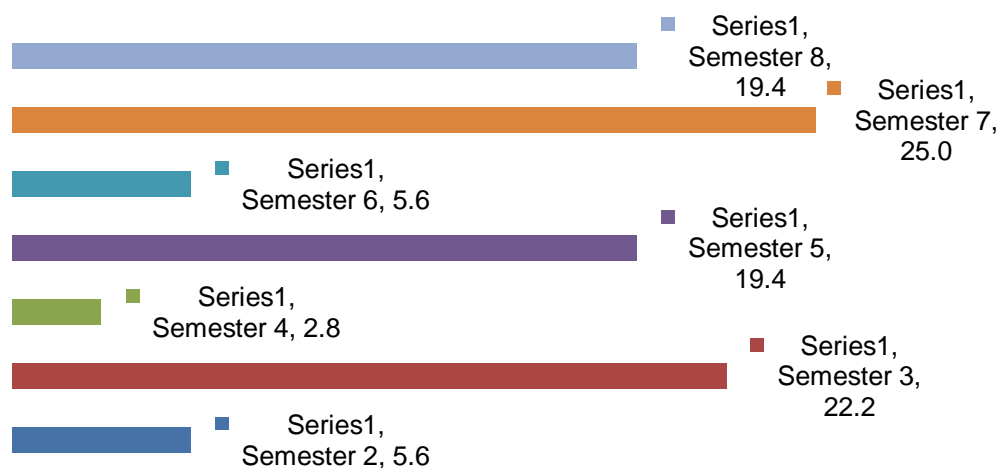

Figure 1

Percentage of Students based on Semester Lecture

Factors in student semester positions are seen as an important part that is enough to contribute to the ability of the media and the critical power of the students. The assumption is, The higher the level of student semester, the more demands of the task which then affects the attitude of students in accessing the content in the media.

Most of students (83%) access the internet every day. With this number, the category of contact with the media or the frequency of use of internet media fall into the category of high level. Fedorov in his article on Levels' of Media Competence: Russian Approch explains that the frequency of daily media use is an indicator of media contacts in high-level categories (Fedorov, 2015: 194). The frequency of internet usage on this high level shows that the internet is not a strange thing for students. Students can access the internet through various devices such as, mobile phones and laptop. Internet access is done through google features contained in the phone. Mobile becomes the main device in accessing the internet because this device is easy to have students. With the capital of hundreds of

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thousands of dollars only students can already buy mobile devices, fill internet quota and access the internet. This easy accessibility is also supported by the telkomsel network available in Manggarai district. Internet access via mobile phones can basically be extended to other devices such as laptop and computers by utilizing the portable hotspot feature available in all types of mobile phones. However, only a small percentage of students are able to activate the portable hotspot feature.

Although from the aspect of internet usage frequency, student media literacy in Manggarai district is in high category, that fact is not enough to describe actual media capability. Referring to the definition, media literacy is not only defined as the ability to access the media but also the ability to analyze, evaluate and create a variety of information. In the context of this study, it is not sufficient to describe the media literacy (internet) of students from the aspect of frequency of use and accessibility only, it is also necessary to explain the aspects of the information accessed and the ability to evaluate the information contained in the internet media.
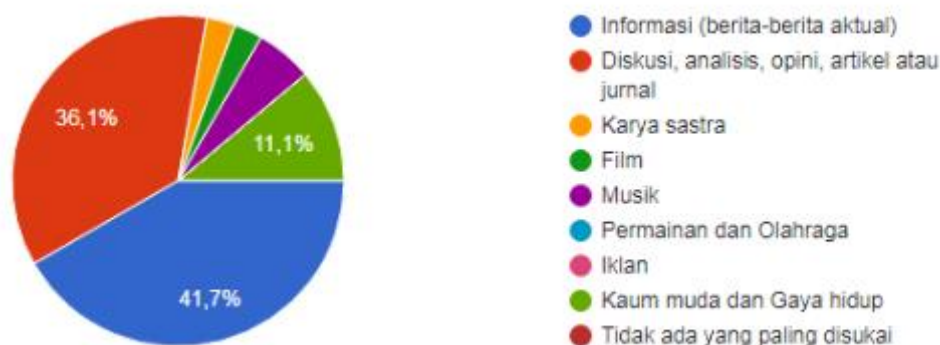

Figure 2

Content that students access

Research data shows that, the content accessed by students is quite diverse. Almost all students (41.7%) access internet content that contains actual information such as news and events that occur at the local, national, or international level. Actual information is accessed by students from 2nd to 8th semester. In addition, 36.1% of students use the internet to access content-filled discussions, analyzes, opinions, articles or scientific journals. The number of 36.1% of students accessing the scientific content is 92.3% or the majority are in the 5th to 8th semester. Meanwhile, 11.1% of students use the internet to access entertainment content

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such as youth and style life. Students who access this content tend to come from semester 2 to semester 4. This can be a picture that student interest factor is one of the factors that determine the content being accessed. This fact is in line with Rahardjo's research results which show that in relation to the learning needs, students make use of the Internet as a source of learning. Utilization of the internet in this case aims to find and meet the needs of information, learning and doing tasks (Rahardjo, 2015). The observations also confirm that in the final semesters, the lectures of students tend to be done independently. Students are required to develop knowledge independently. This demand encourages students to find alternative sources of learning and one such alternative is to access scientific content provided by the internet.

Although most students use the internet to access actual information and scientifically charged content, a student's critical attitude in assessing information sources needs attention. Many students are unaware and able to sort between credible and less credible sources. For example, in completing lecture assignments, students cite the writings of anonymous blogs. This reference is even used as the main reference of student writing. Something like this also happens when working on thesis proposal. Not infrequently supervisors find references sourced from blogs without the author's identity. Permissive attitude to this condition can affect the quality of work produced by students. Access to information from anonymous sources is directly proportional to the level of student confidence in the internet. On a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means less trust and 5 strongly believe, a total of 86.1% of students have a level of trust on the internet on a scale of 3 to 5. This means students believe in the information presented on the internet. Only a small portion (13.9%) of students lack the confidence in the content available on the internet.
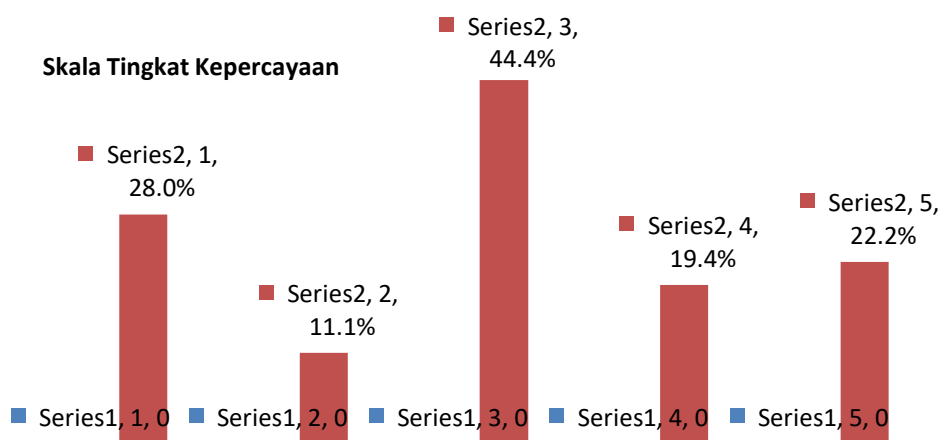

Figure 3

Level of Student Trust on the Internet

When crosstabulation of confidence level data with semester students was conducted, it was found that the position of students in the upper semester did not affect the students' critical ability. 58.3% of students in the 5th to 8th semester believe in information accessed via the internet. Research data also shows the fact that students tend to ignore the difference in information from various sources in the internet. As many as 36.1% of students often and 22.2% of students very often ignore the differences in information found from several sources in the internet. This fact explains that students tend to believe in a single source obtained from the internet. Students usually believe or "come to believe" on information gleaned from sources first obtained from the internet. In other words, students rarely compare information from other sources.

A high degree of confidence in the content and information available on the internet should be balanced with the students' critical skills. If students only believe in one source let alone anonymous sources, then the students will be easily trapped in pseudo-knowledge that the truth can not be justified scientifically. If the questionable information is shared by the student without critical analysis, then the student will be the wrong information agent. This pessimism was proven through research data. A total of 69.5% of students who access information from the internet very often directly share the information without doing critical analysis related to the truth of that information.

The fact that the ability to use and access internet media belonging to the high level category was not matched by the critical power of students in Manggarai district. Paolo Celot in Study on Assessment Criteria for Media Literacy Levels categorizes these conditions at the basic level of competences in media (Celot, 2009: 55). Students have sufficient knowledge of internet functions, are able to use, and access information from the internet but do not have sufficient critical analysis capacity to the information obtained from the internet media.

CONCLUSION

The ability to access high internet but not in line with the critical power will only produce students who are easily stuck on fake issues and pseudo-knowledge. This condition needs to get attention from education stakeholders in Manggarai regency. Educational observers need to socialize the media literacy movement as literacy literacy movement is incessantly carried out today. Educational stakeholders can also take the example of a Brazilian State that sets the subjects of Media Analysis as part of the national curriculum.

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This can be done to ward off the massive news and hoax information that is spread freely on the internet. In addition, lecturers or teachers can also deliver various credible sources that can be accessed by students in completing lecture duties. Access to information from anonymous sources by students may occur due to a lack of knowledge regarding the various credible sources that students can easily access from the internet.

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